



Digital Media Addiction “Smart Phones, Social Media and Suicide”

Fact: Social Media is a normal part of our society and functioning today.

The Isolation of Generations

While Social Media has been around for years, it was the introduction of cell phones and smartphones in the mid 90s that social media began to take its strong hold. By early 2003, MySpace became the largest social media site in the world. In 2004 Facebook was introduced and by 2008, became the top visited site. In 2012 Facebook went public and it currently generates \$40 billion per year in revenue. There is no argument that there are many assets to these devices such as planning travel, getting directions, looking for price on new skies, but along with social media comes the “isolation of generations”, the development of depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts and a destructive impact on the development of self.

What happened in 2012, is the proportion of Americans who owned a smartphone surpassed 50%. This is when it became evident that this generation is one shaped by the smartphone and the subsequent rise of social media. Twenge (an author and professor of psychology) refers to these teens as “IGen”, those born between 1995 and 2012. These kids are growing up with smartphones and having Instagram accounts before they start High School, and have no memory of life without the Internet. These kids are reporting the highest levels of depression in history with a 70% increase in suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

In the past, adolescence was marked by the desire for independence, freedom, and the development of unique individuality. Today, teens are less likely to leave their house without their parents much less their cell phones. Even getting a job,

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generating their own income and driving, an indicator of freedom, has lost its appeal.

Moreover, research is showing that excessive Social Media use is rewiring the neurochemical and neurobiological functioning of the brain, forming a foundation to not only the development of social media addiction, but to addiction in general.

Smart Phone, Social Media and Suicide - Suggested Questions

What do you mean by “The Isolation of Generations”?

Problems with excessive Social Media Use?

The concept and development of Self and risks of social media use.

Research demonstrating the negative effects of social media addiction on the developing brain.

Addiction is not the sole product of the individual’s behavior. When is Social Media an addiction?

Symptoms of Addiction include:

Suggestions and specific personal operating recommendations for the development and maintenance of Self with the use of social media.

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For parents

For self

For FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)

Sample Discussion Points for Administrators and Teachers

- Ever feel like you'd have better luck getting your class's attention if you conducted your lessons via Snapchat?
- Are your kids are tied to screens like never before, and they're seeing the effects of digital stress on a daily basis?
- Do you ever wonder if their students suffer from social media addiction?
- Is your teen unable to put their device down and engage in the real world for more than a few moments?
- Are they are posting every single nuance of their existence online?
- Does your teen spend more time on social media than real life?
- As an administrator do you spend hours and hours dealing with abuse of cellphones and social media.
- As an administrator are you looking for a more consistent menu of options while continuing to provide some autonomy for teachers?

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