

THE MIND INSIDE EPISODE 2 | FILM TRANSCRIPT

TITLE CARD	TRIGGER WARNING- The following film contains discussion about teen suicide.
TITLE CARD	The students portrayed in this film, along with their families, have graciously granted us permission to share their stories.
STACY ATHOW	There was a crisis team call pretty early in the morning to come to the Alumni Conference Room which is where we convene at the high school; and so when I came in, I said, "What happened? What's going on?" And everybody sat silent and just looked at me, and it felt like it took everything for the assistant principal to just say it. And when he said it, it kind of hit me in a way that I couldn't hear it. I remember it just being really – I said, "No." And then [sighs] it was just really devastating. It was hard.
BETH MCGRATH	So I had him in a first period class, and that day he was absent, and second period our assistant principal came up and pulled me into the hall and told me. And um–this class that was in here at that time were all friends of him, same grade level, same type class that he was in first period, advanced ninth grade English; and I knew there were lots of friends in there. And I–It was a lot. I broke down. It was a loud scene in the hall. So then I had to come in and we told these kids.
DR. MARK ADLER	My son was Reid Christian Adler, and he was the victim of cyberbullying, and intimidation from one student, a fellow student of his that led him to make the decision to take his own life based upon a mistake that he made. And the struggle that we've had with that over the years is we all make mistakes and no mistake is so big that we can't wrap our arms around it and learn from the mistake and take that learning forward."
CAMMIE WELAND	What happened with Reid was probably one of the most devastating days of teaching, my life probably. I think Reid occupied the same breath and the same space and the same air that I did – He reminded me a lot of my son so that was painful to digest.
DR. MARK ADLER	Unfortunately, Reid used a permanent solution for a temporary situation. And he's changed the landscape of our family, our community, and our school forever. And I wished that he didn't take that impulse decision, but we can't go back.
ERIC DEPUE	I think from that moment on, always wanted to create an environment where my students will always know I love them. And it's hard because there are some students who no matter how many times you are real with them and you – prove that you're willing to do anything to help them and you're an advocate for them, they will disappoint you, they will hurt you, they will lash out at you. And we always say we just love them harder. Just love them harder.
JASON JACKSON	What's up, Danny? What's up, man? Okay, yes. Hey, Haley? Yep, got it. You do? You don't?
DR. MARK ADLER	I'm very grateful that cellphones, electronics, the internet, social media wasn't there when I was growing up. I'm not sure if my path would be the same.
TITLE CARD	95% of teens have smartphones.

SALLY NELLSON	Raise your hand if you have a phone. How old were you when you got a phone?
KENZIE	I was in fourth grade when I got a phone.
KONNER	I think it was my eighth-grade year. It was right between the two semesters. I got it for my birthday. It was after much complaining.
DR. BILL JELKIN	For today's kids, that phone and the social connectivity that comes along with it is almost a necessity to them; and many times even with my own child, I have a 15-year-old boy and a 11-year-old boy, and even with them, they would take any punishment that I would give them as long as I didn't take their phone away.
SALLY NELLSON	What is the longest period of time that you have gone since you've been in middle school without having a phone, an iPad, a laptop?
HAMED	Like, um. { SALLY NELLSON: Including the weekends and -} Five days?
SALLY NELLSON	Five days? And how was that for you?
HAMED	It was pretty easy.
SALLY NELLSON	Okay. What about you?
CAMERON	An hour.
SALLY NELLSON	An hour's the longest you've ever gone?
CAMERON	Yes.
AUSTIN	When I was in third grade, I would play on the playground and I would talk to kids and I would go on playdates, but now kids have these brand-new iPhones. They're just scrolling through social media, using TikTok or whatever the name is now. I just don't think it's good mentally for them or physically as well, you know.
JULIO	Back in middle school, like, oh, I had three Instagram accounts. Two of them I still have. One of them I just deleted because that one I was just kind of like ashamed of, honestly. And that was like, the one I deleted was like my very first Instagram account. When I posted like my very first picture, I started getting like followers and likes, and I was just like, oh my gosh, that feels really good. And so like, on the next one I just put on some hashtags like follow for follow and those trendy hashtags, and it felt really good just getting more likes and more followers.
DR. JEFF BOSTIC	Social media is a very complicated topic. The biggest problem is that it's happening right now in front of us. We didn't even know what this was 10/20 years ago. We're starting to see certain trends are becoming like viable for us to recognize specifically. There are advantages to social media both in terms of connecting with people and learning about things.
TAE	I see us like as a complete generation being more connected than any other generation before since we have our phones and everything and since we're on like technology and things like that that let us talk to people all day. We're like more connected with people that are outside our own little circles –and we get to like learn about other people's experiences,

