Children and young people's motivations for using social media

The Kardashian mindset

Boosting followers by accepting any invitation to 'friend'

Get rich and be famous – anyone can do it

Imitating social media celebrities

Identifying and following trends

Creating a personal brand or identity

Styling a social image that others will 'like'

Seeking feedback in the form of 'likes'

Posting provocative photos seeking 'likes' not sexual contact

Influencing social change (social activism)

Expressing political opinions

Connecting with groups and shaping political identity

Defying gender stereotypes and idealised body images

Attention and connection

Building a sense of belonging, sharing secrets and unhappy events

Seeking reassurance and support

Peer pressure

Liking posts that already have a high number of 'likes'

Posting on multiple platforms (and often)

Endorsing risky images and behaviours

Engaging in risky behaviours, creating sexualised images to create likeable posts

The fun factor

Fun and entertainment

Boredom

FOMO – Fear of missing out on what their 'friends' are saying and doing

Avoiding other tasks that aren't fun

Regulating mood

Reducing anxiety and relieving depression

Avoiding other issues

Improving self-esteem

Seeking 'likes' and positive feedback to build self-esteem

Addiction

Symptoms similar to substance abuse disorders

RESEARCH INSIGHTS:

Unreal expectations of themselves and others

Making social comparisons online resulting in both higher and lower self-esteem

Peer pressure to 'like' and create content that doesn't reflect their values

Those unpopular with peers tend to share more negative comments and unhappy events

Hyper-sexualised attitudes and behaviours such as sexting

Sexually explicit self-generated images can be re-posted on websites created exclusively for this purpose

Risky online exploration and experimentation

Exposure to images and behaviour so often that it seems normal

Constant checking of social media for information about friends' activities

Posts can create and signal vulnerability that puts young people at risk

Queensland Government