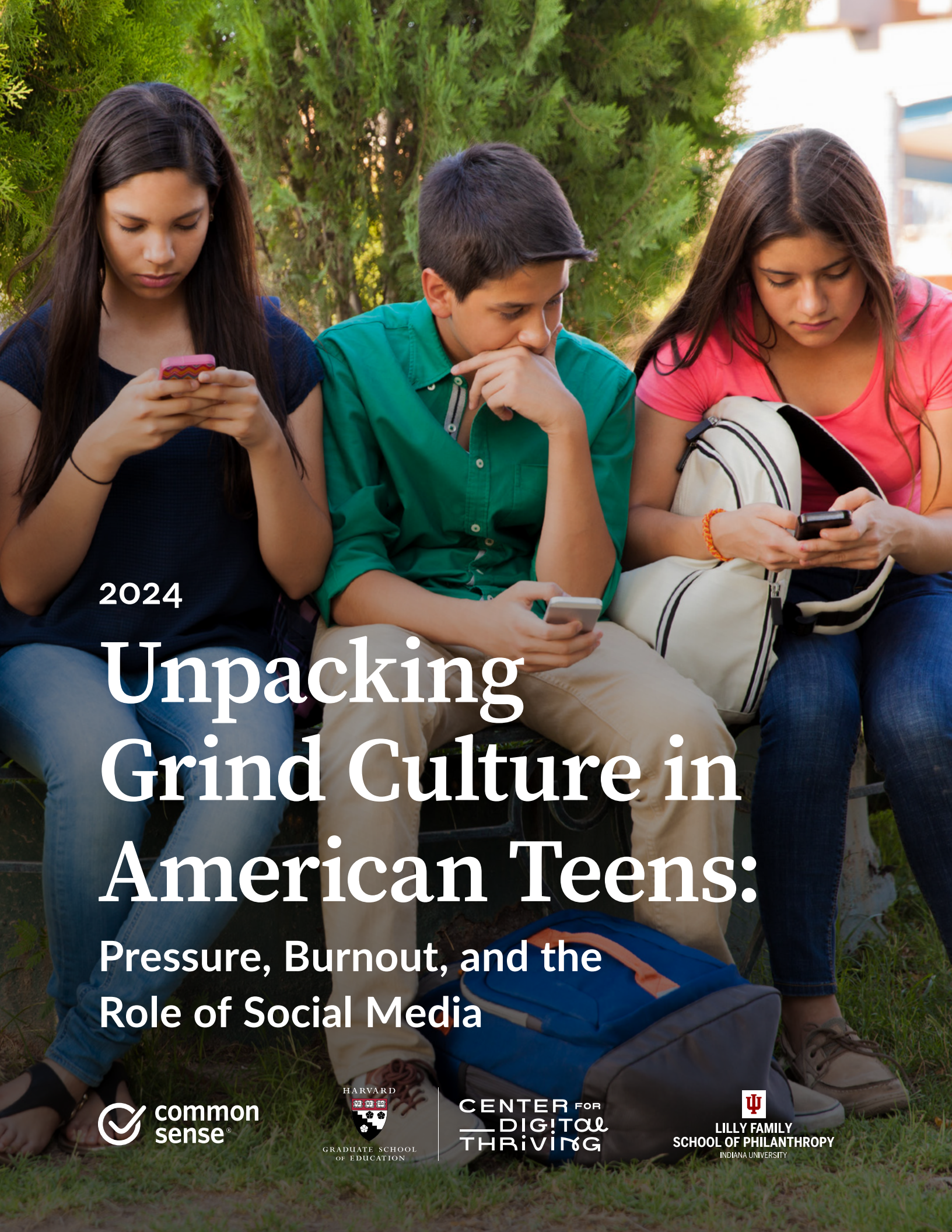


2024

Unpacking Grind Culture in American Teens:

Pressure, Burnout, and the Role of Social Media

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Key Findings

1. A majority of American teens feel at least one of six types of pressure.

A majority (81%) of American teens report experiencing pressure that makes them feel bad in at least one of six domains, and more than half (52%) say they personally experience this negative pressure in three or more domains. At the same time, 19% report no feelings of pressure in any domain we examined.

> ***"I'm scared because what if I don't meet the standards that everyone's hoping? … You want to seem like the most impressive person, the person that does all this, the person that's the president of all these clubs. And it's like you can't do all these clubs, you don't have enough time, you have to study. And it's just overwhelming because you feel like you're not doing enough."***
>
> —Black teen girl, 11th grade

Pressures vary by teen, and those that weigh heavily on some are not relevant at all to others. Below are the six types of pressure we asked about[1] and the percentage of teens who say the pressure negatively affects them personally "somewhat" or "very much":

- **Game Plan:** 56% of American teens feel pressure to have their future life figured out (e.g., college, career, relationships).
- **Achievement:** 53% of teens feel pressure to be exceptional and impressive through their achievements (e.g., honors classes, good grades, jobs).
- **Appearance:** 51% of teens feel pressure to look their best or present themselves in a certain way (e.g., follow trends, have a certain body type).
- **Social Life:** 44% feel pressure related to having an active and visible social life (e.g., hanging out with friends, going to social events/parties).
- **Friendship:** 41% feel pressure to stay available and be supportive to friends (e.g., respond to texts/social media from friends right away, be there when needed).
- **Activism:** 32% feel pressure to do good for their community or the world, or to be informed about different issues (e.g., helping community members, supporting or giving money to causes, keeping up with the news).

> ***"One of my grinds, for me, is the constant need to be the best or just constantly be able to perform and excel at everything I do because of the sense that if you're not constantly performing at an amazing rate, you're not doing enough. You're not enough. Just a constant need to be perfect or else it's just … you don't feel like you belong or you're not enough."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ Latinx teen, 10th grade

Identities matter: Girls and nonbinary teens (compared to boys) and LGBTQ+ teens (compared to cisgender and non-LGBTQ+ teens) report greater feelings of pressure in every domain. These differences by gender and sexual orientation are all statistically significant.

Teens from families of higher socioeconomic status (in terms of income and parental education) report more pressure specifically related to having a Game Plan, to Achievement, and to their Appearance. Higher parental education was also associated with more Social Life pressure.

[1] For the full question wording for this and all data in this report, please see the survey questionnaire, available at https://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/research/report/teen-grind-pressures-study-2023-questionnaire.pdf.

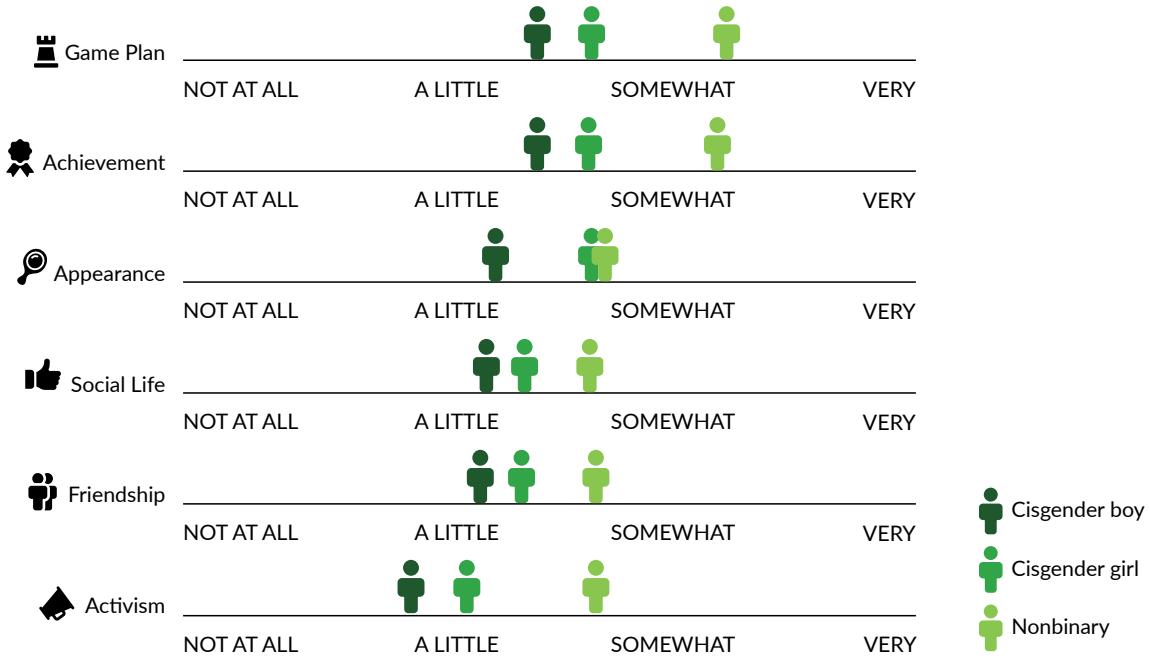
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Pressures Experienced by U.S. Teens



Note: This chart illustrates the six types of pressure experienced by American teens. Game Plan pressure (56%), Achievement pressure (53%), and Appearance pressure (51%) affect over half of teens surveyed. Social Life pressure (44%), Friendship pressure (41%), and Activism pressure (32%) impact fewer than half of teens. The percentages listed on the right represent teens who report that each pressure affects them "somewhat" (orange) or "very much" (red). The percentages listed on the left (in gray) represent teens who report that each pressure affects them "not at all" or "a little."

Intensity of Pressures Experienced by U.S. Teens, by Gender



Note: Nonbinary teens report higher levels of pressure across all domains, and cisgender girls generally report more pressure than cisgender boys. This graphic is based on the question "How much does this pressure affect you personally?" Each figure represents a point on a four-point scale, where 1 = "Not at all" and 4 = "Very." The differences shown here are all statistically significant.

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2. More than one-quarter of American teens struggle with burnout.

Burnout involves feelings of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and a lack of confidence that your effort will make a difference (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Nápoles, 2022). Most American teens (73%) say they are not feeling burned out, but more than one in four teens (27%) say that they are actively struggling with burnout. We found that pressures and feelings of burnout coexist in teens. Teens who report feeling more types of pressure and a greater intensity of pressure are more likely to also report feeling burned out.

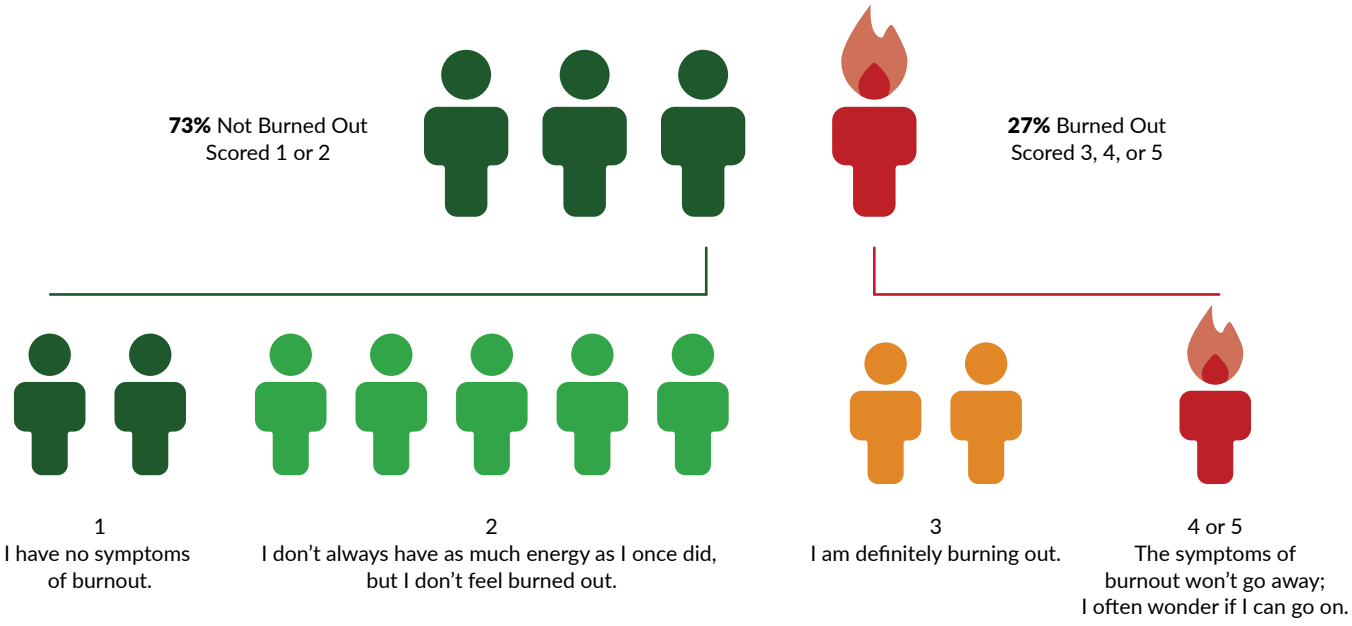
"What creates burnout in my life would be things that put pressure on me, I suppose."

—Latino teen boy, 12th grade

"[I think of burnout] like an overused machine in a factory … You're just doing the same thing over and over, and you don't feel like you really have a purpose."

—Black teen girl, 11th grade

American Teens' Feelings of Burnout



Note: This chart shows the extent of burnout among American teens. More than one in four teens (27%) are actively struggling with burnout (responses 3–5), while 73% are not feeling burned out (responses 1–2).

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3. The pressure that teens feel comes from a variety of sources, including adults in teens' lives, social media, and even themselves.

Teens say that pressure comes from a variety of sources, most notably from the adults in their lives, like parents or family members, and the adults at school, like teachers, school counselors, and coaches, especially for Game Plan pressure. Teens also mention the pressures they put on themselves, especially Achievement pressure, though social media also plays a role, especially for Appearance pressure.

"Parents—I don't think they most of the time mean to kind of add pressure. But … a relationship that one has with their parents might increase or decrease one of these pressures."

—LGBTQ+ Latina teen girl, 11th grade

"I feel this pressure from sports coaches a lot because … it's like anytime you're not perfect, you're scared. Like, 'Is this person going to take my spot? Is [the coach] gonna bench me? Am I not good anymore? What happened? Why do I suck?'"

—Black teen girl, 11th grade

"In my experience, social media makes me feel a lot more pressure about Achievement and Game Plan and Friends. It's, like, all of them, because I compare myself to other people's achievements. And I can see on Instagram, for example, other people posting with their friends, and it might make me realize, like, I don't really hang out with my friends as much as some other people do. And in those ways social media increases all my pressures because it's what I can use to compare myself to others."

—LGBTQ+ White teen girl, 12th grade

4. Social media has a dual influence: It may amplify pressures, but can also reduce them.

A majority of teens say that social media at least sometimes amplifies (worsens) every pressure they feel.

- Fully three-quarters of teens who feel Appearance pressure say social media makes it worse at least sometimes, and a similar proportion who experience Social Life and Activism pressures say that social media makes them worse. Two-thirds say the same about Game Plan, Achievement, and Friendship pressures.
- At the same time, meaningful proportions of teens (39% to 52%) say that social media at least sometimes *decreases* each pressure. Thus, teens' reports reveal a complex interplay between social media and pressure—one that is negative-leaning, but not without instances of positive influence.
- Social media is the most likely to worsen Appearance, Social Life, and Activism pressures. For Achievement, Game Plan, and Friendship pressures, other contributors are more salient (e.g., teens themselves, parents and family members, adults from school).
- With respect to particular apps, teens say Appearance pressure is most often worsened by Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat, and less often worsened by messaging apps and social gaming.

"We're always seeing someone's face [on social media], you're always comparing yourself to someone's face. Someone's always going to create a new trend. You're gonna want to follow that trend. You don't feel perfect in that trend. Now you're leading yourself into self-doubt and all these like insecurities and whatnot. So the pressure is there and very strong, especially with beauty standards and the way that we change beauty standards and the fact that the beauty standard isn't realistic and they don't look like real people."

—LGBTQ+ Black teen, 10th grade

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The Impact of Social Media on Game Plan Pressure



7 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **increases** **Game Plan** pressure.

5 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **decreases** **Game Plan** pressure.

This figure shows that nearly 7 in 10 (68%) teens who feel Game Plan pressure say social media at least sometimes increases it, and over 3 in 10 say it only increases pressure (32%). Approximately 4 in 10 (44%) say social media at least sometimes decreases Game Plan pressure, and nearly 1 in 10 (8%) say it only decreases pressure. Thus, the figure reflects a mixed but negative-leaning portrayal of social media's influence on Game Plan pressure.

The Impact of Social Media on Achievement Pressure

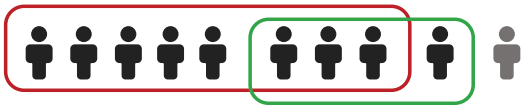


7 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **increases** **Achievement** pressure.

5 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **decreases** **Achievement** pressure.

This figure shows that nearly 7 in 10 (67%) teens who feel Achievement pressure say social media at least sometimes increases it, and 3 in 10 say it only increases pressure (30%). Less than half (45%) say social media at least sometimes decreases Achievement pressure, and less than 1 in 10 (8%) say it only decreases pressure. Thus, the figure reflects a mixed but negative-leaning portrayal of social media's influence on Achievement pressure.

The Impact of Social Media on Appearance Pressure



8 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **increases** **Appearance** pressure.

4 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **decreases** **Appearance** pressure.

This figure shows that approximately 8 in 10 (79%) teens who feel Appearance pressure say social media at least sometimes increases it, and almost 5 in 10 (48%) say it only increases pressure. Approximately 4 in 10 (38%) say social media at least sometimes decreases appearance pressure, and about 1 in 10 (13%) say it only decreases pressure. Thus, the figure reflects a mixed but negative-leaning portrayal of social media's influence on Appearance pressure.

The Impact of Social Media on Social Life Pressure



8 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **increases** **Social Life** pressure.

5 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **decreases** **Social Life** pressure.

This figure shows that nearly 8 in 10 (75%) teens who feel Social Life pressure say social media at least sometimes increases it, and 4 in 10 say it only increases pressure (40%). Over 4 in 10 (42%) say social media at least sometimes decreases Social Life pressure, and less than 1 in 10 (7%) say it only decreases pressure. Thus, the figure reflects a mixed but negative-leaning portrayal of social media's influence on Social Life pressure.

