

# Facts About Young Adults, Mental Health, & Online Information Seeking

## The Overwhelming Majority of Young Adults Use the Internet

- 93% of young adults ages 18-29 go online.<sup>1</sup>
- 72% of online 18-29 year olds use social networking.<sup>1</sup>



### Our Findings:

Out of 27 young adults with serious mental health conditions, most (85%) had looked up mental health information online—almost half (44%) do so at least once a month.

## Most Young Adults Use the Internet to Find Health Information

- In 2008, 72% of young adults 18-29 looked for health information online.<sup>1</sup>
- 52% looked for information about a specific medical treatment or procedure online.<sup>1</sup>
- 49% of 18-29 year olds research doctors and other health professionals online.<sup>2</sup>
- 38% look up information on prescription or over the counter drugs.<sup>2</sup>
- 34% look up alternative treatments or medicines.<sup>2</sup>

## Young Adults Use the Internet to Search for Mental Health Information

- 33% of 18-29 year olds said they looked for mental health information online.<sup>2</sup>

## People Use the Internet to Guide Their Health Decisions

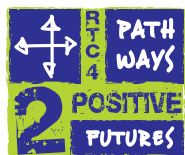
- 68% of health information seekers state that the information they find online has an impact on their healthcare decisions.<sup>3</sup>
- 18% of adults say they have gone online to diagnose or treat a medical condition on their own, without consulting their doctor.<sup>3</sup>
- About half of adult online health information seekers have read someone else's commentary or experience about health or medical issues on an online news group, website, or blog.<sup>2</sup>

## The General Quality of Online Mental Health Information is Poor

- Several studies indicate that the overall quality of online information about social phobia, substance addictions, and other mental health disorders is low.<sup>4,5</sup>
- A review of 21 popular websites about treatment for depression found the quality of information was poor.<sup>4</sup>
- Few health-related websites display the source and date, along with other information quality indicators.<sup>6</sup>
- Young people feel overwhelmed by the amount of health information available online, and they report not being able to find answers to their specific questions, or information tailored to their needs.<sup>7</sup>
- However, the majority (72%) of health seekers say you *can* believe all or most of the health information online.<sup>3</sup>

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Fact sheet produced by L. Kris Gowen & Matthew Deschaine, eHealth Project, Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures, Portland State University, Portland, OR.

For more information, contact:

L. Kris Gowen, Ph.D.  
gowen@pdx.edu



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