	other people's like views on things without having to physically meet them, and I think like there's a lot of benefits to that as opposed to just having the physical interactions which would be like your little small circle that you normally have.
DR. JEFF BOSTIC	Unfortunately, the downside that we're starting to see is too often kids identify what kind of person they are by how they're perceived. And so concretely, a big issue that we see right now with kids is they gauge their life by the number of likes that they get on social media sites.
ABBEY	When I was in middle school, I started a few fan pages for a few pop culture things that I was really into at that time. It became sort of my life; and so all I would think about was like what am I going to post next, how many likes am I getting. I felt as though if I didn't like post for a day or interact on the internet for like a day, I would lose everything; and it became a very kind of, in my opinion, unhealthy obsession. And so I started to realize that like, oh wait, I'm literally living on my phone all the time. I get home and like literally all I see is screen. It's like hurting my eyes. I can't focus anymore.
BETH MCGRATH	We've all talked about it, seen the posts about the presentation of your online life is always so much better than the reality of it.
SALLY NELLSON	So you're flipping through Instagram and you're seeing, you know, all your friends, like especially over Christmas vacation and summer vacation, you're like, "Look where they are." They're in Fiji or they're at the zoo or they're at a sleepover or they're at this or they're at that.
HAMED	They could just be there – it could just be a fake photo and be like stolen from the internet or it could just be them like looking, going to the zoo once in like a year.
BETH MCGRATH	For adults sometimes it's even hard to get that perspective. Well, when you're on that rollercoaster of adolescence, there's no perspective a lot of times. And everybody's life seems better, everything seems better.
TITLE CARD	45% of teens say social media makes them feel overwhelmed by drama. 43% feel pressured to only post content that makes them look good. 37% feel pressure to post content that will get lots of likes and/or comments 26% say social media makes them feel worse about their own life.
KAYLEE	The pressure to be perfect is really hard.
SALLY NELLSON	And who sets that bar for perfect? Like how do you know if you've achieved it?
KONNER	It like goes out a chain. It's like you got like your Kardashian level of like high-end superstar. Like this is what it's like. Then it trickles down to like in your area like who's really popular and then you have, you know, like that one really popular girl at school that has like two, three thousand followers and everyone wants to be like here; and then like that's the standard for your school.
BETH MCGRATH	Well, there's no denying the social media aspect and how that has influenced the mental health of kids and has exacerbated the reactions and, yeah, you break up with a boyfriend or something happens and it's – you can't get away from it.

CAMMIE WELAND	Good morning, people.
CLASS	Good morning.
CAMMIE WELAND	How we doing today?
CLASS	Great.
CAMMIE WELAND	Good. Today what we're going to do is we're going to continue our discussion – When I first started teaching, come in students, open your books, let's learn and the student was more engaged and they were more focused. Now, they want to be entertained which is fun. But it chips away at, I think, that content learning because you're competing against the phone.
TEACHER	– yesterday. Good. If these side with one another, what groups in this one? Okay, can you tell me a little bit about what you meant?
STACY ATHOW	Some of the things that I'm seeing just day to day are social media being paramount. I mean we have kids coming in that are being bullied on social media. We have kids that are saying things on social media that they won't say face to face with their friends. When we get them into mediation, they can have a good conversation and come to an agreement; but when they're on social media, the things they say are horrific. When we read them back to them, sometimes they can't believe they said those things because they're so mean and horrible.
SALLY NELLSON	Have you ever been hurt by something you've seen on social media?
KAYLEE	I think that everyone has been hurt by something that they've seen on social media
KAMRIN	Just not everybody necessarily speaks up about it or like says that it hurt them. We do a really good job of just because it's easier to just swipe past something than to type something out instead of like what my grandma would do is she'd go on there and type a paragraph of how she feels and then all these people are commenting about how they don't agree with her or they do. We do a lot better job of just swiping past.
SALLY NELLSON	You swipe past it, but does that swipe the feeling away?
KAMRIN	No.
KONNER	You have a bad day, you post about it or someone like really made you mad, you post about it. And then if you're that person, you see it and, I don't know, it hurts. And like he said, you can swipe past it but you still kind of sit on it and you think, oh, well, I don't know what I did to make this person so mad. It always hurts no matter what.
TITLE CARD	70% of teens say that anxiety and depression are a major problem among people their age.
DR. JEFF BOSTIC	We've also seen unfortunately a linear relationship with the amount of time that people spend on social media and their inclination to feel despondent, depressed, and anxious. So the more time you spend, the more likely you are to feel discouraged and negative about things.
BETH MCGRATH	Well, any time you're dealing with a population of people, certainly teenagers, you're dealing with all sorts of levels – of mental health;, qualities of mental health; and I think for me in an English classroom, especially where there's a lot of writing and where there's opportunities to

