

LEARNING HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA LIKE A YOUNG PERSON

A GUIDE TO HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE IN A CRISIS ON SOCIAL MEDIA - BY KURTIS REID



Social media isn't just a pastime for young people—it's where they connect, express themselves, and seek support. If a child is struggling, their digital world is often the first place signs will appear. But with Facebook long abandoned and new platforms constantly emerging, staying informed can feel overwhelming.

This guide breaks down the key apps young people actually use, how they communicate online, and why understanding these spaces is crucial when offering support in a crisis. You don't need to be an expert—just willing to listen, learn, and meet them where they are.

1. Download the Apps Yourself

Stop guessing—jump in. Create an account on Snapchat, TikTok, Discord, and Twitch. Explore how they work. Don't announce yourself in a group chat or post cringe videos (they will block you), but observe and understand.

2. Know What Each Platform is Actually For

- **Snapchat** - This isn't just for selfies. It's about private conversations, disappearing messages, and location sharing (Snap Map). Many teens/young people use it as their primary messaging app.
- **Instagram** - This isn't just for photos anymore—it's a carefully curated highlight reel, a DM hub, and a place where young people craft multiple versions of themselves. It's where they get news, validation, and sometimes pressure to keep up with impossible standards.
- **Discord** - Think of it as WhatsApp meets Reddit (a forum website). Private servers host everything from encrypted gaming chats to mental health communities. Some are great, others are complete chaos.
- **Twitch** - Not just for gaming. Some young people spend hours watching streamers—who can have massive influence. Some content is harmless; some is unfiltered and intense.
- **TikTok** - More than dance trends. It's where young people get their news, advice, and validation. Some content is brilliant, but it can also push harmful trends and echo chambers.



EMOJI GUIDE

- 🔥 (Hot face) → "Damn, you look good"
- 👹 (Purple devil) → "I'm feeling naughty"
- 👁️👁️ (Eyes looking sideways) → "I'm watching this drama unfold" or "••• you looking good"
- 💅 (Nails being painted) → "I'm unbothered" or "I'm feeling myself"
- 🌟 (Sparkles) → "I'm being sarcastic" or used for dramatic emphasis ✨

- What 🍆 Actually Means (According to Gen Z)
- 🍆 Not just an aubergine → It's almost always used to represent something... phallic. Basically, it's a cheeky way to reference male anatomy without saying it outright.
 - 🍆💧 (Aubergine + water droplets) → You already know. Definitely NSFW.
 - 🍆🍑 (Aubergine + peach) → Well, now we've got the full set... 😏
 - 🥗 (Salad or food emojis with it) → Someone trying to be innocent, but means sex.

SCAN ME!

Scan with your smartphone for a link to each platform's parents/guardians' centre



Snapchat



TikTok



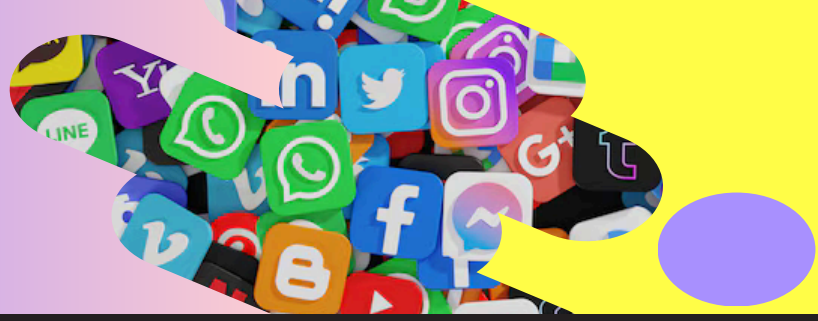
Discord



Twitch



LEARN THE LANGUAGE (BEFORE YOU EMBARRASS YOURSELF) AND TALKING TO YOUNG PEOPLE



Learn the Language (Before You Embarrass Yourself)

- **“Streaks” (Snapchat)** – Sending daily snaps to keep a Snapstreak alive. It’s more serious than you think.
- **“Cord” (Discord)** – A shortcut for Discord servers.
- **“FYP” (TikTok)** – The For You Page, where TikTok’s algorithm traps you for hours.
- **Emojis Mean Different Things (see above)** – A simple 👊 can come across as passive-aggressive. The 😂 emoji means “I’m laughing”, not actual death.

4. Accept That You Won’t See Everything (And That’s Normal)

Young people don’t want you monitoring their every move. Private group chats, alternate accounts (“finstas”), and deleted messages mean you’ll never have full visibility.

