

Self-Healing in Gen-Z Adolescents': Behind the Scene of Social Media

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive quantitative research aims to explore adolescents' understanding of stressors arising from social media use, their self-actualization through social media, motivation for self-healing, and the role of spirituality and communication as a means to overcome stress. Primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 73 adolescents, while secondary data were obtained via interviews with psychologists, counseling teachers, and ustazds (religious teachers). The results indicate that (1) social media is not the primary stressor for adolescents; the most significant stressors were family problems (71.2%), academic challenges (60.3%), and parental demands (54.8%); (2) Generation Z shows limited interest in openly self-actualizing on social media; (3) 63.01% of respondents are motivated to seek self-healing information via social media; and (4) spirituality and communication serve as effective mediums for adolescents to manage and overcome stress.

Keywords: Stress; Adolescent; Spirituality

ABSTRAK

Penelitian dengan pendekatan kuantitatif deskriptif ini bertujuan untuk memperoleh berbagai data terkait pemahaman remaja terkait stressor yang muncul akibat penggunaan media sosial, aktualisasi diri melalui media sosial, motivasi melakukan self-healing, dan pemahaman terkait aspek spiritualitas dan komunikasi bisa menjadi media untuk mengatasi stress pada remaja. Pembagian kuesioner kepada 73 sampel merupakan data primer, sedangkan data sekunder diperoleh melalui wawancara kepada psikolog, guru bimbingan konseling, dan ustad. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa (1) Media sosial bukan merupakan stressor utama pada remaja. Stressor tertinggi diakibatkan oleh masalah keluarga sebanyak 71,2%, permasalahan akademik 60,3% dan 54,8% karena tuntutan orang tua. (2) Generasi Z tidak terlalu suka untuk mengaktualisasikan diri secara terbuka melalui media sosial. (3) Sebanyak 63,01% responden memiliki motivasi untuk mencari informasi terkait self-healing melalui media sosial. (4) Aspek spiritualitas dan komunikasi merupakan salah satu media untuk mengatasi stress pada remaja.

Kata Kunci: Stress; Remaja; Spiritualitas

INTRODUCTION

Today, the shift from the real world to the digital world has become a daily routine for teenagers. The proliferation of social networking sites around the world undoubtedly affects human behavior. "Bringing distant people closer" is one of the outcomes of the rise of social media. Through internet-enabled devices, we can learn about events happening in any part of the world in real-time. The same goes for Indonesia. In 2021, it ranked as the fourth-largest internet user in the world, with a penetration rate of 73.7% (Faz, 2021, www.merdeka.com). Indeed, developments in information and communication technology now reach every generation. Generation Z—born between 1997 and 2012—has grown up in an era where accessing information through mobile and online media is extremely easy.

According to the 2020 Population Census, around 74.93 million of Indonesia's 270 million population, or about 27.94%, fall under the Generation Z category (Pryanka, 2021, www.republika.co.id).

At a very young age, they are already connected to various aspects of the world. With their technological fluency, they can spend an average of 9 hours daily on their smartphones (Indrajaya & Lukitawati, 2019). Internet usage continues to rise year by year. A survey by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) from 2019 to 2020 showed that 91% of Indonesian teenagers aged 15–19 used the internet (Anwar et al., 2023). Samuel A. Pangarep noted that in 2021, there was an 11% increase from the previous year in internet usage, driven not only by advancements in technology but also by the need for ongoing communication during the pandemic (Kusumastuti, 2022, Kompas.com).

Changes in communication behavior have become increasingly visible in line with the development of new media. The emergence of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Path, and Instagram has altered human behavior in various aspects, including social and cognitive domains (Hardika et al., 2019). Like two sides of a coin, the convenience brought by information and communication technology also comes with negative effects on individuals. Information, initially intended to satisfy curiosity, has now become a weapon that can weaken one's mental state, including issues related to emotional regulation. Teenagers with shorter sleep durations tend to engage more in risky media behaviors, adding to their emotional burden (Bulck, 2023).

One notable incident occurred in Newcastle, England, where a teenager attempted suicide because she felt her Instagram photo was not perfect enough. Another case involved a man undergoing plastic surgery to look better on social media. He reportedly uploaded his photos up to 200 times a day (Hardika et al., 2019). These examples show that narcissistic tendencies can be fueled by the number of likes or comments on Instagram. Many believe that self-existence and self-actualization in the virtual world can be easily achieved. Unfortunately, this also affects one's self-esteem and feelings of loneliness. People who feel lonely in the real world often exhibit narcissistic behaviors in the digital world (Hardika et al., 2019). his behavior can also lead to addiction, particularly among teenagers, who feel more valued and noticed online through likes and comments from netizens.

Such phenomena are also happening in Indonesia, where teenagers are highly dependent on mobile and online media. Rapid advancements in information technology have led to changes in how people think and behave. However, these changes do not always lead to positive outcomes. Several psychological and mental health issues have emerged due to excessive social media use. A study involving 36 adolescents aged 14–15 found that 58.3% admitted being dependent on smartphones, and 80.6% viewed their smartphones as companions, becoming anxious when separated from them or when the phones did not function properly. This condition is known as *Nomophobia (No Mobile Phone Phobia)* (Ratmanto et al., 2016).

Research also shows that students begin using Instagram between the ages of 11 and 15 and need specific digital and social media skills. The educational use of Instagram includes learning about social media itself, gaining inspiration, following trends, and sharing experiences. Although user-friendly, Instagram has weaknesses, including the potential for misuse by unauthorized users. While it fosters friendships and information sharing based on interests, criminal activity on the platform is a concern. Instagram is known to be an effective advertising medium, but it also poses risks, including photo misuse (Anwar et al., 2023).

According to the 2018 Basic Health Research (Riskesdas), depressive disorders can begin as early as adolescence, particularly in the 15–24 age range, with a prevalence of 6.2% (Indrayani & Wahyudi, 2019). That same year, the prevalence of emotional mental disorders (depression and anxiety) rose from 6% to 9.8%. However, only 9% of those with depression received medical treatment (Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Kesehatan, 2013, 2018). The challenge is that adolescent depression is often underdiagnosed, possibly because mood swings and irritability are common in this age group (Thapar in L et al., 2020). A 2019 study by the psychiatric team at Melinda Hospital showed that 741 university students sought counseling each month for issues ranging from general stress and depression to suicidal thoughts (Nugraha, 2019, www.Liputan6.com). This situation underscores the urgent need to prioritize mental health at the community level to mitigate the growing impact.

