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Social Media
and Students with Disabilities
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Social Media is here to stay. Parents and Schools Need to Help Students Recognize and Deconstruct How Social Media Works

But first we need to understand it...

TOPICS TO BE COVERED:

- **Social Media &**
- **FAPE**
- Discipline
- Social Skills
- Mental Health
- Cyberbullying
- Student Safety & Security

- **What Parents & Schools Need to Do**

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The World Is Different Now…

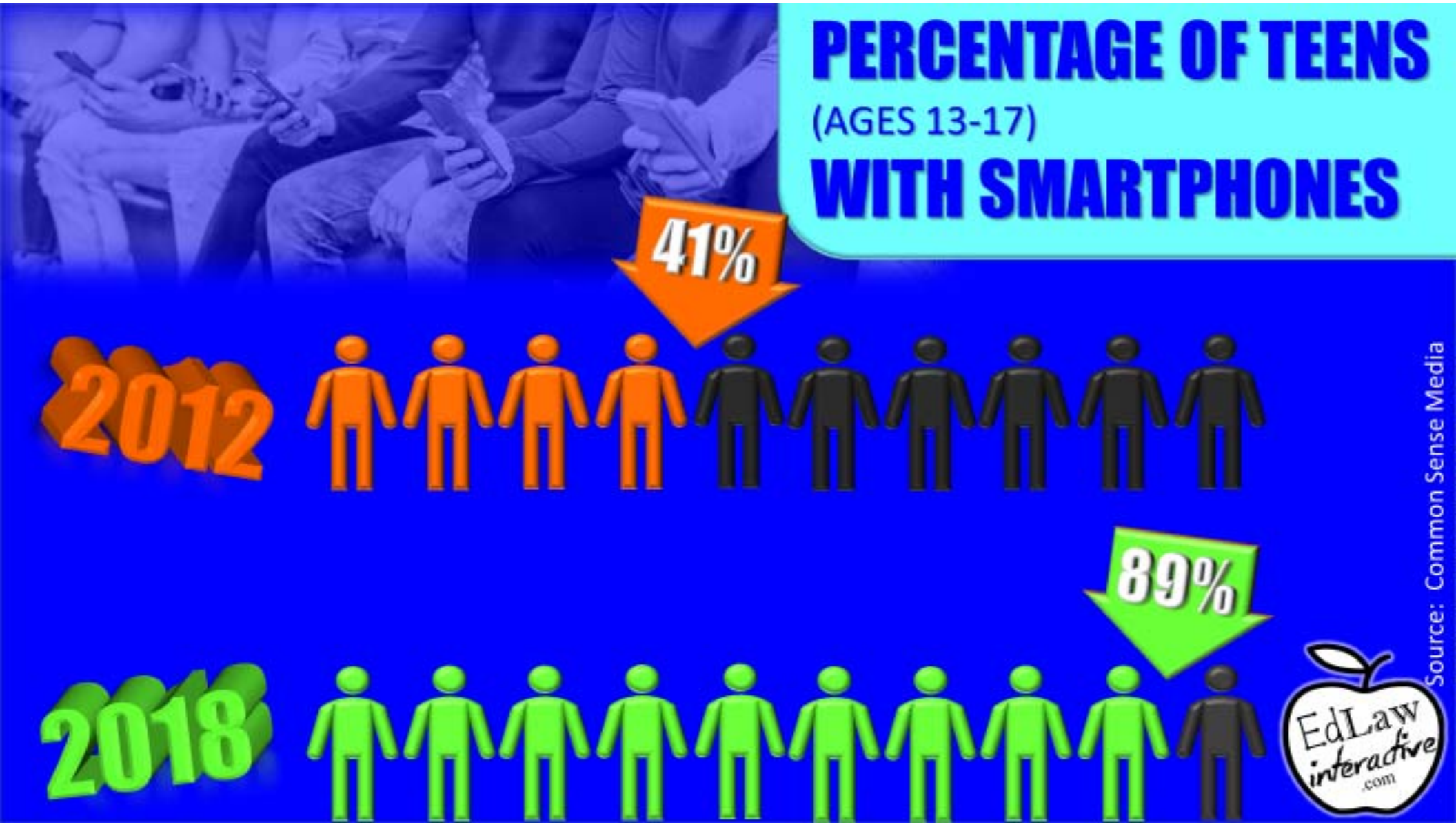
"Liked" "Friends" Cyber vs. "Real" Life

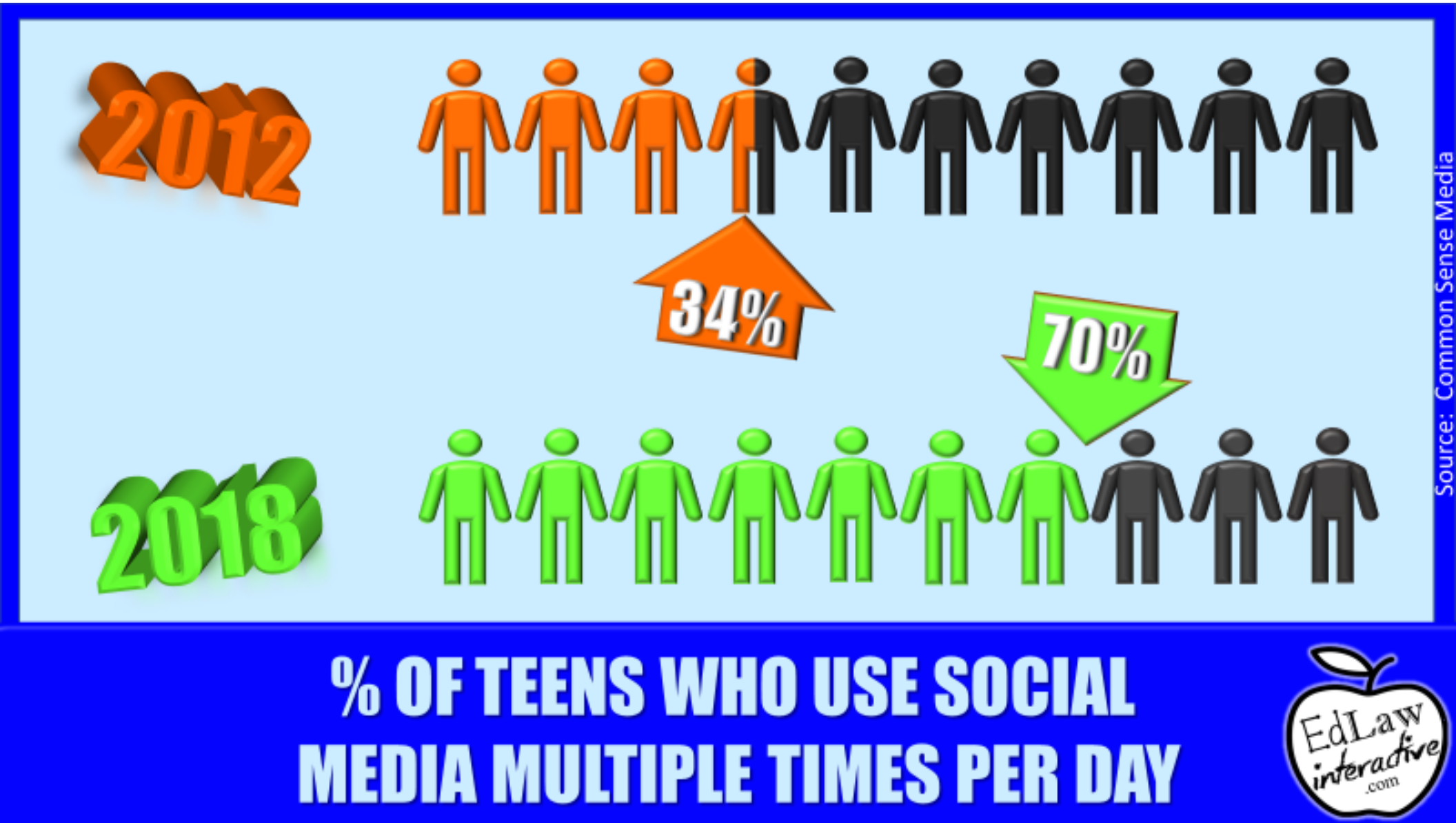
For Better or Worse… Social Interactions Are Changing

PERCENTAGE OF TEENS

(AGES 13-17)

WITH SMARTPHONES





% OF TEENS WHO USE SOCIAL MEDIA MULTIPLE TIMES PER DAY

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Different Methods of Gaining Social Media Attention

Boys

- "Shock" factor
- Out-grossing one another
- Pushing the envelope

Girls

- Projecting idealized images
- Filtering photos
- Chronicling life events

SOCIAL MEDIA AND FAPE

2 Considerations:

1. Making General Technology Curriculum Accessible to Students with Special Needs

2. Addressing Situations Where Student's Behavior Impacts Learning

Making General Technology Curriculum Accessible to Students with Special Needs

- Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) mandates training regarding internet safety and appropriate use of the internet & social media
- All public schools provide some level of training
- Many provide a comprehensive curriculum across K-12

Is this training enough to meet the needs of special education students??

IEP teams need to consider whether specially-designed instruction is appropriate/ necessary for some students.

Additional information?
Different pacing?
Reinforcement of past learning?

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DISABILITIES PARTICULARLY IMPACTED:

- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- ADHD
- Anxiety, Depression, & Other Mental Health Disorders
- Intellectual Disability

STUDENTS FOR WHOM SOCIAL MEDIA IS IMPACTING THEIR LEARNING OR THE LEARNING OF OTHERS…

An FBA and BIP may be necessary.

DISCIPLINE AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

TRADITIONAL DISCIPLINE

Limited Effectiveness for Social Media Offenses

Off-campus vs. on-campus speech issues

Not effective to prohibit bullying (sometimes exacerbates it)

Typically does not address training needs

Let's take a look at some key social media issues and determine whether they may give rise to a need for **SPECIALLY-DESIGNED INSTRUCTION** for some students...

