

Helping young people cope without social media

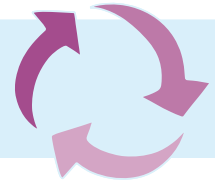
Social media is designed to feel good



- Likes, comments & notifications
- Personalised content (the algorithm)
- Validation & social approval
- Constant entertainment & distraction

These features trigger dopamine, the brain's reward chemical.

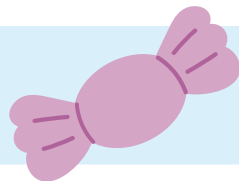
Dopamine: the reward loop



Social media delivers fast, artificial dopamine. Over time, this can create a dopamine loop:

- Constant craving for stimulation
- Reduced enjoyment of everyday achievements
- Needing bigger rewards to feel good

Other fast dopamine sources



- High-sugar foods
- Alcohol
- Screen use first thing in the morning
- Chasing distraction

These can lead to dopamine crashes and lower motivation.

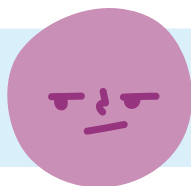
Natural, sustainable dopamine sources



- Going outdoors, exercising, & playing sports
- Sleep and diet
- Reading
- Setting & achieving personal goals

These can support positive mood and increased motivation.

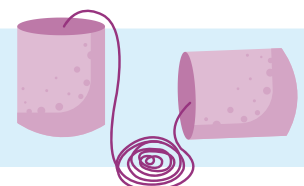
Life without social media access



Social media provides young people with connection, validation, and belonging. With reduced access, they may feel:

- Disconnected
- Bored
- Left out

Rebuilding connection



- Text messaging, voice calls, & video calls
- Spending time at friends' houses
- Meeting in safe community spaces
- Going to the pool, movies, or arcade
- Organising face-to-face hangouts

With less social media, young people can build healthier dopamine habits and stronger real-world connections, supporting long-term wellbeing.