

Social Media Kills

Social media has had an increased usage in the last decade, however it is no coincidence that suicide rates and overall mental illness have simultaneously increased. Social media constantly surrounds our daily lives. It is how we connect with friends and family on a day-to-day basis, yet it is able to also create cruel turmoil for many. It exposes people to self-comparison, addiction, and overall is a massive contributor to depression and anxiety. Suicide rates have increased substantially within the last few decades. Suicide has even become one of the top leading causes of death for those between the ages of 15-19. This age group consists of the same people consuming the most social media. It is devastating how many kids receive cruel messages online and never understand how much more they are worth. It has become a brutal place and leading people to depression or anxiety. Social media has been proven to have damaging results on a person's mental health and this is clear as it increases self-destructive behavior that includes self-comparison, damage to motor skills and performance, and exposure to cyberbullying.

When people scroll on social media it is a common occurrence to reflect on themselves and compare themselves with others. In making such comparisons, there is great damage caused especially in adolescents. Azusa Pacific's Psychology Professor, Ryan Poling explains, "In 1954, social psychologist Leon Festinger popularized social-comparison theory, arguing that we have an intrinsic desire to assess our progress by comparing ourselves to others. When we make what he calls 'upward' comparisons, we measure ourselves against people to whom we feel inferior. Given the 'highlight reel' nature of Facebook, it is almost impossible to avoid upward comparisons, and these upward comparisons can cause a person to experience dissatisfaction, desperation, and even depression" (Poling 1). This reflects on the fact that social media is full of

the highlights in a person's life so it is easy to be on social media platforms and immediately find yourself in a place of self-comparison. This causes teens to see themselves as inferior to those they see online which has a negative impact upon a person's self-concept and identity.

Social Media has been proven to create turmoil in how a person performs in their daily living. Mclean Hospital explicates, “A 2018 British study tied social media use to decreased, disrupted, and delayed sleep, which is associated with depression, memory loss, and poor academic performance” (Coyne 1). Social media is able to create a spiral of side effects that can decrease a person’s performance within their academics or workplace.

Another contributor to depression in youth is the cyberbullying that occurs on these social networks. Frederick Ghahramani reveals, “However, nearly one-third of those who have been cyberbullied developed symptoms of depression” (Ghahramani 1). This elaborates on the fact that cyberbullying is enabling depressive symptoms and contributing to the suicidal behavior adhering to young kids. Social media is an enabler of self-comparison, a decline in performance, and cyberbullying. All of these are contributors to mental illness and affect a vast majority of adolescents due to their exposure to the internet. Limiting social media usage when possible and learning about the illusions that lie within social media can help teens to battle the turmoil that social media can create. It is certainly not coincidental that both suicide rates and social media usage have both risen simultaneously, but as our generation becomes educated on these defects we can begin to stand together and watch the suicide rates fall because we are all humans struggling with these same insecurities that social media enables within us.

Work Cited

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