Scrolling Towards Stress

The Impact of Smart Phones and Social Media on Child and Adolescent Mental Health

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jealousy, jealousy

Olivia Rodrigo

I kinda wanna throw my phone across the room
'Cause all I see are girls too good to be true
With paper-white teeth and perfect bodies
Wish I didn't care

I know their beauty's not my lack
But it feels like that weight is on my back
And I can't let it go

Co-comparison is killing me slowly
I think, I think too much
'Bout kids who don't know me
I'm so sick of myself
I'd rather be, rather be
Anyone, anyone else
My jealousy, jealousy
Started following me (he-he-he, he-he)
Started following me (he-he-he, he-he)

And I see everyone getting all the things I want
And I'm happy for them, but then again, I'm not
Just cool vintage clothes and vacation photos

I can't stand it, oh, God, I sound crazy

Their win is not my loss
I know it's true
But I can't help getting caught up in it all

All your friends are so cool, you go out every night
In your daddy's nice car, yeah, you're living the life
Got a pretty face, a pretty boyfriend too
I wanna be you so bad, and I don't even know you
All I see is what I should be
Happier, prettier, jealousy, jealousy
All I see is what I should be
I'm losing it, all I get's, jealousy, jealousy

Main problems caused by the smart phone and social media:

*social deprivation
*sleep problems
*fragmented attention
*addiction

Addictive nature of social media activates the brain's release of dopamine (a "feel-good" chemical.) When someone "likes" something, we get a boost; when we don't get that approval, our sense of self is impacted and we try harder for more."

WHO (World Health Organization) finds depression and anxiety are most common childhood health threats, only behind car accidents, violence, substance use

-International problem
-1 in 8 children/teens at any given time

Smart phone use and social media are known causes, not correlates

Problems caused by both use of the device and the content that's accessed

KNOWN MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

Anxiety

Depression

Eating disorders

Self-harm, suicide

ADHD (exacerbates)

Addiction (Internet Gaming Disorder)

Sociogenic conditions*

- *Sociogenic means "generated by social forces" instead of biological causes

- Orthorexia: unhealthy obsession with healthy eating, heavily blamed on influencers

Pros of social media and smart phone use?

POSITIVES:

-provide connections (especially for isolated, marginalized individuals)

-educational resource

-provide inspiration, share stories and advocate, self-expression

-self-help and coping strategies for mental health

SKEPTICS SAY…

-we have evidence for the negative effects but no evidence for positive effects

-confusing internet with social media

-individuals that may seek support and connection are typically those the most negatively affects

-age is rarely considered

Clear negative effects on boys and girls

Social comparison

Unrealistic beauty / appearance standards

Information overload

Cyberbullying

Copycat self-harm, eating disorders, other behaviors

Often encourages risky / dangerous behaviors (trends)

FOMO (fear of missing out)

Boys vs. girls

Girls are more impacted by social media, use it more often, prefer visually-oriented platforms, greater need for connection and belonging

Boys' rates of anxiety and depression also increased, moved from externalizing to internalizing thoughts and behaviors

GIRLS

Impacted by social media more because

-girls are more sensitive to visual comparisons

-girls experience more relational aggression

-girls are more influenced by sociogenic illnesses

-it's easier for men/predators to find and stalk girls with limited accountability

BOYS

<u>Boys are more affected by</u>

-accessibility to pornography (satisfy desires without developing appropriate skills and experiences for adulthood)

-video game addiction/online gaming

-reduced face-to-face interactions (more time in the virtual world)

-greater risk of failure to launch

-shunning of risk

Dear Society

Madison Beer

Diets that I shouldn't try, it feels like social suicide
And honestly, it's cyanide, I'm born to die
Been 21 since 17, thanks to all the magazines
Man, sometimes, I just wanna scream and break my screen

Ages 0-5

-more and better real-world experience
-free play with risks and challenges beyond current abilities
-learning by leading and following
-less and better screen time
-helping out with responsibilities

Ages 18-24 months

Prior to 18 months: Screen time (limited) is only for visual communication (FaceTime, etc.)

