

Modern mobile life and its impact on the lifeline

Mobile has become among the basic needs of today's life. While most of us enjoy using social media, excessive use can create some mental issues like depression, isolation anxiety, and FOMO. Evidence has proved that there is a strong connection between social media and depression. Many recent studies have revealed that teenage and young adult users who spend most of their time on WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and other social sites appear to have a substantially higher rate of anxiety and depression than those who spent the least time.

Does it mean that social media is actually a cause of depression? The studies express a correlation, not causation. But it is worth seeing how social sites are affecting teenage and adult users negatively.

Social media and depression

One of the major differences between the living style of current youth and earlier generations is that we spend less time connecting with people in person and more time connecting electronically. So, the principal source is social media. Some professionals reported that the increase in depression is proof that the connections through social media are less emotionally satisfying, making them feel personally isolated.

Contrarily, one exception to the depression correlation is girls who are hardcore users of social sites but also keep up a high level of personal social interaction. The Twenge study revealed that those females who interact intensely offline as well as online via social media are less likely to show an increase in depressive symptoms.

Social Media Role in Mental Health

Human beings are social animals. We always need the companionship of others to prosper in life. The strength of our connections impacts our mental health and moods. When you are socially connected to others you may be less likely to be stressed and depressed. It will increase your self-worth, avert loneliness, provide comfort and joy, and even add years to your life. On the other hand, if you lack strong social connections, you can pose a serious risk to your mental and emotional health.

In today's world, we usually rely on social sites like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, and WhatsApp to connect with each other. While each has its advantages, it is essential to remember that social media can never be a better substitute for a real-world human connection. It requires in-person contact with each other to stimulate the hormones that eliminate stress and make you feel healthier, happier, and more fulfilled. Contrarily, if you spend most of your time on virtual connections, it will cause mental issues such as anxiety and depression.

The positive aspects of social media

While virtual connections on social sites do not give you the same psychological satisfaction as in-person contacts. However, it can help you to stay connected and pillar your well-being in some positive ways.

Social media allows you to:

1. Communicate and stay up to date

Social media enables you to stay connected with your family and friends around the world. You can find new friends and communities network with people who share similar interests.

2. Raise awareness on current affairs

There is every kind of information posted on social media. While using any social site, you may see a number of political, national, and international, posts making you aware of current affairs. So social media enables you to learn about politics and current affairs to fulfil your role as informed citizens.

3. Seek emotional support when you are sad

Sometimes you may find yourself fed up or bored. You can go to social sites and find vital social connections if you live in a remote area. For example, if you have limited independence or can't go outside because of Covid restrictions, causing anxiety, then you may scroll through a social platform and connect with people.

4. Join an online outlet for showing your creativity

You can join online groups and pages where you can publish your art and communicate your creative expression. It will make you emotionally fulfilled and happier. On the other hand, you'll get a handsome amount of money.

Negative impacts of social media

1. Inadequacy about life

Although you know that photos that you are scrolling through social media are manipulated, you still may feel insecure about how you look or what is going on in your own life. You start comparing your own life with that of social media influencers' stories. Similarly, we all are aware that people used to share just the highlights of their lives, rarely including the low points that everyone experiences. But that does not lessen the feelings of dissatisfaction and envy while you are scrolling through a friend's polished images of the tropical beach holiday.

2. Fear of missing out (FOMO)

FOMO has been around for a longer time than social media sites. Online platforms like Instagram and Facebook seem to inflame feelings that others are living better lives than you are. The feeling that you are missing out on certain things can affect your self-esteem. It may trigger depression, anxiety, and fuel even greater use of social media. FOMO creates a sense of restlessness and compels you to check your mobile every few minutes to see updates.

3. Isolation

The studies show that usage of Snapchat, Instagram, and Facebook increases rather than decreases feelings of loneliness. When you spend most of your time scrolling through these apps, you may forget to arrange a face-to-face meet-up and actually isolate yourself.

3. Depression and anxiety

We actually need in-person contact to live a healthy and happy life. Nothing can reduce anxiety and boost your mood faster than eye-to-eye contact with someone who means to you. The more you prioritize social media connections over face-to-face interactions, the more you are at risk for developing mental disorders like depression and anxiety.

4. Cyberbullying

Teenagers are more likely to be cyberbullied. The reports show that more than ten percent of teenagers are affected by cyberbullying. Consequently, many other people are subjected to offensive activities. Social media sites like Twitter can be a hotspot for spreading abuse, lies, and rumors that may leave lasting emotional threats.

How to modify social media making it constructive rather than destructive

Step:1 Reduce time online

The study has found that reducing social media use to half an hour a day resulted in a significant reduction in levels of isolation, depression, anxiety, dep, FOMO, and sleep problems. But you should not cut back on your mobile phone use exceedingly to improve your mental health. The same study suggests that just being more aware of your social media use can be beneficial for your mental health.

Track Time

You can use a tracking app to monitor how much time you spend on social media each day. Then you can set a goal for how much you want to reduce it.

Turn Off Mobile Phone at Certain Times

It is good to turn off your phone at certain times of the day, like when you are in a meeting, driving, at a gym, with offline friends having dinner, playing with kids, or spending time with your spouse. Additionally, never take your mobile with you to the toilet and never take your mobile to bed.

Turn Off Social Media Notifications

It may be difficult to resist the constant beeping, dining, buzzing, and banner of your mobile notifying you of new messages. So, disable your mobile notifications to regain control of your focus and time.

Limit checks

If you are in the habit of checking your mobile, again and again, wean yourself off by reducing your checks to once every 15 minutes. Then you can increase the time span by once in half an hour, then once an hour. You can use apps that can automatically limit when you are able to access your mobile.

Step:2 Spend more time with offline friends

Human beings are socially constructed, so we need in-person interaction with others to be healthy and happy. Indeed, social media is the best option to facilitate real-life connections. But most often we enable virtual connections to replace real-life relationships. There are many ways to make real friends without using social media.

Set a face-to-face meeting

You can fix a meeting every weekend to interact offline with your friends. Try to make it a regular meeting where you always keep your mobile off. If you neglect to in person, get to gather, reach out to an old friend and arrange to meet up. If you both are having a busy life, offer him to walk or exercise together.

Join a club or class

You can join a fitness club or a yoga class to increase your social interactions. You can also join a group of people sharing similar interests who meet on a regular basis.

Don't let social phobia restrict your way

Even if you have a feeling of social awkwardness, still you should overcome your fear and go ahead. There are proven ways to overcome social fear and build friendships. All you need is just to take a step!

Step:4 Express gratitude

Gratitude is anything that makes you feel awesome. Feeling and showing gratitude about the important things in your life can be the best way to relieve the animosity, resentment, and discontent often developed by social media.

Practice mindfulness

Having FOMO and comparing yourself negatively to others keeps you disheartened by life's disappointments and frustrations. Instead of living in the present, you are focused on the "what ifs" and the "if only" and it may prevent you from having a fulfilled life. Practicing mindfulness may lead you to live more in the present, lessen the impact of FOMO, and improve your overall mental health.

Volunteer

As we are hard-wired to seek social links, we are also hard-wired to give to others. Helping other people or animals will not only enrich your community and advantage you, but it will also make you feel prosperous and happier.