



LifeStance Survey Finds Nearly One-Third of Americans Use Social Media Content to Self-Diagnose Mental Health Conditions

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Less Than Half of Respondents Consistently Seek Professional Guidance for Self-Diagnosed Conditions, Reinforcing the Need for Increased Access to Evidence-Based Mental Health Care

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz., April 15, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- A [LifeStance Health](#) survey released today reveals the profound impact of social media on Americans' mental health and relationships, stemming from the prevalence of an "always-on" connectivity culture and a growing reliance on online mental health content, despite concerns about misinformation and credibility.

The LifeStance survey, "[Navigating Mental Health in the Age of Social Media](#)," found that nearly one-quarter (23%) of respondents have sought mental health advice on social media, and almost one-third (29%) have self-diagnosed a mental health condition based on what they have seen online. Further, more than half (54%) of respondents reported seeing mental health misinformation on social media at least weekly, and 27% reported experiencing stress or anxiety from attempted self-diagnosis.

Importantly, 81% do not believe mental health content on social media is an adequate replacement for evidence-based mental health care. With the prevalence of non-clinical sources sharing mental health information online, the need for accessible, high-quality care provided by licensed clinicians is crucial to help decipher fact from fiction and develop a clinically-appropriate treatment plan.

"Social media is a double-edged sword. While it has helped to normalize discussions about mental health, its potential for spreading misinformation poses a threat to individual well-being through the risk of harmful self-diagnosis and delayed professional intervention," said Dr. Ujjwal Ramtekkar, Chief Medical Officer, LifeStance Health. "Our survey emphasizes the importance of recognizing the limitations of online content and seeking online information from qualified sources and evidence-based mental health care from licensed clinicians. We must continue working toward ensuring everyone who needs it has access to affordable, high-quality mental health care."

Key findings from LifeStance's survey, "Navigating Mental Health in the Age of Social Media," include:

Being "chronically online" is pervasive, especially among younger generations.

- Over one-quarter (26%) of respondents check social media within five minutes of waking up, and the same portion (26%) spend four hours or more daily on social media.
- Nearly one-third (29%) of respondents report being "constantly connected" to the internet or social media — Gen Z (45%) and millennial respondents (39%) are most likely to be constantly connected, compared to respondents from the Gen X (25%) and baby boomer (14%) generations.
- Over half (57%) of respondents identify with the term "chronically online," meaning they believe the term accurately describes their relationship with social media.
- More than one-in-five (21%) respondents report experiencing negative impacts on their mental health as a result of this constant online connectivity.

Although many are aware of the prevalence of mental health misinformation on social media, people still turn to these platforms for advice.

- More than half (54%) of respondents report seeing misinformation about mental health on social media at least weekly.
- Nearly one-quarter (23%) of respondents have sought mental health advice on social media. This jumps to 55% for Gen Z and 30% for millennial respondents.
- Nearly half (45%) of respondents have turned to social media for mental health advice for its convenience and immediacy.
- Sources matter: 82% trust online information from credentialed health care providers the most, compared to 64% for mental health influencers and 53% for information shared by other social media users.

Self-diagnosis from social media is common. However, many respondents who self-diagnose do not consistently seek professional guidance from a clinician.

- Nearly one-third (29%) of respondents have self-diagnosed mental health conditions based on online information. Gen Z (50%) and millennial (38%) respondents lead in self-diagnosis.
- Less than half (47%) of respondents who self-diagnose often or always discuss their symptoms with a clinician, and almost a quarter (24%) rarely or never do.
- More than one-quarter (27%) of respondents reported experiencing unnecessary stress or anxiety from attempted self-diagnosis.

As the casual use of clinical mental health terminology, or "therapy speak," becomes more common in everyday conversations, people are analyzing their relationships through the lens of the language they've seen online.

- Forty percent of respondents report seeing terms like "trauma," "narcissist" and "toxic" on social media daily or multiple times a week.
- Nearly one-in-three (32%) respondents say social media content has made them question their relationships — leading people to believe that a partner or loved one is "toxic" (52%), "gaslighting" them (45%) or "love bombing" them (28%).
- Thirty percent of female respondents report using "therapy speak" regularly in online and in-person conversations, compared to 25% of male respondents. Gen Z (50%) respondents reported the highest usage amongst all generations.

Amid increasing anxiety and stress fueled by social media, most respondents wish to disconnect, with a significant number expressing interest in a digital detox.

- Forty-four percent of respondents believe social media has done more to increase negative perceptions and stereotypes about mental health than to reduce them.
- Examining the negative impacts felt by social media, 37% reported feeling anxiety about politics, 27% feel overloaded by the news cycle and 22% said social media supports poor sleep habits.
- More than three-quarters (76%) of respondents find the idea of a digital detox appealing, with Gen Z (84%) and millennial (83%) respondents most interested compared to respondents from other generations.
- Over one-quarter (26%) of respondents believe a permanent TikTok ban would positively impact their mental health.

To explore the survey results, visit LifeStance's [website](#). For tips on how to cope with mental health struggles associated with social media, visit LifeStance's [podcast](#).

Methodology

On behalf of LifeStance Health, Researchscape International conducted an online survey of 1,110 U.S. adults aged 18 and older. The survey was fielded from Jan. 30 to Feb. 9, 2025. The credibility interval is plus or minus four percentage points for questions answered by all respondents. The data was weighted to the U.S. population by nine demographic questions.

ABOUT LIFESTANCE HEALTH

Founded in 2017, [LifeStance](#) (NASDAQ: LFST) is reimagining mental health. We are one of the nation's largest providers of virtual and in-person outpatient mental healthcare for children, adolescents and adults experiencing a variety of mental health conditions. Our mission is to help people lead healthier, more fulfilling lives by improving access to trusted, affordable and personalized mental healthcare. LifeStance and its supported practices employ approximately 7,400 psychiatrists, advanced practice nurses, psychologists and therapists and operate across 33 states and more than 550 centers. To learn more, please visit www.LifeStance.com.

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