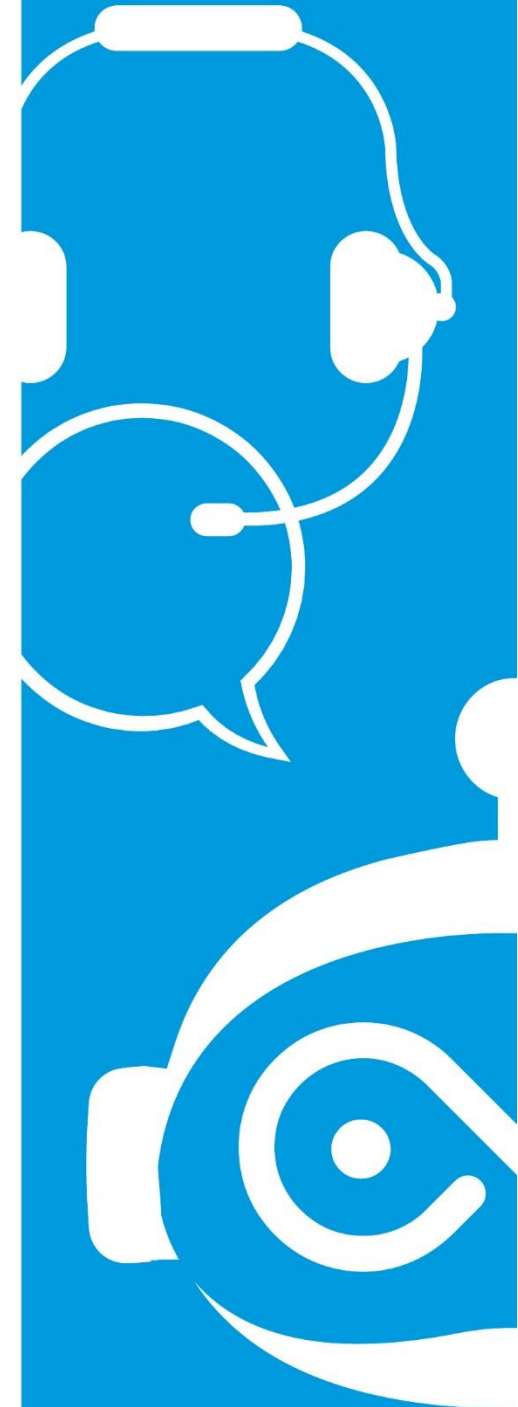




SOCIAL MEDIA: TIKTOK

What is it?

TikTok is a **digital tool** that enables users to create and share short-form videos, often set to music. TikTok, introduced in 2016, has emerged as a dynamic digital tool, revolutionising the way users engage with short-form videos. Renowned for its music-driven content, TikTok provides a stage for youth worldwide to craft captivating and often viral videos, including the popular TikTok dances. It's celebrated as a hub of boundless creativity, fostering a global community where the younger generation can unleash their artistic flair, entertain, and express themselves freely. The app's meteoric rise is a testament to its appeal among youth, who gravitate toward its unique blend of entertainment and social interaction.

