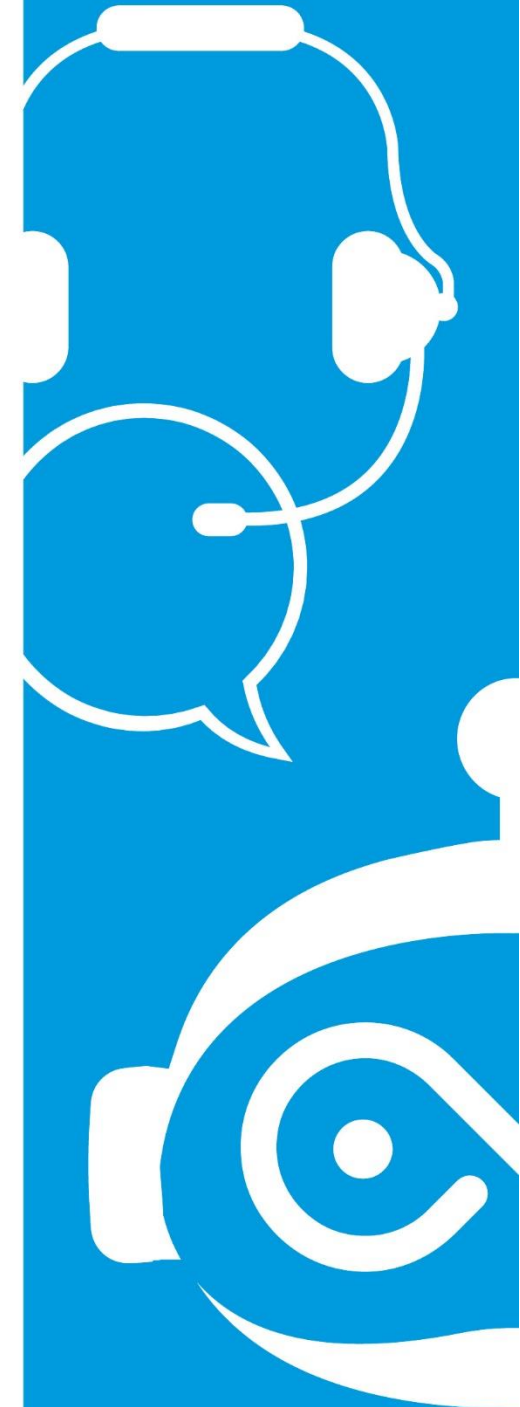




# IMAGE SHARING PLATFORM: PINTEREST

## What is it?

Pinterest is a **digital tool** which works as an image sharing and social media service designed to enable saving and discovery of information on the internet using images in the form of pinboards. It is used as a social site among young populations where they collect and share images of anything they find interesting or inspirational.



### How can it impact the sexual and reproductive health of youth?

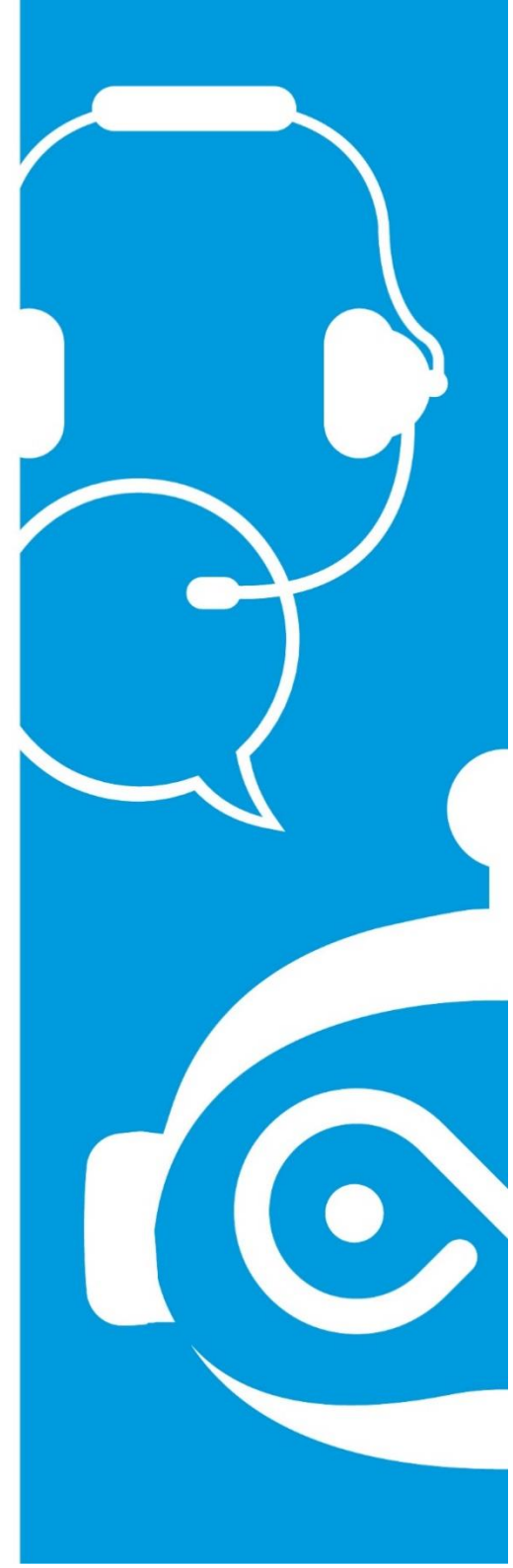
With the use of Pinterest, young people can discover and explore different interests and activities, and through online networking, they can meet like-minded people and people who have the same interests as themselves. They may be difficult to find in the real world due to prejudice or other negative implications. While Instagram has proven to negatively impact the mental health of youth, Pinterest can provide a good social media alternative with a positive environment for these populations.<sup>1</sup>

Pinterest also provides inspiration and motivation in terms of caring for healthy relationships, a healthy life and a healthy body. Youth can follow known and verified organisations and institutions and their pins, which can be a valuable source of SRH information. Also, they can store the pins to their boards (private or not) and if they find something useful, they can look at it anytime they want.

