

About 40 percent of adolescents first develop addictions through gaming applications (Alter, 2017).

The Impact of Social Media on Adolescent Mental Health

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DISCUSSION

Social media usage (SMU) can contribute to the well-being or ill-being in adolescent children. The “feeling of missing out” (FoMo) and loneliness within adolescents increases significantly as social media exposure increases throughout their daily routines, specifically more than 30 minutes at a time. With limited or “timed” use and parental monitoring at home, the symptoms of depression and anxiety can be tremendously decreased. Additionally, when the adolescent child or youth feels that there is a sense of connectedness at school, their mental health is able to thrive successfully. School connectedness is a sense of belonging, feeling heard, and accepted within an educational setting by peers and teachers (Watson et al., 2022). While adolescent mental health is detrimentally impacted by social media use and exposure, reinforcement of guidelines at home and within the classroom can decrease the potential of self-harm, low self-esteem, and other behavioral or mood disorders. Retrospectively, more research on adolescent acceptance and self-support, with added resources can implement improved strategic planning on mental health within children and youth, for parents and teachers.

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INTRODUCTION

- Behavioral addiction is a form of obsessive passion (Alter, 2017).
- In the United States, about 24 percent of adolescents have an online presence, consisting of social media applications (Barry, Sidoti, Briggs, Reiter & Lindsey, 2017).
- Social media usage by adolescents, when used in more than 30 minute increments, can increase depression, self-esteem, and self-harm (Barthorpe, Winstone, Mars & Moran, 2020).
- In the United Kingdom, more than 83 percent of adolescents have their own cellular devices, with an average of more than 99 percent accessing social media for about 20 hours a week (O'Reilly, 2020).
- Social media (SM) can increase the potential for adolescents to engage in promiscuous behaviors with strangers, without parental guidance (Valkenburg, Meier & Beyens, 2022).
- Social media addiction (SMA) symptoms can involve replacement of priorities, mood alterations, and conflicts with others (Watson, Prosek & Giordano, 2022).

RESULTS

- People spend between 1-4 hours on their phones daily, with an overall average of 3 hours per day (Alter, 2017).
- In a correlation study, more than 81 percent of adolescents reported having social media accounts for at least a year, where they later experienced symptoms of inattention, loneliness, and fears of missing out (FoMo) (226 total participants, ranging from 14-17 years) (Barry et al., 2017).
- In a cross-sectional study consisting of a Time Use Diary (4,642 participants, ranging from 13-15 years), 14 percent reported increased self-harm after social media use (SMU), while females reported more depressive symptoms and males reported increased self-esteem (Barthorpe et al., 2020).
- In a sample of 440 participants, ages 13-19 years, positive correlations were found between social media usage and anxiety or depressive disorders (Watson et al., 2022).