

CyberTeens

Findings from Wave 1 of the CyberTeens Research Project at University Hill Secondary School



CyberTeens is a 4-year study looking at your technology engagement. The aim of the study is to better understand your motivations for using technology, and how this relates to mental health and relationships with parents and friends. The study is being conducted by Dr. Jenna Shapka and the DCTech Lab at UBC. These are the findings from Wave 1 of the study at your school.



Participants

Grade 8: 127 Grade 9: 118
Grade 10: 125 Grade 11: 126
Grade 12: 107

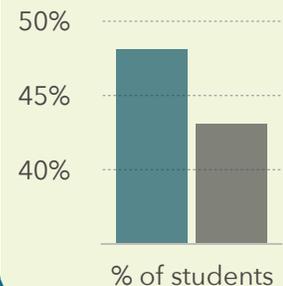
Feelings about the quarter system:

- Prefer it
- Same
- Struggle with it



Adjusting to new ways of learning

- It's been difficult
- I've adjusted ok



Compared to before COVID-19, you reported increases in the following:

- 55% feel more Anxiety
- 48% feel more Loneliness
- 46% feel more Depression



Since COVID-19 started...

Mental Health

You might think that most teens are experiencing worse mental health

This is kind of true. While there have been increases in experiences of anxiety, depression, and loneliness for about half of UHILL teens since COVID-19 began, only about 23% of you report a feeling of disconnection from others. The majority of you told us that you felt just as connected as before the pandemic began.

One student said: *I feel more isolated and less relaxed. It's harder to maintain friendships when you are unable to spend time with them.*

Academics

You might think that all teens are struggling with school

It's complicated. The transition to online learning and the quarter system has been the hardest part for about half of UHILL teens. Many of you said that your motivation is lower, that it was more difficult for you to learn online, and that you like school less since the start of COVID-19. Despite the initial struggles with adapting to new ways of learning, most of you have been finding ways to adjust to the new changes.

One student explained: *I've learned that I perform better in classroom settings with lots of social interaction. When I'm doing work on my computer at home, I get distracted easily. I've adapted since the start of covid, and I'm doing much better, but it was really rough at first.*

Another student said: *Online learning is not as efficient as in person learning for me, however I can still handle it pretty well.*

Technology

You might think that teens are getting too much screen time

Our data show an increase in screen time. On average, 59% of you reported that you are using your phone "somewhat more" since the start of the pandemic. About half of you who told us you felt connected emphasized the importance of screens.

One student said: *I've been calling my friends on hangouts since covid, and before, we might not talk but we just know each other is there. We technically are using technology and calling, but at the same time, we aren't engaging and putting everything else aside. We work on our homework, projects, and multitask while we are there with each other.*

What can I do to make things easier?

The data we collected from your school shows that screens/technology has helped you maintain friendships during COVID. However, we know that spending all of your time on a screen at the cost of other activities and experiences isn't the healthiest for you. So we recommend making your screen time count! When you are spending time on your devices, try to think about why you are on it and what purpose it's serving. If the screen time isn't benefitting you in any way and is just filling time, maybe consider another activity.

Finally, we know that most of you are doing okay during this pandemic. We are so happy to know this. However, some of you are struggling with everything that's going on. If this is you, please know that you are not alone in this, and that there are lots of resources to support you:

Crisis Lines: youthinbc.com, kidshelpphone.ca, crisiscentre.bc.ca

UHILL Counsellors: Grades 8-11 (A-L) & Strategies: Emily Chen (ehchen@vsb.bc.ca); Grades 8-11 (N-Z) & Transitions: Susan Hornby (shorby@vsb.bc.ca); Grade 12 & Whitecaps: Elizabeth Watanabe (ewatanabe@vsb.bc.ca)