

Mental Health Difficulties

Children and young people with mental health difficulties may face additional challenges online. Below we share some research and insights into how this may affect their wellbeing and safety.

In this research children and young people identified with the following statement:



"I have a mental health difficulty"¹

Predicted risks

Young people's offline vulnerabilities can be used as a predictor for their online vulnerabilities.

Young people with mental health difficulties are significantly vulnerable to all high-risk

online scenarios - contact, content, conduct and cyber scams.

Being a victim of cyber aggression also significantly predicts the likelihood of experiencing all the high-risk online scenarios.

Key Insights



44% of young people with a mental health difficulty say they often visit self-harm sites



25% of young people in this group say they often feel 'addicted' to their phone²



25% say they often get irritated or anxious without their phone²



40% report having been cyberbullied³ compared with **23%** of those with none



Young people who feel 'I am not good enough' most of the time were more than **twice as likely** to have been cyberbullied

1. This is a self reported mental health difficulty. 2. Cybersurvey 2019, by Youthworks in partnership with Internet Matters.

3. [Vulnerable Children in a Digital World](#)

Risks explained

Conduct risks are associated with:

- use of chat rooms
- looking at pages meant for adults
- visiting gambling sites
- downloading music without paying

Content risks involve visiting or being exposed to websites that:

- urge young people to be very thin
- talk about self-harming or suicide
- promote hatred or racist views
- give dangerous advice
- sell illegal goods
- show nude pictures or videos that weren't searched for
- show very violent pictures or videos that young people didn't want to see

Victims of **cyber scams** have experienced abuse of their personal data and tend to agree with statements such as:

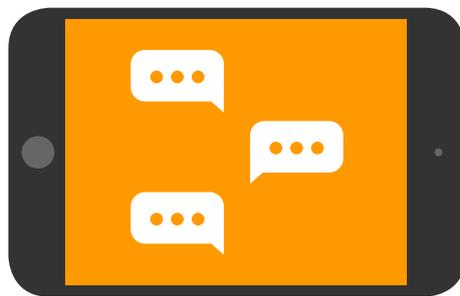
- My social media account has been hacked
- My personal details have been stolen or hacked

- I've had credit card details stolen and used
- I've been tricked into paying money for something I did not want to buy
- I've been tricked into buying fake goods

Contact risks have high risk online relationships involving sexting with reasons for doing so including:

- being pressured / blackmailed to do it
- being tricked into it
- being in a relationship and pressured to or wanting to share nudes
- sharing due to threats
- trying it for fun

Cyber aggression: online aggression that isn't always viewed as bullying. It can include comments, insults or threats due to appearance, race, religion, sexuality, gender, or disability. They also include threats to harm a person or their family.



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