The Impact of Social Media on Friendship Pressure



7 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **increases** **Friendship** pressure.

5 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **decreases** **Friendship** pressure.

This figure shows that nearly 7 in 10 (69%) teens who feel Friendship pressure say social media at least sometimes increases it, and 3 in 10 say it only increases pressure (30%). Approximately 5 in 10 (50%) say social media at least sometimes decreases Friendship pressure, and about 1 in 10 (11%) say it only decreases pressure. Thus, the figure reflects a mixed but negative-leaning portrayal of social media's influence on Friendship pressure.

The Impact of Social Media on Activism Pressure



7 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **increases** **Activism** pressure.

5 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **decreases** **Activism** pressure.

This figure shows that over 7 in 10 (73%) teens who feel Activism pressure say social media at least sometimes increases it, and over 3 in 10 say it only increases pressure (33%). Over 5 in 10 (51%) say social media at least sometimes decreases Activism pressure, and over 1 in 10 (11%) say it only decreases pressure. Thus, the figure reflects a mixed but negative-leaning portrayal of social media's influence on Activism pressure, and one that is more balanced than for other pressures.

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5. Gaming can be a pressure release valve for teens.

Almost 80% of teens report gaming with others. Social gaming is different from other social media because it is more often a pressure release valve or at least a meaningful temporary distraction from pressures they feel: While teens most commonly answer that gaming has no effect on the pressures they feel, about one in four say that gaming actually reduces each pressure. Relative to the other social media platforms, gaming was the platform that teens most often said alleviates their pressures.

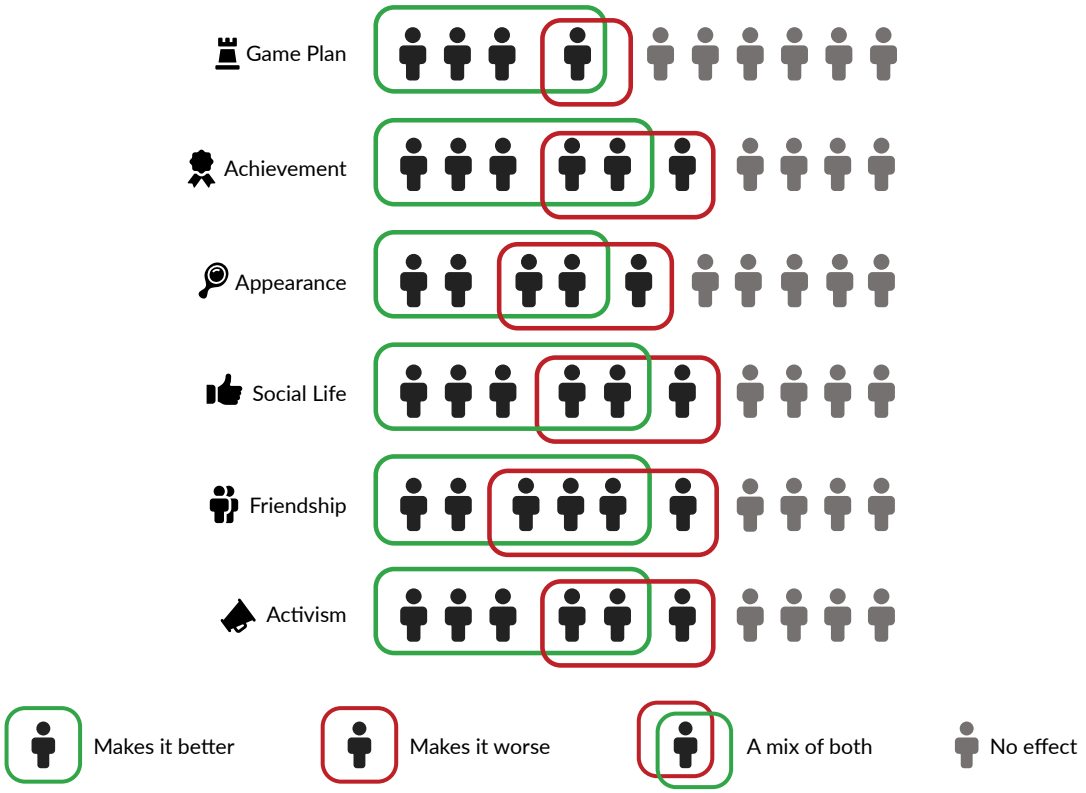
"You get to escape when you're gaming. Why would you think about appearance, my achievements? Why would I need to focus on the future, my social skills, my social pressures, the friendships? … Gaming is intended to focus you on the game, and not what's going on around you."

—White teen boy, 10th grade

"I choose my player. … She makes me so happy playing her because she's, like, amazing. I get lost into the game because I'm building stuff, I'm fighting monsters and stuff. And I forget about everything [else] that's going on."

—Black teen girl, 11th grade

The Impact of Gaming on Pressures



Note: This graphic illustrates the multifaceted impact of gaming on various pressures. More teens say that gaming only alleviates their pressures than only exacerbates them, though many teens who play social games say this has no effect on the pressure that they feel (gray), and some say the influence is mixed (as represented by overlapping green and red boxes).

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6. Self-care practices may mitigate teen burnout, and they are weekly (but not daily) aspects of most teens' lives.

For adolescents, self-care activities, like getting sufficient sleep, physical activity, and meaningful social connection, are often considered cornerstones of well-being. We found that American teens who engage in more self-care practices report fewer pressures and lower burnout.

- **A majority of teens engage in key self-care practices weekly, but not daily.** Just over half (51%) of teens reported engaging in all seven self-care practices we examined at least once during the past week. However, of these practices, most teens do not spend daily time in nature, do fun or relaxing things, have deep or meaningful conversations with friends, engage in creative activities outside of schoolwork, help others, or get at least an hour of exercise. Only one in 50 teens (2%) engaged in all of the self-care practices on four or more days, and one in seven teens (14%) did not engage in *any* self-care practice on four or more days in the past week.
- **Many teens aren't getting enough sleep or exercise.** Nearly half of teens (45%) got less than seven hours of sleep on multiple nights during the past week—less than the 8 to 10 hours per night recommended for teens—while 55% of teens got seven or more hours of sleep on at least four of the last seven nights. With respect to exercise, 60% fell short of the daily one-hour recommendation, and about one in eight did not meet this guideline on any days over the past week.
- **Teens face barriers to self-care.** Teens who co-interpreted the survey findings alongside us described barriers to self-care, including feeling unable to put away their devices, like phones or gaming consoles, but also—notably—constraints on their time, as well as beliefs that self-care just isn't "productive."

WHAT HELPS?

By studying the teens who report few to no negative pressures, we can identify practices that may help with pressure and burnout, including:

- Getting sleep
- Spending time outdoors or in nature
- Having more open schedules (free time, less restrictive scheduling, and using the internet less frequently)

WHAT CAN ADULTS DO TO HELP?

Teens in our advisory sessions shared other ways that adults can help:

- Adults can help teens make decisions that prevent overload.
- Adults can recognize teens' efforts vs. just the outcome.
- Adults can share in teens' joys.
- Adults can empathize, rather than minimize, when teens share about their stress/pressures.
- Adults can be curious about teens' social media experiences—and not assume it's all bad.

Frequency of Self-Care Activities by U.S. Teens

In the last week, teens ...	Never	1–3 Days	4+ Days
Got 7 or more hours of sleep per night	9%	36%	55%
Got at least 1 hour of exercise/physical activity	13%	47%	40%
Did something just for fun or relaxation	5%	55%	40%
Spent time outside or in nature	16%	54%	30%
Helped friends or classmates	9%	67%	24%
Had a deep/meaningful conversation with a friend	19%	59%	22%
Did something creative (not for school)	23%	61%	16%

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Summary of Methods

- This is a nationally representative survey of 1,545 teens age 13 to 17 in the United States.
- The survey was conducted by SSRS using their SSRS Opinion Panel, and also includes survey participants from nonprobability opt-in web panels to oversample for Black teens and LGBTQ+ teens.
- Survey data was collected from October to November 2023, and co-interpretation focus groups took place from February to April 2024.
- The survey was fielded online, in English or Spanish.
- Data and analyses are weighted. We examined whether results depended upon gender, age, race/ethnicity, location, family/household income, parent education, and LGBTQ+ identity.
- The margin of error in this survey is ± 3.0 percentage points. The margin of error is calculated using a 95% confidence interval. For surveys that use a 95% confidence interval, which is an industry standard, one would expect that the results would contain the population value 95% of the time. The calculated margin of error for this study also accounts for the most conservative sample proportion estimate: 50%. This means that the margin of error calculation assumes 50% of the sample will answer a question a certain way.
- Nineteen teens age 13 to 17 participated in focus group sessions to co-interpret and contextualize findings from this survey. These teens were not part of the initial survey sample. The quotations included throughout this report are from these focus groups.
- For additional details, please see the **Methodology** section of this report.

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Introduction

If we wanted to reverse trends in adolescent mental health—to see youth thriving, rather than struggling—where would we start? Many people point first to social media. In the current study, we examine American teens' experiences of different pressures that may contribute to "grind culture" and burnout. We begin with the aim of understanding teens' experiences in general, and then home in on the ways in which social media and gaming are relevant.

This flips a typical approach in research about youth and social media: Instead of asking about positive and negative experiences as they arise for teens on social media, we first examine the pressures that teens feel, and then ask about how those pressures intersect with social media and other factors. Our overarching goal is to make visible teens' perspectives and situate the diverse roles of technology in their well-being. Ultimately we hope to contribute new insights, nuance where it is warranted, and support for a solutions-oriented frame to current public discourse.

In the current U.S. context, teens heading to school are as likely to pocket their smartphones as they are to reach for their house keys, backpacks, or water bottles. It is easier for teens to edit Instagram Reels and set up Discord servers than it is to set up bank accounts. Most (88% to 95%) have personal smartphones, and social media and gaming are staples (**Common Sense, 2022**; **Pew Research, 2023**).

These technologies have scaled quickly, ahead of a full understanding of their impacts for youth well-being. National data on the mental health of Generation Z has been ringing alarm bells: There have been notable increases in persistent sadness and hopelessness, loneliness, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors over the the last decade (**CDC, 2022**; **CDC YRBS, 2024**; **Office of the Surgeon General, 2023**). Nearly 3 in 10 young people age 14 to 22 report moderate to severe depressive symptoms, and this number is even higher among LGBTQ+ youth, nearly half of whom (49%) report such symptoms (**Common Sense & Hopelab, 2024**).

For youth of color, national survey data also highlights prevalent and elevated mental health struggles: More than one in two Black, Latino, Native American, and multiracial youth and young adults have experienced moderate to severe depressive symptoms, as well as 48% of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) youth and young adults (**The AAKOMA Project, 2022**).

Social media apps loom large in the conversation about youth mental health, even as scholars continue to debate what conclusions are warranted from available data (e.g., **Haidt, 2024**; **Odgers, 2024**). Researchers generally agree that the data also shows that youth are having different experiences, and that the impacts are not solely or universally negative (**Moreno et al., 2022**; **Coyne et al., 2022**).

At the same time, social media and smartphones are widely considered as key contributors to adolescent mental health trends (**APA, 2024**; **Murthy, 2024**). Importantly, research also suggests that both the benefits and harms of social media may be magnified for youth of color and for LGBTQ+ youth (**Common Sense Media, 2024**).

Social media aside, we know that adolescence is a developmental period of heightened stress reactivity. In a neurological and physiological sense, adolescents are particularly reactive to stress (**Romeo et al., 2017**). This is an important reason to pay attention to teens' experiences: When stress is intense or prolonged, or adolescents do not have sufficient coping resources and support, it can lead to experiences of anxiety and depression as well as other negative health outcomes (**AACAP, 2019**).

We can think about pressure as the external demands on a teen, and stress as their response to that pressure. Stress and pressure can go hand in hand in ways that manifest differently for different young people. For example, in her book ***Under Pressure***, Dr. Lisa Damour describes the ways in which academic, social life, and appearance pressures contribute to elevated stress and anxiety among girls.

When young people are under pressure, their personalities and sensitivities shape how they respond (e.g., see **Charbonneau, Mezulis, & Hyde, 2009**; **McLaughlin et al., 2010**). While one young person may be more sensitive or emotionally reactive to pressure than another, the reality is that young people also have vastly different pressures put upon them. Identities, circumstances, and broader systemic forces are all relevant. The broader context that surrounds them—friends, family, school, and social media—can increase or decrease pressure, too.

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One thing we know is that perception matters when it comes to pressure and mental health. In this report, we focus on the perspectives of American teens. We examine a collection of pressures, as well as the ways in which teens see social media and gaming as relevant to the pressure they feel. These pressures include:

- **Game Plan**: pressure to have your future path all figured out
  "*Overwhelming pressure from school and your future career; needing to have everything figured out.*"
- **Achievement**: pressure to achieve the most; to be impressive
  "*Pressure to be the best in all aspects of life.*"
- **Appearance**: pressure to look your best; to present yourself in a certain way
  "*Look my best at all times (outfits, makeup, body).*"
- **Social Life**: pressure to have an active social life (in person)
  "*Be social/partying/hanging out with friends all the time.*"
- **Friendship**: pressure to be available and/or show support for friends
  "*Pressure to keep communicating.*"
- **Activism**: pressure to be informed; to do good for your community or the world
  "*Consistently stay informed and outspoken.*"

These pressures reflect established themes across existing literature on adolescence, including those related to the real risks for teen well-being associated with extreme pressure to excel (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2018). Yet the set of pressures included here are featured specifically because they emerged in prior qualitative research with teens about digital well-being (Weinstein, Davis, & James, 2024; Weinstein, Tench, & James, 2022; Weinstein & James, 2022).

That said, it is essential to acknowledge that there are heavy burdens on some teens that are beyond the focus of this study. This is not to minimize the weight of pressures related to finances and family circumstances, for example, nor to overlook the tolls of poverty, trauma, or discrimination as critical risk factors related to mental health (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2018).

Parsing American teens' reports of the different pressures they face helps us take stock of their current experiences. It also invites us to interrogate how social media relates to the different pressures that teens feel. The pressures are not inherently tied to technology, but they intersect with teens' digital experiences in a variety of ways. We investigate how teens see these pressures as influenced by different people in their lives (adults, friends, peers) and by digital environments, including social media and gaming.

We also explore connections to teens' self-care practices and to their reports of burnout. While burnout is most often researched in the context of adult populations and in relation to professional work (Bakker & Sanz-Vergel, 2020), it is a well-established concept linked to stress, pressure, and mental health. Burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and low feelings of accomplishment or efficacy (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Nápoles, 2022), and is more likely in contexts where demands and pressures overwhelm resources and supports to deal with them. Feeling burned out is a signpost that pressure is overwhelming.

In broader research on adolescent mental health, there is considerable attention to experiences like depressive symptoms, feelings of hopelessness, loneliness, and anxiety; burnout is less often examined (Walburg, 2014). But teens' descriptions of the aforementioned pressures piqued our interest in burnout, as they repeatedly described *"pressure to do the most and spread myself thin"* and drew connections to a "*grind culture*" that seems to celebrate and even fetishize constant activity at all costs. We therefore explore teens' overall reports of burnout and associations between pressures and burnout.

This report purposefully centers teens' perspectives. We examine pressures that teens in our prior research told us they face, as well as how these pressures relate to burnout and to a collection of self-care practices. We grapple with the roles that social technologies play in these pressures, but also the roles played by people in their lives (parents and family members, teachers, friends, peers).

The findings are a data-driven call for adults to approach the roles that social media and gaming play in young people's lives with curiosity. That is, to consider teens' social media experiences in the context of pressures and stresses that are relevant for different youth, and to ask questions about the sources of those pressures and the ways tech is—and isn't—contributing to them.

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The Current Study

This report describes findings from a nationally representative survey, conducted online from October to November of 2023, with 1,545 adolescents (age 13 to 17) in the United States. The purpose of the study was to explore various pressures, teens' views on what contributes to those pressures (including different people in their lives and on social media), self-care practices, and feelings of burnout. The survey data was co-interpreted with teens through 12 in-depth youth advisory group sessions. The study oversampled for and designed analytic approaches to ensure that the experiences of Black teens and LGBTQ+ teens were represented.

The focus of this study was grounded in young people's voices and their descriptions of *grind culture* and a variety of pressures related to it. We asked teens whether they use social media and which platforms they use the most (e.g., YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, messaging apps, X/Twitter, gaming, BeReal, Reddit, and more).

We also asked teens about the frequency of their self-care practices in the past week. We selected practices that previous research with adults suggests are restorative for stress and burnout: physical health practices like getting enough sleep (**Chin, Guo, Hung, Yang, & Shiao, 2015**) and exercise (**Naczenski et al., 2017**)—especially outdoors (**Kondo, Jacoby, & South, 2018**; **Thompson Coon et al., 2011**); social practices like having meaningful conversations (**Kim, Jee, Lee, An, & Lee, 2018**; **Delroisse, Rimé, & Stinglhamber, 2023**) and helping others (**Wekenborg et al., 2022**); and psychological flow practices like creative and fun/relaxing activities (e.g., see **Tjasink, Keiller, Stephens, & Carr, 2023**; **Li, Lai, Friedrich, Liu, & Popkin, 2023**). It's important to note, though, that pressures and burnout risks go beyond what a teen does individually, which is why we also explore teens' perceptions of the people and contexts around them that contribute to increasing or decreasing negative pressure.

This report helps to unpack some of the pressures that teens feel and strives to help us be more attentive to the particular roles of social technologies in making those pressures better or worse (or having no impact at all). Throughout the report, we integrate perspectives of teens who co-interpreted the survey data. Our hope is to illuminate some of the texture around teens' felt pressures, and to provide insights that support timely, grounded conversations about social media and youth mental health.

