Findings

Young parents in this study, and especially young mothers, used the internet to meet adolescent developmental needs and to help navigate their roles as new parents. While such online interactions provided information and social connection, they also carried risks to the privacy and safety of young parents and their children.

- Participants engaged in social media for personal support and information sharing, but several reported experiencing judgment or bullying in such fora. These negative experiences were usually perpetrated by individuals known to the targets, and echoed stigma and bullying experienced offline.

- There was a great deal of variation in the degree and manner in which individual young parents took measures, such as managing privacy settings and being selective about social media use, to protect online privacy.

- The advice of parents, teachers, and other trusted adults was cited as influential to young parents' online privacy practices.

Conclusions

Online bullying may replicate or reinforce offline targeting of vulnerable youth. However, young parents often take measures to protect their own and their children’s online privacy.

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