Social Media & Social Skills

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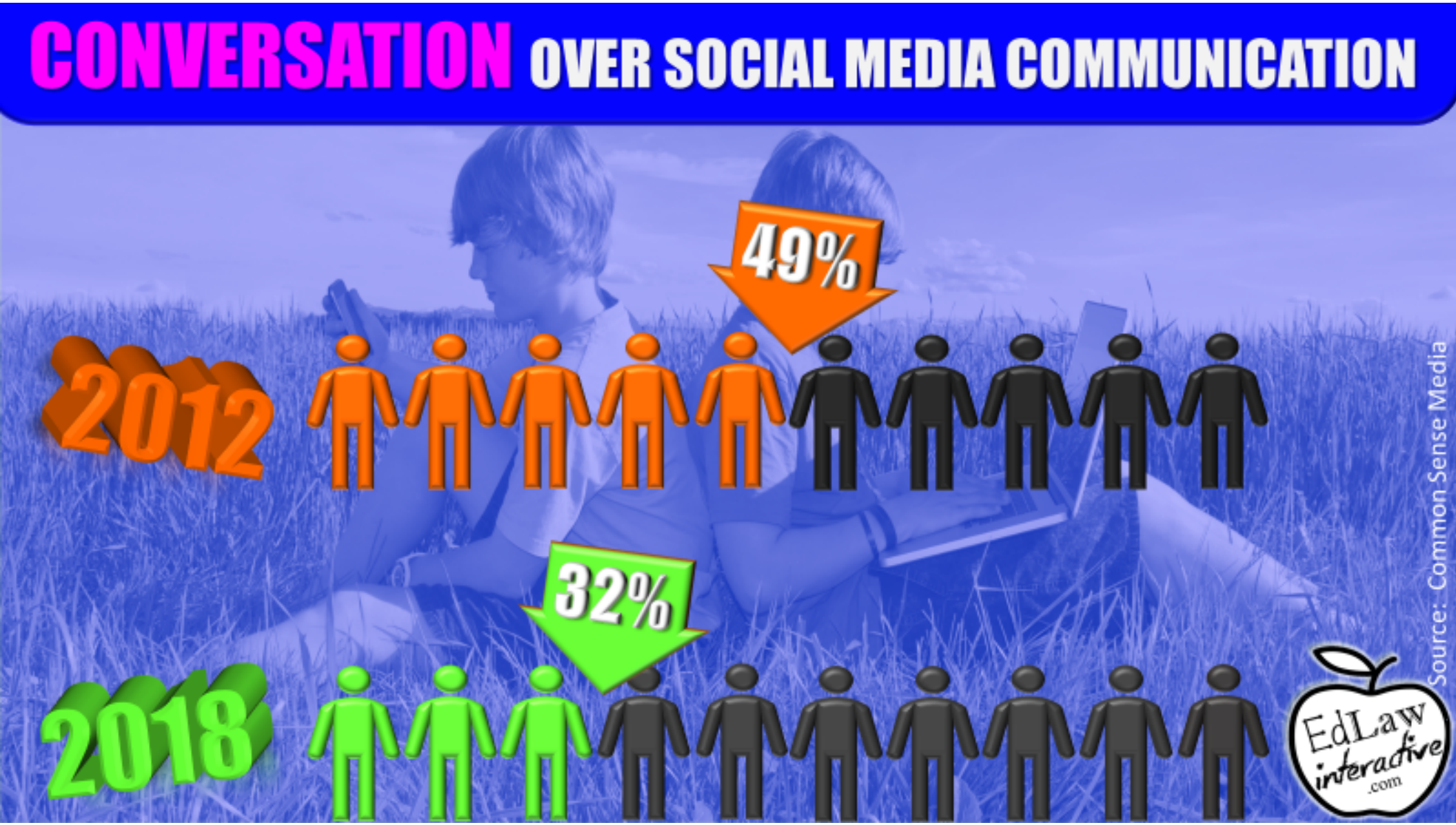
CONVERSATION OVER SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION
49%
2012
32%
2018
Source: Common Sense Media
EdLaw interactive .com

Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair

Clinical Psychologist

Author of

THE BIG DISCONNECT

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"As a species, we are very highly attuned to reading social cues."

"There's no question kids are missing out on very critical social skills..."

About texting and online communication:

"body language, facial expression, & even the smallest kinds of vocal reactions are rendered invisible..."

If this is the impact on kids in general, what, then, is the impact on students with social skills deficits?

Both in a social media context and generally…

Instances of typical-peer "modeling" are becoming less frequent.

Schools and IEP teams need to recognize and address this new reality.

Online Communication	Face-to-Face Communication
Immediate social risk-taking removed… • *Will she agree? Will they like what I am saying? Will this hurt his feelings?* **More time to weigh (& often perseverate) over communications**	**Responses need to be immediate** **Without sufficient practice, this is a huge social pressure!!**

Communication & Social Risks

Disagreement & Peer Acceptance

Online Communication	Face-to-Face Communication
Fosters the idea that if people disagree, they will not "like" me… • Encourages embracing views that garner the most "likes"	**Fosters expectation that people don't have to agree on all things all the time…** • Encourages discourse and dialogue

What Can/Should We Do?

- Help students understand difference between having comments/photos "liked" and being liked…
- Foster face-to-face conversations
- Encourage/teach/model civil disagreement online

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and

Mental Health

UK Study Finds Social Media Use at Age 10 Could Reduce Wellbeing of Adolescent Girls

University of Essex found association between increased time spent on social media in early adolescence (age 10) and reduced wellbeing later in adolescence (10-15)

Study reveals impact only shown in **GIRLS**

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UK Study
Also Shows
Higher
Social Media
Use in Girls

Use Social Media More than 1 Hour Per Day...