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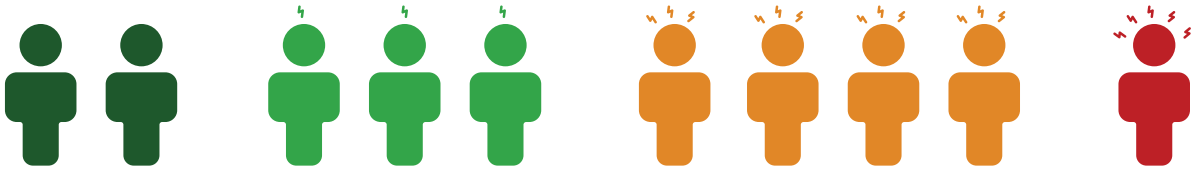
Unpacking Grind Culture: Pressures and Burnout

American youth experience a variety of pressures in their everyday lives, and these pressures can influence their mental health and even their day-to-day functioning. But their experiences of pressure differ in meaningful ways. While a majority (81%) of American teens struggle with feeling bad related to at least one of six pressure points we examined, nearly one in five (19%) feel none of these pressures. Forty-one percent of teens report feeling the pressure "very much" (i.e., the highest level of pressure provided in the response options) in one or more areas.

Below are the six pressures we asked about[2] and the percentage of teens who say the pressure affects them personally "somewhat" or "very" much:

- Game Plan: 56% of American teens feel pressure to have their future life figured out (e.g., college, career, relationships).
- Achievement: 53% of teens feel pressure to be exceptional and impressive through their achievements (e.g., honors classes, good grades, jobs).
- Appearance: 51% of teens feel pressure to look their best or present themselves in a certain way (e.g., follow trends, have a certain body type).
- Social Life: 44% feel pressure related to having an active and visible social life (e.g., hanging out with friends, going to social events/parties).
- Friendship: 41% feel pressure to stay available and be supportive to friends (e.g., respond to texts/social media from friends right away, be there when they need them).
- Activism: 32% feel pressure to do good for their community or the world, or to be informed about different issues (e.g., helping community members, supporting or giving money to causes, keeping up with the news).

Number of Pressures Experienced Among U.S. Teens



19%
Report no pressures at a level of "somewhat" or "very."

29%
Report 1 or 2 pressures at a "somewhat" or "very" level.

39%
Report 3–5 pressures at a "somewhat" or "very" level.

13%
Feel all 6 pressures at a "somewhat" or "very" level.

Note: The figure highlights that while most teens experience some degree of pressure, a significant portion (41%) feel intense pressure in at least one area.

[2] For the full question wording for this and all data in this report, please see the survey questionnaire, available at https://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/research/report/teen-grind-pressures-study-2023-questionnaire.pdf.

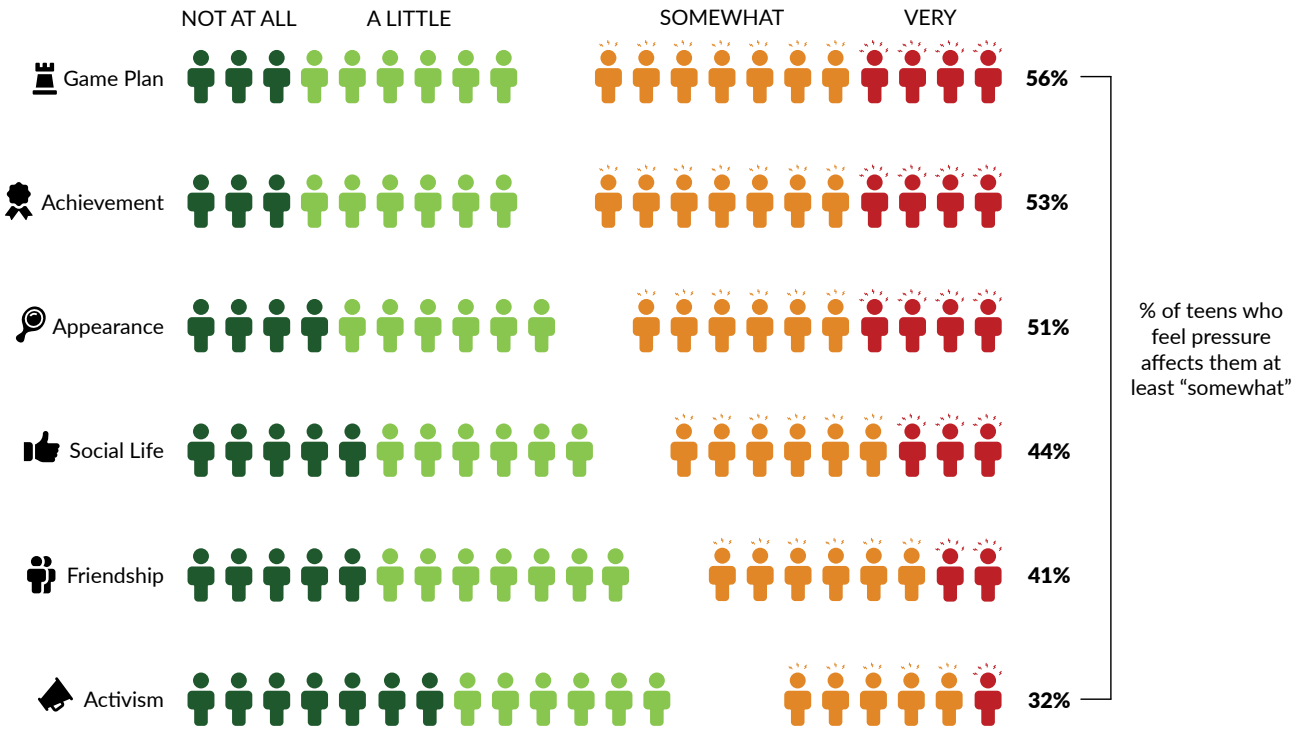
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Pressure is a complex dynamic. It can be overwhelming, but pressure isn't inherently problematic or concerning. This was a careful line we had to walk throughout the survey development and co-interpretation sessions. For example, we used language in our survey to focus on pressures that make teens "feel bad" to connote pressures with negative valence. Still, time and again we were reminded that teens have a nuanced relationship with pressure. At times, teens who co-interpreted the survey data acknowledged that it can be motivating.

> ***"It can get bad at some point, but I also think that pressure can be the initiative for you to do something else. For example, when I have pressure, like when one of my friends is getting a 96 [percent], and I'm getting a 94, I can be like, 'I can do 97! I can be better than you.' And I just start doing that and just start going by the pressure."***
>
> —Latina teen girl, 10th grade

Pressure that may feel motivating can quickly become negatively hued. And the reverse is true as well. Research on stress and child development recognizes "positive" stress as a normal and essential part of healthy development (Center on the Developing Child, n.d.). A crucial question we considered in collecting, analyzing, and co-interpreting the data was whether and when teens feel constructive versus overwhelming pressure.

Intensity of Pressures Experienced by U.S. Teens



Note: This figure shows that Game Plan, Achievement, and Appearance pressures affect more than half of teens. Social Life and Friendship pressures notably impact teens, but to a lesser extent. Activism pressure is the least frequently reported, but it still affects nearly one-third of teens.

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Different Types of Pressures

Three pressures were each reported by over half of surveyed teens: Game Plan, Achievement, and Appearance. Three other pressures—Social Life, Friendship, and Activism pressures—each affected less than half of surveyed teens, with Activism impacting about one-third.

Game Plan pressure (pressure to have a clear future path for one's life) was the most common pressure reported, by 56% of American teens. This was followed by Achievement pressure (the pressure to excel in current pursuits or to be the most impressive), reported by 53%. Appearance pressure (looking one's best or having a certain body type) was also relevant for about half of the teens surveyed (51%). About three-quarters of teens (74%) felt pressure in at least one of these three areas, 55% in at least two, and 30% said they feel all three: Achievement, Game Plan, and Appearance pressure.

Smaller proportions of teens reported feeling pressures related to having an active Social Life (44%), Friendships (being available and supporting friends; 41%), and Activism (being informed about different issues; 32%). In general, teens who felt more of one pressure also tended to feel more of other pressures.

What follows is an overview of each pressure.

Game Plan

More than half of teens surveyed (56%) report that feeling pressure to have a future path all figured out is "very" or "somewhat" pronounced for them (21% and 34%, respectively). For another one in four teens (28%), this Game Plan pressure is felt only "a little," and 17% say they do not feel this pressure at all.

Teens who examined the survey findings alongside us noted that:

"From a small, small age, you are always asked, 'Oh, what do you want to do when you're older?' It's almost pressurized to succeed and try and find your place and what you want to do in the world."

—White teen boy, 10th grade

"It's definitely starting to get to me now that I have like two or three months of my junior year left. Everyone wants to know, 'Hey, what are you going to major in? Where do you see yourself in a few years or after college? What college do you want to go to?'"

—Latina teen girl, 11th grade

How Much Does Each Pressure Personally Affect American Teens?

Pressure	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Very	Total who feel the pressure negatively affects them at least "somewhat"
Game Plan	17%	28%	34%	21%	**56%**
Achievement	16%	32%	33%	20%	**53%**
Appearance	20%	29%	32%	19%	**51%**
Social Life	27%	30%	32%	12%	**44%**
Friendship	26%	33%	31%	10%	**41%**
Activism	36%	32%	26%	7%	**32%**

Note: Numbers may not sum exactly due to rounding.

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Achievement

More than half of teens surveyed (53%) report that feeling pressure around Achievement is "very" or "somewhat" pronounced for them (20% and 33%, respectively). For another 32% this pressure is felt only "a little," while 16% say they do not feel this pressure at all.

For some teens, this pressure is a constant:

> ***"You're always pushed to achieve your highest goal, highest capability, and work towards what you want to achieve and what people think your highest potential is."***
>
> —White teen boy, 10th grade

> ***"The achievement pressure is something I think about constantly as I am a first-generation immigrant … The achievement thing is something I hold in my head a lot because I do want to impress my parents, make them proud. And at the same time it can get overwhelming, it can like mess with my brain sometimes."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ Black teen, 10th grade

As we examined the survey findings alongside teens, they raised several further considerations about Achievement pressure. In addition to connections to social media and comparison (which are described on page 24), they noted:

Achievement can come at high costs for teens. In some cases, the cost is a balanced life and emotional well-being:

> ***"I know I always feel pressure to not waste time, where it makes me not do the things that I like doing for myself, and it makes me spend time with my friends less, and all the sorts of things that you know make a balanced life. Even during exam seasons, I'll stop going to my sport because I have to spend so much time on school, and I don't think that's very good for my overall emotional mental health."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ White teen girl, 12th grade

In some cases, the cost is rest or downtime:

> ***"Every time I do waste time, I feel so guilty about it … When I waste time, then I feel so bad about it that I'll study for the whole week straight, not play any games, [not watch] any YouTube videos, [not watch] any Netflix videos for the whole week. Just study, study, study. Grind, grind, grind. It's an exhausting cycle."***
>
> —Black teen girl, 11th grade

And in some cases, the cost is relationships:

> ***"I feel like it's very difficult to get out of this feedback loop, almost, and … just constantly comparing yourself with others. And sometimes it's really annoying, and I feel like it does disrupt the relationship that I have with some people. So I don't know. I guess achievement would be one of the prices."***
>
> —Latino teen boy, 12th grade

Achievement pressure and Game Plan pressure are related. Indeed, 72% of those who reported feeling Game Plan pressure also reported Achievement pressure.

Achievement pressure is by no means universal. As the survey data signals, 16% said they feel no Achievement pressure ("not at all") and another 32% feel only "a little."

Appearance

More than half of teens surveyed (51%) report that pressure to look their best or present themselves in a certain way is "very" or "somewhat" pronounced for them (19% and 32%, respectively). For another 29% this Appearance pressure is felt only "a little," while 20% say they do not feel this pressure at all.

Teens report that social media is the top contributor to increasing Appearance pressure (Please see figure on page 20). And though Appearance pressure was more frequently and strongly reported on the survey by girls, the pressure was reported by girls (57%), boys (42%), and nonbinary youth (69%). During co-interpretation, teens reiterated that Appearance pressure is not just a "girl thing" and described how it can come up for boys, for example, related to working out or having a particular body type.

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Teens in co-interpretation groups also recalled different moments when they started to notice pressure to look a certain way:

"I did not think about appearance until I became a teen. Seeing other teens getting ready for quinceañeras, I thought '"Am I supposed to like poofy dresses?!'"

—Latina teen girl, 10th grade

Social Life and Friendship pressures

Forty-four percent of teens report feeling pressure "to have an active social life (in person) after school and on weekends" (Social Life pressure), and 41% reported pressure specifically related to being available or showing support for friends (Friendship pressure).

"I sometimes feel guilty, because I have to put myself over other things first. So I think in the back of my mind I feel that pressure, like maybe I'm not being good enough as a friend."

—LGBTQ+ biracial teen girl, 10th grade

Social Life pressure includes having friends to hang out with or study with, or being invited to and attending social events, parties, and even group chats or virtual spaces where peers congregate. More than two in five (44%) report this pressure as "very" or "somewhat" pronounced for them (12% and 32%, respectively). For another 30% this pressure is felt only "a little," while 27% say they do not feel this pressure at all. For those who experience a feeling of pressure to maintain an active social life, financial pressures can be relevant and intertwined:

"There's definitely pressure to like, always go out and like, when you're going out, you like spend money to eat or to do an activity."

—LGBTQ+ Asian teen girl, 12th grade

Friendship pressure is connected to teens' individual relationships, and to the ways they experience pressure related to investing in those friendships. About two in five (41%) report this pressure as "very" or "somewhat" pronounced for them (10% and 31%, respectively). For another 33% this pressure is felt only "a little," while 26% say they do not feel this pressure at all. For some teens, aspects of friendship pressure include responding to text messages, commenting on friends' social media posts, and generally being available to friends. However, the pressure also comes up related to conflicts with friends and group dynamics (e.g., choosing sides in social conflicts).

Activism

About one in three teens (32%) report feeling Activism pressure or the pressure "to do good for their community or the world or to be informed about different issues," with 7% reporting the pressure as "very" and 26% as "somewhat" pronounced for them.[3] For another one in three teens (32%), this pressure is felt only "a little," while the remaining third (36%) say they do not feel this pressure at all. Though this pressure is not felt by most American teens in our study, we heard from teens who co-interpreted the survey findings alongside us that it can be quite overwhelming.

"I take activism very seriously, and I try to keep myself up with things, trying to consume all the knowledge and stuff like that. Sometimes it does become overwhelming, especially since some of the issues I think and talk about are things that are very gruesome and things that you know teens shouldn't necessarily be, like, fixating and focusing on. So I feel like sometimes that grinds me a little bit because I feel like I need to know everything and so I guess that would be one of my grinds."

—LGBTQ+ Black teen, 10th grade

[3] Numbers may not sum exactly due to rounding.

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"I just feel like I'm not doing enough toward my community to help them be better and be more informed and, like, just create a better environment for the upcoming generation. I feel like I don't know where to start, and it's like you're not doing anything to help your community, and I feel like a failure because of that."

—Black teen girl, 11th grade

Which teens are reporting more pressure?

A few notable patterns emerged across different types of pressures. Girls and nonbinary teens report greater feelings of pressure in every domain, compared to teen boys. Specifically, compared to boys, teen girls are:

- 87% more likely to experience Appearance pressure
- 53% more likely to experience Friendship pressure
- 42% more likely to experience Social Life pressure
- 39% more likely to experience Game Plan pressure
- 32% more likely to experience Achievement pressure
- 25% more likely to experience Activism pressure

Similarly, LGBTQ+ teens report greater feelings of pressure in every domain, compared to cisgender and non-LGBTQ+ teens. (See **Spotlight: LGBTQ+ Teens**, beginning on page 40, for more detail.)

A family's income or a parent's education level is also related to teens' experiences with the different pressures examined in this report. Teens with higher family income or with parents who have higher educational attainment report more pressure specifically related to having a Game Plan, Achievement, and Appearance. Family income or parent education were unrelated to Friendship and Activism pressures. Higher parental education was also associated with more Social Life pressure.

Teens who co-interpreted the survey data with us shared reactions to this finding based on personal experience and observations of their peers, giving voice to what Wallace (2024) has referred to as "the encore effect"—that is, a kind of pressure to replicate parents' success:

"My parents went to college, both of them, and they always tell me how they went to college, [so] college is supposed to be two times easier for me since they already went to college. And that just gives me a little bit more pressure."

—Latina teen girl, 10th grade

"I have a lot of people in my school that their parents are doctors, lawyers, and all this other big-time stuff, and they just feel so pressured to fit into the family aesthetic that they start crumbling. It's because they're afraid of disappointment from their family."

—Black teen girl, 11th grade

For the six pressures examined in this survey, there were no consistent patterns by race/ethnicity.

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"I think my school is a generally competitive school. So there's a lot of toxicity related to that. I'm a senior right now, a lot of people like sort of brag about their college acceptances … So that sort of adds onto the Game Plan pressure and sort of ties to Achievement pressure."

—LGBTQ+ Asian teen girl, 12th grade

"Even though they don't mean to, I feel like my parents really add to the pressure."

—LBGTQ+ Latina teen girl, 11th grade

"Our classmates can make certain comments that may passively stick with you in terms of maybe your appearance or a certain insecurity you may have."

—LGBTQ+ Asian teen girl, 12th grade

"On social media, you see a lot of people my age being so successful in life, and I can't help but think, like, 'Wow! They're my age, and they're already starting their career, and they're already making tons of money every day.' And it's like you start to compare yourself … so you start to feel, like, kind of left behind."

—LGBTQ+ Latina teen girl, 11th grade

"I feel this pressure from sports coaches a lot … it's like anytime you're not perfect, you're scared. Like, 'Is this person going to take my spot? Is [my coach] gonna bench me? Am I not good anymore? What happened? Why do I suck?' And it just circles your mind."

—Black teen girl, 11th grade

"With other peers or classmates … we're all learning the same thing, but for some reason this person's, like, an all-star, like, they do everything easily. They're breezing through every class. They never had to study. And it's like, now you feel pressure because you're like, 'Wait, am I like doing something wrong?' Like, 'How come I can't understand, am I not smart enough?' And so it just really pressures you to work harder, do this more, and now you're studying at 12 a.m., not getting enough sleep. You still get the grades you get because, I mean, you're not getting sleep. This is like a downward spiral … and it's just, I don't know, this is really hard."

—Black teen girl, 11th grade

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What Contributes to Pressure?

Feelings of pressure come from a variety of sources, including adults in teens' lives, social media, and even themselves.