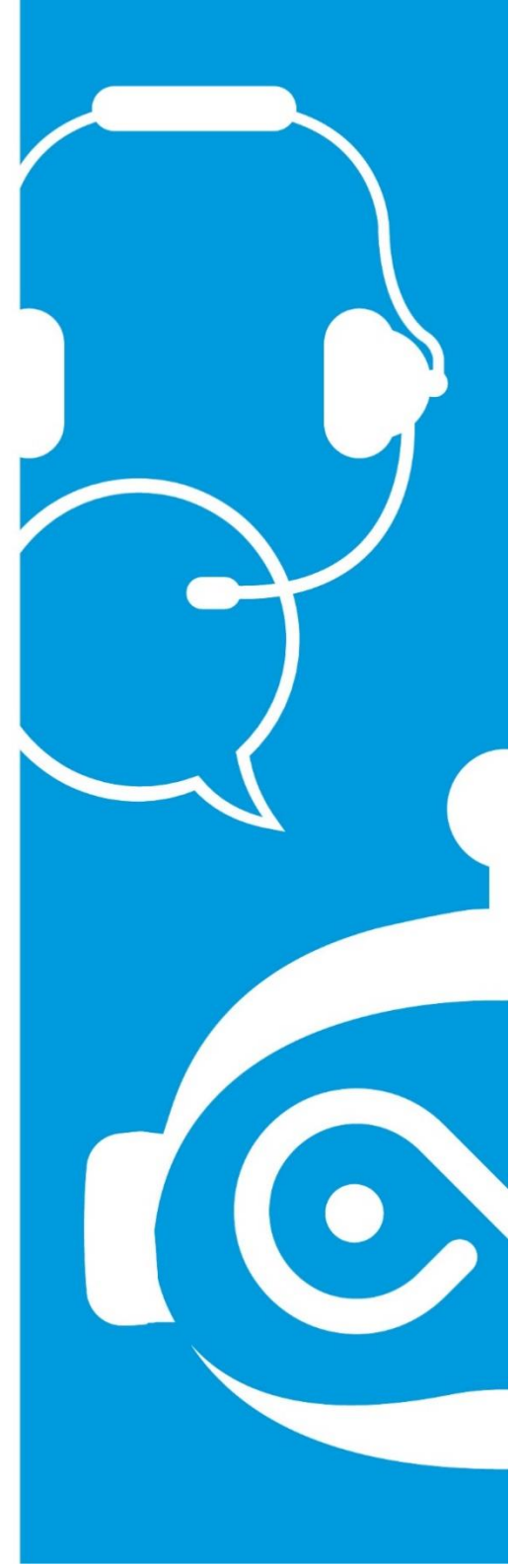


How can it impact the sexual and reproductive health of youth?

TikTok - in a relation to SRH - offers a unique opportunity to engage youth in SRH discussions through creative content. Informative videos about sexual health, consent, and relationships can be shared in a visually engaging format that resonates with young audiences. Educational content on TikTok can fill gaps in formal SRH education.

Yet, TikTok's format can also present challenges. The platform's algorithm-driven content curation might expose youth to explicit content or reinforce stereotypes about sexuality. The algorithmic content curation may unintentionally filter out valuable sex education material, impacting its reach and comprehensiveness. Additionally, while TikTok's fast-paced nature encourages engagement, it can sometimes result in superficial understanding of SRH topics.

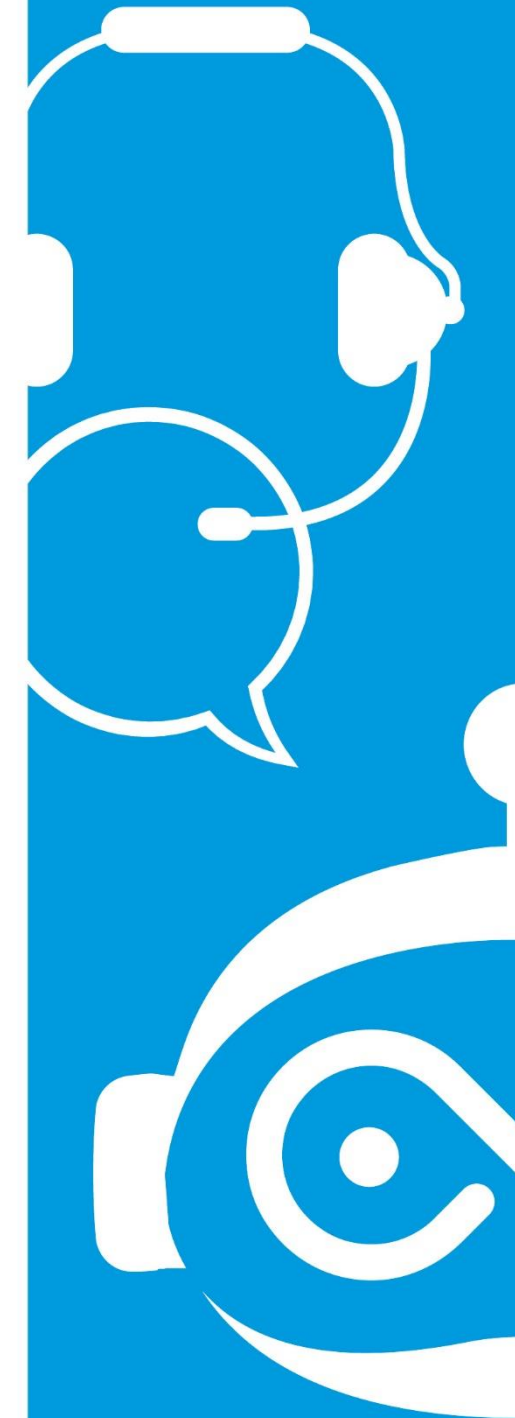
Another point of contention with the use of TikTok is the platform's strict censorship policy. TikTok's censorship of information related to SRH has been a growing concern for activists and users alike. The platform has been known to remove videos that discuss topics such as contraception, abortion, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This censorship can have a negative impact on people's ability to access accurate and essential information about their health and well-being.