Excessive anxiety, depression, and even suicide attempts can affect this generation for various reasons. According to Jaclyn Halpern, PsyD, in Healthline, some of the negative effects of social media include FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), exposure to inappropriate content, access to inaccurate information, cyberbullying, and being targeted by online crime. These experiences can cause disappointment and trauma in individuals exposed to the dark side of social media (Kusumastuti, 2022,

Kompas.com). Research by Jelang Hardika, Igaa Noviekayati, and Sahat Saragih revealed a significant relationship between self-esteem and loneliness and the tendency for narcissistic personality disorder among teenage Instagram users. The study involved 109 teenagers aged 12–22 with active Instagram accounts (Hardika et al., 2019). Another study by Ricadona Priyanti Lim, Daru Purnomo, and Dewi Kartika Sari also found a slight correlation between Instagram use and mental health issues—specifically, “Instagramxiety”—among teenagers in Salatiga (Lim et al., 2021).

Overall, findings from previous studies on the use of smartphones and social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram indicate the emergence of the Alone Together culture. This phenomenon leads individuals to become isolated from social reality (Saleh & Pitriani, 2018). According to Turkle, individuals become detached from real-life experiences as they become increasingly immersed in social networking sites and technologies that dominate their lives (Saleh & Pitriani, 2018). This cultural shift contributes to a range of problems experienced by adolescents. Although the influence is not always statistically significant, it still affects individuals’ daily behaviors.

Furthermore, as noted by Dr. Jiemi Ardian, SpKj, every individual inherently attempts to heal from past trauma. The human brain is wired for self-preservation, and thus, each person naturally employs coping mechanisms to manage stress and personal challenges. Engaging in dialogue or storytelling can be beneficial for mental health. Healing, in this context, refers to the therapeutic process often facilitated by a professional therapist (Mutohharoh, 2022). However, this process has evolved, allowing clients or patients to pursue recovery independently—a practice known as self-healing (Crane & Ward, 2016). Individuals driven and guided by instinct who engage in personal recovery efforts are said to be practicing self-healing (Farmawati et al., 2020). Self-healing involves releasing suppressed emotions and feelings. Philosophically, it is a holistic effort that integrates physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Effective self-healing requires strong intrapersonal communication skills, which enable individuals to identify current problems, assess psychological states, and evaluate thought patterns (Mutohharoh, 2022). Through self-healing, individuals learn how to understand, identify, and regulate their emotions (Bachtiar & Faletahan, 2021). Moreover, self-healing serves both therapeutic and preventive functions (Redho et al., 2019). Optimal physical, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and spiritual conditions are closely linked to good mental health, which can be fostered through self-healing practices (Mutohharoh, 2022). According to Rahmasari, self-healing must be practiced consistently and repeatedly to achieve optimal physical and mental health outcomes (Mutohharoh, 2022).

Prayer and remembrance of God (*dzikir*) are forms of self-healing that individuals may engage in. At this stage, individuals are encouraged to surrender (*tawakkal*), fill the spiritual void by strengthening the heart, and place hope solely in Allah SWT (Mutohharoh, 2022). Through patience and gratitude, individuals may cultivate a sense of inner peace and relaxation (Herman, 2022). In the *Sufi* tradition, there are three key approaches to self-healing: (1) purging the self of destructive traits, (2) instilling positive characteristics, and (3) applying these values in daily life (Bakri, 2019).

Filling the spiritual void with positive elements does not necessarily require engaging in pleasurable activities such as recreation. Several self-healing techniques can be employed, including relaxation, journaling, mindfulness, positive self-talk, reading the Qur’an, forgiveness, self-management, gratitude, imagery, and reinforcing religious practice (Mutohharoh, 2022). Self-healing begins with self-love and self-appreciation, which can be nurtured through positive internal dialogue (Aisa et al., 2021). Previous research has shown that storytelling can reduce anxiety and fear related to death (Noviar, 2013). Additionally, storytelling can serve as an educational tool for promoting health awareness, particularly among children (Noviar et al., 2021). Everyday dialogue can serve as a medium for transcending space and time, exploring and understanding actions, and reflecting on personal and others’ circumstances. Through storytelling, individuals can gain insights that aid in making informed decisions about health, illness, and care (Noviar et al., 2021).

Therefore, this study seeks to explore adolescents’ understanding of self-healing. More specifically, it aims to collect data on adolescents’ perspectives regarding (1) stressors arising from social media use, (2) self-actualization through social media, (3) motivations for engaging in self-healing, (4) their understanding of spirituality, and (5) how communication may serve as a medium to cope with stress. Hopefully, this study will provide insights for various stakeholders into how spirituality and communication, as practiced by adolescents, can serve as effective means for stress relief.

METHODS

This study explores high school students' understanding of self-healing using a descriptive quantitative research approach. This approach aligns with Sugiyono (2018), who defines descriptive research as a method used to describe individual variables, either a single variable or more, without comparing them. Data collection in this study involved using questionnaires, interviews, social experiments, and a literature review. These methods were categorized into two types: primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through the distribution of questionnaires via Google Forms to high school students in Bandung. Meanwhile, secondary data were collected through interviews with psychologists, guidance and counseling teachers, and religious teachers (*ustadz* or *ustadzah*), as well as through relevant literature.

The inclusion of secondary data was intended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the field context. The study population consisted of students from public and private high schools in Bandung. The sampling technique employed was purposive sampling, which involves selecting specific respondents based on criteria that are considered representative of the research objectives, statistical requirements, and significance level (Rakhmat, 2012). The criteria for respondent selection included being a high school student aged 15 to 18 years who actively uses social media, having experienced stress and sought guidance counseling, and having some understanding of the concept of self-healing. Based on these criteria, 73 respondents were selected.

Prior to the distribution of the final questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents at a 10% alpha level. The validity test results, conducted using the product-moment correlation formula, indicated that 51 items in the questionnaire were valid, with correlation coefficients exceeding the critical value of 0.201. The questionnaire was also deemed reliable, as evidenced by Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.60 across all sub-variables. A summary of this process is presented in Figure 1.

