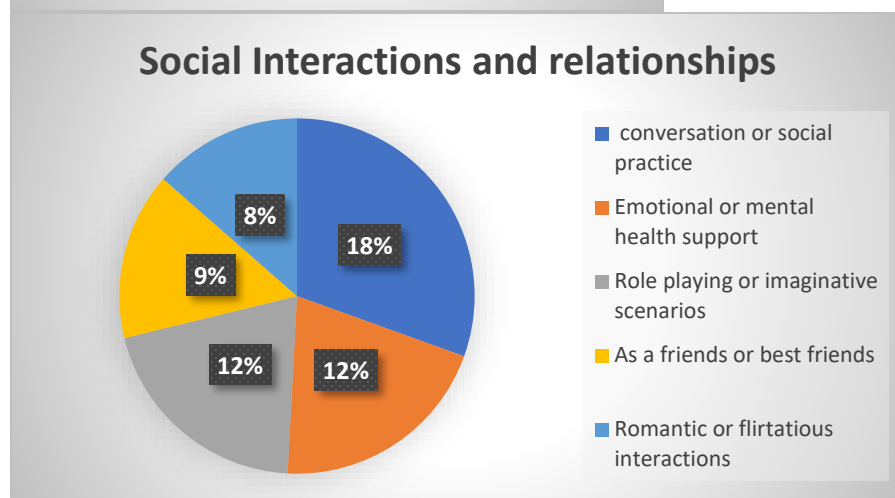
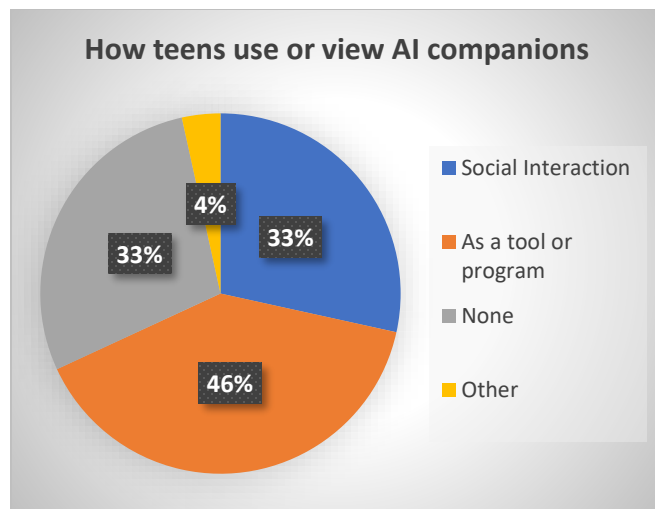


September – Suicide Awareness Month
KAHF Post: AI companion and Teen Mental Health
Dr. Badal and Dr. Sadhir

- The rapid rise of AI (Artificial Intelligence) companions—on platforms like CHAI, Character.AI, Nomi, Replika, and similar conversational AI systems—has created new digital social environments.
- These platforms may be presented as virtual friends, confidants, and even therapists, allow users to engage in conversations with AI entities designed to simulate humanlike interaction, and they can offer everything from casual chat to emotional support and role-playing scenarios.
- 72% of teens have used AI companions.
- Entertainment and curiosity drive AI companion use.
- Starting conversation, giving advice and expressing emotion are the most common transferred skills to real life situations for AI companion users.



Ref: Common Sense

Media

What can pediatricians do:

- **Start conversations** about AI relationships by asking what platforms teen uses and how they feel about AI versus human friendships.
- **Educate** about the specific risks for teens, including exposure to inappropriate material, privacy violations, and dangerous advice.
- **Explain** that AI companions are designed to be engaging through constant validation and agreement—help teen recognize this isn't genuine human feedback.
- **Ensure** teens understand that AI companions cannot replace professional mental health support.
- **Engage parents** to recognize warning signs of unhealthy AI companion usage, including social withdrawal, declining grades, and preference for AI companions over human interaction. Seek professional help if showing signs of unhealthy attachment to AI companions.
- **Encourage** families to develop family media agreements that address AI companion usage alongside other digital activities.

Resources

- [Talk, Trust, and Trade-Offs: How and Why Teens Use AI Companions](#)
- [AI literacy toolkit](#)
- [How will Artificial Intelligence\(affect\) children?](#)
- [Family Media Plan](#)