We asked teens what contributes to the pressure they feel. We were specifically interested in the contexts and sources of these pressures: Do they see the pressure as coming from themselves, from the people and content they follow on social media, from their closest friends, from their parents/family members, from the teachers or other adults at school, or from people in their community (e.g., neighborhood, church)? We focused the analyses for pressure contributors on those teens who actually reported feeling the pressure (excluding those who said they do not feel the pressure at all).

Pressure on teens comes from a variety of sources

Teens' feedback points to a constellation of sources, rather than one single driver of pressure. For example, teens most often say that teachers, school counselors, coaches, and other adults at school (48%) and they themselves (44%) increase their Game Plan pressure, but 39% also say pressures come from other family members. These same sources were also seen as the top contributors to Achievement pressure, but showing a different pattern of influence. That is, teens say that they themselves (48%) and adults at school (38%) put the most pressure on themselves. They also feel pressure from parents/family members (34%).

The top sources of Appearance pressure look a little different. Here, teens most often point to three top contributors: social media (48%), other peers or classmates (46%), and themselves (46%). (We discuss social media in more depth in the next section. See page 21).

In addition, teens tell us that some sources have dual influences, both increasing *and* decreasing pressures. This is important to note because it suggests that most teens are reporting increased pressures from these sources at least sometimes. For example, 40% of teens say that they themselves sometimes increase and sometimes decrease their feelings of Game Plan pressure. Teens also report mixed influences on Game Plan pressure from other peers or classmates (40%) and their closest friends (38%).

For Achievement pressures, teens similarly report that people and contexts have a complex role in terms of sometimes increasing or decreasing it. For example, 40% see a dual role from other peers or classmates, with similar proportions seeing this complexity from themselves (37%), people and content on social media (37%), parents or family members (37%), and school adults (38%).

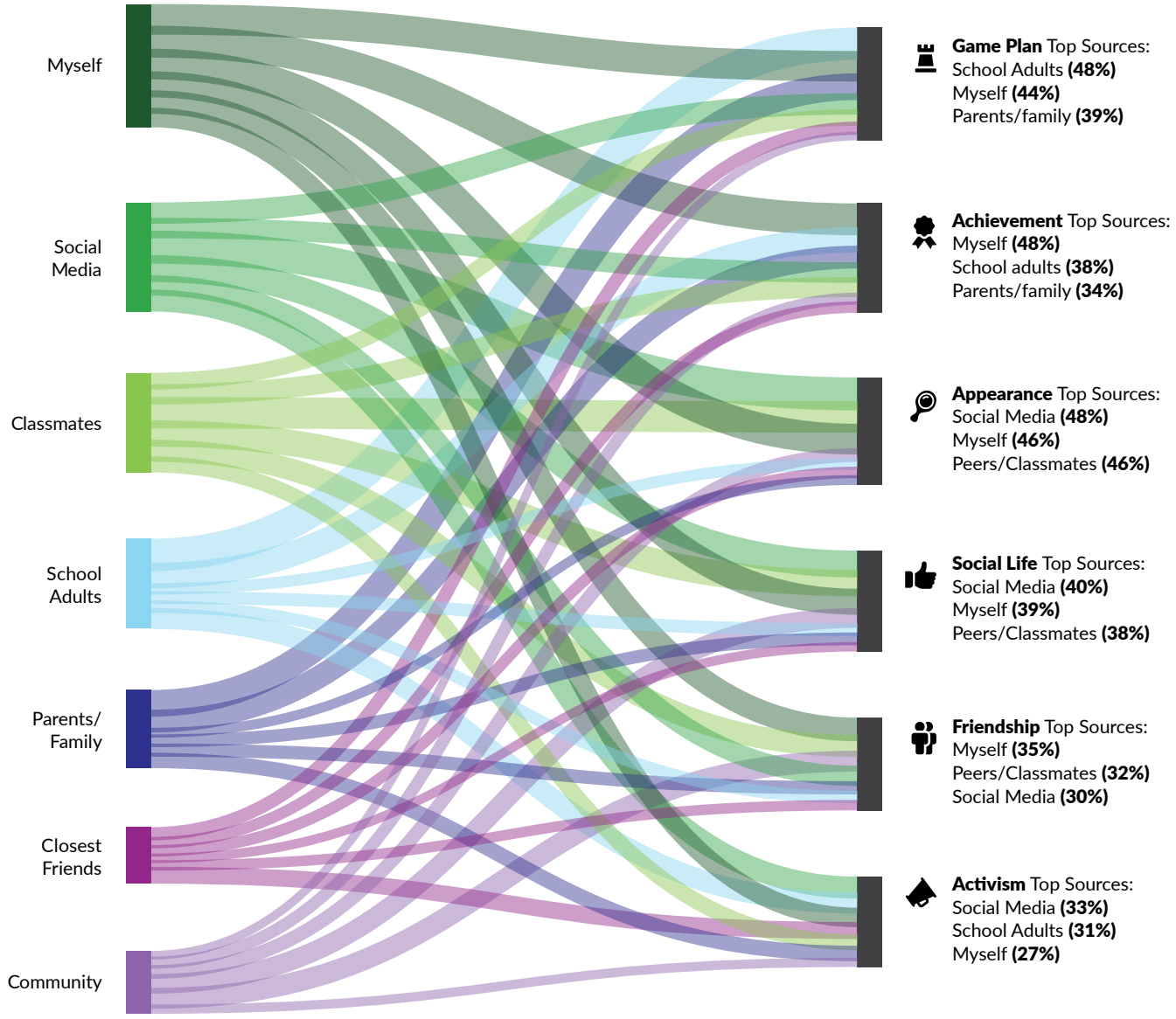
Finally, for Appearance pressures, teens say that they themselves (38%), their closest friends (38%), other peers or classmates (37%), people in their community (36%), and parents or family members (35%) both decrease and increase their pressure to look their best. (For a more detailed visualization of what contributes to teens' pressure, please see Figure 6 in the **Appendix**.)

Who helps reduce feelings of pressure?

Importantly, the data also provides some insight into where pressure relief can come from for teens. Their closest friends and parents/family members are most relevant as sources of decreasing felt pressure. For teens who are feeling Game Plan pressure, their closest friends decrease the pressure for 26% of teens, and parents/family members for 18%. For Achievement pressure, 30% say their close friends decrease their feelings of pressure, and 20% say their parents/family members do. For Appearance pressure, 31% say parents/family members reduce this pressure, and 29% say closest friends do.

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What Increases the Pressures That Teens Face?



Note: This figure shows that the pressures teens face are influenced by multiple sources. Most pressures have multiple top contributors that are effectively tied for the top spot. That is, differences between the top few contributors to the pressure are likely to be statistically similar to one another if they are within 3% to 4% of each other. The figure can be explored by tracing an influence (e.g., myself, social media) to the corresponding pressures (e.g., Game Plan, Achievement), or by examining the ranking of each influence on a given pressure. The thicker the line, the greater the influence, and influences are traced in order of prevalence (though again, note that not all ordering differences are statistically significant). The information is also presented numerically (see Table 1 in the Appendix).

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A Closer Look at Social Media

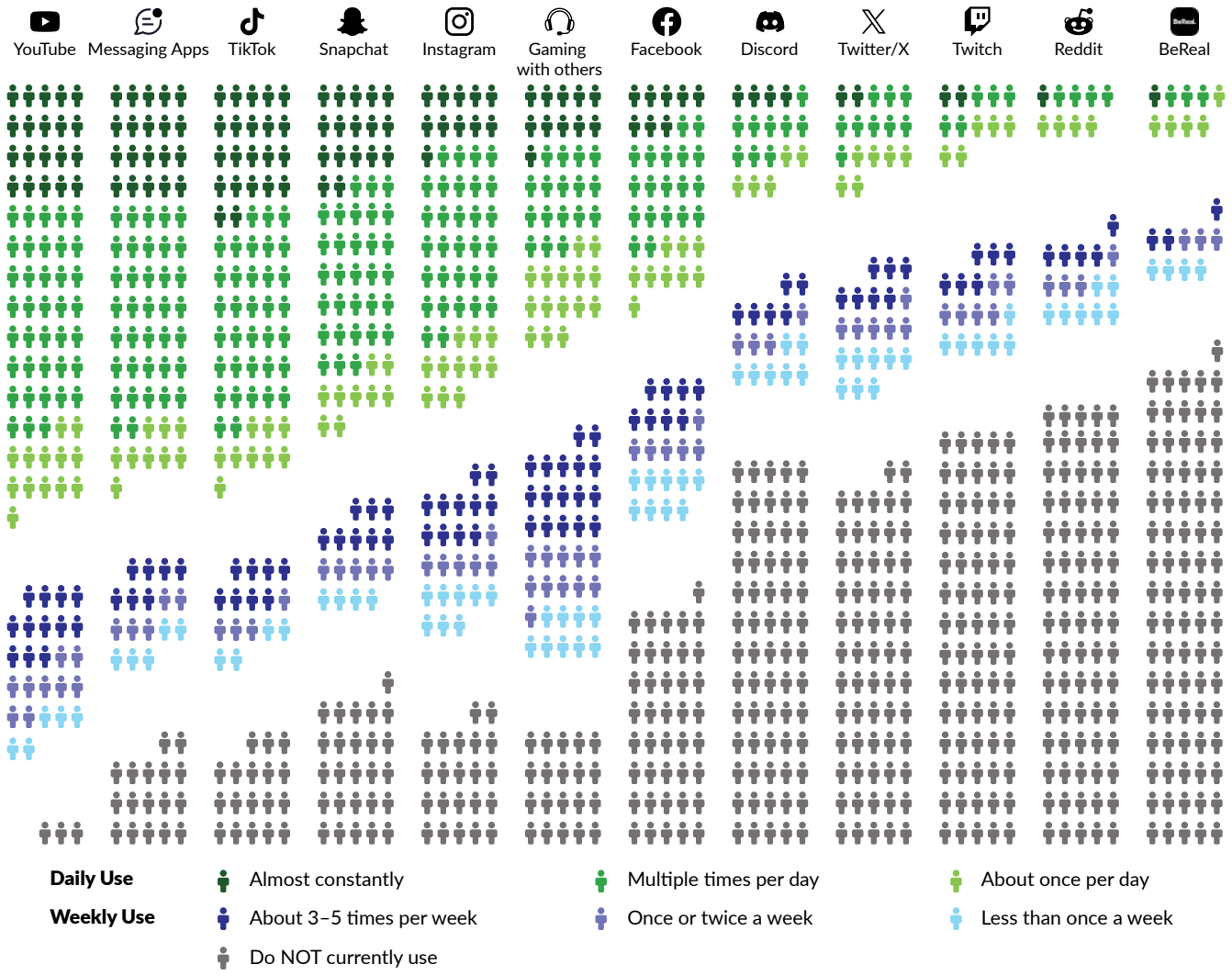
We asked teens about the social media platforms they use and how frequently they use them, from "do not currently use" to "almost constantly." In this sample, teens most widely used:

- YouTube (97%)
- Messaging apps (83%)
- TikTok (82%)
- Gaming with others (80%)
- Instagram (78%)
- Snapchat (74%)

With respect to frequency of use, about one in five teens reported using the following apps *almost constantly*:

- TikTok (22%)
- Messaging apps (20%)
- YouTube (20%)
- Snapchat (17%)

Frequency of Social Media Platform Use



Note: This figure shows the frequency of social media platform use for American teens (as of October/November 2023), ranging from "almost constantly" (darkest green, at top) to "do not currently use" (gray, at bottom). The intensity of color reflects the usage frequency, highlighting which platforms are most and least used by teens.

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Social media has a dual influence: It acts as an amplifier of pressures, but can reduce them, too.

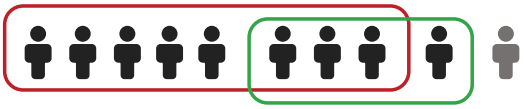
A majority of teens say that people and content on social media at least sometimes worsen every pressure they feel. Over three-quarters of teens who feel Appearance pressure point to social media as at least sometimes worsening it (79%), and a similar proportion for Social Life (75%) and Activism pressures (73%). Two-thirds say the same about Game Plan (68%), Achievement (67%), and Friendship pressures (69%).

Yet at the same time, meaningful proportions of teens say that social media at least sometimes *decreases* each pressure (38% to 51%, depending on the pressure in question). **Thus, teens' reports reveal a complex interplay between social media and pressure—one that is negative-leaning, but not without instances of positive influence.**

Social media influences on Appearance pressure

More than three-quarters of teens who report Appearance pressure say that social media at least sometimes increases (worsens) this pressure (79%, of which 48% say social media *only* increases Appearance pressure, and 31% say the influence is mixed). A smaller number say that social media at least sometimes decreases the pressure (38%, including the 31% who say the influence is mixed and the 7% who say social media *only* decreases Appearance pressure). Just 13% say social media has no influence on their experiences of Appearance pressure.

The Impact of Social Media on Appearance Pressure



8 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **increases Appearance** pressure.

4 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **decreases Appearance** pressure.

This figure shows that approximately 8 in 10 (79%) teens say social media at least sometimes increases Appearance pressure, and almost 5 in 10 (48%) say it only increases this pressure. Approximately 4 in 10 (38%) say social media at least sometimes decreases Appearance pressure, and about 1 in 13 (7%) say it only decreases this pressure. Thus, the figure reflects a mixed but negative-leaning portrayal of social media's influence on Appearance pressure.

When we examined these survey findings with teens, we asked—before showing them the findings—which of the six pressures they expected would be most influenced by social media. One teen's poignant, immediate reply was:

> ***"It's definitely Appearance. And if it's not Appearance, this is rigged!"***
>
> —LGBTQ+ Black teen, 10th grade.

With respect to particular apps, teens most often named TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat as specific contributors to increasing Appearance pressure (i.e., "makes me feel worse").

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The Impact of Social Media Platforms on Appearance Pressure



Note: The figure above demonstrates how different apps (e.g., Instagram, TikTok) affect teens' Appearance pressure, among teens who use each app. Apps are ordered by their negative impact (e.g., Instagram has the most negative influence on Appearance pressure; Gaming with others has the least). Within each app, the boxes in green (decreases pressure), red (increases pressure), and overlapping colors (a mix of both) show the nuances in teens' portrayals, while the gray figures identify teens who said the app has no effect on their feelings of Appearance pressure. Table 2 in the Appendix presents this information numerically.

*__Not shown__: Twitter, Reddit, Discord, BeReal, and Twitch were included on the survey but are not reported in this table, which summarizes data only for the most commonly used apps.

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In the co-interpretation focus groups, teens referenced Appearance-amplifying elements of Instagram, including filtered and curated content from peers, influencers, and celebrities.

> ***"I put Instagram as 'it increases the pressure,' because it's so easy, like the others have mentioned, just to scroll and see constant filters and beautiful people. And you don't really take into account, you know, if they edit their photo. They have professional makeup artists or hairstylists, whatever the case may be."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ Asian teen girl, 12th grade

Teens also raised considerations about the ways TikTok influencers contribute to Appearance pressure, for example, as related to beauty products and routines. This occurs particularly often for younger girls, like one teen's 11-year-old cousin who *"feels like she's not pretty if she doesn't use this expensive moisturizer and that expensive face wash"* (Black teen girl, 11th grade), and also for teen boys related to "*gym culture*" and the "*ideal body type.*"

With respect to gym content, one teen noted, "*A lot of my guy friends are affected by [gym content] and feel the pressure to, like, work out every single day, or, like, have the ideal body type*" (LBGTQ+ Asian teen girl, 12th grade). A teen boy shared, "*As someone that goes to the gym and watches a lot of gym content, there are so many, like, influencers online that have just the perfect bodies.*"—Latino teen boy, 12th grade

Filters can be particularly relevant on Snapchat, as described by the teen who shared,

> ***"In middle school, everyone around me would use the [Snapchat] filters that would make you look better. I got so used to seeing myself a certain way that when I turned it off, I would get insecure. So once I deleted that [app] and I stopped using the filters, I felt better about myself."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ biracial teen girl, 10th grade.

Social media influences on Achievement and Game Plan pressures

Two-thirds of teens who report Achievement pressure say that social media at least sometimes worsens this pressure (67%, of which 30% said social media *only* increases Achievement pressure, whereas 37% said the influence is mixed). A smaller number (45%) say that social media at least sometimes decreases Achievement pressure, including the 37% who say the influence is mixed and the 8% who say social media *only* decreases Achievement pressure. One-quarter (25%) say social media has no effect on their feelings of Achievement pressure.

The Impact of Social Media on Achievement Pressure



7 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **increases Achievement** pressure.

5 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **decreases Achievement** pressure.

This figure shows that nearly 7 in 10 (67%) teens who feel Achievement pressure say social media at least sometimes increases it, and 3 in 10 say it only increases this pressure (30%). Less than half (45%) say social media at least sometimes decreases Achievement pressure, and less than 1 in 10 (8%) say it only decreases this pressure. Thus, the figure reflects a mixed but negative-leaning portrayal of social media's influence on Achievement pressure.

We observed similar findings related to Game Plan pressure: Of those who experience this pressure, 32% say social media *only* increases it, and 36% say the influence is mixed. On the flip side, 44% say it at least sometimes decreases the pressure (including the 36% who say the influence is mixed and the 8% who say it *only* decreases Game Plan pressure). One-quarter (25%) say social media has no effect on their feelings of Game Plan pressure.

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The Impact of Social Media on Game Plan Pressure



7 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **increases** **Game Plan** pressure.

5 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **decreases** **Game Plan** pressure.

This figure shows that nearly 7 in 10 (68%) teens who feel Game Plan pressure say social media at least sometimes increases it, and over 3 in 10 say it only increases this pressure (32%). Approximately 4 in 10 (44%) say social media at least sometimes decreases Game Plan pressure, and nearly 1 in 10 (8%) say it only decreases this pressure. Thus, the figure reflects a mixed but negative-leaning portrayal of social media's influence on Game Plan pressure.

In our co-interpretation groups with teens, we heard about how social media can spark social comparisons that are specifically linked to others' achievements and success:

> ***"Social media—based off my feed—who I'm seeing is all of these really successful people…like people my age and all of their achievements. So then I just feel like I end up comparing myself even more and with personal friends or classmates."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ biracial teen girl, 10th grade

Personal records at the gym, college acceptances, and other personal achievements are other forms of social media sharing that teens described as having potential to exacerbate pressure.