	share things and to explore things – I think we have an insight into kids’ mental health status and children share what they experience and the challenges as a teacher has changed a lot in the 32 years because of that.
DR. BILL JELKIN	Some of the things that I deal with on a daily basis are students who are writing about killing themselves.
STACY ATHOW	So what happens when they do things like fail a test, they are absolutely unabashedly like devastated as if everything – I mean we’re talking about kids that have taken high level classes all the way through. They take an AP Cal class and they fail their first test. I realize it’s a little devastating, but the level of devastation is a lot higher than we’ve seen before. I mean they go straight to I want to kill myself. You know, it’s just a test.
ABBEY	I think that the romanticization of mental illness on social media is making our discussion of mental illness itself like depression a lot serious. We see that in social media when people joke about suicide whenever they’re like sad. So like they call themselves depressed even though they’re sad for like a few days. So I think that calling that depression, first of all, is an appropriation of what depression actually is and then further in our like, in our memes or entertaining little posts that are meant to make us laugh, we see one negative thing happen to a person in that post and then that person will say, “I want to die.” And so that kind of, that takes away the seriousness of the issue of suicide and mental illness in our culture, and I think that’s part of the reasons why it’s getting worse because it’s not a serious thing anymore. It’s a joke.
KONNER	I think the hardest part of it is – I mean it’s a horrible thing, but so many people just joke about it like, “Oh, I failed a test. Oh, that’s it. Guys, I’m going home and I’m doing it.” Like it’s so hard to discern when it’s true and when it’s not. And then when it is genuine, it’s, okay, do I talk to them,? Do I talk to the counselor? Are they going to be made at me if I talk to someone about this? It’s just so hard, especially I mean because people don’t like to talk about it.
ASHLIE	And people are probably like embarrassed to talk about it.
SALLY NELLSON	And when you say it, are you talking about suicide or depression or what?
ASHLIE	Yeah, all of it.
KAILEE	All of it.
KAMRIN	All of it. Yeah.
SALLY NELLSON	We can’t talk about our feelings?
KAMRIN	You get kind of ridiculed for talking about your feelings because people are like, we don’t care.
KAILEE	You’re supposed to be happy. That’s it. Picture. So.
SALLY NELLSON	And that’s what society expects?
KAILE	Yeah.