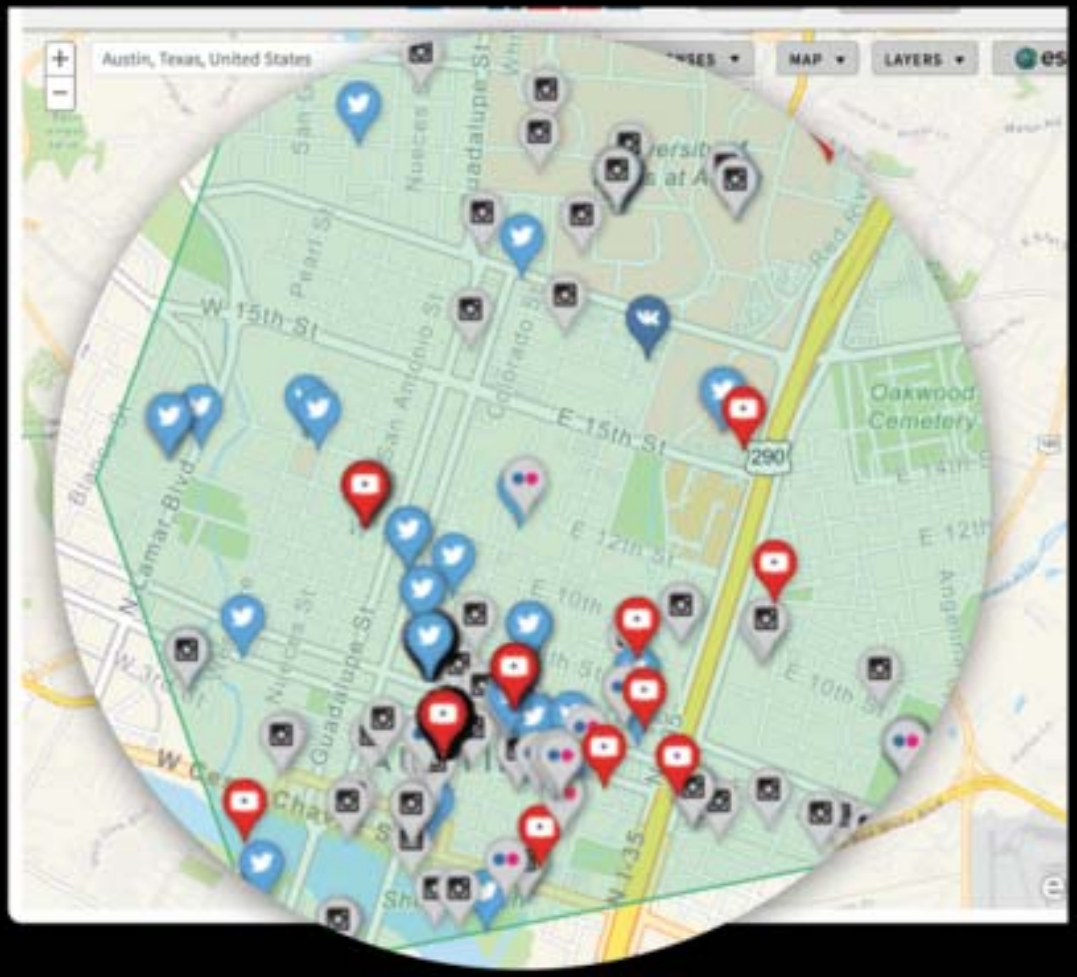
- **Age 13**
  - 50% girls
  - 33% boys
- **Age 15**
  - 59% girls
  - 46% boys

The Idealized World of Social Media
We used to be concerned about photoshopped magazine photos.
Now kids photoshop themselves!

"Imposter Syndrome"

Self-Esteem is rooted in how someone feels about who they ARE.

Difficult to achieve when constantly trying to project an IMAGE that is different than self.

