

The Impact of Social Media on Teenage Girls

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Social media: teenage girls with perfectionist tendencies need to take extra care

Social media developed a negative impact on teenagers. “The impact of social media on teenagers can be significant. It’s not just a case of losing sleep and getting distracted during the day – social media can have far-reaching negative effects on a teen’s mental health. (The University of Queensland, 2021)”

On November 5, 2021, writers Marianne Etherson and Thomas Curran reported about *Social media: teenage girls with perfectionist tendencies need to take extra care* on *The Conversation* which appears on the *News 24* website which they explained how perfectionism affects their daily lives.

They researched and studied perfectionists on their mental health. “A new study suggests that self-critical perfectionism is a characteristic that may make young women vulnerable to the harmful effects of social media. This is partly due to social media providing teenage girls with a platform to compare their appearance with others. (Etherson and Curran, 2021)”

They reviewed that social media could cause young people to develop body image issues. “Social media often intensifies their insecurities and anxieties. This is partly because social media provides female adolescents with a platform to compare their appearance with others. Sadly, research suggests that women often perceive themselves negatively in such comparisons. It has been shown to heighten female body-image concerns, reduce happiness and increase feelings of social alienation. (Etherson and Curran, 2021)”

One of the interpersonal communication concepts that would help the situation is the fallacy of perfection. “People who accept the *Fallacy of Perfection* believe that a worthwhile

communicator should be able to handle every situation with complete confidence and skill. Given the desire to be valued and appreciated, it's tempting to try to appear flawless. But the costs of such deception are high. If others ever find you out, they'll see you as a phony. Even when your act isn't uncovered, it uses up a great deal of psychological energy and thus makes the rewards of approval less enjoyable (Adler and Proctor p. 164, 2017)"

Perfectionism shows health consequences on young people. "Recent research has found perfectionism to be rising in young people. This is particularly alarming, as perfectionism has been linked to a host of negative outcomes, such as depression, symptoms of eating disorders, and even thoughts and ideas about suicide. (Etherson and Curran, 2021)"

As in moving forward, parents need to educate their children about the side effects of social media to improve their well-being. "Parents can help by talking with their adolescent children about the fact that their value as a person does not hinge on attaining a perfect appearance. They should help encourage children to avoid using social media to gain validation and self-worth. Indeed, challenging this belief and adopting greater self-compassion and self-acceptance is vital to help counteract these harmful effects. (Etherson and Curran, 2021)"

References

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