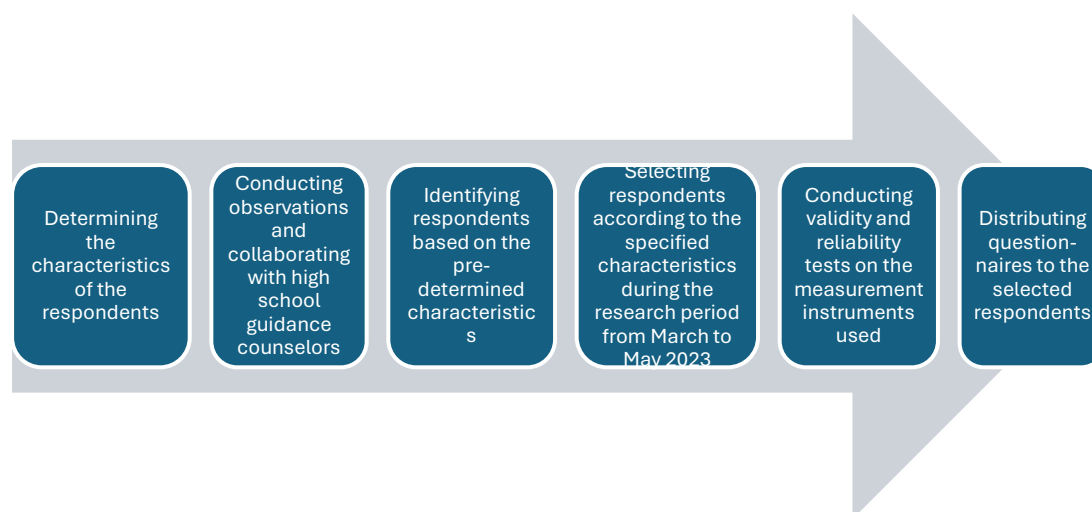


Figure 1. Research Flow
Source: The researcher

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are presented in two main parts. The first part describes the characteristics of the respondents, focusing on their ownership of social media accounts, the frequency of internet or online media usage, and the types of social media platforms most frequently used. The second part addresses the core issues raised in this study, including stressors caused by social media use, adolescents' self-actualization through social media, their motivation to engage in self-healing, and the roles of spirituality and communication as media for practicing self-healing.

Respondent Characteristics

This research targeted adolescents in the city of Bandung who had experienced stress and possessed an understanding of self-healing. The respondents were between the ages of 15 and 18 and were active users of social media or had been exposed to digital media. Adolescents were chosen as the focus of this study due to their complex developmental phase, which involves mental, emotional, social, and physical maturity (Hurlock, 1980). Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to stress, especially those who are still attending school (Bachtiar & Faletahan, 2021). In the midst of their search for identity, they also face academic pressures and social life challenges (Franco et al., 2018; Bachtiar & Faletahan, 2021).

As noted in the methodology section, all 73 respondents reported having at least one social media account, with platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube being commonly used. While some respondents had only one social media account, others used multiple platforms. Based on the questionnaire responses, Instagram emerged as the most commonly used social media platform among the respondents, as illustrated in Figure 2.

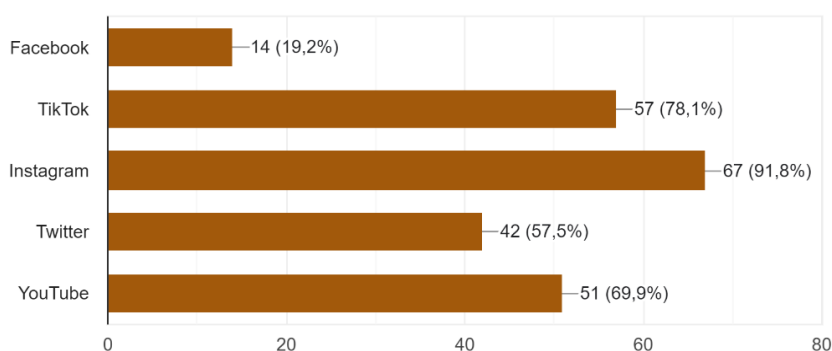


Figure 2. Social Media Ownership
Source: Research March – May 2023

The ownership of social media accounts among respondents aligns with the high percentage of Instagram and TikTok usage among adolescents, which accounts for 41.1% (see Figure 3).

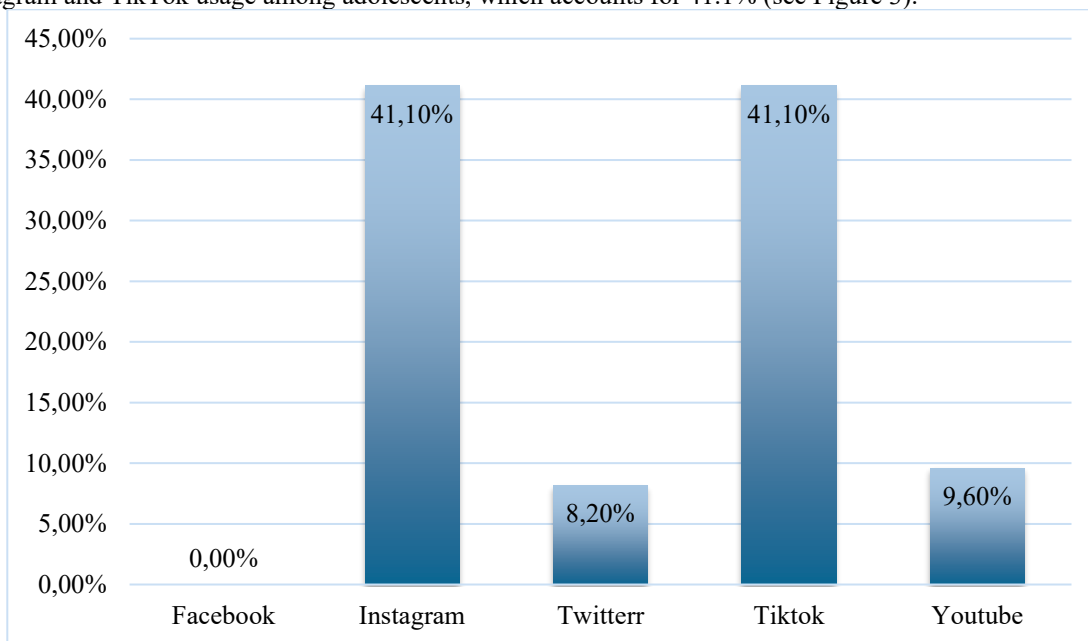


Figure 3. Social Media Usage
Source: Research March – May 2023

Social media platforms such as YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook follow Instagram and TikTok in terms of usage frequency. Respondents demonstrated varied intensity in accessing social media, with the majority spending between 4 to 6 hours per day online.