SALLY NELLSON	What about your parents?
KONNER	I like –
ASHLIE	That’s a whole ‘nother thing.
KONNER	Yeah. It’s like mom might – my mom, like she tells me, “It’s okay. We can talk about things.” And then the first sign of me like being sad, it’s like, “Oh, like what’s wrong? We need to get your out of this.” It’s like it’s just hard for people to understand sometimes you’re just not okay and that’s not a bad thing. You’ll get through it, but you don’t always have to be happy.
KAYLEE	Sometimes parents or adults or anyone that you’re talking to, it can be a big deal to you but when you say it out loud, it sounds dumb and it might sound dumb to them or like small. So you just kind of hide it so then ‘cause that’s like another way that it’s embarrassing. Like if it’s a big deal to you but it’s not to anyone else.
KAMRIN	And like with the embarrassing part, I feel like it’s embarrassing to ask for help is the biggest thing with us. You know, we feel, like even when you have a question with math, you’re like do I go up to the teacher, do I just sit here and try to figure it out myself.
KAILEE	Yeah, like I feel so weak asking.
KAMRIN	So when it comes to something much bigger than like a math problem, it’s kind of embarrassing to ask for help.
STACY ATHOW	It’s difficult for kids it’s difficult for kids right now. They have a lot more pressure, a lot more on their plate, a lot more expectation than maybe we had when we were younger.
CAMMIE WELAND	It’s four years of probably one of the roughest parts of your life where you feel like you want to conform but you don’t want to conform because you don’t want to be a conformist but you do, you want to be loved, you want to be liked, and you’re trying to work through the social part as well as your body is changing.
JASON JACKSON	Trying to figure out who you are.
CAMMIE WELAND	You’re trying to figure out who you are.
JASON JACKSON	Your identity.
CAMMIE WELAND	It’s huge. And then they’re plopped into your classroom – and I’m going to teach you some dates and sometimes and some people and I want you to care about it. That’s a joke. That’s a joke. So you can’t teach them unless you know them.
DR. JEFF BOSTIC	The front part of the brain, the part that you’re using to like make sense out of things, yeah, that kind of gets turned down when they go into adolescence. They turn up the emotional part of their brain. It’s called the amygdala. But the point of the story is so basically you’re speaking German when you talk to adults and you’re speaking to someone who speaks French around the kids. Everything they process through this emotional channel. And so you would go, “Well, that doesn’t make any sense. Why would kids do that at this age?” Well, they’re job from the time they immemorial to this moment is to look up when they’re about 12-20 and start going, “Yeah, this person’s attractive. Yeah, that person’s attractive.” So it’s

	not built on, "Well, rationally, this would be a good mate for me. This is a person who has the right kind of personality and, yeah, I think they look good. Our kids would be able to play sports and she likes music." They don't think like that. It's like, oh, they're hot. So they get attracted so they can do the really developmentally difficult job of separating from their parents as they affix to their peers and other people that they're attracted to. So this emotional part, first off, makes it very hard to have a conversation because it's like frontal lobe amygdala.
SALLY NELLSON	Teens in general tend to isolate.
KAILEE	Everyday my mom will be like, "Come watch this movie with me" and like me being a teenager, I just want to sit in my bed and be on my phone. And like I feel horrible for it, but like it's just something that I enjoy.
SALLY NELLSON	But it's hard for parents to know is this depression – not participating in the family, not going outside of the house, being on your phone all the time, in your room all time – or is that just being a teen.
TITLE CARD	Superintendent's Bullying Summit - Millard Public Schools
DR. BILL JELKIN	Our next guests, Dr. Mark and Joni Adler. Dr. Adler is the superintendent of Ralston Public Schools. He and his wife are leaders in the community, and they have been touched by this topic of bullying in a profound way. And I would like to let them tell you about Reid and Reid's story. Please help me welcome Dr. Adler
DR. MARK ADLER	<p>So Reid was an awesome kid. He was an athlete. He was smart. He was a great kid. But Reid wasn't perfect, and what we didn't know was when Reid was in middle school he took a picture of himself that was inappropriate of his midsection. Didn't show his face, any part of his body, but did show his midsection with no clothes on. He shared that with a girl. We think for nine or ten months, that girl held that over Reid's head, "If you don't do this or this, I'm going to share this out on social media. I know this will embarrass you." And we feel like what happened, and we've kind of, we tend to piece this together and it's taken a while. We feel like Reid had, had enough. I'm not going to do this anymore. I'm not going to continue letting you harass me. And so we think he quit communicating with her and said, "I'm not going to communicate with you anymore." And made her mad. And on January 6, she held up her end of the deal and she shared it on social media. She shared that picture of Reid on a website called Omaha Purge. And then it all went from there. Earlier that night, Reid finished his homework. And Reid was a great kid, but he also was a kid that, you know, if he was not going to school the next day, I'll guarantee he's not going to be doing his homework. So he kind of went by the seat of his pants on some of that stuff. But he finished all his homework and that's why we think was an impulse decision. That what happened that night was Reid's worse nightmare came true. She posted that. He didn't know what to do, and so his answer was he would just take his own life.</p> <p>There's very few things that don't get captured – you know, with a video or a picture; and then that comes back around; and it's that constant reminder, if it isn't a positive thing, of what's not right with you.</p>
STACY ATHOW	We had no idea this was going on with all these kids and it wasn't just him. But we had no idea these kids were being tortured like this. Now at least we do. Now at least for the most part we get kids that come in and say, "Hey, this girl is doing this to me on social media."