On the other hand, they shared that particular uses of social media can help directly reduce these:

> ***"I don't use Reddit often, but the only times that I do is for advice with school, or my career. It was the only social media platform that I said decreases my pressure, because I feel like with that platform … you could find guidance … or with tips I feel like are really important for teenagers."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ biracial teen girl, 10th grade

But as a reminder that teens' experiences of different platforms vary in meaningful ways, it is worth noting that others directly pointed to Reddit as having the opposite effect for them:

> ***"[On Reddit pages about SATs and AP classes], I think they're very inflated with the, like, the level of expectations of greatness that they have on there, and I feel like that makes a lot of people feel bad about themselves, even when you can look at it and then look at statistics and know that only the people with the highest numbers are the ones posting on there. And I think that the communities there are really negative and can make people feel bad about themselves."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ White teen girl, 12th grade

Social media influences on Social Life and Friendship pressures

Three-quarters of teens who report Social Life pressure say that social media at least sometimes worsens this pressure (75%, of which 40% say social media *only* increases Social Life pressure, and 35% say the influence is mixed). For this pressure, 42% say that social media at least sometimes decreases pressure (including the 35% who say the influence is mixed and the 7% who say social media *only* decreases their Social Life pressure). Another 18% say it has no effect.

The Impact of Social Media on Social Life Pressure



8 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **increases** **Social Life** pressure.

5 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **decreases** **Social Life** pressure.

This figure shows that nearly 8 in 10 (75%) teens who feel Social Life pressure say social media at least sometimes increases it, and 4 in 10 say it only increases this pressure (40%). Over 4 in 10 (42%) say social media at least sometimes decreases Social Life pressure, and less than 1 in 10 (7%) say it only decreases this pressure. Thus, the figure reflects a mixed but negative-leaning portrayal of social media's influence on Social Life pressure.

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Just over two-thirds who experience Friendship pressure say that social media at least sometimes worsens it (69%, of which 30% say it only increases the pressure; another 39% say the influence is mixed). Fully half of teens say social media at least sometimes decreases Friendship pressure for them (including the 39% who say the influence is mixed and another 11% who say social media *only* decreases this pressure). Another 21% say it has no effect.

The Impact of Social Media on Friendship Pressure



7 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **increases** **Friendship** pressure.

5 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **decreases** **Friendship** pressure.

This figure shows that nearly 7 in 10 (69%) teens who feel Friendship pressure say social media at least sometimes increases it, and 3 in 10 say it only increases this pressure (30%). Approximately 5 in 10 (50%) say social media at least sometimes decreases Friendship pressure, and about 1 in 10 (11%) say it only decreases this pressure. Thus, the figure reflects a mixed but negative-leaning portrayal of social media's influence on Friendship pressure.

In our co-interpretation groups with teens, we heard about a variety of ways in which social media can convey a sense of what social life "should" be, and in ways that contribute to comparisons that can make teens feel worse.

> ***"I can see on Instagram, for example, other people posting with their friends. And it might make me realize, like I don't really hang out with my friends as much as some other people do. And in those ways, social media increases all my pressures because it's what I can use to compare myself to others."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ White teen girl, 12th grade

It can also feel like:

> ***"everybody's at a party or something during the weekend" because "social media is always, like, full of stuff that they're doing, and I'm just here."***
>
> —Latina teen girl, 10th grade

On the other hand, social media can also *ease* Social Life pressure. For example, teens shared that it provides a continued opportunity to connect with peers, which can reduce the pressure put on in-person interactions.

However, the opportunity for ongoing connection can be a burden. Being constantly connected through their smartphones can amplify the pressure that teens feel to reply to friends and maintain regular contact.

> ***"Replying to my friends' texts, answering calls, and just having all these expectations in a friendship met … sometimes I feel that if I don't talk to a friend that much, then that could affect, like, my social life, and [it] could all like crumble down. Even though I know it won't, there's still that little pressure in the back of my head that it could."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ Asian teen girl, 12th grade

Group chats with a large volume of participation are also relevant here: While they can support friendship and closeness in meaningful ways for the teens who are included, knowing about group chats that some peers are in (and others are being excluded from) can also worsen the Friendship and Social Life pressures that teens feel.

Social media influences on Activism pressure

Nearly three-quarters of teens who feel Activism pressure say that social media at least sometimes increases this pressure (73%, of which 33% say social media *only* increases Activism pressure; 40% say the influence is mixed). For this pressure, more than half (51%) say that social media at least sometimes decreases the pressure (including the 40% who say the influence is mixed, and another 11% who say it *only* decreases the pressure. Another 16% say it has no effect.

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The Impact of Social Media on Activism Pressure



7 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **increases** **Activism** pressure.

5 out of 10 teens social media at least sometimes **decreases** **Activism** pressure.

This figure shows that over 7 in 10 (73%) teens who feel Activism pressure say social media at least sometimes increases it, and over 3 in 10 say it only increases this pressure (33%). Over 5 in 10 (51%) say social media at least sometimes decreases Activism pressure, and over 1 in 10 (11%) say it only decreases this pressure. Thus, the figure reflects a mixed but negative-leaning portrayal of social media's influence on Activism pressure, and one that is more balanced than for other pressures.

From teens who examined the survey findings with us, we heard that Activism pressure has both obvious and more subtle dimensions online. Teens described how seeing other people and influencers post about activism "motivates" people to do the same. They also said that seeing a steady flood of activist-oriented content *"can also make teens feel very, like, desensitized"* (LGBTQ+ Asian teen girl, 12th grade).

And they described feeling pressure to be informed and speak out:

> ***"You are called out a lot more on [social] media especially in our current state, you know, to speak on subjects, to go out of your way to say what you need to. I see a lot of my friends say stuff. I personally say stuff about whatever I feel like I need to do because I have my voice for a reason. So the pressure to be informed, and the pressure to know everything, and the pressure to, you know, grasp things have lasted for over a hundred years, grasp a lot of issues and to speak on them eloquently, and to be able to put them in a way that other teens can understand—that pressure is like very high."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ Black teen, 10th grade

Content and context matter

The data from this study suggests that social media can play different roles in the pressures that teens feel—in some cases, amplifying pressure, in other cases, decreasing it, and sometimes a mix of both. The overall portrayal is negative-leaning, with social media more often worsening pressures rather than helping to decrease them, though the data does showcase nuance and varied experiences.

Teen co-interpreters offered insights about the importance of content and context, too. They emphasized that *"the type of content I'm consuming matters on social media"* (LGBTQ+ White teen girl, 12th grade), and acknowledged that algorithms shape the content and therefore how pressures are impacted:

> ***"I personally think that it depends on how the algorithm is suggesting stuff to you ... It's depending on what you're looking at and what you're doing on that platform sometimes. Sometimes it gives you—it allows you to ease the pressure because of how the algorithm is working and how your mind is processing those things. So I think it's just kind of one of those things where it can be anything."***
>
> —White teen boy, 10th grade

And they pointed to particular positives related to interest-driven engagement and learning. For example,

> ***"If I'm on Twitter, where for me is where I'm in a lot of fandom spaces that I like, I really enjoy that time because I'm looking at really cool art or reading people's opinions. And because that's like important to me and to whatever, you know, media I'm enjoying, that feels a lot more valuable to me, and like, I always notice I'm happier when—it sounds really weird—but when I'm able to spend more time in those spaces."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ White teen girl, 12th grade

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A Closer Look at Gaming

Gaming can be a release valve for the pressure and stress that teens feel. Eighty percent of teens report gaming with others, and social gaming is different from other social media—it generally reduces feelings of pressure, and rarely worsens them.

Almost 80% of teens report that they engage in digital games with others. For these teens who are social gamers—that is, those who play online games (e.g., Minecraft, Fortnite) that involve interacting with other players—teens most commonly answer that it has no effect on the pressures they feel, and roughly one in four say that gaming *only* helps to decrease each pressure.

Relative to the other social media platforms, social gaming stands out as being the most positive and least pressure-amplifying. Depending on the pressure, between 23% and 28% say gaming *only* decreases the pressure, 4% to 10% say gaming *only* increases the pressure, 14% to 26% say the influence is mixed, and 41% to 55% say it has no effect. This generally echoes existing research on the benefits of playing video games (Granic et al., 2014), including how teens say gaming helps more often than hurts in areas like supporting teens' friendships, mental health, and problem-solving skills (though not with sleep and school performance) (Gottfried & Sidoti, 2024).

This differentiation of gaming from social media reflected in the survey findings was also bolstered by comments from teen co-interpreters who explained:

> ***"Gaming for about an hour versus social media for an hour—sometimes social media can leave me feeling very overstimulated. There's so much content and material I'm absorbing in, like, a small time frame. So yeah, I think gaming, compared to social media, is more relaxing, and it doesn't, like, hurt my brain as much because I can just take the time to chill and relax. Whereas with social media, although I would go on it to relax, it leaves me feeling different ways."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ biracial teen girl, 10th grade

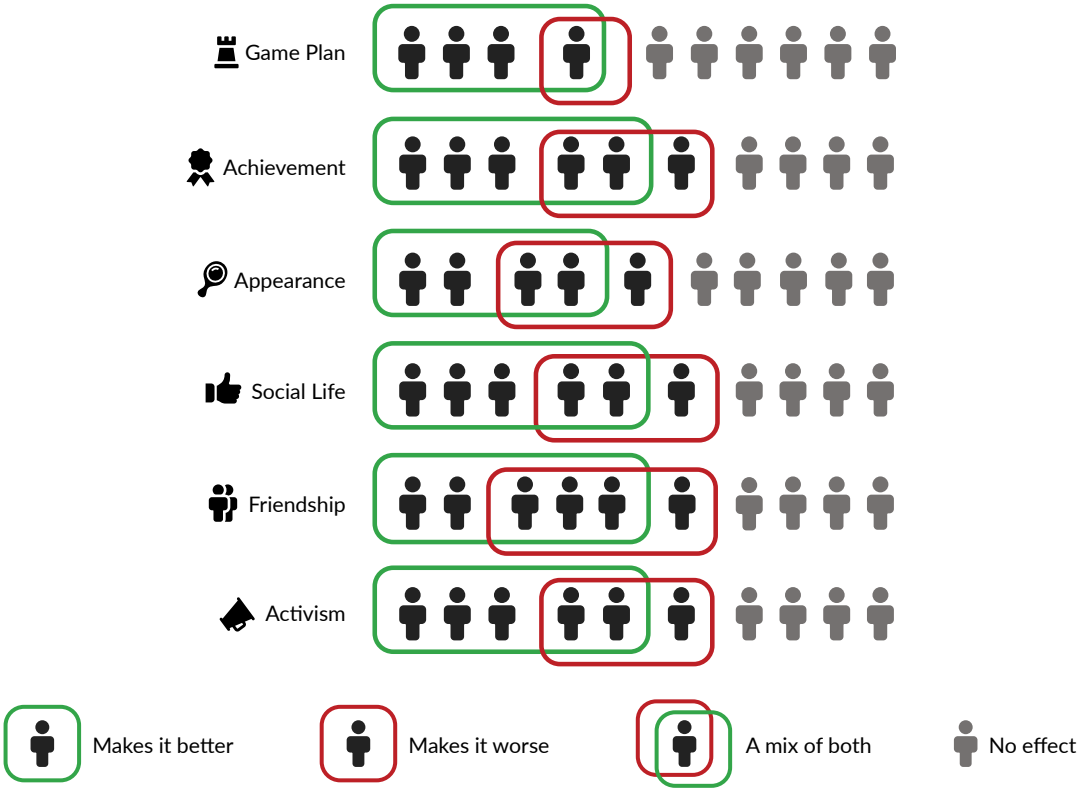
> ***"You get to escape when you're gaming. Why would you think about appearance, my achievements? Why would I need to focus on the future, my social skills, my social pressures, the friendships? Gaming is intended to focus you on the game and not what's going on around you, almost."***
>
> —White teen boy, 10th grade

Teens also acknowledge that gaming *can* be stressful if interactions become tense. They also point out that it can be an escape while playing, but may distract from tackling priorities, which then later increases stress.

> ***"Afterward, gaming might reduce your amount of free time, which in turn can then increase your pressure."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ biracial teen girl, 10th grade

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The Impact of Gaming on Pressures



Note: This graphic illustrates the multifaceted impact of gaming on various pressures. More teens say that gaming only alleviates their pressures than only exacerbates them, though many teens who play social games say this has no effect on the pressure that they feel (gray), and some say the influence is mixed (as represented by overlapping green and red boxes).

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Burnout

More than one-quarter of American teens struggle with burnout. Burnout can occur when teens face persistent, overwhelming pressure without adequate social support systems or effective self-care practices. As one teen put it:

> ***"What creates burnout in my life would be things that put pressure on me, I suppose."***
>
> —Latino teen boy, 12th grade

Burnout is typically defined in research using three criteria: emotional exhaustion, cynicism or depersonalization, and low sense of personal accomplishment or self-efficacy (Maslach, Shaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Walburg, 2014).

In their own words, teens described burnout in ways that closely align with these criteria. They described it as "*losing motivation*," *"when you stop caring about doing assignments"* [LGBTQ+ Latina teen girl, 11th grade], and *"[when you] lose interest in things, eat less, sleep more, generally numb"* [LGBTQ+ Asian teen girl, 12th grade].

> ***"[I think of burnout] like an overused machine in a factory … You're just doing the same thing over and over, and you don't feel like you really have a purpose."***
>
> —Black teen girl, 11th grade

Mistrust of others and "paranoid" competitiveness were also relevant in some teens' descriptions:

> ***"When people start getting burned out, they start where they're working and they work themselves into exhaustion, but they still want to be able to beat the other person. They still want to get the highest grades, and it turns into an almost paranoid sort of need to be better … You just kinda become paranoid."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ Latinx teen, 10th grade

In our survey, more than one in four American teens (27%) said they were experiencing burnout. Among those who reported that they were not burned out, 25% endorsed the statement "I enjoy my life. I have no symptoms of burnout," and 48% of teens endorsed the statement "Occasionally I am under stress, and I don't always have as much energy as I once did, but I don't feel burned out."

Among those who said they were experiencing burnout, 19% said, "I am definitely burning out," and 5% endorsed the statement, "The symptoms of burnout that I am experiencing won't go away. I think about this a lot." Another 3% agreed with "I feel completely burned out and often wonder if I can go on. I am at the point where I may need some changes or need to seek some sort of help."

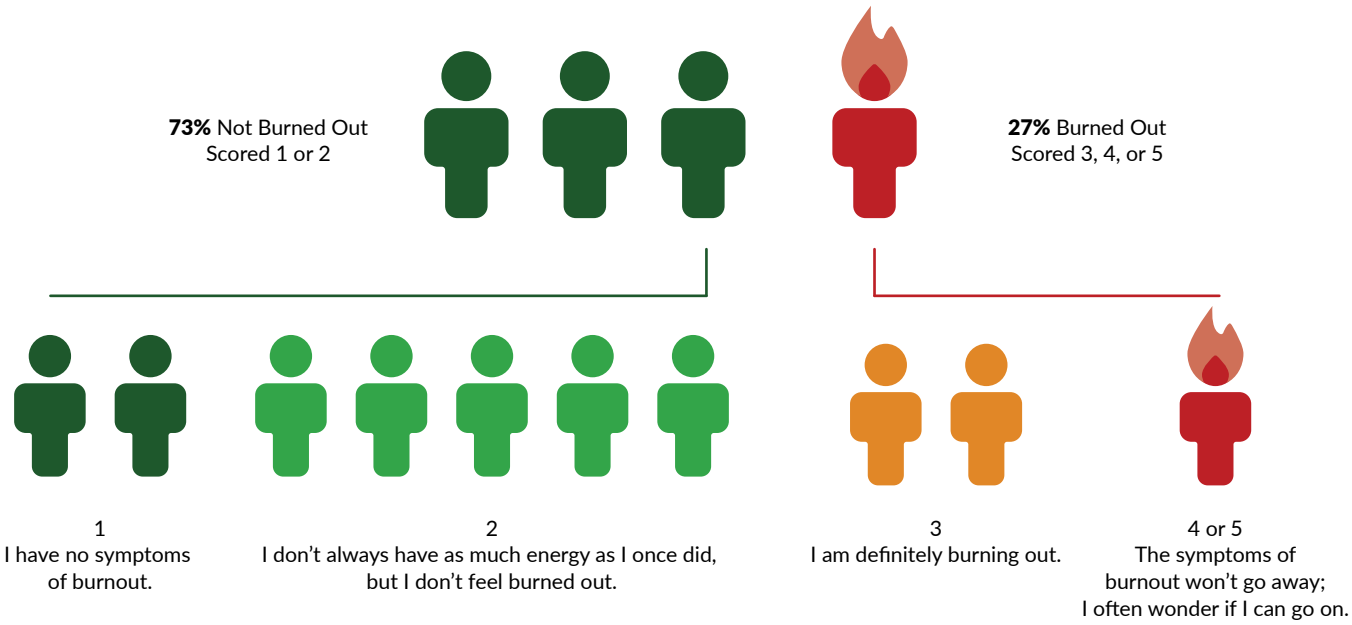
> ***"My older brother who was, I think, just leaving middle school, was going into high school and was talking about how he couldn't find a reason to go to school anymore 'cause he was just so tired all the time. He just kept working and working and working, and he was just burnt out. He was just … he was just done—just tired of it, constantly. I remember [my older brother] described it in a way where he said, 'I feel like a train who's burnt off every ounce of fuel that's left, but still hasn't reached the station.'"***
>
> —LGBTQ+ Latinx teen, 10th grade

> ***"I define burnout as getting overwhelmed and not being able to do everything you need to do. It is a collection of everything you have to do in your life, not just school, work, social."***
>
> —Latino teen boy, 12th grade

Teens who report a greater number of pressures are more likely to also report feeling burned out, as are those who reported feeling any given pressure more intensely. For each additional pressure that a teen reports, there is a 2.2 times increase in their likelihood of reporting burnout. Notably, among teens who report experiencing none of the pressures, only 5% (1 in 20) reported experiencing burnout, whereas 43% (nearly 9 in 20 teens) reported burnout if they had also reported four or more pressures. One interesting exception is the Activism-related pressure, which was associated with slightly lower, rather than higher, burnout.