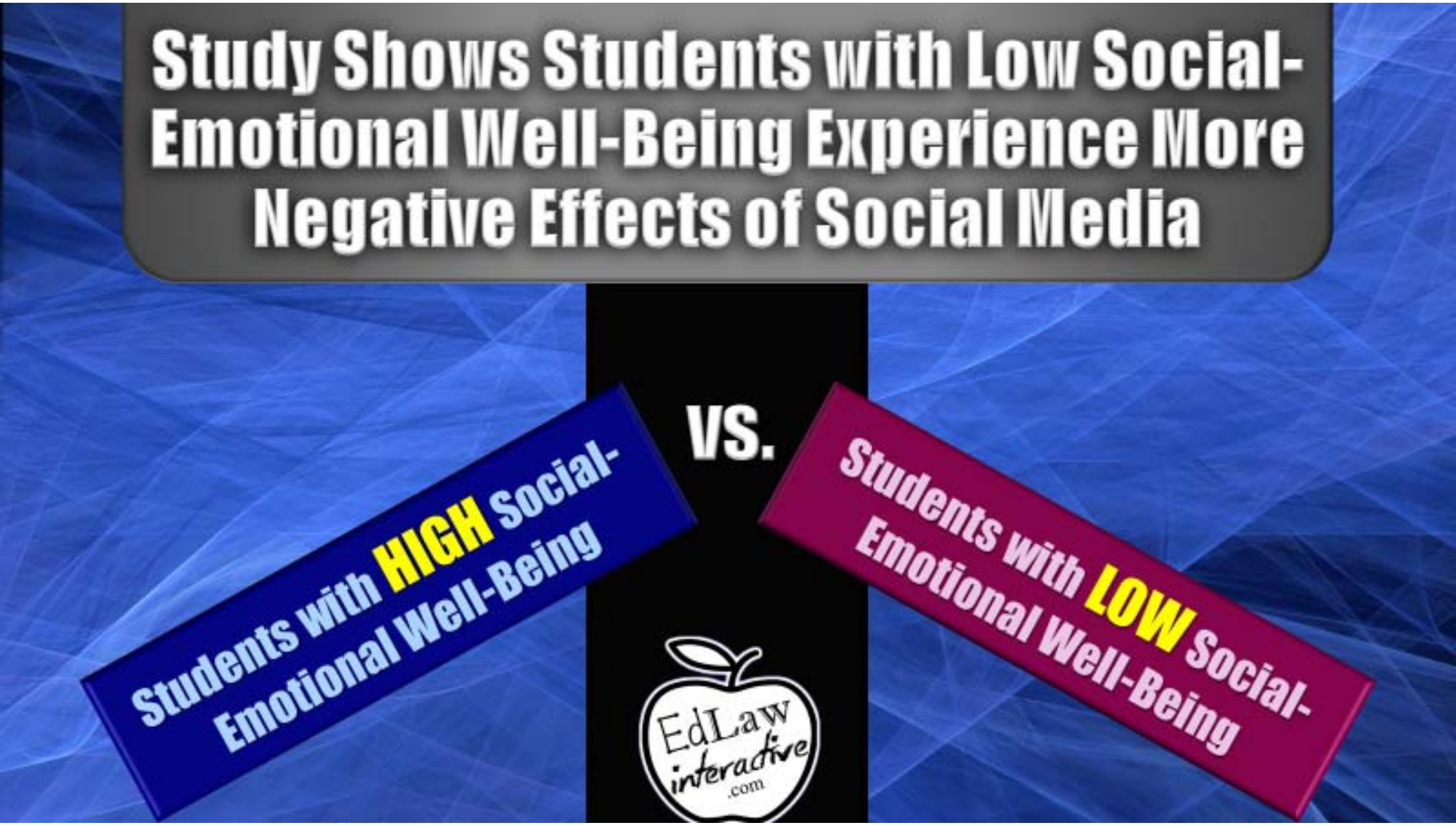


New Kind of Lonely...

Perpetually locatable, but no one bothers to look...

Colleges across the nation are reporting an increase in students with mental health needs and a decrease in resiliency

Could social media be part of the problem?


Study Shows Students with Low Social-Emotional Well-Being Experience More Negative Effects of Social Media
Students with HIGH Social-Emotional Well-Being
VS.
Students with LOW Social-Emotional Well-Being
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sometimes feel left out when using social media
29%
Students with HIGH Social-Emotional Well-Being
Source: Common Sense Media
Students with LOW Social-Emotional Well-Being
70%
EdLaw interactive

feel bad about themselves if no one comments on or likes their posts
Students with HIGH Social-Emotional Well-Being
11%
Source: Common Sense Media
Students with LOW Social-Emotional Well-Being
43%

have deleted social media posts because they got too few "likes"
Students with HIGH Social-Emotional Well-Being
13%
Source: Common Sense Media
EdLaw interactive
Students with LOW Social-Emotional Well-Being
43%

have ever been cyberbullied
5%
Students with HIGH Social-Emotional Well-Being
Source: Common Sense Media
Students with LOW Social-Emotional Well-Being
35%

Perception vs. Reality

- **Just because it is an issue of misperception does not mean that it doesn't need to be addressed!**
- **For many special needs students, need to address "perception" as well as reality**
- **Sometimes difficulty with perception…**
  - May misperceive that someone is "angry" or "upset" at them
  - Text-based nature of cyber communication makes this significantly more difficult

Social Media
and
Cyberbullying

Bullying v. Cyberbullying

Is there a difference anymore??

The End of Civility?

How Many of These Instances of Online Torment Do You Recognize?

ghosting

subtweeting

griefing

rumors

revenge posting

hate speech

sextortion

documented exclusion

fake accounts

Sharing embarrassing posts & pics

Recommended Resources:

Nancy Willard, M.S, J.D.

embracecivility.org

"Embrace Civility in the Digital Age" – Research-Based, Reimagined Bullying-Prevention Program for Schools

"Rethinking Token Rewards" – Embrace Civility Whitepaper by Nancy Willard

Social Dominance Behavior

2 Types of Targets

Nebraska Study:

2012 University of Nebraska Study Concludes Students with Disabilities More Likely to Be Bullied

(published in the Journal of School Psychology)

- **800 students surveyed** – mix of regular and special ed. – ages 9-16
- **38% reported they had been a bully**
- **67% reported they had been the victim of bullying**

Nebraska Study:

Receipt of Special Education Services Factor in Bullying:

- **Students who received special education services were at increased risk for:**
  - bullying others,
  - being bullied,
  - being sent to the school office for disciplinary problems and
  - engaging in antisocial behavior.

Nebraska Study:

Interesting Finding Regarding Bullying of Students with Disabilities:

- **Students with observable disabilities** – language or hearing impairments or mild mental handicaps – reported the **highest levels of bullying others and being bullied**.