Adolescents' Understanding of Stressors Arising from Social Media Use

Stress is defined as a physiological and psychological response to pressures or demands encountered by an individual. It is a common reaction to changes that require adaptation or coping strategies. Stressors, or causes of stress, may stem from both internal and external sources. These factors include family issues, financial difficulties, relationship conflicts, academic pressure, physical changes, and more.

The findings of this study reveal that the most dominant stressor among adolescents is family-related problems, reported by 71.2% of respondents. This is followed by academic challenges at 60.3% and parental expectations at 54.8%. These results are consistent with the statement of a guidance and counseling teacher at a private senior high school in Bandung, who noted:

Family conditions are the most common issue. Around 30% of students here come from broken homes. They have financial means, but still face family problems. The issues vary—some have divorced parents, others live together but still experience conflicts. There's also pressure and expectations from parents. For instance, a student might want to go to UPI because they feel it suits them, but the parents insist on ITB. (Interview with NDA, May 15, 2023).

Although social media can act as a stressor, research data indicate that it is not the primary cause of stress among adolescents. This is evident in Figure 4, where the percentage of agreement for each social media post-related stressor remains below 30%.

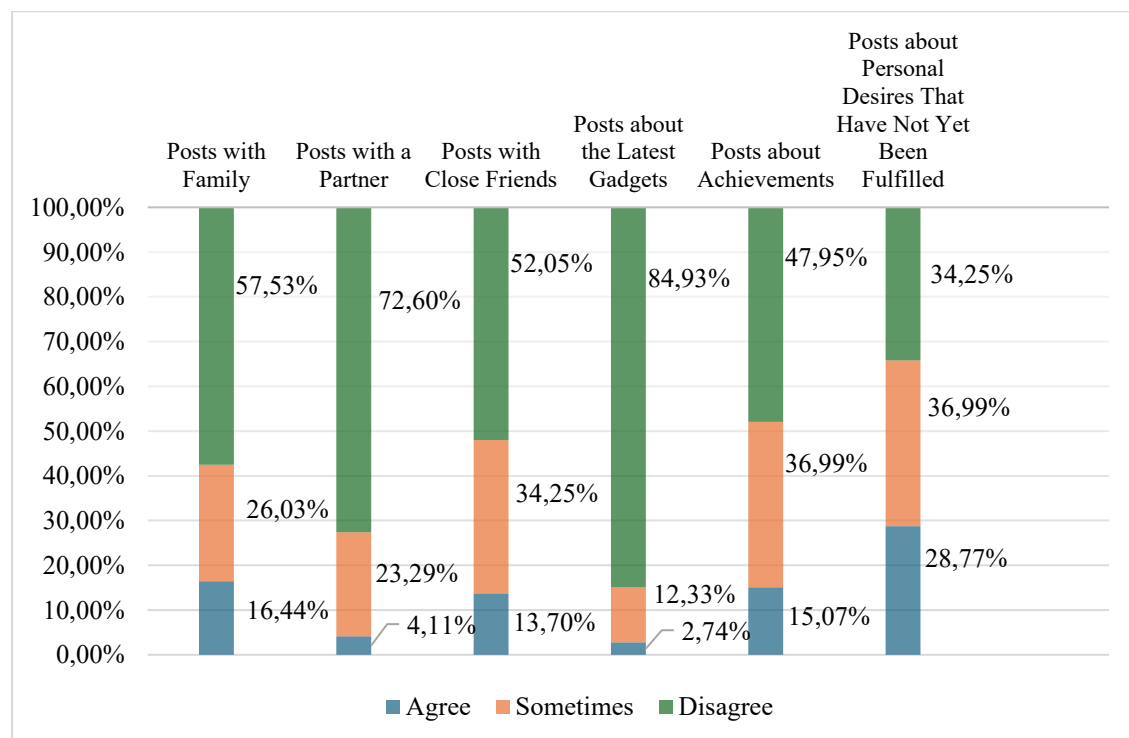


Figure 4. Stressors from Social Media Posts
Source: Research March – May 2023

To strengthen the data obtained from the questionnaire shown in Figure 4, the researcher also collected secondary data through an interview with a psychologist, who stated:

“The causes of stress in adolescents are varied. Primarily, for teenagers, physical aspects—such as their appearance, clothing, and other accessories—can have a significant impact if there are even slight differences. This relates to outward appearance. From a mental perspective, hormonal changes also play a role, along with social factors, including family environment. Such conditions do exist. Additionally, loneliness, especially during the pandemic when adolescents were disconnected from friends and had to do everything alone, became a source of stress. Furthermore, the increase in divorce cases during the pandemic caused confusion and stress for many children, as they were unsure where to turn. So, when people say social media affects the mental condition of children, it certainly does because fear and worry about what others say and seeing differences become major stressors. That’s why there is a saying, ‘Do not scroll because there is too much pain in it.’ Some say if you do not scroll, you are healthier and happier.” (Interview with LW, May 22, 2023).

Adolescents’ understanding of the stressors they face is an essential first step in dealing with daily challenges and pressures. Awareness of stressors helps identify the sources of stress and develop strategies for managing it.

“If you want to solve a problem, first you need to find out what the problem is. Second, you figure out how to differentiate the problems so you know which are the main issues and which are underlying. This process is structured. Third, you determine solutions. Then, you plan the implementation of these solutions. Fifth, you carry out the solutions, and finally, you evaluate them” (Interview with LW, May 22, 2023).

Understanding stress needs to be developed properly with the aim of training adolescents to manage their stress effectively, as prolonged stress can negatively affect physical health. Moreover, it is important to recognize that the level of stress varies among individuals, including adolescents.

