

A S C A W E B I N A R S E R I E S



Technology & Social Media's Influence on Mental Wellness, Interpersonal Connectivity, & Self-Image

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Session Description

Technology and social media are pervasive forces influencing how we view ourselves, cope with stress and interact socially. Today we will examine research on the link between social media/technology and mental wellness, and learn how technology both helps and hinders self-perception, coping skills and social connectivity.

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Learning outcomes:

- Explain how technology and social media pose both negative and positive implications in regard to self-concept, stress management and healthy relationships.
- List ways to encourage students to use technology in a positive and productive manner.



Technology Drill

If you have your cell phone with you now, we kindly ask that you turn it off. Completely off (not just the sound) and keep it off for the remainder of this presentation.

What kind of emotions are you feeling right now as a result of turning off your phone?



Fast Facts

- 97% of households have a mobile device.
- Kids ages 8-18 spend more than 7 hours a day engaged in tech & media.
- 80% of 18-24 year olds sleep with their phones right next to their heads.
- An average person checks their phone 110 times per day often without reason while others check their phone as much as 900 times per day.



Background knowledge & Introduction





The Major Trends and Implications

- Increase in feelings of anxiety & daily stress
- The breakdown of interpersonal relationships
- Decrease of self-esteem and self-worth



The Connection Between Social Media and the Increase of Anxiety and Stress

- After controlling for other relevant factors such as sex, age, time of awakening, perceived stress and perceived social support, a study at Harvard University found that the larger your Facebook network, the greater your cortisol production during the day. (Psychology Today).
- It is possible that technology users — especially those who use social media — are more aware of stressful events in the lives of their friends and family. This increased awareness of stressful events in other people's lives may contribute to the stress people have in their own lives. (Pew Research Center).

"It adds a lot of pressure to be the perfect person because that is how we portray ourselves online." USA Today, 2014



Implications

- Do you know the acronym FOMO?
- Device users had difficulty sleeping due to anxiety and other negative emotions related to constant updates which instigated self comparison and feelings of inadequacy. (Medical News Today, 2012)
- The more students spent using online communication methods, the more likely they were to show symptoms of anxiety about communicating face-to-face. (The Atlantic, 2015)



Action Steps

- Give parents talking points to process child's feelings related to online stress
 - how does it feel when you see your friend's posts online?
- Provide psychoeducation regarding the impact of technology on feelings of anxiety and stress.
- Challenge irrational thoughts and perceptions related to online use and the posted image of others.



The Breakdown of Interpersonal Relationships

- A study reported that individuals who use Facebook excessively are more likely to experience Facebook related conflict...may cause negative outcomes like emotional and physical cheating, breakup, and divorce. (University of Missouri, 2013)
- A UK study reported that a quarter of respondents said that after having confrontations online they experienced difficulties in personal and work relationships. (Medical News Today, 2012)

“Social media provides an invaluable resource for fulfilling the basic human need for social connection...but rather social media use predicts the opposite results.” -Medical News Today



Implications

Emotional Connection Relies On:

- Facial Expressions**
- Voice Intonation**
- Body Language**
- Sharing of Metaphysical Energy**



The reading of emotions, even when face-to-face, requires practice & frequent checking in. Without feedback, misunderstandings multiply exponentially, and assumptions can become truths before they are truly examined. (Psychology Today)

Scientists found that 6th graders who went 5 days without even glancing at smartphone or other digital screen did substantially better at reading human emotions than 6th graders from the same school who continued to spend hours each day looking at their electronic devices. (UCLA Newsroom, 2014)



Phantom Ringing or Vibration



Action Steps

- Encourage school policies that promote phone free zones during unstructured time to allow for more face-to-face social interactions.
- Look for opportunities to teach and practice social skills useful for everyday life. (phone etiquette, customer service, appropriate greetings/introductions, self-advocacy skills, and verbal manners)
- Help children understand that mutual self-disclosure rather one sided online disclosure can build stronger and more interpersonal connections.



Decrease in Self-Esteem & Self-Worth

- A study published in the Journal of Eating Disorders found that a group of women who were asked to browse a social media site for 20 minutes experienced greater body dissatisfaction than those who researched about the rainforest.
- “People with low self-esteem seem to behave counterproductively, bombarding their friends with negative tidbits about their lives and making themselves less likeable.” (Psychology Today, 2014)



Implications

- Increased narcissistic behaviors: need for admiration and exaggerated sense of self importance
 - Seeking social support more than providing it
- Social media can cause women to have an increase in negative & obsessive thoughts about appearance.

Contingent self-worth- *“When you’re waiting for someone else to approve of you, you are basing your opinion of yourself on the value of others and the further you stray from your own values, the worse you feel.” -Bryan Dik, Psychologist (Elle Magazine, 2014)*

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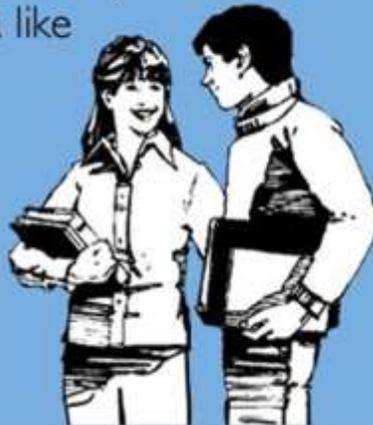
Action Steps

- Encourage students to create a routine of positive self talk.
- Use a mirror and have students make eye contact with themselves as they give themselves a compliment.
- Encourage kids to reflect on the reasons for taking a selfie or making a post. Who is it for?

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Not to be pushy, but my Facebook status ain't gonna like itself.



your  cards
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The Impact

Taking into consideration that these trends and negative implications impact all of society, we want to discuss how you can use this information in your schools as you address the three major domains.

- Personal/social
- Career
- Academic



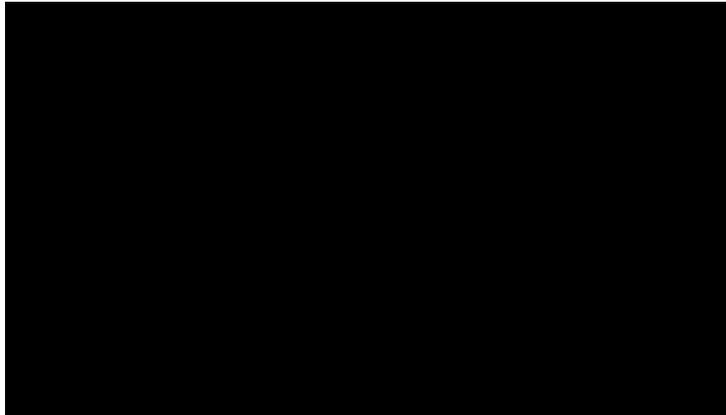
Helpful Tools & Take Aways

Handout includes tips for counselors and parents:

- Suggestions for starting dialogue with kids and teens that will help them think about the impact of social media on their lives.
- Suggestions for influencing kid and teen use of social media.
- Helpful and positive APPS
- Empower Parents to monitor cell phone use
- Example of a cell phone contract



Digital Insanity



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