

Does Social Media Cause Loneliness?

Social media unites the world in ways never before possible. Using various platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, users from around the globe or in the same city can connect with each other without ever meeting face to face.

How Social Media Can Cause Loneliness

Time is an important component of loneliness caused by social media. A study published in JAMA Psychiatry showed that adolescents who spend more than three hours daily on social media had heightened risks of psychological and mental health issues, including loneliness, depression, and suicide.

Additionally, negative social media experiences also contribute to loneliness. A recent study demonstrated that a 10% increase in negative experiences on social media corresponded with a 13% rise in loneliness.



Impact of Loneliness Caused by Social Media



Unfortunately, the nature of social media makes it unhealthily attractive for many users, and they overindulge in its use. For teens who lack the maturity and skills needed to cope with loneliness and psychological stress, these toxic consequences are even more extreme than for adults.

Lower Self-Esteem

Teens constantly struggle with their self-esteem as they find their place in society. Social media posts have the power to boost or harm teens' self-image. More often than not, the latter is the case.

Thanks to magazine-quality photos with blemish-hiding filters, future adults often look at their own faces and bodies with disdain. Also, seeing posts of parties, get-togethers, and other events can make a teen extremely sad if they weren't invited.



Depression

Many experts emphasize the correlation between the rise in depression among youth with the high use of social media in that demographic. Although studies demonstrating strict causation are still few, most believe there is no doubt that social media use leads to depression. Isolation and lack of face-to-face contact through social media use don't help. When kids don't interact in person, they can fail to develop empathy and feelings of deep connection, which makes them feel even more isolated.



Decreased Productivity

One of the most common consequences of depression related to social media use is decreased productivity. For an adult, this manifests itself at work and home. In teenagers, lack of productivity caused by depression means substandard performance in school, home, and work if they have a job.



Suicide

Suicide is a leading cause of death among teenagers. Additionally, in the past two decades, suicide rates have skyrocketed in young people. There is a growing correlation between the rise in social media use and suicide rates in this population. Research suggests that this rise in suicide rates may be caused by social media. In an ongoing study, researchers analyzed 15 suicidal teens and found that 67% of them felt worse after social media use and 73% felt pressure to boost their online appearance with social media posts.