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

One of the main concerns about TikTok's censorship is that it disproportionately affects women and marginalised groups. For example, a study by the Center for Countering Digital Hate found that TikTok was more likely to remove videos about abortion than videos about other controversial topics, such as gun violence and the death penalty.

TikTok's censorship of SRH can have a number of negative consequences. For example, it can make it more difficult for people to learn about different contraception methods and how to use them correctly. It can also make it more difficult for people to identify and treat STIs. Additionally, TikTok's censorship can contribute to the stigma surrounding SRH topics, making it more difficult for people to talk about their health concerns and seek help.



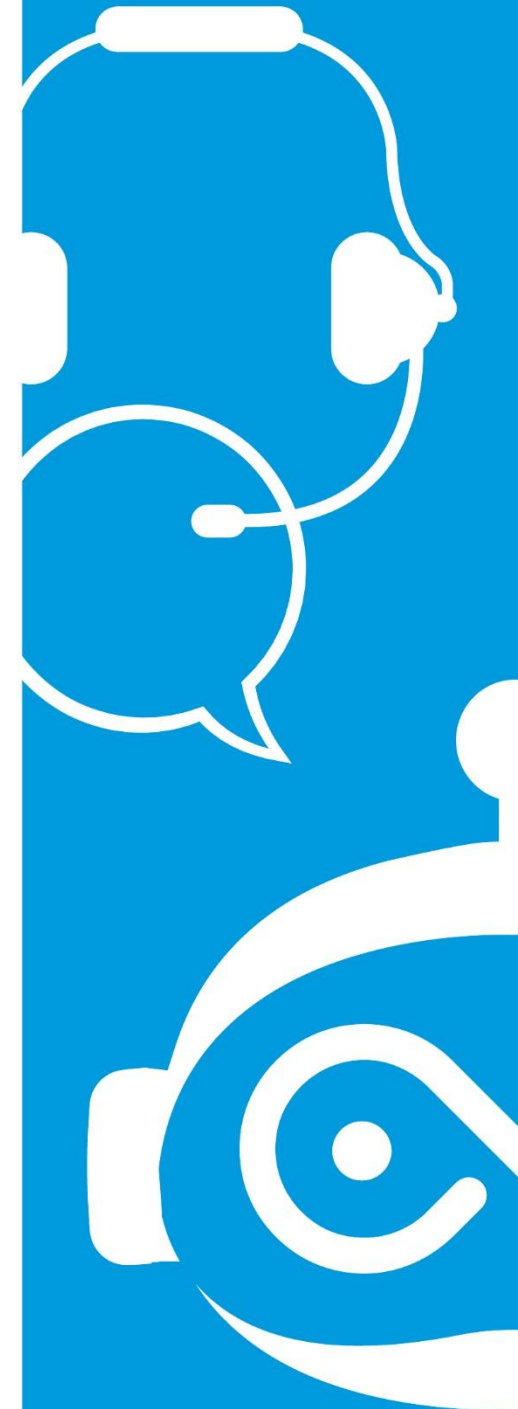
What are some ways in which youth can be supported?

- Encourage the development of concise and engaging TikTok videos that provide accurate SRH information and challenge misconceptions.
- Teach TikTok users to scrutinise content, question its credibility, and seek supplementary sources to enhance their understanding.
- Guide youth in using TikTok's features to report inappropriate content and engage in respectful discussions.
- Support digital well-being by advising on setting time limits and following positive content creators to maintain a healthy TikTok experience.

Related digital phenomena/tools:

See sheets:

- Whatsapp and other IM apps
- Social media: YouTube
- SRH-related censorship online



Further reading:

- Slater, K. (2022). "Theorizing Cultures of Oversharing on TikTok." In *LGBTQ Digital Cultures: A Global Perspective*.
- Soriano-Ayala, E., Bonillo Díaz, M., & Cala, V. C. (2022). "TikTok and Child Hypersexualization: Analysis of Videos and Narratives of Minors." *Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Almeria, Almeria, Spain*.