Adolescents’ Understanding of Self-Actualization

Self-actualization is a process in which an individual strives to achieve better life goals by utilizing all their potential. The mediums used for self-actualization vary widely, encompassing both the use of social media and other forms of expression without social media. Platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook have become popular social media channels for adolescents to interact and share information. However, based on the findings of this study, not all adolescents use social media to showcase or explore their abilities and talents.

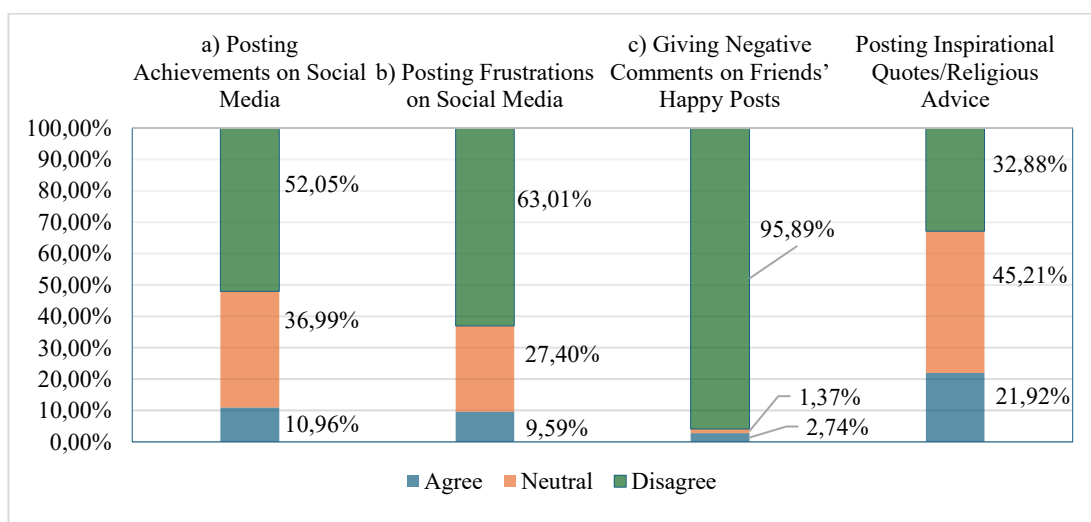


Figure 5. Way of Self-actualization on Social Media

Source: Research March - May 2023

Figure 5 shows that the majority of respondents disagreed with expressing what they experience or feel on social media, with 52.05% and 63% (Figures 5a and 5b) particularly reluctant to share negative experiences. Although adolescents enjoy searching for information on social media, only about

10.96% of respondents post about their achievements, and just 9.59% share their frustrations on these platforms. This indicates that they still maintain boundaries around their personal spaces. When they do share happiness or frustration, they tend to use the “close friend” feature. This is illustrated in a social experiment with several adolescents, for example:

“When stressed, I post on social media only using the close friend feature, which is really for close friends. I just post songs that reflect my mood and do not directly show my stress. Close friends include only my closest friends; family or relatives are not included because I’m not that close with them.” (Interview PU, March 8, 2023)

“I never update social media much. At most, I update activities like organization events or give a brief life update. But if I have problems, I just talk to close friends.” (Interview SE, March 8, 2023)

“In general, I rarely post on social media; maybe when I’m out, I make a snap about the place. Posting photos of myself makes me afraid of being seen as ‘cheesy’ by others. Usually, I post with friends or my partner. Posting myself makes me feel insecure, and maybe it’s just my fear. Nowadays, even a little ‘cheesy’ gets comments.” (Interview AU, March 8, 2023)

This tendency may be because adolescents feel more comfortable interacting with peers, while interactions with adults often come with more judgment than support. Experts suggest that adolescents tend to listen more to their peers than to adults. Therefore, peer groups can serve as important spaces for self-exploration and learning (Rasimin & Hamdi, 2018).

On the one hand, social media provides adolescents with opportunities to express themselves, showcase talents, and communicate with others, gaining recognition and support from peers or communities. On the other hand, adolescents’ understanding of self-actualization can be negatively influenced by unhealthy social media use. Social media can intensify social comparisons, where adolescents may compare themselves to others they see online, potentially damaging their self-perception. Feelings of dissatisfaction, insecurity, or social anxiety may arise when they feel less successful or not as good as others portrayed on these platforms.

Adolescents tend to view things based on differences with others. When asked, “What makes you worried?” they answered, “Afraid of being talked about.” When asked why, they said, “Just scared, afraid of being judged or talked about. Sometimes, they think about it for days. Especially since social media shows that to be accepted, you must fit a certain ‘model’ or role, and your environment must be a certain way. If you are different, it is seen as uncool or bad.” (Interview LW, May 22, 2023).

Therefore, it is important for adolescents to develop a healthy understanding of social media use in their self-actualization process. They need to recognize their unique value and talents regardless of social media popularity or recognition. Adolescents should appreciate their own abilities and interests without comparing themselves to others. This is crucial because adolescence (ages 12–19) can be challenging. Peer groups can help identify problems such as issues with friends, parents, or school (Rasimin & Hamdi, 2018).

“They only open up to close friends because that is their comfortable space. Adolescents are very sensitive about comfort or discomfort when the ‘vibe’ is strong.” (Wawancara LW, 22 Mei 2023).

Fundamentally, individuals with healthy self-actualization can love and enjoy the process they undergo. They can make peace with themselves when making mistakes and view these experiences as opportunities to improve themselves. In this way, adolescents can see things realistically and rationally. An individual’s behavior, both inner and outer, is not static but influenced by their social environment, customs, and group habits, changing as their environment changes (Dja’ali dalam Jalaluddin, 2018:150).

It is vital for adolescents to understand that what appears on social media may not always reflect real life. They should remember that much of social media content is edited or selectively shared to present a better image. Adolescents also need to appreciate the importance of spending time in the real world and setting limits on social media use. They must maintain a balance between online interaction

and offline activities. In this regard, family and friends play a crucial role in encouraging and reminding each other. Family serves as a source of love and affection as well as a medium for learning and socialization (Enjang & Dulwahab, 2018).