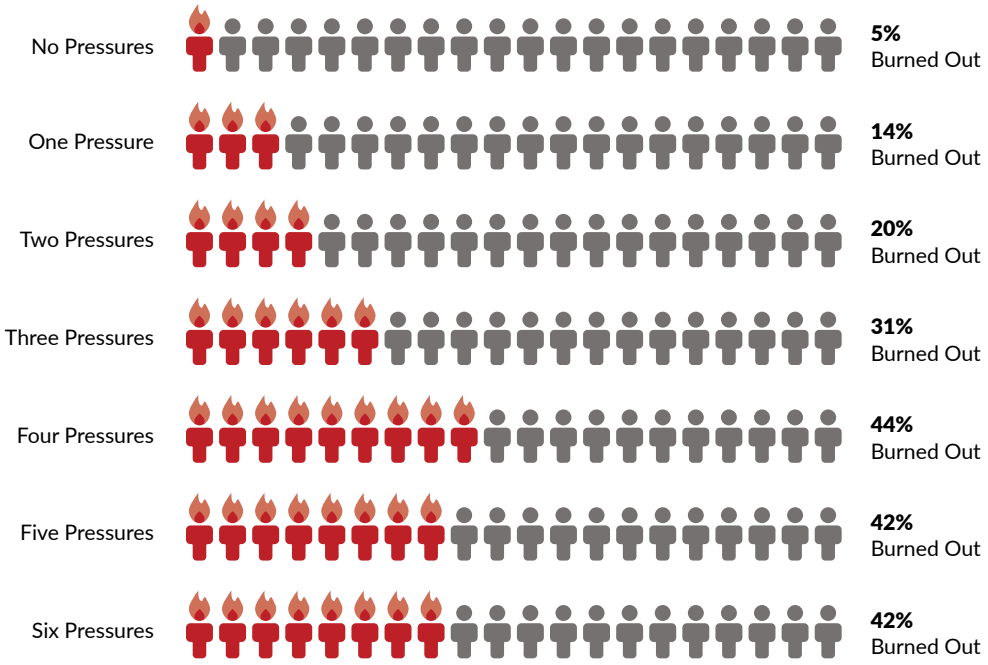
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American Teens' Feelings of Burnout



Note: This chart shows the extent of burnout among American teens. More than one in four teens (27%) are actively struggling with burnout (responses 3–5), while 73% are not feeling burned out (responses 1–2).

Percentage of Teens Who Feel Burned Out, by Number of Reported Pressures



Note: This figure shows the percentage of teens who feel burned out, organized by the number of negative pressures reported. For example, among those teens who report no pressures that make them feel bad, 5% feel burned out; among those who report all six negative pressures, 42% feel burned out. This chart highlights the compounding effect of multiple pressures and indicates a clear relationship between teens' reports of pressure(s) and of burnout.

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Certain demographic groups of teens reported higher levels of burnout: nonbinary teens (compared to teen girls and teen boys), older teens (compared to younger teens), and LGBTQ+ teens (compared to cisgender straight teens).

Youth who co-interpreted the survey data with us surfaced several methodological considerations related to how we asked about and measured burnout in our survey:

1. The survey data may underreport teen burnout because of stigma associated with the term "burnout" itself ("*A lot of people might stigmatize burnout mental health issues in general*"—LGBTQ+ White teen girl, 12th grade), as well as because the term could be interpreted by some teens as a true point of crisis ("*That's a very strong word that I take seriously … We're stressed, you know. We're tired. But I feel like we still have energy to keep going at the same point.*"—LGBTQ+ White teen girl, 12th grade).
2. Burnout may be seen as more fluid by teens than it is by adults (e.g., "*burnout … comes in waves, depending on what you have going on*"—LGBTQ+ biracial teen girl, 10th grade). "*Some days, I do feel burned out, and then other days, I don't. Instead of just like, 'I am burning out.' If that makes sense*."—LGBTQ+ biracial teen girl, 10th grade
3. We used a validated and widely used Likert scale item for measuring burnout, but teens noted that the scale could have had more granularity to give them the opportunity to indicate nuance. "*With the one through five scale, it's a bit of an extreme jump to go from 'I'm experiencing symptoms' to 'I'm wondering if I can go on.'*"—LGBTQ+ White teen girl, 12th grade

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Self-Care Practices

Teens who engage in more self-care practices report lower burnout. Most teens actively engage in a variety of self-care practices, but many still fall short of recommended guidelines for sleep and exercise.

Self-care practices can help regulate healthy routines and buffer negative impacts of pressure and stress. For adolescents, self-care activities like getting sufficient sleep, physical activity, and meaningful social connection are cornerstones of adolescent well-being and key buffers for mental health (Kiss et al., 2022).

We asked American teens about when (and how frequently) they engage in a variety of self-care practices. We asked about a variety of practices that research suggests may have protective factors against stress and burnout. These include physical health practices (seven hours or more of sleep, exercising an hour or more, spending time in nature), social practices (helping out a friend, having a deep or meaningful conversation with a friend), and psychological flow-related practices (doing something fun or relaxing, engaging in a creative activity).

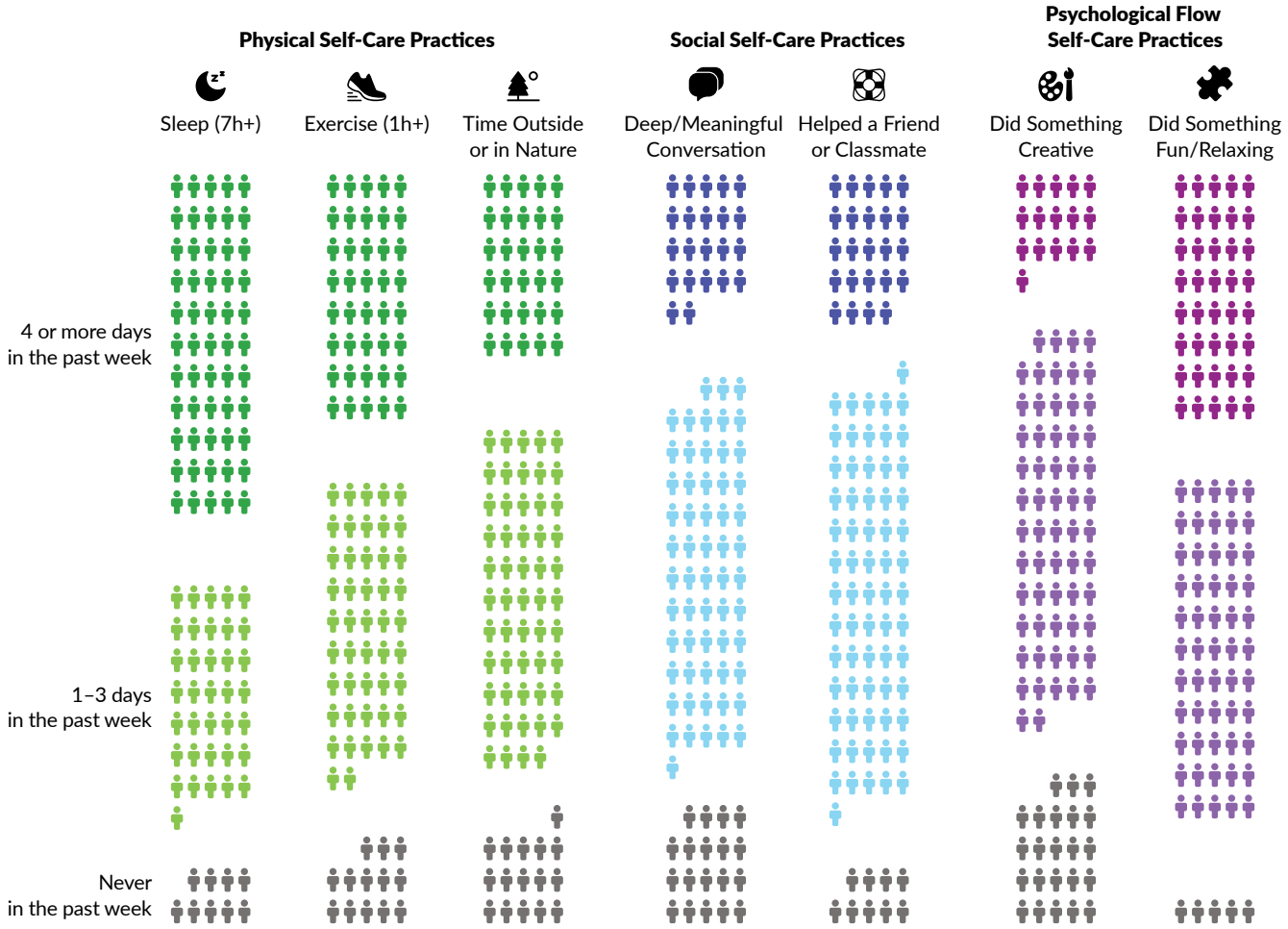
On average, teens report that they engage in two self-care practices on four or more days in the past week. Only one in 50 teens (2%) engage in every practice on four or more days, and one in seven teens (14%) did not engage in *any* self-care practice on four or more days in the past week.

For teens who engaged in any protective practice four or more days over the past week, 55% slept more than seven hours per night, 40% did something for fun or relaxation, 40% got at least an hour of exercise/physical activity, 30% spent time outside or in nature, 24% gave help to friends or classmates, 22% had deep/meaningful conversations with friends, and 16% did something creative that was not for school. Teens who examined the survey findings alongside us speculated that the self-care practices that teens reported in our survey may have been clustered over weekend days versus on weekdays.

For a closer look at teens' engagement in these self-care practices, please see the table on the following page.

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Frequency of Self-Care Practices Among U.S. Teens



Note: This figure shows the frequency of self-care practices for American teens (as of October and November 2023) across three areas of self-care: physical, social, and psychological flow. Responses range from "4 or more days in the past week" (darkest colors, at top) to "1–3 days in the past week" (lighter colors, in the middle) and "Never in the past week" (gray, at bottom). The data reveals that teens are more likely to engage in self-care practices weekly instead of daily.

Frequency of Self-Care Activities by U.S. Teens

In the last week, teens ...	Never	1–3 Days	4+ Days
Got 7 or more hours of sleep per night	9%	36%	55%
Got at least 1 hour of exercise/physical activity	13%	47%	40%
Did something just for fun or relaxation	5%	55%	40%
Spent time outside or in nature	16%	54%	30%
Helped friends or classmates	9%	67%	24%
Had a deep/meaningful conversation with a friend	19%	59%	22%
Did something creative (not for school)	23%	61%	16%

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Sleep experiences vary, but many teens aren't getting enough. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that teens (age 12 to 18) should regularly sleep 8 to 10 hours per night (Paruthi et al., 2016). In the current sample, 55% of teens got seven or more hours of sleep at least four of the last seven nights, leaving almost half (45%) who did not. Over one in three teens (36%) got seven or more hours of sleep on one to three days, and nearly 1 in 10 teens (9%) did not get seven or more hours of sleep on *any* night in the past week.

Most teens are not getting enough daily physical exercise. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that teens get a minimum of one hour of exercise each day. In this survey, 40% of teens got the recommended amount of exercise at least four days in the past week; the majority (60%) did not. Less than half (47%) of teens got the one-hour recommendation on one to three days, and about one in eight (13%) did not meet the one-hour recommendation on *any* days.

Most teens spend time outside in nature weekly, but not daily. Of the teens we surveyed, 84% spent at least some time outside in the prior week; 30% spent some time outside on four or more days of the prior week and 54% spent time outside on one to three days. Further, 16% say that they spent no time outside or in nature on any day in the last week. Teens who co-interpreted the survey findings with us suggested that access to nature and/or safe outdoor spaces might be a barrier for some youth.

About one in five teens had no deep or meaningful conversations with friends in the last week. A majority of teens (59%) report that they had deep and meaningful conversations with friends one to three times in the past week. Twenty-two percent had meaningful conversations on four or more days in the past week, and 19% reported that they had not had a deep or meaningful conversations with a friend in the past week). Some teens who examined these survey findings noted that it can be difficult for teens to find relationships where they can share authentically and without judgment. Other teens said that while they spent valued time socializing, they wouldn't have said that they had "deep and meaningful conversations" because they interpreted those as more "in depth" and "talking about my feelings" versus casual, fun socializing.

Most teens are helping their peers weekly, but not daily. As expected from recent research (Konrath et al., 2023), teens today are prosocial, with two-thirds of the teens we surveyed (67%) providing help to friends or classmates one to three days in the past week, and almost one-quarter (24%) helping a friend on four or more days. About 1 in 10 teens (9%) did not help a friend or classmate on any days.

Most teens are engaging in creative activities weekly, but not daily. Six in 10 teens (61%) did something creative that was not for school on one to three days in the past week, and one in six (16%) did so on four or more days. Nearly one in four teens (23%) did not engage in a creative activity in the past week.

Most teens are doing things for fun and relaxation weekly, but not daily. Over half of teens (55%) did something for fun or relaxation on one to three days in the past week, and two in five (40%) did this on four or more days. Only about 5% did not do anything for fun or relaxation on any days.

Routine practices for self-care are less common for some groups of teens. LGBTQ+ teens report less engagement in the physical self-care activities (sleep, exercise, and spending time outside or in nature). However, they report similar engagement in social (helping a friend, having a meaningful conversation) and psychological flow (fun/relaxation, creativity) self-care activities as their straight and cisgender peers. (See **Spotlight: LGBTQ+ Teens**, beginning on page 40, for more detail.)

Similarly, teen girls report less engagement in physical self-care activities compared to teen boys, such that they are 42% less likely to get more than one hour of exercise weekly, 29% less likely to get at least one night of more than seven hours of sleep weekly, and 26% less likely to spend time in nature or outside at least once weekly. However, teen girls are 45% more likely to have deep and meaningful conversations with friends weekly and 53% more likely to engage in creative activities at least once weekly.

Self-care and burnout

More self-care is associated with lower burnout. On average, for each additional self-care practice that teens reported at least weekly, there is a 23% decrease in their likelihood of being burned out.

Both higher intensity (days per week) and number of practices seem to matter. About one-third (34%) of teens who engage in a low (zero or one) number of self-care practices at least four times weekly report being burned out. Of the teens with moderate self-care engagement (two to five practices at least four times weekly), 23% report being burned out. And only 6% of teens with high self-care engagement (six to seven practices, at least four times weekly) report being burned out. Notably, among the teens who engage in *all* self-care practices at least four days a week, *none* report being burned out. Of the teens who engage in no regular (four or more days) self-care practices, 41% report experiencing burnout.

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Older teens are practicing less self-care, and feeling more burned out. Older teens are generally less likely than younger teens to say they had fun or relaxed, slept more than seven hours per day, spent time in nature, and engaged in creative activities. But they were more likely than younger teens to have had deep and meaningful conversations with friends. Older teens are also struggling more with burnout: In the current sample, 17-year-olds were nearly twice as likely (34%) to report showing signs of burnout compared to 13-year-olds (18%). Given the barriers to self-care surfaced in co-interpretation (and described below), this may be at least partly related to additional responsibilities and time constraints among older teens, who also tend to feel more negative pressure related to having a Game Plan for their lives.

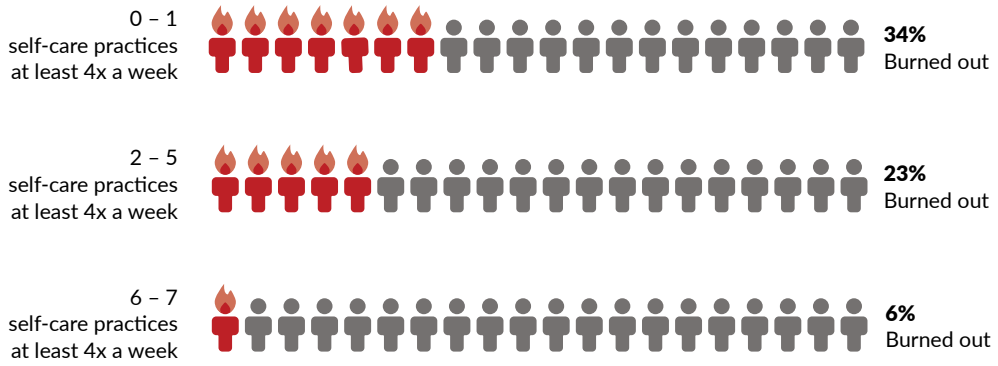
Pressures and self-care appear to be distinctly relevant to teen burnout. Considering the relationship between pressures, burnout, and protective practices (see the figure at the bottom of page 37), our data suggests that both less pressure *and* more self-care practices are associated with lower burnout: Those who had the lowest reported pressures and the highest reported self-care practices were least likely to feel burned out.

Looking specifically at those teens who report *no* pressures that make them feel bad, several practices and patterns emerge. They tend to get more sleep: They are 227% more likely to have had seven or more hours of sleep at least once in the past week. They also appear to have more time outside: They are 66% more likely to have spent time in nature/outdoors at least once in the past week. And they tend to have more open schedules: They are 60% more likely to say that they had more free time than others, and 81% less likely to say that they felt overwhelmed by all they had to do most days or every day. Their open time seems not to be filled only with tech use, as they are 34% less likely to watch television a lot (two or more hours daily), 48% less likely to use the internet "*almost constantly*," and 50% less likely to be among the highest (top 25%) social media users.

The figure on the bottom of page 37 shows the relationship between pressures and self-care practices, illustrating how self-care practices may function as a kind of counterbalance to pressures. We split pressures and self-care practices into high versus low, based on a median split. We found that 49% of teens are burned out among those in the quadrant with low self-care and high reported pressures. We see the numbers decrease for those who have similar high pressures, but also high self-care (34%). Notably, though, the most substantial reductions appear to come with low pressure (those teens in the lower two quadrants). This graphic highlights the apparent importance of both pressures and self-care practices. It also suggests that while self-care practices are protective, some teens can feel burned out even if they engage in self-care.

