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How Social Media Affects Our Adolescents

	Mental Health Series	
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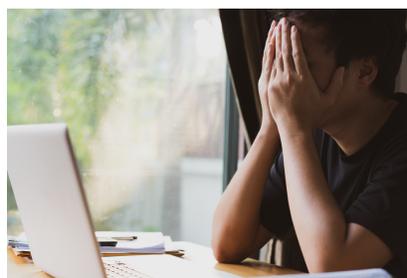


Harms of Social Media

Social media has become an integral part of modern life, and it is increasingly being used by adolescents. However, the widespread use of social media has raised concerns about its potential negative effects on adolescent mental health. Here are some of the ways in which social media can be harmful to the mental health of adolescents:

Cyberbullying: Social media provides an easy platform for bullies to harass, intimidate, and humiliate others. Cyberbullying can have devastating effects on the mental health of adolescents, including anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts. A study conducted by Kowalski and Limber (2007) found that adolescents who were victims of cyberbullying experienced higher levels of depression and anxiety than those who were not bullied.

Social comparison: Adolescents who use social media are often exposed to idealized and unrealistic images of others' lives, which can lead to social comparison and feelings of inadequacy. This can contribute to low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety. A study conducted by Fardouly et al. (2018) found that exposure to idealized images on social media was associated with increased body dissatisfaction among adolescent girls.



Sleep disturbance: Social media use can interfere with sleep, which is crucial for adolescent mental health. Studies have shown that social media use before bedtime can disrupt sleep

and lead to mood and behavioral problems the following day. A study conducted by Levenson et al. (2016) found that adolescents who spent more time on social media had poorer sleep quality and higher levels of depressive symptoms.

Addiction: Social media use can become addictive, leading to compulsive behavior and neglect of other important activities. This can lead to increased stress and anxiety. A study conducted by Andreassen et al. (2017) found that social media addiction was associated with higher levels of anxiety and depression among adolescents.

Ways Parents Can Help their Child with Social Media Usage

As parents, it is important to be aware of the potential negative effects of social media on adolescent mental health and take steps to mitigate these effects. Here are some ways that parents can help their children with social media usage:

Social Media

Set limits: Set reasonable limits on the amount of time your child spends on social media each day. Encourage them to engage in other activities, such as exercise or hobbies.

Monitor their use: Be aware of what your child is doing on social media and monitor their accounts for any signs of cyberbullying or other negative behavior.

Encourage positive self-image: Help your child develop a positive self-image by focusing on their strengths and encouraging healthy habits such as exercise and good nutrition.

Educate your child: Talk to your child about the potential negative effects of social media and help them develop healthy online habits, such as avoiding cyberbullying and limiting social comparison.

Seek professional help: If you are concerned about your child's mental health, seek professional help from a qualified mental health provider.

In conclusion, while social media has many benefits, it can also have negative effects on adolescent mental health. Parents can help mitigate these effects by setting limits on social media use, monitoring their child's activity, and promoting positive self-image and healthy habits.

You Can Do It!

STAY POSITIVE

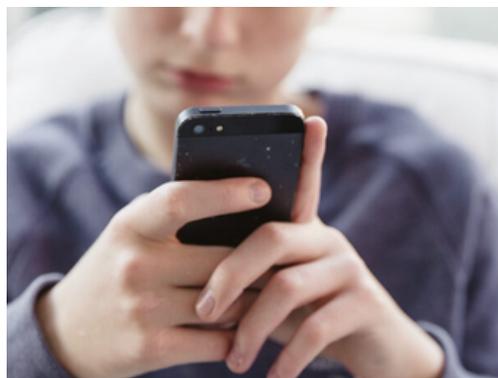
Teaching children about social media usage can be a challenging task, but it's important for parents to remain positive throughout the process. One way to stay positive is to focus on the benefits of social media, such as staying connected with friends and family. Another way is to approach the topic with curiosity and a willingness to learn alongside your child. It's also important to celebrate your child's successes and progress, while also acknowledging that mistakes and missteps are a normal part of the learning process. By staying positive and supportive, parents can help their children develop healthy and responsible social media habits.



Turn to ParentGuidance.org for Help

Parentguidance.org is an excellent resource for parents who want to learn more about social media usage and how to help their children develop healthy and responsible online habits. With its evidence-based advice, practical tips, and supportive community, Parentguidance.org can help parents feel more confident and effective in guiding their children's online behavior.

Here is one of many courses that you can explore to help you on this journey of parenting.



How Digital Media is Changing Our Children's Mental Health



Dr. Kevin Skinner

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Works Cited

Andreassen, C. S., Pallesen, S., & Griffiths, M. D. (2017). The relationship between addictive use of social media and video games and symptoms of psychiatric disorders: A large-scale cross-sectional study. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 31(8), 959-964.

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