- **Students with non-observable disabilities**, such as a learning disability, reported **similar levels of bullying and victimization as students without disabilities**.

Nebraska Study:

"The observable nature of the disability makes it easy to identify those students as individuals with disabilities, which may place them at greater risk for being the easy target of bullying…

Also, being frustrated with the experience of victimization, those students might engage in bullying behavior as a form of revenge."

Query: Are our school-wide positive behavior support programs part of the problem?

Token Reward Systems

Green-Yellow-Red Warnings

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Programs

Are they backfiring?

Social Dominance Theory

Fundamental Problems with

"Tell an Adult"

400 school social workers surveyed

1/3 said their school had a cyberbullying policy

38% of those individuals said the policy is ineffective

45% stated that they did not feel equipped to deal with cyberbullying issues

Compare: In studies on "traditional" bullying, generally only around 20-25% of school employees feel ill-equipped

2011 Ohio University Study on Social Workers and Cyberbullying

(Published in the Journal of Children and Schools)

MORE PROBLEMS...

MOST EDUCATORS REPORT THAT WHAT THEY ARE DOING IN THEIR SCHOOLS IS GENERALLY EFFECTIVE...

MOST STUDENTS REPORT:

- **Schools are not doing enough**
- **Most staff ignore bullying**
- **Reporting bullying will only make things worse**

According to Multiple Recent School-Wide Studies on Bullying...

Should this be part of a student's transition plan??

CutyStacy

Radnor man arrested on child porn cha

Published: Monday, April 22, 2013

By VINCE SULLIVAN

RADNOR — Investigators charged a township man with possessing more than 25 videos and images of child pornography Friday, in addition to other related charges.

Andrew J. Milligan, 35, of the 200 block of Locust Grove Road, surrendered to detectives Friday and was arraigned on 29 counts of possession of child pornography. He was held on 10 percent of $50,000 bail.

Delaware County Detective Edmond Pisani works with the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force and received a tip in August 2012 from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children about the possible sharing of child pornography. According to an affidavit of probable cause, through a series of court orders, Pisani tracked the Internet Protocol address of several devices used to share images of teenage girls in various pornographic poses.

The user accounts, purporting to be a teenage girl named Stacy, were tracked back to Milligan's Bryn Mawr home. Detectives executed a search wa
Dec. 5, 2012, at Milligan's home and seized a Macbook laptop, an iPad, two iPhones,
computer, a flash drive, a digital camera and several CDs.

questioned by detectives, after being advised of his rights, he said h
ild pornography "for years." He also said that he posed
images of themselves in their underg

The REAL CutyStacy

2016 Michigan State University Study:
SOCIAL MEDIA POSES THREAT TO PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES.

- Study focused on adults with Williams syndrome – a rare genetic disorder charact4erized by developmental delays, learning disabilities, excessively social personalities, and an affinity for music
  - Many live with parents or other caregivers

A 2013 study revealed that people with Williams syndrome, autism, and Down syndrome experienced extremely high rates of real-world teasing and bullying, theft, and abuse.

2016 Michigan State University Study:
SOCIAL MEDIA POSES THREAT TO PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES.

APPROX. 1/3 SAID THEY WOULD:

- send their photo to an unknown person,
- arrange to go to the home of a person they met online, and
- keep online relationships from their parents

NEARLY 86% USE SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES SUCH AS FACEBOOK NEARLY EVERY DAY, TYPICALLY WITHOUT ADULT SUPERVISION.

PARTICIPANTS ALSO SHARE A LARGE AMOUNT OF IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION ON SOCIAL NETWORK PROFILES AND ARE LIKELY TO AGREE TO ENGAGE IN RISKY BEHAVIORS.

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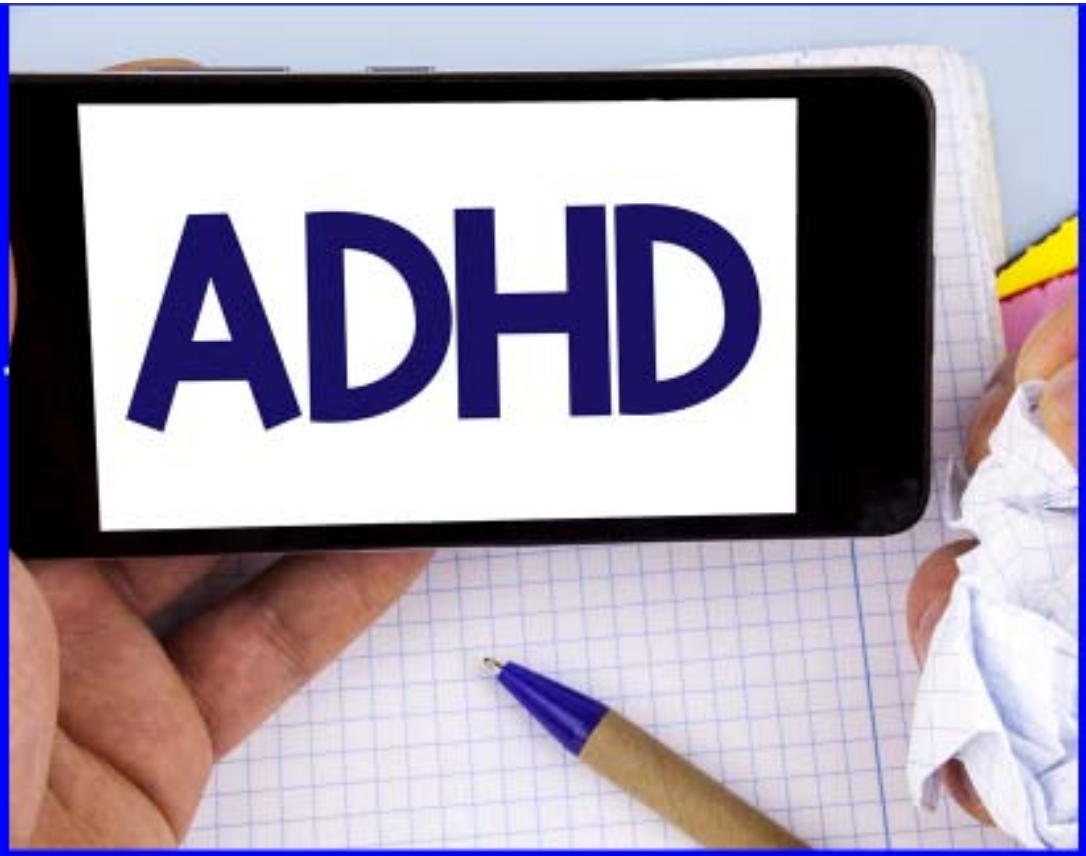
DATA PRIVACY