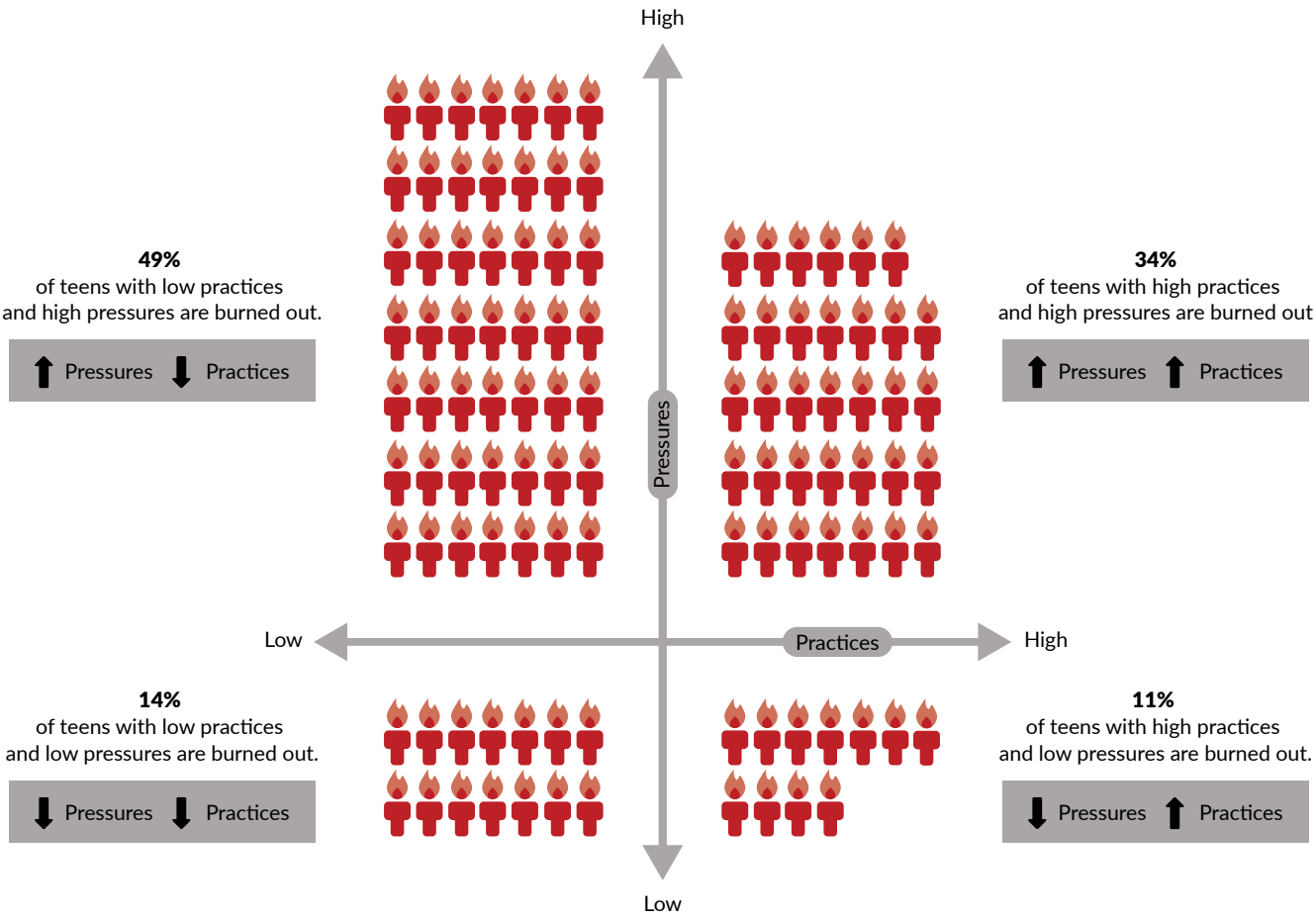
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Relationship Between the Number of Self-Care Practices and Burnout



Note: This figure illustrates the relationship between the number of self-care practices that teens engage in at least four times a week and their burnout rates. Teens who practice zero to one self-care activity have the highest burnout rate (34%), while those who engage in two to five practices have a lower burnout rate (23%). Teens who practice six to seven self-care activities have the lowest burnout rate (6%). This underscores the importance of regular self-care practices in reducing burnout.

Relationship Between Pressures, Self-Care Practices, and Burnout



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IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Barriers for Teens to Self-Care

What interferes with self-care?

When we examined the survey findings with teens, we asked them about what can interfere with self-care. We learned that some barriers are practical and others are abstract. Practical barriers included time constraints and lack of access to resources (e.g., time spent in nature). More abstract barriers were linked to a fixation on productivity and guilt over taking time for basic self-care. Teens also described how tech can be a way to unwind or relax, though it can also be a detractor from self-care.

(Note: These categories are not mutually exclusive, as reflected in several quotes below.)

Practical barriers: Time constraints

"By the time I get home and eat and do homework, I don't really have time to focus on caring for myself. There are some cases, like when I'm listening to music. That's about the only thing [and] it's not as enjoyable because I'm just using it as background noise to get work done."

—Black teen girl, 11th grade

"During the day, all I do is go to school. And then when I get home, it's homework … and then I have a job, too. So I feel like I barely get any time to myself, and it really, like, takes away my self-care."

—LGBTQ+ Latina teen girl, 11th grade

"I always feel pressure to not waste time where it makes me not do the things that I like doing for myself, and it makes me spend time with my friends less, and all the sorts of things that you know make a balanced life."

—LGBTQ+ White teen girl, 12th grade

Aspirational self-care: Putting tech away

"It's, like, relaxing is a good thing. But instead of going outside and reading a book, I choose to stay inside and go on social media. So it leaves me feeling a bunch of different negative feelings. And yet, for some reason, I just don't put it down."

—LGBTQ+ biracial teen girl, 10th grade

"Something that really just gets in the way of my self-care is me being able to put my phone down. So a lot of times when I'm on TikTok, I find it hard to just stop being glued to it. And next thing I know, hours have passed, and it's, like, it's crazy … I get more stressed out. Because I'm not doing self-care for something that can, like, release my stress. I'm stressing myself out more because I'm not able to do my school-work or anything else. I'm doing nothing but being on TikTok or Instagram."

—Black teen girl, 11th grade

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Beliefs: Self-care is a "privilege"; it isn't "productive"

"Sometimes self-care is somewhat, I would say, is a privilege."

—LGBTQ+ Black teen, 10th grade

"It takes a lot of time both to get to nature, spend time in nature, and then get back from nature. And it has the least amount of immediate, noticeable effect, for example, as something being productive. For example, exercise. You can exercise for a sport, which is considered productive because you put that on your college application. And also, like, you know objectively, that it's good for your body. Being creative is, like, you're creating a product. You can see that you were creative. But for me, walking around [in nature], like, I feel like I could have better things to do, because there's no visible product, even though the product is in my head, like my mental health."

—LGBTQ+ White teen girl, 12th grade

"During this year, I've read about 65 books. And honestly, sometimes, when I'm reading, it takes ... like, I can finish a book in maybe like three, two hours. But then there's this part of me like, 'Why am I reading a book and not outside playing or doing something more productive?' Because the books are, like, they're really good books, but I just feel unproductive sometimes when I'm reading."

—LGBTQ+ Latina teen girl, 11th grade

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Spotlight: LGBTQ+ Teens

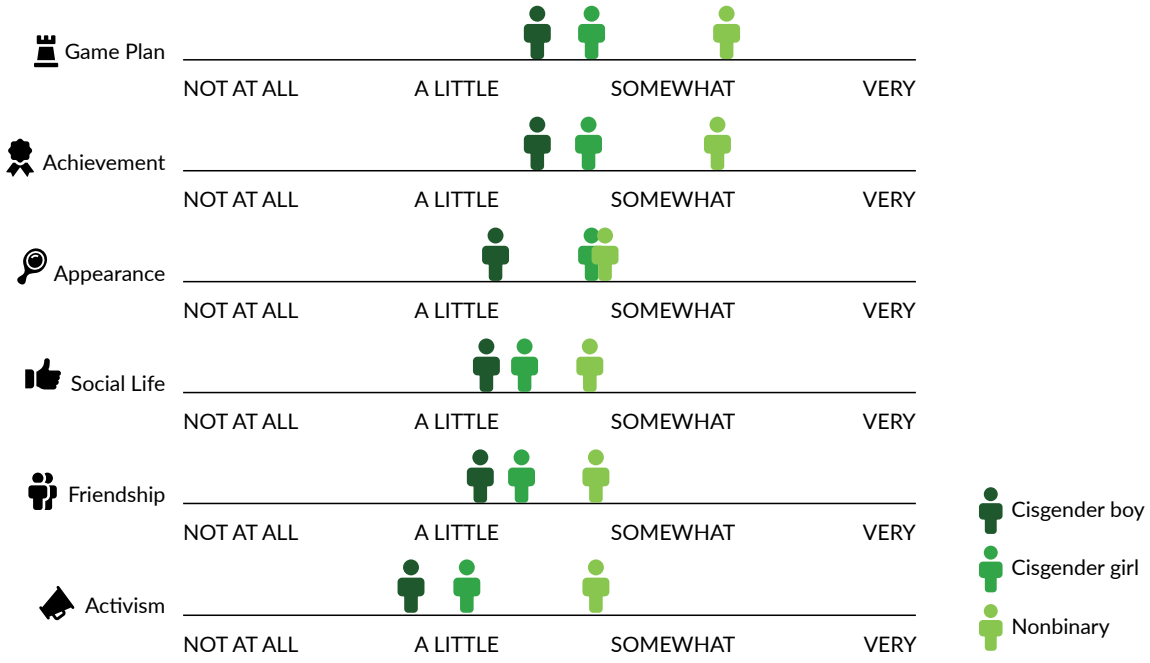
Compared to cisgender and straight teens, LBGTQ+ teens are experiencing greater pressure in every domain and a higher likelihood of burnout. Along gender lines, nonbinary teens consistently face a higher risk of experiencing these pressures across all domains. That is, nonbinary teens experience increased risk for the following pressures, compared to cisgender teens:

- 6.81 times increased risk of experiencing Game Plan pressure among nonbinary teens
- 3.30 times increased risk of experiencing Activism pressure
- 2.62 times increased risk of experiencing Friendship pressure
- 2.36 times increased risk of experiencing Achievement pressure
- 2.32 times increased risk of experiencing Appearance pressure
- And 2.17 times increased risk of experiencing Social Life pressure

LGBTQ+ teens experience increased risk for the following pressures, compared to non-LGBTQ+ teens:

- 93% increased risk of experiencing Friendship pressure
- 68% increased risk of experiencing Social Life pressure
- 66% increased risk of experiencing Game Plan pressure
- 50% increased risk of experiencing Achievement pressure
- 39% increased risk of experiencing Appearance pressure
- 23% increased risk of experiencing Activism pressure (not significantly different from non-LGBTQ+ teens)

Intensity of Pressures Experienced by U.S. Teens, by Gender



Note: Nonbinary teens report higher levels of pressure across all domains, and cisgender girls generally report more pressure than cisgender boys. This graphic is based on the question "How much does this pressure affect you personally?" Each figure represents a point on a four-point scale, where 1 = "Not at all" and 4 = "Very." The differences shown here are all statistically significant.

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LGBTQ+ teens are also less likely to engage in physical health self-care practices. Compared to their cisgender and straight peers, LGBTQ+ teens in the survey sample were 60% less likely to sleep seven or more hours at night, 58% less likely to exercise for an hour or more each day, and 43% less likely to spend time outdoors/in nature at least weekly. They were also 44% less likely to do something for fun/relaxation at least once weekly.

Nonbinary teens also had lower physical health self-care practices. They were 83% less likely to get seven or more hours of sleep, 62% less likely to get at least an hour of exercise, and 60% less likely to spend time outdoors/in nature at least weekly. They were also 82% less likely to do something for fun/relaxation at least once weekly.

LGBTQ+ teens who examined the survey data with us emphasized that additional pressures weigh on LGBTQ+ teens, including those related to inclusivity, acceptance, and others' expectations.

> ***"You know, it's difficult being a part of the LGBTQ+ community. There's people that don't accept people for who they are. And communities that aren't, you know, inclusive. So I definitely do think when you consider that, I think the pressures would be different, maybe even more increased. Because not only do they have their own pressures like everybody else, but they have so much more to kind of balance and think of when it comes to like fitting in and feeling accepted."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ biracial teen girl, 10th grade

> ***"There's obviously the pressure to be straight. Does that make sense? Like, in the LGBT community, their parents and people around them might want them … like, you have to like a boy because you're a girl, or you have to like a girl because you're a boy, and there's, like, internalized homophobia. So I feel like that's a pressure."***
>
> —LGBTQ+ Latina teen girl, 11th grade

Pressures that LGBTQ+ teens face related to acceptance, prejudice, and stigma, and their impacts on mental health, are well-documented (Meyer, 2013; Price-Feeney, Green, & Dorison, 2020). During our co-interpretation focus groups with LGBTQ+ teens, participants described concerns about acceptance and finding support within their respective sexual and gender identities. LGBTQ+ teens need not only individual self-care, but also supportive and inclusive environments at home, in school, and online to mitigate heightened pressures. This includes LGBTQ+ inclusive school environments (e.g., access to gender-neutral bathrooms and gender and sexuality alliances), and support from family and trusted adults (e.g., teachers, coaches, and other school staff) (Meyer, 2015; Johns et al., 2018; Trevor Project, 2024).

Resilience and protective factors among LGBTQ+ teens are shaped by both in-person and online experiences. Online spaces can be particularly crucial for LGBTQ+ teens to connect with their community and experience a sense of belonging (Austin et al., 2020), though they may also be a double-edged sword, as LGBTQ+ youth face greater exposure online to harassment and more encounters with homophobic and/or transphobic comments (Common Sense, 2024).

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Conclusion

Well-being remains at the forefront of public discourse about U.S. teens, and for good reason: Research points to an ongoing adolescent mental health crisis (e.g., CDC, 2022). The data from this study enriches our collective understanding of what's hard, for which teens, and how. The study indicates that more than one-quarter of American teens (27%) are struggling with burnout. We examined a variety of pressures that create "grind culture" and may feed feelings of burnout. Additionally, we homed in on the specific roles that social media and gaming may play in amplifying or lessening this dynamic.

One clear finding was that social media can both create *and* amplify pressure related to Appearance. For 79% of American teens who feel Appearance pressure, social media worsens it at least some of the time, though equally strong causes came from their peers and from themselves. This role of social media aligns with both theoretical accounts of it as a "perfect storm" for body image concerns among adolescent girls (Choukas-Bradley et al., 2022) and with prior data, including from the leaked Facebook Files.

Importantly, however, Appearance pressure is not "just a girl thing." Although more common in girls (57%) and nonbinary youth (69%), more than two in five boys (42%) also report feeling Appearance pressure. Online, it can be amplified for teens through content like "gym culture" and "ideal" body types. What's more, 38% of teens also say social media at least sometimes reduces Appearance pressure, which underscores the need for nuanced conversations about teens' varied experiences.

For Achievement and the future-oriented Game Plan pressure, teens tend to portray social media as more of an amplifier than as a root cause. They generally see these pressures as coming from other sources (e.g., adults at school, pressures they put on themselves, parents and family members). Yet most American teens who feel Achievement, Appearance, Game Plan, Social Life, Friendship, or Activism pressures report that social media at least sometimes amplifies these pressures.

Social comparison is well recognized as an important risk of social media use (McComb, Vanman, & Tobin, 2023; Verduyn et al., 2020). Our co-interpretation of these findings alongside teen advisors shows how social comparison can play out in relation to the pressures. It can amplify Appearance pressure (e.g., related to filters and curated self-presentations), future Game Plans (e.g., seeing others who already seem to be far ahead and on track for greater success), Achievement (e.g., when others share academic or athletic successes), Activism (when others seem more knowledgable or engaged), Friendship (when friends' other friendships are on display), and Social Life pressure (e.g., seeing that others always seem to be out socializing).

Teens are more likely to say that social media consistently increases pressures, rather than decreases them. At the same time, the data indicates a complex interplay between social media and pressure. Social media may lean toward amplifying pressures, but teens say there are several other equally strong amplifiers, and they also report that social media can at times be a positive influence and help to reduce pressure. This presents an open question for future research: What are the social media behaviors and content that reduce pressures? Gaming, in particular, is different in terms of its relationship with grind culture. We found that it more frequently appears to provide a pressure release valve for teens.

Because protective practices are meaningful for well-being, we also examined a variety of self-care practices. Teens who engage in more self-care practices also report lower burnout. Most American teens engage in various self-care practices weekly, but not more often. Nearly half of teens (45%) fell short of getting even seven hours of sleep on most nights during the prior week, and 60% did not meet the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendation for one hour of daily exercise. Nearly one in five teens did not have a single "deep and meaningful" conversation with a friend in the past week, and nearly one in six had no time outdoors or in nature.

Qualitative insights from our co-interpretation phase indicate that self-care is seen by some teens as "wasted time" and devalued in a larger cultural context that seems to revere productivity. It is not difficult to trace connections to the current attention economy, where teens' time is commodified and their attention drives revenue for many tech companies. Youth attention is routinely prioritized over youth agency and well-being in ways that may unsurprisingly influence self-care attitudes and behaviors, particularly as tech is always ready to offer brief distraction.

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Also responsible, though, are intense schedules that leave some teens with little space for downtime. This overscheduling may be driven in part by families' concerns about ensuring their children have stable, secure economic lives, especially in light of dramatically increasing costs of **housing** and **tuition** across generations. This can ultimately manifest as pressure (from oneself, parents and family members, and school adults) to prepare for their future adult lives.

As with pressures, tech can play a dual role, serving to potentially both support and/or hinder self-care. Generally, we found that more frequent tech use (internet, social media, television) was associated with less frequent physical self-care activities (exercise, sleep, time outdoors/in nature). Yet more frequent internet and social media use was associated with more social self-care activities (deep conversations, giving help). And more frequent television watching was associated with more psychological flow activities (creativity, fun/relaxation).

Of course, not all teens experience pressure that makes them feel bad. In fact, nearly one in five of the teens surveyed did not report any negative pressure in any area we examined.

