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Often in society today, teenage adolescents spend a large amount of time using social media. Social media can be very beneficial and useful, but too much usage can cause mental illnesses. Many teenagers suffer from severe mental illnesses such as social anxiety and depression. Adolescents who use social outlets for several hours at a time, experience at least one of these two illnesses. Although young adolescents can encounter many different illnesses, depression and anxiety are the most common illness teenagers encounter from over usage of social media.

Social media has been around for nearly four decades and has drastically evolved since. There are several media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and many more. These social media outlets are known to “allow people to manage and accomplish their everyday activities.” As it is so popular today, several psychologists have determined social media to be a behavioral addiction for many young adolescents. Having an “uncontrollable urge” to pick up a smartphone and log onto and use social media is an addition. Which quite a few teenagers have and do not even realize. Having an addiction to consistently use a smartphone and view social media can be mentally draining and cause serve illnesses.

Teenage years are stated by Appleyard, Vera “What is the most difficult year of parenting?” the most challenging than any other year of age. Often teen adolescents with physical traits such as obesity or gender transitions have deep depression mental illnesses from social media. A lot of the time the depression that teenagers obtain from social media is from what is shown. Such as supermodels and their body figures. A lot of teenagers see public figures and their appearance and want to achieve the exact goals and looks. This can be devastating for teen adolescents with a low level of self-confidence or self-esteem.

Having a low level of confidence as a teenager becomes mentally draining and raises many questions. Questions such as Am I worthy? Do I look fat? Am I pretty enough? This is known as self-questioning. Self-questioning is “an ongoing process of asking questions among self.” This is the beginning stage of self-doubt which later leads to depression and anxiety. The fewer confidences a teenager has creates anxiety, making simple tasks such as being productive or outgoing a hassle. “Self-conscious emotions are those affected by how we see ourselves.” Being anxious and self-conscious about every self-characteristic only leads to thinking of how other people see us. Legg, Timothy “Self-conscious Emotions.” Healthline June. 2017, indicates; unhealthy self-consciousness results in social anxiety which leads to isolation.

Avoiding confrontation among other individuals as a teenager is extremely hard to do. Teen adolescents who suffer from severe mental illnesses usually avoid being around others in large, crowded places. One of those many places is at schools. Seeing hundreds of children daily using technology and social media, distracts the learning environment for many teen adolescents. Social media has been an escape for many teenagers during school hours, but it has also been dangerous. Physical altercations are real and typically happen among young teenagers. With the usage of social media today, anyone could easily upload or live stream and altercation for the world to see.

Imagine being humiliated and tormented about an altercation on the internet for millions to see. It is simply degrading to watch and depressing to read. Several studies have shown “the average teenager who decides to become homeschooled is because of their mental illness.” Anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, autism, etc. are all affiliated with this mental illness. Homeschooling becomes “part of the healing process,” away from other teenagers and social media. Being homeschool develops a support system, with trust and mental help awaiting. Taking a break from “large crowded” areas such as school can help that anxiety teens have.

There are many effects social media can have on a young adolescent; mental illness is just one of them. According to Newport Academy about “81 percent of teens age 13 to 17 say social media makes them feel more connected to what’s going on in their friends’ lives.” Some teenagers use social media as a way to escape reality and explore support through social media. Having social media for some teenagers allows them to express and explore who they are and what they may like. Staying connected through social media with friends, family, and even co-workers create a bond over the web. However, “45 percent of teens say they feel overwhelmed by all the drama on social media.”

Cyberbullying is an important effect social media has on teenagers who use it. “23% of students reported that they’ve said or done something mean or cruel to another person online.” Cyberbullying has created a platform where other individuals think it’s fine to say hurtful things to one another. Things that people say through social media can cause just as much damaging as it is in person, if not more. The effects of cyberbullying have a large negative impact on mental health. Cyberbullying through social networks touches a “more sensitive part of the human psyche.” In a survey with teens who felt results from cyberbullying, 41% developed social anxiety, while 37% developed depression.

