

## Social Media and Mental Health

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### INTRODUCTION

Social media basically means any human communication or sharing information on internet that occurs through the medium of computer, tablet or mobile. There are numerous websites and apps that make it possible. Social media is now becoming one of the largest means of communication and is gaining popularity rapidly. Social media enables you to share ideas, content, information and news etc. at a much faster speed. In last few years social media has grown tremendously at an unexpectedly fast rate and has captured millions of users around the world.

Mental health refers to our cognitive, behavioral, and emotional wellbeing - it is all about how we think, feel, and behave. The term 'mental health' is sometimes used to mean an absence of a mental disorder. Mental health can affect daily life, relationships, and even physical health. Mental health also includes a person's ability to enjoy life - to attain a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience.

### TYPES OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

- Anger
- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Bipolar disorder
- Depression
- Eating problems
- Hearing voices
- Hoarding
- Hypomania and mania
- Loneliness
- Mental health problems - introduction
- Panic attacks
- Paranoia
- Personality disorders
- Phobias
- Self-esteem
- Self-harm
- Sleep problems

### POSITIVES

The social aspect of course, now people are not limited to being around the people immediately in front of them. They can explore and converse with others from all over the world.

Not only can they further their existing relationships as another way of connecting, but also there is more opportunity to connect with a larger base, possibly opening the doors to more choices of people and relationships.

This allows for even more interactions that may not have been possible or even existed before, creating outlets and communities. For example, it can benefit people that have trouble with in-person contact, minority or marginalized groups, or people that have been through the same trauma. It sometimes displays the best of humanity, with uplifting stories or messages. In this regard, social media creates a positive impact on the world, benefiting the social aspect of a person's well-being.

However, an online personality is not always the same as someone's real personality. There are some that use their online presence to augment their true personality and use their social media as an extension of who they think they are, not who they actually are.

But even in the more "real" portrayal online, social media provides a perfect avenue for people to create facades. No amount of words, captions, pictures or even videos can completely capture what a person is really like.

Social media is an outlet for people to create a curated image, one that is thought-out and intentional, unlike what most can accomplish in real life. This concept, however, can easily be forgotten or not realized for impressionable people, like the youth.

### NEGATIVES

Online personalities are not real, especially because they tend to take the best moments or best said things and string them together to create this image. When this is not regularly acknowledged, it may create pressure on ourselves to replicate this in real life too.

And we can get so used to it, it can almost become subconscious, even for young kids. When these standards are not met, people may feel like there is something wrong with them or that there is something missing from their lives.

Additionally, the quantification of social media through the number of followers and comments on posts, and even what is being said in the comments, good or bad, can dictate someone's mood or self-esteem.

Businesses know this too, and use it to their benefit to promote products to impressionable youth.

The formula for social media makes it so people will always keep coming back for more. With the lack of education in it, people can easily let it control their life and tell them when to look at it and when to stop and how it should make them feel.

Sound like an addiction? Perhaps for those that have not understood the effects of social media. This makes less-mature people, like young people, prime exploits.

Social media takes advantage of what makes drugs so addictive, but does it psychologically rather than chemically, using instant gratification and impulse.

Now, some are stable on their own and know how to deal with their own emotions in healthy ways, so for them social media is just an aid to help them. But for those still learning to deal with their thoughts, feelings, body and health in general, without regulation or education, social media can disrupt this process. In dealing with negative emotions, similar to addictive substances, social media could be learned to be used in response.

## **PROTECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH FROM SOCIAL MEDIA'S DANGERS**

### **Limit when and where you use social media**

Using social media can interrupt and interfere with in-person communications. You'll connect better with people in your life if you have certain times each day when your social media notifications are off – or your phone is even in airplane mode. Commit to not checking social media during meals with family and friends, and when playing with children or talking with a partner. Make sure social media doesn't interfere with work, distracting you from demanding projects and conversations with colleagues. In particular, don't keep your phone or computer in the bedroom – it disrupts your sleep.

### **Have 'detox' periods**

Schedule regular multi-day breaks from social media. Several studies have shown that even a five-day or week-long break from Face book can lead to lower stress and higher life satisfaction. You can also cut back without going cold turkey: Using Face book, Instagram and Snap chat just 10 minutes a

day for three weeks resulted in lower loneliness and depression. It may be difficult at first, but seek help from family and friends by publicly declaring you are on a break. And delete the apps for your favorite social media services.

### **Pay attention to what you do and how you feel**

Experiment with using your favorite online platforms at different times of day and for varying lengths of time, to see how you feel during and after each session. You may find that a few short spurts help you feel better than spending 45 minutes exhaustively scrolling through a site's feed. And if you find that going down a Face book rabbit hole at midnight routinely leaves you depleted and feeling bad about yourself, eliminate Face book after 10 p.m. Also note that people who use social media passively, just browsing and consuming others' posts, feel worse than people who participate actively, posting their own material and engaging with others online. Whenever possible, focus your online interactions on people you also know offline.

### **Stop social media from replacing real life**

Using Face book to keep abreast of your cousin's life as a new mother is fine, as long as you don't neglect to visit as months pass by. Tweeting with a colleague can be engaging and fun, but make sure those interactions don't become a substitute for talking face to face. When used thoughtfully and deliberately, social media can be a useful addition to your social life, but only a flesh-and-blood person sitting across from you can fulfill the basic human need for connection and belonging.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is clear that during the past 10 years, social networking has caused significant changes in the way people communicate and interact. It is unclear, however, whether some of these changes affect normal aspects of human behavior and cause psychiatric disorders. In the future, additional research will be needed to identify and describe the potential relationship between the use of social media and various mental health issues.

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