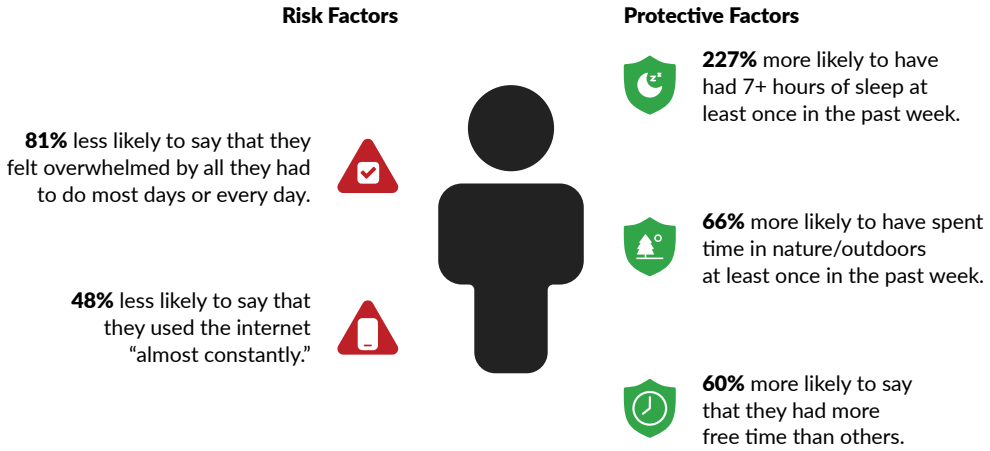
What helps?

What can we learn from those teens who are not reporting any negative pressure (i.e., grinds that make them feel bad)? And for those teens who are experiencing negative pressure: How can adults help?

Those teens who report *no* pressure(s) that make them feel bad:

- **Get more sleep.** They are 227% more likely to have had seven or more hours of sleep at least once in the past week.
- **Spend time outdoors/in nature.** They are 66% more likely to have spent time in nature/outdoors at least once in the past week.
- **Have more open schedules.** They are 60% more likely to say that they had more free time than others, and 81% less likely to say that they felt overwhelmed by all they had to do most days or every day. Yet the open time isn't just filled with tech use: They are 34% less likely to watch a lot of television (i.e., more than two hours daily), and 48% less likely to say that they used the internet *almost constantly*. They are also 50% less likely to be among the highest (top 25%) social media users.

Risk Factors and Protective Factors



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Teens in our co-interpretation groups shared other ways that adults can help:

- **Adults can help prevent overload.**

  "One of the things [my parents] told me a lot is, take a lot of opportunities that interest you, or whatever, and be really open. But the more important thing they told me was: 'Don't take every opportunity.'"

  —Biracial teen boy, 10th grade

- **Adults can recognize the effort vs. just the outcome**.

  "I wish that [adults] were more understanding … Because sometimes you do your best, but I guess they don't see it. So it feels more pressuring, and you just get more drained."

  —Latina teen girl, 9th grade

- **Adults can share in their joys.**

  "Sometimes we're excited about something and we really want to share it and we're having fun with it. Then when we share it, and [adults] don't see the colorful things that we see, and erase it off for a little bit and I don't know … it just doesn't feel fun anymore. I just want to have a fun experience with my parents, with them having fun with me."

  —Latina teen girl, 10th grade

- **Adults can empathize, rather than minimize.**

  "When adults say, like, that your college major doesn't matter as much and that you can go many different paths in life, for me, it almost makes it more stressful. Because I feel like there's no clear way that I can control my future … It can all depend on the economy or things that happen in your personal life."

  —LGBTQ+ White teen girl, 12th grade

- **Adults can get curious about teens' social media experiences—and not assume it's all negative.**

  "I think adults should know about how teens use social media … Social media is not the enemy. I know a lot of adults want to think it is, [but] there's so much stuff we can learn and expand on it. And like I just feel like it's the way we connect. And, you know, to be able to connect with people can obviously come with a lot of bad, but it really isn't the enemy."

  —LGBTQ+ Black teen, 10th grade

The U.S. surgeon general has urged a safety-first approach to social media, calling for a **warning label** on social media apps based on concerns about negative consequences for youth mental health. Teens themselves can readily cite negative impacts of social media for mental health, including from unwanted habits, concerning or traumatic content, and toxic social interactions (**Common Sense & Hopelab, 2024**; **Weinstein & James, 2022**). A major debate is whether the downsides of exposures to such risks are "outweighed" by benefits like social connection, identity affirmation, and interest-driven engagement. How should society attempt to solve such an equation, especially recognizing the "**double-edged sword**" of risks and benefits that arise for LGBTQ+ youth and youth of color—both groups that currently face outsize mental health risks?

The current study flips the typical approach in research about youth and social media. Instead of asking about positive and negative experiences as they arise for teens on social media, we first examined the pressures that teens feel, and *then* asked about how those pressures intersect with social media and other factors.

This approach clarifies how social media can amplify pressures that teens are feeling, along with other sources of amplification (e.g., themselves personally, parents and family members, and school adults). It also shows that some teens have notably different and more positive experiences, and it helps us locate the nuanced role of social media related to a variety of pressure points.

Ultimately, the data reinforces that social media warrants attention and intervention, but also that the pressures that teens feel have other roots—social media is not the whole story. Truly addressing grind culture and burnout for teens will almost certainly require us to recognize social media as one important piece of a larger puzzle.

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Methodology

Study design

A nationally representative sample of teens age 13 to 17 was recruited by SSRS from October to November 2023. Teens were invited to participate in a self-administered online survey through their parents, who were targeted via probability-based (SSRS Opinion Panel) and nonprobability-based panels. The survey was conducted online in either English or Spanish, depending on respondent preference, and parental permission was obtained for all respondents. Once parent/guardian consent was obtained, teens were then asked to give their assent to participate, and then those who assented completed the remainder of the survey. The survey study was approved by Advarra, an independent IRB. (The co-interpretation study, described below, was reviewed and approved by Harvard's IRB.)

We oversampled Black and LGBTQ+ teens to generate a total unweighted sample of n = 252 Black and n = 287 LGBTQ+ respondents (see Table 4 in the Appendix for demographics). For analyses among the general population, Black and LGBTQ+ respondents were weighted to their representative proportion.

A total of 1,545 responses were collected during the three-week data collection period. Of the total, 761 responses were from the SSRS Opinion Panel, and 784 responses were from nonprobability opt-in web panels. The average length of the survey was 17 minutes (including screening the parents). Data was weighted using SSRS's Hybrid Encipher calibration solution to represent the target population of teens. The sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is ± 3.0 percentage points.

Questionnaire development

To assist with developing this survey, a sample of 13 teens age 13 to 17 was recruited to participate in qualitative cognitive interviews. During the interviews, teens were asked (1) how they understood the questions, (2) how they arrived at their answers, and (3) if any of the questions were challenging or could be made more relevant to teens. During the interviews, the participants were presented with questions about the six different pressures (Game Plan, Achievement, Appearance, Social Life, Friendship, and Activism), as well as the follow-up questions about the impact of people and apps on those pressures. Parents provided verbal parental consent for their child to participate, and then teens assented verbally. All parents and youth agreed to participate and be recorded. Parents of participants had the option to either stay in the room or leave while their child participated in the interview.

Survey items

Parents reported their race/ethnicity, educational attainment, location (state), and total family income, as well as their child's age, grade, and race/ethnicity. Teen participants completed an online survey that included questions on social media platform use and frequency, pressures that teens may face and people and contexts that contribute to those pressures (e.g., family, friends, school, community, social media), feelings of burnout, and a variety of self-care practices. Teens also reported their race/ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

Post-survey teen co-interpretation focus groups

In the existing discourse about teens, technology, and its impact on their well-being and mental health, teens' voices are often missing. Co-interpretation of research alongside people from relevant study populations is increasingly recognized as a valued approach for understanding important topics (**Watson et al., 2023**). Engaging youth in participatory research has been shown to have benefits for young people themselves and for the reliability and validity of research (**Cheney, 2011**; **Thomas & Kane, 2006**). Recent research using co-interpretation methods with adolescents has led to new insights about mental health and well-being, which allows for insider perspectives based on participants' lived experience, and provides valuable context for academic literature (**Weinstein & James, 2022**; **Coyne et al., 2023**).

Our team recruited 22 teens, and each was invited to participate in three separate online advisory focus group sessions. In these sessions, teens co-interpreted the survey findings and offered their perspectives on survey findings about pressures, potential contributors (including social media), burnout, and self-care practices. Our co-interpretation research was reviewed and approved by Harvard University's IRB. The focus groups were supported by Character Lab, and a subset of teens was recruited via Character Lab's CLIP Program.

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Other participants were screened for eligibility (age 13 to 17 and living across the United States) and recruited online through a purposive sampling method. Parents or guardians of participants provided consent for their children to participate, and participants provided consent for recordings of Zoom focus groups, which were then transcribed. We then compiled and coded emerging themes and selected quotes from these sessions for the report, which aided with interpretation of our findings. Using a participatory approach, these focus groups amplified the perspectives of young people to provide context for the survey research findings.

A total of 19 teens participated in focus groups sessions across three time periods (from February to April 2024). We intentionally sought out input from LGBTQ+ and youth of color in order to elevate underrepresented perspectives in conversations about digital technology and youth mental health (see Table 5 in the Appendix for demographics). We conducted a total of three focus groups sessions with each of four affinity groups (12 sessions total): teen girls, teen boys, LGBTQ+ teens only, and youth of color only. The perspectives of these teens are woven throughout the report. We incorporate their quotes and reactions to survey definitions and concepts, responses from our session activities, and their opinions and interpretations of the key findings.

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Appendix

Table 1: Percent of Teens Who Say This Makes the Pressure Feel Worse:

	40% or more of teens	30–39% of teens	20–29% of teens	<20% of teens
Game Plan	School adults (48%) Myself (44%)	Parents/family (39%) Social media (32%)	Classmates (24%) Community (20%)	Closest friends (12%)
Achievement	Myself (48%)	School adults (38%) Parents/family (34%) Classmates (30%) Social media (30%)	–	Community (17%) Closest friends (17%)
Appearance	Social media (48%) Myself (46%) Classmates (46%)	–	–	Closest friends (19%) School adults (17%) Community (17%) Parents/family (15%)
Social Life	Social media (40%)	Myself (39%) Classmates (38%)	Closest friends (28%)	Parents/family (19%) School adults (19%) Community (13%)
Friendship	–	Myself (35%) Classmates (32%) Social media (30%) Closest friends (30%)	Parents/family (20%)	School adults (17%) Community (16%)
Activism	–	Social media (33%) School adults (31%)	Myself (27%) Community (25%) Classmates (23%) Parents/family (22%)	Closest friends (12%)

Note: Differences greater than 4% are likely to be statistically significant.

Table 2: Among Teens Who Report Appearance Pressure and Use the Following Apps …

App teens have used*	% who say it only **increases** Appearance pressure	% who say it **both increases and decreases** Appearance pressure	% who say it only **decreases** Appearance pressure	% who say it has **no effect on** Appearance pressure
Instagram	41.7%	31.0%	9.1%	18.2%
TikTok	40.2%	31.6%	10.1%	18.1%
Snapchat	34.9%	32.2%	9.5%	23.3%
Facebook	32.8%	27.6%	10.8%	28.8%
YouTube	21.0%	29.0%	14.0%	36.0%
Messaging apps	12.5%	32.0%	10.3%	45.2%
Social gaming	6.8%	15.4%	23.3%	54.4%

Table 3: Self-Reported Burnout Score Among Teens

1. "I enjoy my life. I have no symptoms of burnout."	25%
2. "Occasionally, I am under stress, and I don't always have as much energy as I once did, but I don't feel burned out."	48%
3. "I am definitely burning out and have one or more symptoms of burnout, like physical and emotional exhaustion."	19%
4. "The symptoms of burnout that I am experiencing won't go away. I think about this a lot."	5%
5. "I feel completely burned out and often wonder if I can go on. I am at the point where I may need some changes or may need to seek some sort of help."	3%

Numbers may not sum exactly due to rounding.

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Table 4: Demographics of the Entire Survey Sample

Category	Values	Parameter	Unweighted	Weighted
Gender	Male	49.9%	54.5%	50.1%
	Female	47.0%	43.8%	47.0%
	Other	3.1%	1.7%	2.9%
Age	13	20.9%	22.0%	21.0%
	14	20.8%	17.7%	20.6%
	15	19.7%	20.3%	19.8%
	16	19.7%	18.9%	19.6%
	17	19.0%	21.2%	19.1%
Education	Not enrolled	2.9%	1.0%	2.2%
	Public school	85.8%	82.5%	86.2%
	Private school	11.4%	16.5%	11.6%
Race/Ethnicity	White, non-Hispanic	49.4%	45.0%	49.5%
	Black, non-Hispanic	12.2%	16.4%	12.4%
	Hispanic	25.6%	29.1%	25.7%
	Asian, non-Hispanic	5.1%	2.5%	4.8%
	Other, non-Hispanic	7.7%	6.9%	7.6%
Region	Northeast	16.1%	21.0%	16.1%
	Midwest	21.0%	21.7%	21.1%
	South	38.8%	37.5%	38.8%
	West	24.1%	19.7%	23.9%
Sexual Orientation	Straight	84.8%	82.6%	84.9%
	Lesbian/Gay	2.2%	3.5%	2.2%
	Bisexual	5.8%	8.3%	5.9%
	Other	7.2%	5.6%	7.0%

Table 5: Demographics of Focus Group Participants

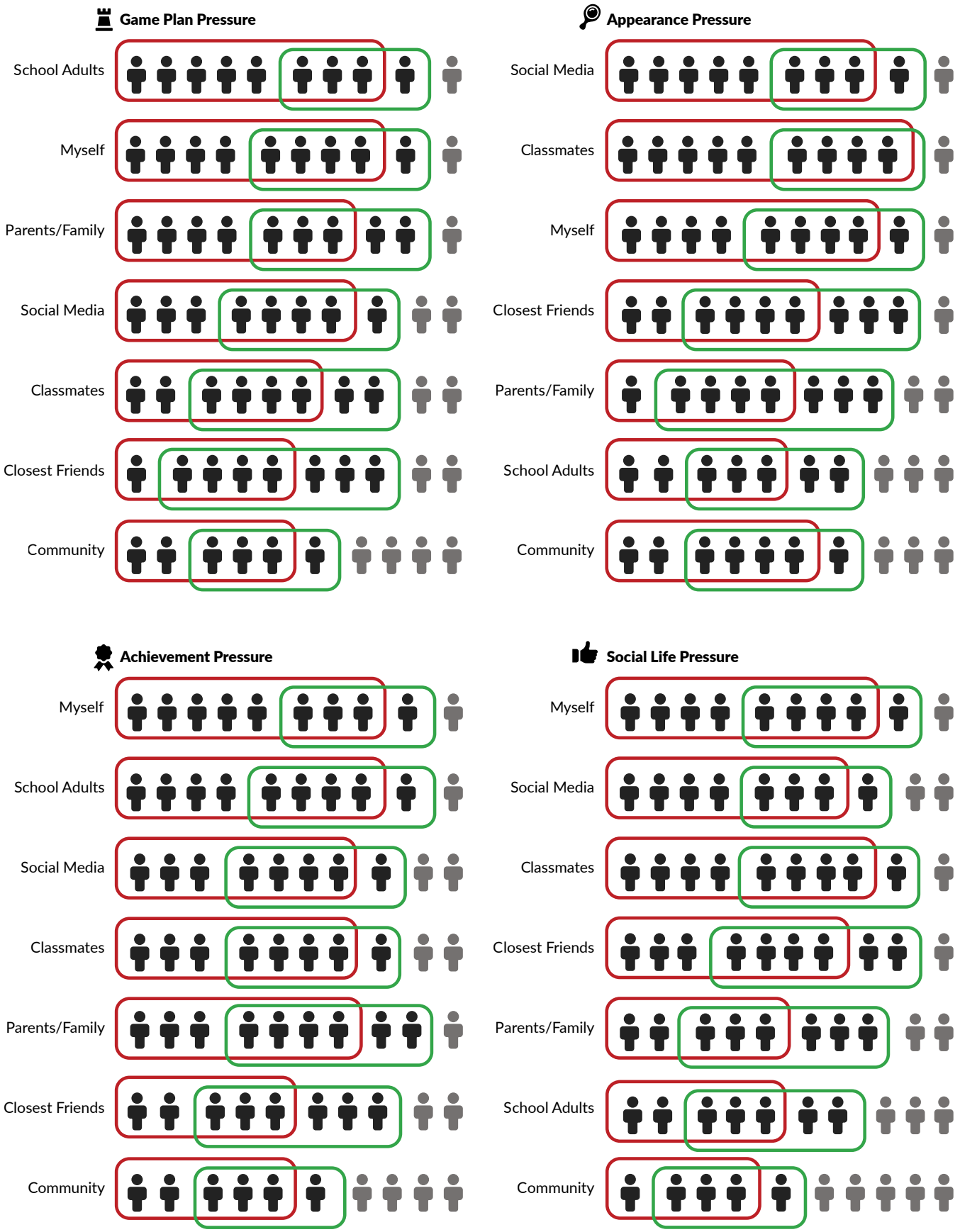
Grade	Percentage	Race/Ethnicity	Percentage
9th	5%	Black or African American	26%
10th	32%	Hispanic or Latina, Latino, or Latinx	37%
11th	37%	Other (MENA*, Asian, or Pacific Islander)	16%
12th	26%	Multiracial (two or more)	11%
Gender	**Percentage**	White	10%
Boy or man	26%	**School Type**	**Percentage**
Girl or woman	58%	Public (charter or non-charter)	68%
Nonbinary, gender queer, or a gender not listed	11%	Private (independent, faith-based, etc.)	32%
Prefer not to answer	5%		

*Middle Eastern or North African

Numbers may not sum exactly due to rounding.

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Figure 6: What Impacts the Pressures That Teens Face?



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Note: The figures above demonstrate how different sources (e.g., social media, family, classmates) impact pressures (e.g., Game Plan, Achievement, Friendship) on teens. Each source is ranked by its impact (e.g., social media is the greatest influence on Appearance pressure, school adults are the greatest influence on Game Plan pressure). With each pressure, you can see the interplay of various influences, and within each influence, you can see the nuances of how a given source increases pressure, decreases pressure, has a mixed impact, or has no effect.

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