New Study Shows Possible Link between ADHD Symptoms & Frequent Social Media Use

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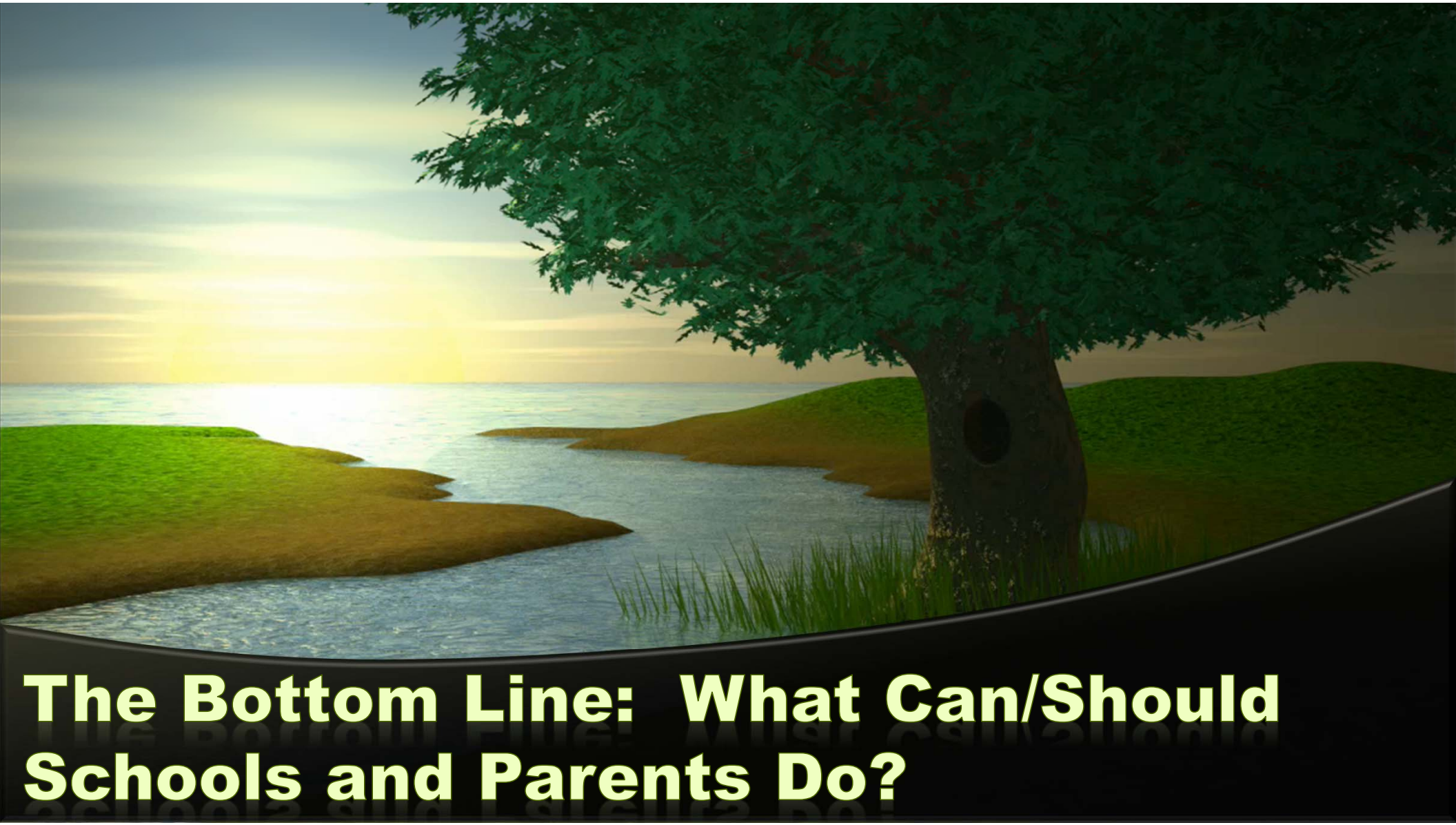
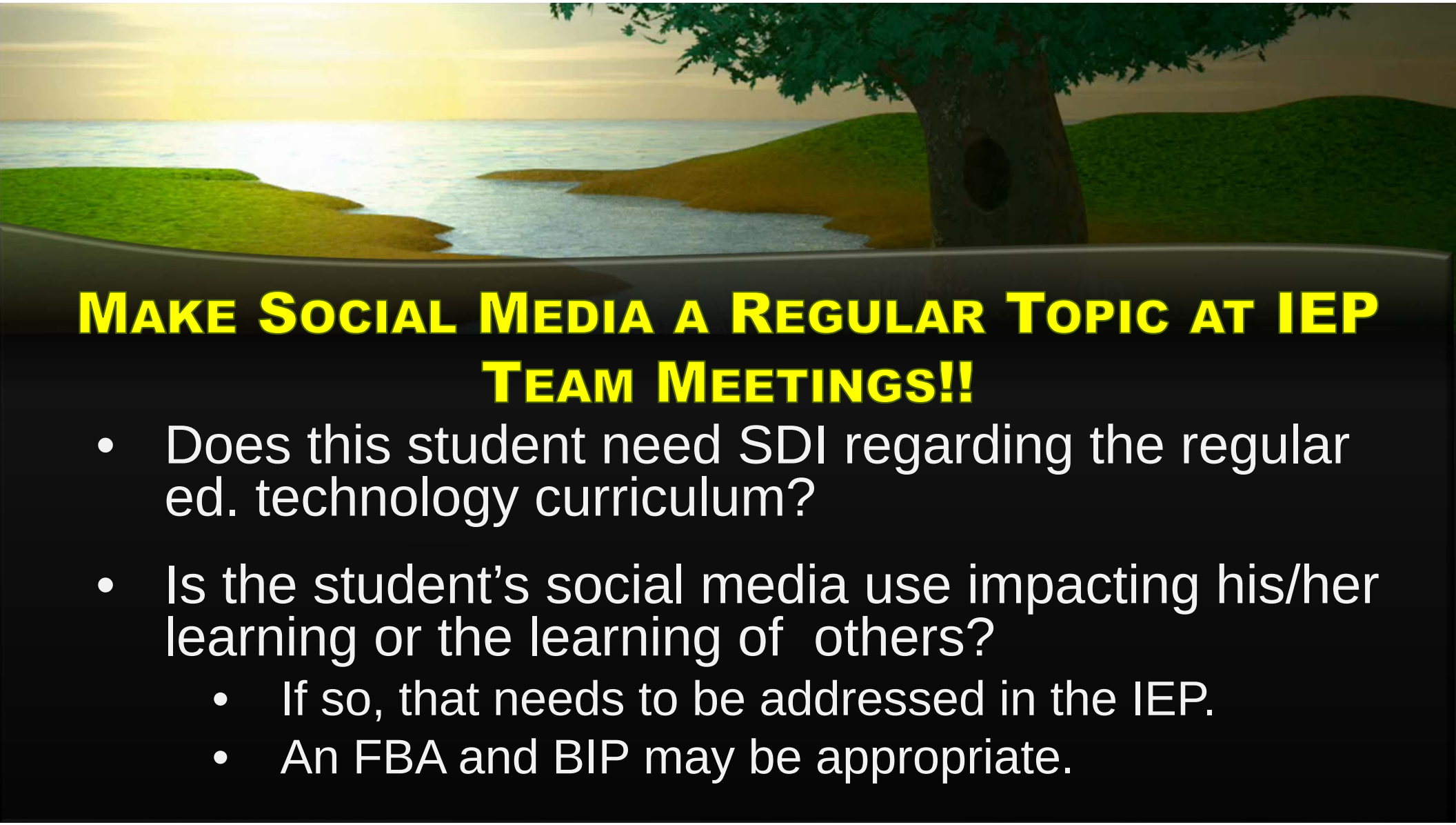


The Bottom Line: What Can/Should Schools and Parents Do?



Make Social Media a Regular Topic at IEP Team Meetings!!

- Does this student need SDI regarding the regular ed. technology curriculum?
- Is the student's social media use impacting his/her learning or the learning of others?
  - If so, that needs to be addressed in the IEP.
  - An FBA and BIP may be appropriate.

What Parents Can Do

- Set a good example re: tech and social media
- Establish tech-free zones and tech-free hours in our own homes (adults, too!!)
- Communicate in cars (no tech!)
- Be aware of when kids are turning to the internet for help
- Delay the age of social media involvement
- Get kids involved in peer-based activities
- Encourage friendships
- Encourage face-time vs. texting
- Communicate regularly with school personnel if there are concerns

What Schools Can Do

- Understand social media and its impact on students with disabilities
- Discuss social media considerations at IEP team meetings
- Add social media questions to parental information questionnaires
- Encourage face-to-face student communication
- Assign “no-tech” zones in places like cafeteria
- Think critically about school’s tech curriculum in relation to students with special needs (and make changes, where necessary)
- Emphasize communication-based projects

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QUESTIONS?