18-24 months: Brief, supervised educational programming only

Ages 2-5

Maximum 1 hour of noneducational screentime per weekday, 3 hours on weekends

Age 6 and older

- -screens off during meals and outings
- -parental controls
- -screens aren't babysitters, pacifiers, or to stop tantrums
- -turn off and remove devices 30-60 minutes before bed

Qustodio by Qoria

AURA

Norton™ Family

bark

Ages 6-13
MORE and BETTER real world experiences
reduce overprotection

- Encourage independence
- Allow sleepovers and don't micromanage
- Walking/biking to school and in neighborhood
- Allow free play after school (minimize structured activities)
- Camping
- Sleepaway camps with no devices
- Neighborhood play

Ages 6-13
NO SOCIAL MEDIA UNTIL 16

-Less and higher quality screen time (2 hours max per day; consider content, context, maturity and skills)

-Use parental controls and features; time limits; monitoring software

-Maximize in-person activity and sleep, healthy habits

-Set clear schedule and rules

-Schedule screen-free days (weekly) and one week a year

-Talk openly about risks (not until it's too late, be direct)

-Watch for red flags

Ages 13-18

+Increase mobility

+Require more of your teen at home

+Encourage volunteering or a part-time job

+Leadership opportunities

+Outdoor opportunities

idontwannabeyouanymore

Billie Eilish

Don't be that way
Fall apart twice a day
I just wish you could feel what you say
Show, never tell
But I know you too well
Got a mood that you wish you could sell

If teardrops could be bottled
There'd be swimming pools filled by models
Told, "A tight dress is what makes you a w***e"
If "I love you" was a promise
Would you break it, if you're honest?
Tell the mirror what you know she's heard before
I don't wanna be you
Anymore

Parents

Keep the lines of communication open

Talk openly about risks

Don’t assume everything is OK; check in

Model good phone behavior (as usage rates for kids rose, so did parents)

Parents can…

Set time limits using phone or monitoring apps

Use software for monitoring, parental controls

Designate specific hours

Work with kids to:

-unfollow/unfriend people who make them feel bad

-curate their feeds (positive content, unfollow or mute negative content; algorithms are at work)

-avoid comparison

-engage with purpose to avoid mindless scrolling

If using phone and social media, encourage kids to:

take breaks
check in with self
balance online with offline activities
avoid doom scrolling (once there's a bad feeling, put it down)
engage in frequent discussion and coaching
focus on valuable activities

If using phone and social media, parents can:

teach digit literacy skills: identifying misinformation; understanding AI, fake news, filters; protecting privacy; misrepresentation of reality online

watch out for problematic behaviors

Behaviors to be concerned about

- Strong urges/cravings to use devices and social media
- Inability to stop
- Lying and sneaking to use devices
- Interferes with daily activities
- Prevents 8 hours of sleep & physical activity
- Continue to use even when there's a desire to stop
- Prefer to interact online than in-person
- Fighting over device use

Symptoms of anxiety in kids and teens

- Excessive worry or fear
- Appears nervous, on edge, irritable, restless
- Difficulty concentrating
- Headaches, stomachaches, fatigue, difficulty sleeping, panic attacks
- Avoidance of social situations, activities, certain people
- Changes in behavior, eating patterns
- Mood swings
- Hard time making decisions
- Decline in schoolwork

Symptoms of depression in kids and teens

- Sadness, crying spells or tearfulness
- Loss of interest
- Feeling numb
- Overly apologetic or perfectionistic
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Decline in schoolwork or performance in other areas
- Appetite/weight changes
- Overwhelmed
- Social withdrawal, isolated, alone
- Irritability, aggression
- Lethargy, sluggishness; too much or too little sleep
- Increase in risky behavior
- Thoughts or actions of self-harm

What to do when there are concerns…

- Seek therapy (CBT, “unwiring”)
- Group support
- Encourage positive lifestyle choices
- Model healthy behaviors
- Medication

Therapy

Identify strengths

Cognitive therapy to unwire vs. rewire

Teach self-compassion

We are still learning about characteristics of who is more vulnerable vs. resilient; which online activities are helpful vs. harmful