Instead of spying, focus on building trust—so they come to you if something goes wrong.

Remember, social media was ultimately built for people to connect - your child/young person may have connected with a group online about their hobbies or niche interests, this doesn’t mean they are up to anything sinister.

Talk to Them Like a Human, Not a Cop

Instead of “Show me your phone” try:

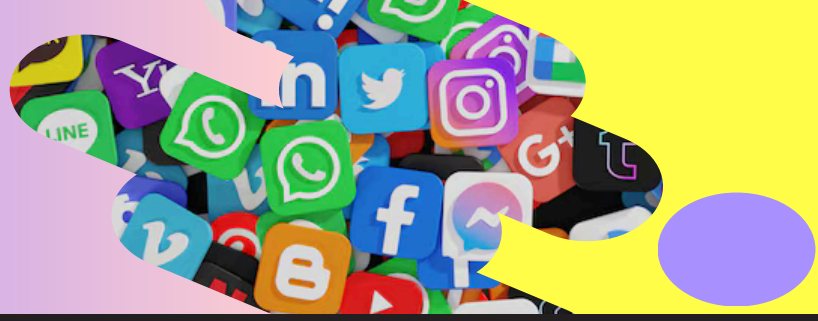
- **“What’s the funniest thing you’ve seen on TikTok today?”**
- **“What’s the wildest thing people are saying on Discord right now?”**
- **“Which streamers do you watch on Twitch?”**

- **“If I opened your TikTok right now, what kind of videos would be on your For You Page?”**
- **“What’s the weirdest thing you’ve seen on Discord lately?”**
- **“Who’s your favourite streamer on Twitch and why?”**
- **“Is there a trend going around right now that’s actually funny, or are they all just cringe?”**

- **What kind of servers are you in—gaming, memes, or just random chaos?”**
- **“How do people even find Discord servers? Are some of them invite-only?”**
- **“What’s the best inside joke from your Discord group?”**
- **“Do you think Discord mods take their jobs way too seriously?”**

- **“I heard TikTok’s algorithm can get really intense and show the same kind of videos over and over—do you ever notice that?”**
- **“Have you ever seen a really toxic Discord server? What made it bad?”**
- **“Do streamers ever talk about serious stuff, or do they just keep things light?”**
- **“What do you do when you see something really negative online? Do people actually report things or just ignore it?”**

THE UNFILTERED GUIDE TO TALKING ABOUT NUDES (WITHOUT MAKING IT AWKWARD)



Let's be real: young people are sending nudes. Maybe not your child, but their friends? Their classmates? It's happening - and pretending it's not won't help anyone. Instead of launching into a "Just don't do it!" speech that'll get ignored immediately, try having an actual conversation—one that's honest, judgement-free, and gives them the tools to make smart choices.

Step 1: Accept That This Is a Thing

Instead of "You better not be sending anything inappropriate!", try:

- **"I know people your age get asked for nudes a lot. How do people usually respond?"**
- **"What do people actually do when they get sent something they didn't ask for?"**
- **"Have you ever heard of someone's private pictures getting shared without their permission?"**

Step 2: Acknowledge the Pressure

A lot of young people don't just wake up one day and decide, "I think I'll send a nude today". They get pressured, manipulated, or made to feel like they have to.

Instead of "If someone asks for a nude, just say no", try:

- **"What would you say if someone you really liked kept asking you for one?"**
- **"What do people say to convince someone to send something? How do they make it seem normal?"**
- **"Do you think most people regret sending them, or is it not a big deal?"**

Why this works: It helps them recognise red flags and think ahead about their own boundaries, rather than making them feel guilty or embarrassed.

Step 3: Make Sure They Know What to Do If Something Goes Wrong

If a young person gets exposed, pressured, or blackmailed, the worst thing they can do is panic in silence. Make sure they know:

- **They can come to you (or another trusted adult) without judgement.**
- **If someone is blackmailing them, they should NEVER send more—it only gets worse.**
- **They have the right to say no, even if they've sent something before.**
- **If a picture gets leaked, there are ways to get it removed (like reporting it to platforms or seeking help from organisations that specialise in online safety).**

Being curious, not judgmental opens conversations. The more they trust you, the more likely they are to talk if something serious happens.

You Don't Need to Be a Social Media Expert—Just Aware

No one's expecting you to go viral on TikTok. But understanding these platforms without panic or judgement helps you guide young people through both the fun and the risks. Social media isn't just an app—it's a lifeline, a battleground, and a support system all at once.