Health & Mind Club
Newsletter for November
Social Media: Good or Evil?

Breathe

It's hard when you keep fighting,

Always hiding the way you feel.

Losing your sight on truthful words,

Forgetting what is real.

It's hard when you can't speak

And your throats starts craving for air

So much to hear, but nothing to say.

It's hard when you forget to laugh

And you're scared that someone might see. Hoping no one saw your face,

As you struggle to remember how to breathe.

It's hard when you can't focus

And you're lost, slightly hopeless

Your hands remain unsteady,

And your heart pounds like a huge drum,

And even though you can barely walk,

You find the urge to run.

To run where is the question

To run to whom is the other

Into the loneliness you create

Or to cry it out loud for the other

If you feel you're alone

And there's no one standing beside you

There is no need to worry

For we will always be there to guide you

Social media, the centre of everybody's attraction, has seemingly taken over our lives. The first thing most of us do right after we wake up is open our phone to check Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat or any of the endless social media platforms available nowadays. These apps have fully integrated themselves into our lives to the point where we might not be able to live our life without access to them.

I'm definitely not saying that social media is the root of all evils and should be banished from the face of the earth. It helps us connect with people around the world in ways we couldn't before. I actually met many of my closest friends through Instagram. It lets us broadcast our voice and opinions to the entire Internet as well, which is very important in helping the rights of free speech. However, there is no denying the impacts of social media on many users mentally, especially teenagers. Social media platforms can severely diminish one's self-esteem and can affect the mental health of the user.

Social media might let us connect with others virtually, but it actually makes us more distant towards others in the real world. Speaking to somebody while hidden behind a screen is easy for us all, but face-to-face interactions are not the same. Studies have shown that the newer generation, who are used to social media as a part of their lives, find it much harder to talk to somebody in front of them than to send messages on their phones, and prefer to do the latter. It makes people distant from others, which results in significant damage to their mental health

Social media also boosts our insecurities. We put filters on our photos to make us look better and we try too hard to make people pay attention to us. A follower, subscribers, likes shares; these numbers mean nothing in the real world, but we still crave for them.

We are obsessed with comparing ourselves to other, seemingly more 'perfect' people on social media. We are caught up on their life stories and stalk their aesthetic photos and stunning looks. However, this behavior fills us with self-doubt and makes us more susceptible to cyber-bullying. All this leads to feelings of anxiety and depression.

Social media is a wonderful creation that will stay with us for a long time, but the herd mentality surrounding it and a lack of human connection causes serious mental health problems.

Studies on social media affecting the mental health of users, particularly teens, have been done multiple times, and they all have the same result: Social media usage results in depression, anxiety, sleep problems, eating issues and increased suicide risk. So, when you wake up tomorrow, try to not get distracted by all of these distractions.

A big part of the social media addiction is 'Selfie Culture' We all know what it means but surely how can something as simple as taking a selfie be harmful?
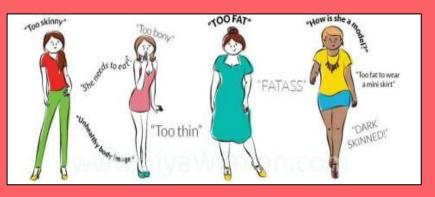
Teens and Selfie Culture

While some teens would never post a picture or a selfie on Facebook, others can't seem to resist posting selfies on Instagram at least a few times per day.

Teens constantly evaluate their self-worth based on the feedback they receive from social media. The more likes or positive comments they get, the better they feel. If some teenagers attract negative attention or worse yet, no attention at all, their self-esteem drops to 0. They may perceive that they're unattractive and unloved if they don't get the responses they hoped

Teens become obsessed with taking attractive selfies to gain positive attention from others. There are reports of teenagers spending more than 5 hours each day trying to perfect that selfie which could help them gain accolades from people on social media. Unfortunately, the quest for the perfect selfie can become so severe that it interferes with their social life and education.

Although most teens aren't likely to develop an obsession with selfies, there are other dangers that exist. If teens aren't careful about the type of pictures they share, a selfie could ruin their reputation.

A common trend among teenagers is to take selfies that include action shots in the background. Example: Taking photos of themselves in front of burning buildings standing underneath waterfalls, or while performing various stunts. Sadly, some teens have died trying to take risky selfies that they thought would make them look cool.

Another danger of taking selfies is that many teens unknowingly reveal their location. They don't realize the street sign behind them or their house in the background which makes it extremely easy for a predator to find their location.

Selfies can be a healthy way for teens to express themselves. However, teens need some guidance about what's appropriate and what isn't. They need to remember to self-monitor the quantity and the content of their social media. Taking pictures and posting them should not interfere with a teens' day to day activities. Any pictures that students post can be viewed by future employees or college admissions offices as well. It's important for all teenagers to recognize that something which may seem as a harmless activity can someday become a serious problem in the future.

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