However, as with most digital tools, caution is required when browsing Pinterest. In a study conducted by NBC, it was discovered that Pinterest's browser provides quick access to images of younger girls, which are usually searched for by men in order to access child pornography.<sup>2</sup> Another one of the present downsides to this platform is its addictive nature.

<sup>1</sup> Carr, "Why It's Time To Switch To Pinterest."

<sup>2</sup> Cook, "Men on Pinterest Are Creating Sex-Themed Image Boards of Little Girls. The Platform Makes It Easy."



## Supporting youth's sexual & reproductive health in the digital age: BEST PRACTICES

Alongside this, the self-image expectations created can sometimes be unrealistic and triggering for young populations. People post aesthetic photos of their bodies, and glamorous pastimes such as travelling, yet the images are sometimes created with the help of Photoshop, which is left unrevealed to users. The results of a study<sup>3</sup> revealed that certain factors in a social media environment, such as Pinterest, may influence women to engage in social comparison or intend to try self-enhancing tactics such as extreme dieting or exercise. Relatedly, Pinterest presents posts promoting certain 'wellness' products, which drives consumerism among youth.

<sup>3</sup> Unis and Sällström, "Adolescents' Conceptions of Learning and Education about Sex and Relationships."



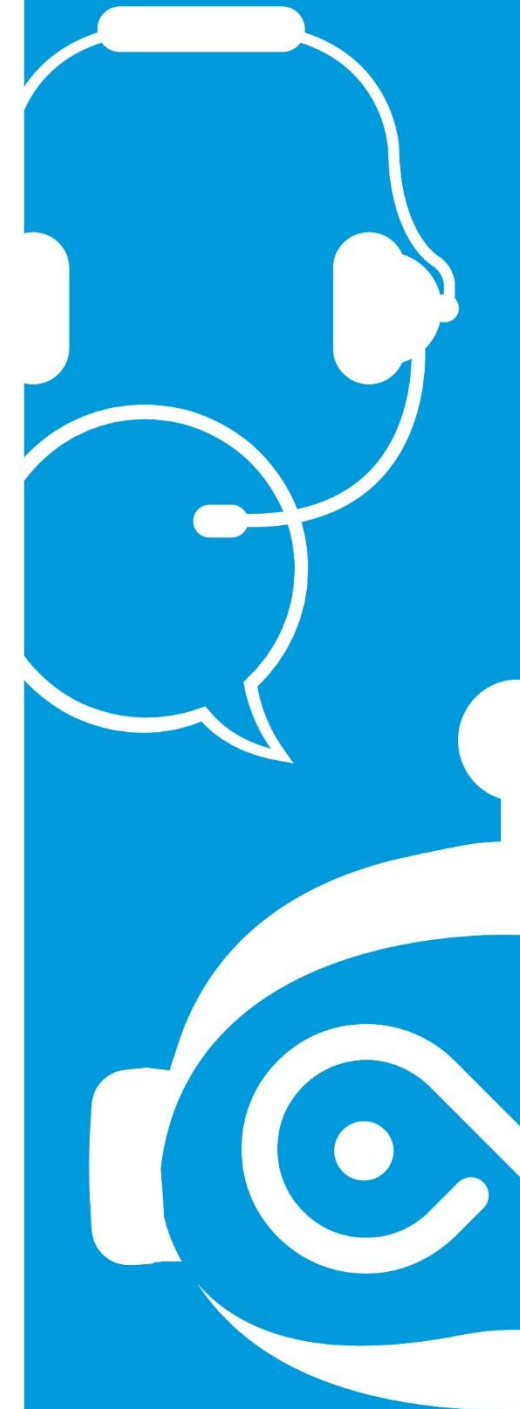
### What are some ways in which youth can be supported?

- Introduce them with the platform's [teen safety options](#). This can be a useful tool for using Pinterest but also to improve their digital literacy.
- Inform youth about safety and possible abuses when posting their photographs and their personal data online. If youth see sexually explicit content, advise them to refer to this link for assistance: <https://help.pinterest.com/en/article/report-nudity>.
- Educate youth on image-obsessed and consumerist culture. Youth should be made aware of the problem with unrealistic expectations from social media, Pinterest included.
- Inform them of the possibility of misleading information about SRH. It is important for youth seeking SRH information online to always check the credibility of information.
- Discuss how obsessive behaviours present online. Any excessive lifestyles can be dangerous, including the glorification of eating disorders and excessive physical activity.

### Related digital phenomena/tools:

See sheets:

- Privacy: Setting privacy settings
- Cyberbullying: Catfishing
- Cyberbullying: Trolls and bots



### Further reading:

- Carr, Mandy. "Why It's Time To Switch To Pinterest." ScreenRant, April 10, 2022. <https://screenrant.com/pinterest-alternative-instagram-comparison-mental-health/>.
- Cook, Jesselyn. "Men on Pinterest Are Creating Sex-Themed Image Boards of Little Girls. The Platform Makes It Easy.," 2023. <https://www.wmbfnews.com/2023/03/09/men-pinterest-are-creating-sex-themed-image-boards-little-girls-platform-makes-it-easy/>.
- Unis, Brian David, and Christina Sällström. "Adolescents' Conceptions of Learning and Education about Sex and Relationships." *American Journal of Sexuality Education* 15, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 25–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15546128.2019.1617816>.