Adolescents' Understanding of Motivation to Perform Self-Healing

Self-healing is the process of restoring physical, emotional, and spiritual balance within oneself. Based on open-ended questions given to respondents, self-healing is described as the process of healing oneself from unpleasant inner conditions or calming oneself from stress through various activities such as playing music, storytelling, riding motorcycles, hiking, exercising, and so on. This aligns with the psychologist's statement:

"Self-healing, what is it really? Because it is basically a healing process. The ways to heal are diverse — through spirituality, movement, art, and various others. Healing oneself with one's own ability means using cognitive ability, perception, memory. Everything empowers what is within oneself" (Interview LW, May 22, 2023).

Basically, adolescents also want to heal themselves when they experience stress or inner tension. They have the motivation to perform self-healing. As illustrated in Figure 6, the data show:

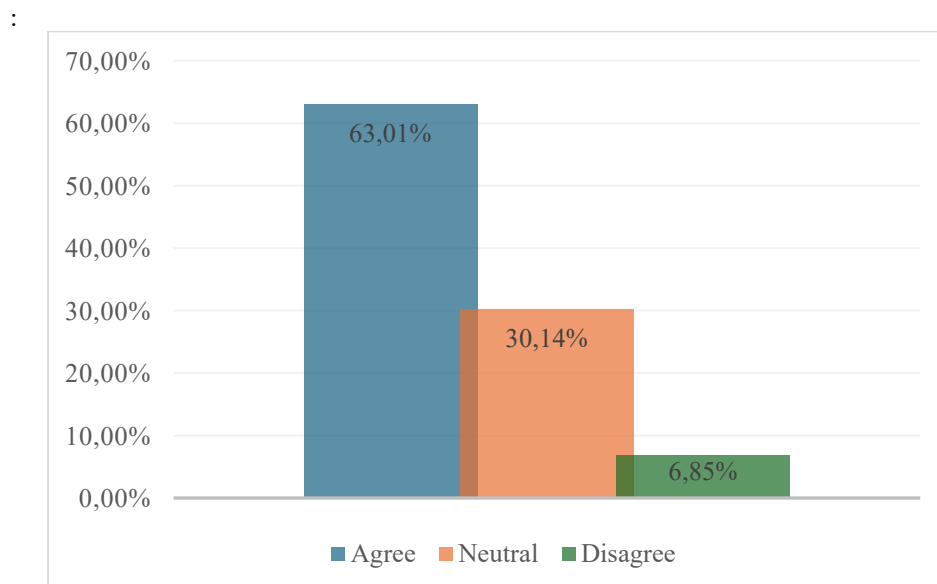


Figure 6. Desire to Learn How to Do Self-Healing

Source: Research March – May 2023

Based on the data from Figure 6, 63.01% expressed a desire to learn how to do self-healing. Adolescents strive to find out what needs to be done. Their strong desire to engage in self-healing can be understood through the framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) introduced by Ryan and Deci (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT highlights three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In the context of self-healing, the need for autonomy is very important. Adolescents who feel they have control over their healing process tend to be more motivated to seek and apply effective strategies. Their efforts to seek mental health information through webinars and social media content reflect a desire to manage their own well-being. They actively seek knowledge and skills to face mental challenges, showing an intrinsic drive to achieve competence in managing their mental health. Moreover, the desire to connect with supportive resources and communities is also evident, fulfilling the need for relatedness in SDT. These findings are supported by statements from some adolescents who said they actively seek information about mental health, either through webinars or Instagram content.

“I am really interested in mental health content and have attended mental health webinars.”
(Interview YU, March 7, 2023)

“My social media activity includes looking at quote accounts (motivational) to stay encouraged. I’m very interested in mental health content because I have personal issues.” (Interview PU, March 8, 2023)

“I am also interested in mental health issues because, during early COVID, I often saw mental health topics on Twitter. Then I became more aware of friends who were down and once had an assignment to make a mental health campaign.” (Interview AU, March 8, 2023)

By nature, humans are beings who can be educated. They possess various potentials that can be developed. Humans have the drive to grow because basically: 1) humans are born helpless; 2) they have a nature to grow; 3) they have the exploratory ability; 4) they have the drive to fulfill needs; and 5) they require help and protection (Barnadib dalam Jalaluddin, 2018:56-57). Through self-healing, we get the opportunity to know ourselves more deeply, identify our strengths and weaknesses, and develop hidden potential.

However, it should be remembered that adolescents’ understanding of motivation for self-healing can be very individual. Some adolescents may have a deeper or more detailed understanding, while others may just be beginning to explore this concept. It is always important to provide appropriate support and information about self-healing so they can make healthy and positive choices for their well-being. “Every child is born with different abilities. These differences include physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, and social conditions and abilities” (Triwardhani, 2012:2).

Adolescents’ Understanding of Spirituality as a Means to Overcome Stress

Spirituality generally relates to the search for life’s meaning. It is a worldview that refers to religious or ethical values, which are manifested in a person’s attitudes or the spirit behind their actions. The aspect of spirituality can be used as a medium to cope with stress in adolescents. Adolescents’ awareness of how they perceive their relationship with God and with other people can serve as a means to address problems in their lives. Based on the analysis of open-ended questions in a questionnaire distributed to 73 high school adolescents in Bandung City, it was found that one of the self-healing efforts they undertake is calming themselves through meditation, worship (praying and reciting the Qur’an), introspection, and forgiving themselves. This aligns with the high percentage of adolescents’ understanding of the need for closeness to God, as shown in Figure 7 below:

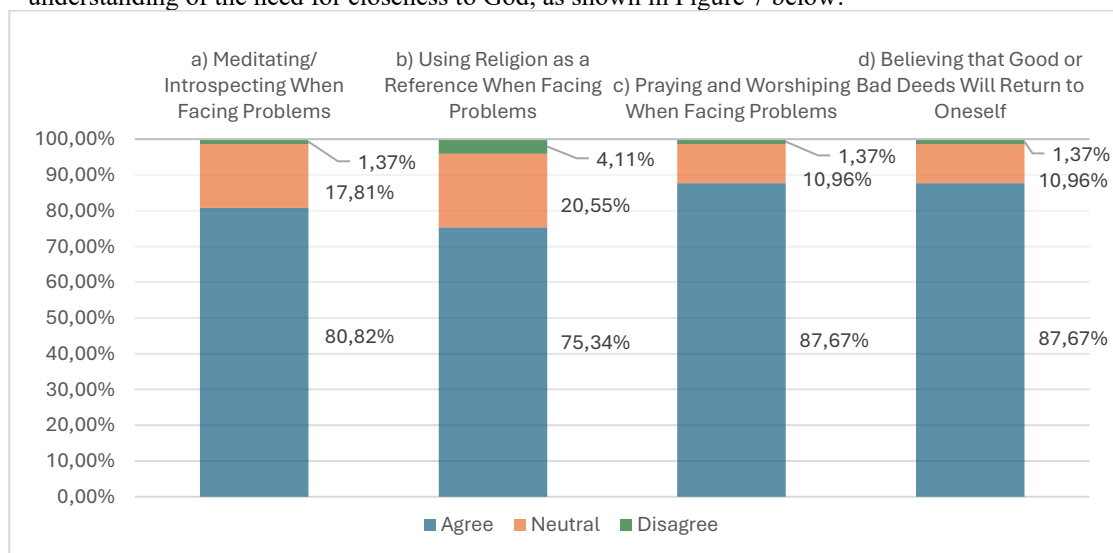


Figure 7. Teenagers’ Understanding of the Need for a Relationship with God
Source: Research March – May 2023

Figure 7 shows that more than 75% of respondents feel that making an effort to draw closer to the Creator is important when facing problems. Not only the relationship with God, but the need for good

relationships with fellow human beings can also serve as a medium for relieving stress among teenagers. Respondents acknowledge that forgiving others and doing good to others are important actions to take. In addition to outward-oriented actions, self-acceptance is also essential. This is illustrated in Figure 8 below:

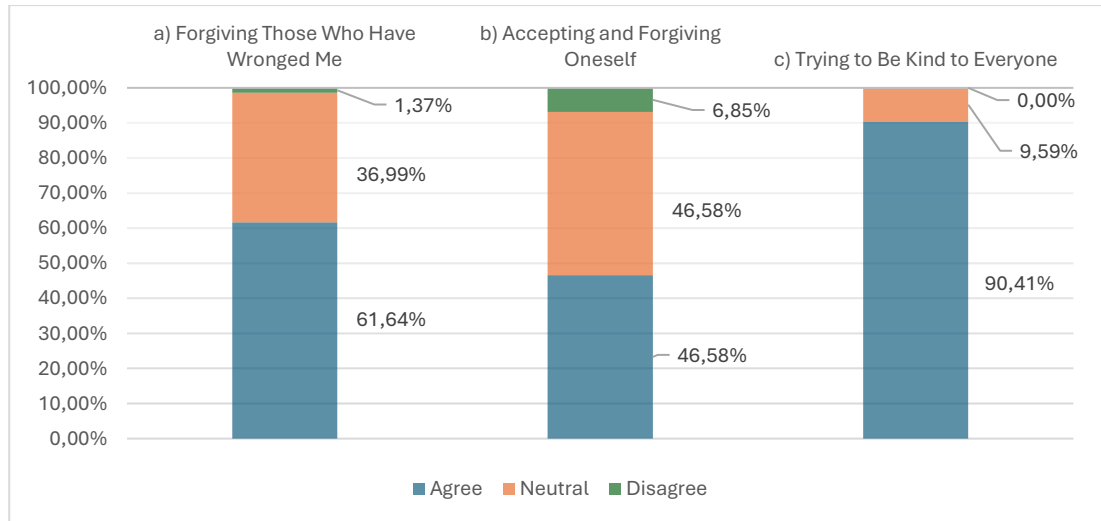


Figure 8. Teenagers' Understanding of the Need for Human Connection

Source: Research March - May 2023

Figure 8 shows that the respondents are aware of the importance of doing good to others and themselves. This aligns with their awareness that good and bad deeds will ultimately return to oneself (as illustrated in Figure 7d).

"... one way to heal through spirituality is by praying—this is a form of spirituality that certainly brings healing and recovery. Some people refer to it as self-love, a way of loving oneself by doing what one enjoys. When they do what they love, healing happens naturally. Self-healing can be that simple." (Interview with LW, May 22, 2023)

Teenagers' Understanding of Communication as a Medium to Cope with Stress

Expressing what one feels can be a way to release emotional "trash" within. This communication can be both verbal and nonverbal. This is illustrated in Figures 9 and 10 below:

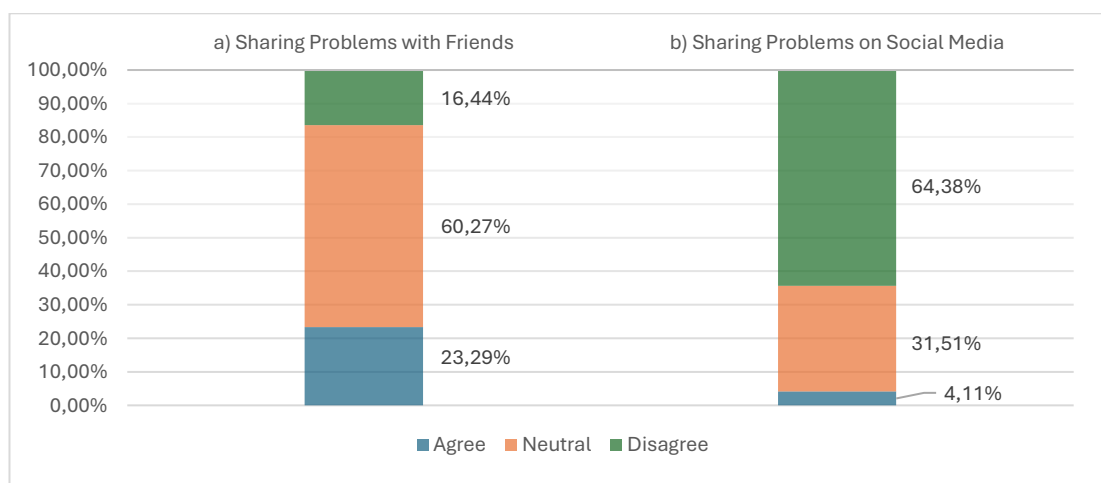


Figure 9. Communicating Problems Orally

Source: Research Results, March-May 2023

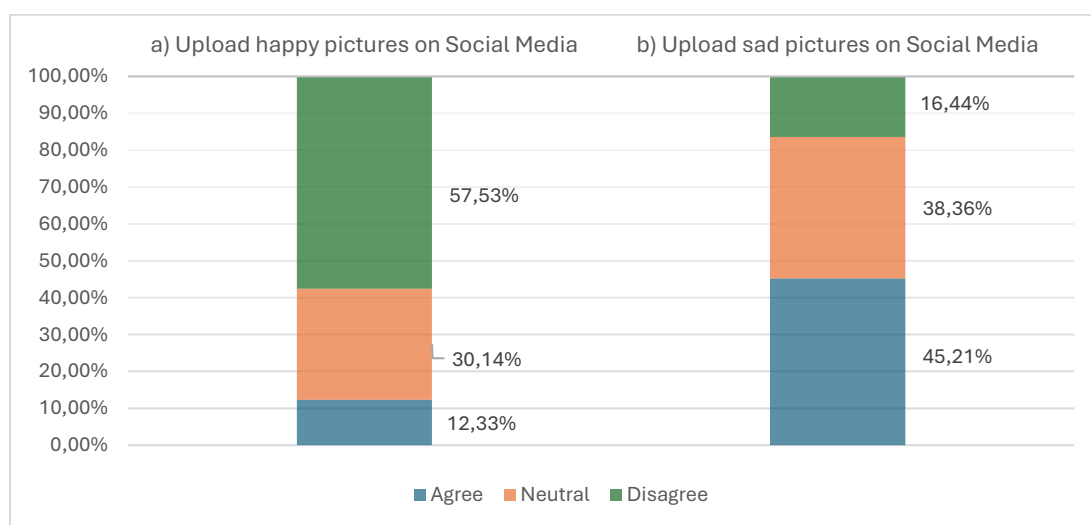


Figure 10. Communicating Problems Nonverbally

Source: Research Results, March-May 2023

However, most respondents still prefer to keep their personal matters private. As shown in Figure 9b, 64.38% disagreed with the idea of sharing problems on social media. This is also supported by data in Figure 10a, which shows that 57.53% dislike expressing their sadness on social media. Respondents who belong to Generation Z still maintain their privacy. Basically, humans have free will over themselves. They have the potential to think and give meaning to everything that happens to them based on experience, perception, and understanding. Individuals act based on these experiences and understandings and toward specific stimuli. These actions represent rational social actions aimed at achieving goals using the most appropriate means (Weber dalam Ritzer, 2008: 137).

Spirituality and communication aspects can play a role in helping teenagers cope with stress. Through spirituality, teenagers are assisted in finding meaning in life. With clear beliefs and life goals, teenagers can better face stress, as they possess a broader view of life and its challenges. Spiritual practices such as meditation, prayer, or reflection help promote calmness and reduce stress. The human conscience, in everyday life, essentially functions nobly, acting like a fair judge. When humans face conflict, contradictions, or doubts, the conscience acts as a critical internal controller. Thus, every human action is, in fact, always monitored (warned) to act within certain limits and not to cross them. (Prawira, 2017:72).

Through meditation, sports, or inspirational activities, teenagers can maintain emotional balance, which is vital for mental well-being. These activities allow them to release negative energy. Additionally, community or group involvement can offer emotional and social support. Through interactions with community members who share similar values, teenagers may feel supported and find a place to share experiences and learn from others.

Communication is also vital in overcoming stress. Receiving support and being able to communicate with parents and trusted friends helps teenagers manage stress. By sharing their problems, they feel heard, understood, and supported.

"Telling stories is one way to release emotional garbage. So, one of the ways is talking and moving. ... When negative energy arises, and you do not know where to release it, it might attack the weakest organ in your body — such as the stomach, a migraine, blurry vision, itchy skin, eczema, or acne." (Interview with LW, May 22, 2023)

When teenagers face interpersonal conflicts or problems, effective communication skills are crucial. Through open, honest, and empathetic dialogue, they can find mutually beneficial solutions, reducing stress caused by such conflicts. According to David and Wasserman, "Communication is essential to human personality growth. A lack of communication can hinder personality development" (Rakhmat, 2019). Additionally, good communication skills help teenagers develop important social abilities for interacting with others.

In-depth analysis shows that self-healing among Gen Z teenagers on social media is a complex phenomenon closely related to interpersonal interactions and communication quality. Social media, as the main interaction platform for this generation, provides easy access to social support and information that can facilitate the healing process. Teenagers can express emotions, seek validation, and find supportive online communities, which can reduce feelings of isolation and boost self-confidence (Valkenburg & Peter, 2009). Access to information on mental health and coping strategies is beneficial for some, although inaccurate or misleading information can pose risks. However, the anonymity of online media can also trigger cyberbullying and negative comments that harm mental health (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015).

This illustrates the importance of interaction quality in building relationships and influencing psychological well-being. There is a transactional process showing how messages are exchanged simultaneously, shaping meaning and influencing individual perception (Barnlund, 2008). Aspects like empathy, clarity, and honesty foster mutual understanding, reduce miscommunication and resolve conflicts constructively. In the context of self-healing, supportive communication helps teenagers process emotions, develop coping strategies, and build resilience. Steinberg (2020) also aligns with this view, stating that supportive communication aids teenagers in identity development. He emphasizes that social support from peers and family can reduce mental health risks among teenagers. Therefore, it is essential for parents, educators, and other adults to create safe and supportive communication environments for teens.

Self-healing among Gen Z teens through social media is a complex process influenced by interpersonal interactions and communication quality. Developing effective communication strategies — including assertive communication, problem-solving skills, and the ability to seek professional support — is essential. Wise social media use, including limiting screen time, choosing positive content, and avoiding unhealthy social comparisons, is also crucial.

CONCLUSION

Social media is not the main stressor for teenagers. Only around 30% report stress due to social media posts. In reality, the highest stressors are family problems (71.2%), academic issues (60.3%), and parental demands (54.8%). The research shows that Generation Z teens are not inclined to express themselves openly through social media. About 52.05% disagree with posting achievements online, and 63% disagree with publicly posting frustrations on social media. However, this generation shows a high interest in seeking self-healing information on social media — about 63.01% of respondents express interest in viewing self-healing content or participating in webinars. Amid their stress, spirituality, and communication can serve as media to help teenagers manage stress. Among the 73 respondents, more than 75% agree that spirituality is crucial. Additionally, 23.29% of teens confide in friends when dealing with problems, though not necessarily through public social media platforms.

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