There are many distractions out in the world, but social media is number one. Although it has in many ways, brought people together it had also been designed to “distract us.” Scrolling through updates, new notifications, and photos, the average user spends “nearly 2.5 hours per day” on social media. Hall, John “How to Beat Social Media Distraction Effectively.” Lifehack, Nov. 2020 determined social media disrupts people’s personal lives and ruin their work productivity. Social media is an exciting thing to have like everything else in life, yet if it is contained then it’ll not be so addictive.

Social media puts unrealistic expectations in many teenagers’ heads. Social media allows individuals to post whatever they’d like but to an extent. A lot of teenagers on social networks have been known to live a “double-life with double standards.” While someone can show and post their happy and living lavish, that person could be in “massive debt and on bad terms with their significant other.” People who are more likely to compare themselves to others on social media develop depression quickly. Many people, especially young adolescents make social media believe something completely different than in person. An example of this could be “Catfishing.” Catfishing is the term to describe a person posing as someone else they are not. This causes a lot of confusion, hurt, and violation.

Being a teenager with anxiety, depression, and overuse of social media causes unhealthy sleeping patterns. Stegner, Ben, “7 Negative Effects of Social Media on People and Users.” Make use of Feb. 2020 stated; alongside having anxiety and depression, too much time spent on social media has a negative effect on adolescent sleeping quality. Sleeping right next to a smartphone at night is one of the worst ways to sleep. Cellphones are easy to buzz, ring, and vibrate throughout the night, resulting in checking the notification. One minute after checking notifications and 3 A.M. and almost time for school. Sleeping near technology with mental illnesses make teens more vulnerable to pay attention to what is consistently occurring.

One of many ways to avoid deep depression and anxiety from social media is limitations. Limiting the amount of time spent using social media daily can prevent these mental issues. “Setting a limit on social media for 30 minutes a day” makes a difference and helps teenagers make better decisions. Apple and Android both have to set screen time and app limitations that can be turned on to prevent too much usage. Limiting the amount of time on social media improves “better ability to focus, self-esteem, and self-awareness.”

Being able to focus more with time away from social media allows teenagers to worry less. “Focus is something that you need if you want to concentrate on and perform quality work.” When attention is fully on a task or assignment adolescents tend to improve better performance. Using the concentration from social media and putting it into more positive things takes away the interruption. “Not owning a smartphone keeps my digital notifications to a minimum.” Although that is quite challenging to do, deleting social media apps is a great alternative to do. It protects teenager’s sanity from cyberbully, humiliation, and much more.

Limiting social media also improves the level of self-esteem an adolescent has for their selves. “I deleted, muted, or unfollowed any posts that weren’t uplifting or inspiring.” Seeing and or hearing positivity blocks out and nearly eliminates all negativity. Seeing uplifting quotes such as “you got this, you are worthy, don’t give up, etc.” can help a teen adolescent tremendously. “Our self-esteem could literally be affected based on the number of likes we receive digitally.” Many teenagers compare their social media accounts to public figures and celebrities which causes low self-esteem. However, keeping social media a reality improves healthier self-esteem.

Being at peace with no social media or limited usage is very relaxing. “Social media has often been described as a highlight reel of peoples lives.” Teen adolescents usually post pictures daily and the best thing about their day onto their story. However, taking the time away from social media limits the amount of concern to update friends, family, and followers. Once that level of self-awareness passes on to other aspects of life, it becomes more cognizant. Teenagers begin to realize how time is limited and precious and start to cherish every moment of it. It makes teen adolescents “chose how they would like their time spent.”

Social media is very useful, we use it to stay connected, share photos, important events, and dates and so much more. However, being a teenager with so much social media usage can cause a deep depression for hundreds, if not thousands of teens across the world. Finding new ways to avoid using technology all day every day is an excellent start. Anxiety among teens is real and is a mental illness that can be avoided from social media limitations. Having a set time of how long to be on social networks creates higher self-esteem, productivity, and self-love.

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