TITLE CARD	<p>By the time girls are seniors in high school, 2 in 3 have been asked to send a sexually explicit photo to another person.</p> <p>While both boys and girls send naked images, boys are nearly four times as likely to pressure girls to send sexts as girls are to pressure boys to do so.</p>
SALLY NELLSON	Do you know if any of your friends have been asked to send inappropriate photos?
KAYLEE	Yeah.
ASHLIE	Yeah, I used to live in Lincoln and there was this girl that her pictures and videos and stuff like got sent out to everybody and then she like didn't come to school for a while so.
SALLY NELLSON	Do you know why she would have taken inappropriate videos?
ASHLIE	No. I mean people ask probably.
KONNER	I had a friend it happened to, too. She came to dance crying one time; and we like sat here down; and we're like, "What's wrong?" She's like, "He said if I, like if I break up with him, he's going to release my nudes to the entire school." It was a moment of like she did it because she thought she needed to because that's – I mean a lot of kids think like that –
ASHLIE	Pressured.
KONNER	Yeah, that's a big part of relationships. Like that's just what you do. If that stuff gets out, it's really hard to gain people's respect back.
DR. JEFF BOSTIC	There's part of the brain, the ventral striatum, that gets activated during adolescence, again so that you can kind of join your group, your peer group and do stuff with them as you separate from your family. But that means that kids will do stupid, crazy stuff when they're 12 to about 25 or so. That they look up at the end of that time and go, I'm not doing that, no matter what other people would encourage them to do. So they're just more vulnerable during that time
SALLY NELLSON	Is there perhaps a time in your life when social media was really important and then you kind of grow out of it?
TRAE	As you mature, at least for me, as I matured and like become more comfortable with myself, I feel like less of an urge to like get validation from social media.
ILLANA	And I think also in this sort of situation, like we're being interviewed. We have cameras on us, not to break the fourth wall or anything. Like we have peers around us. So we're like not going to say like all the bad things we do, right? Like there are definitely things about my usage of social media where like, you know, sometimes I can get caught up in a lot of things or like I spend way too much time on it. But I'm not going to say that here, even though I just did say that. But I think we try and make ourselves look good in real life and online and just be like, "No, that's not me. Those are the other teenagers you've been hearing about."
CAMMIE WELAND	The notion that kids will be kids, boys will be boys, girls will be girls, you know this is just the new fight on the playground type of thing, I would push back on that and I would say, no, the amount of exposure that students see of violence and manipulation and just things that I was never exposed to, we were never exposed to, you know.

JASON JACKSON	Right.
STACY ATHOW	When kids are dealing with that constant need to impress people on social media, that constant need to be liked on social media and to not be attacked on social media, it's-- they never get away from it. At least we got away from it. We were able to go home and have a breather from all of that day-to-day stuff, but these kids don't. They go home and it's constant. It's still there. It's always there. It never goes away. They never turn it off. And that-- that's going to wear on you. That's going to wear on anybody. That would wear on an adult.
SALLY NELLSON	Sounds like there's a lot of pressure on you guys. Do you feel that?
KAMRIN	Yeah.

STATS

- 95% of teens have access to smartphones.¹
- 45% of U.S. teens say social media makes them feel overwhelmed by drama.¹
- 43% of U.S. teens say social media makes them feel pressured to only post content that makes them look good.¹
- 37% of U.S. teens say social media makes them feel pressure to post content that will get lots of likes/comments.¹
- 26% of U.S. teens say social media makes them feel worse about their own life.¹
- 70% of teens say that anxiety and depression are a major problem among people their age.²

By the time girls are seniors in high school, 2 in 3 have been asked to send a sexually explicit photo to another person.³

While both boys and girls send naked images, boys are nearly four times as likely to pressure girls to send sexts as girls are to pressure boys to do so.³

¹ Source: Pew Research Center, May 31, 2018
Teens, Social Media & Technology 2018

²Source: https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/wpcontent/uploads/sites/3/2019/02/Pew-Research-Center_Teens-report-topline_final.pdf

³Source: Hinkelman, L. (2017).
The Girls' Index: New insights into the complex world of today's girls.
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Wilber-Clatonia High School Students

Kenzie, Konner, Kaylee, Kailee, Kamrin, and Ashlie

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