

Social Media Effects on Mental Health

Social media's impact on mental health is a double-edged sword, offering connection but often fueling anxiety, depression, poor sleep, and low self-esteem through social comparison, cyberbullying, and addictive design, with teens and young adults facing heightened risks, especially with excessive use, though it can also provide support networks and creative outlets.

Negative Impacts

- **Anxiety & Depression:** High usage correlates with increased symptoms, fueled by comparison and negative content.
- **Social Comparison:** Seeing curated, idealized lives leads to feelings of inadequacy and dissatisfaction.
- **Sleep Disruption:** Late-night scrolling disrupts sleep, impacting mood and cognitive function.
- **Cyberbullying:** Platforms are hotspots for harassment, causing lasting emotional harm.
- **Fear of Missing Out (FOMO):** Compels constant checking, increasing stress and isolation.
- **Addiction:** Designed for dopamine hits, leading to excessive use and negative health outcomes.

Positive Impacts

- **Connection:** Maintains long-distance relationships and connects people with shared interests.
- **Support:** Offers access to support groups, resources, and emotional help during tough times.
- **Creative Expression:** A platform for sharing creativity and building identity.

Who is Most Affected?

- **Adolescents:** Teens, especially girls, and those with pre-existing mental health issues are at higher risk for negative outcomes like body image issues and disordered eating.

What Can Be Done?

- **Set Limits:** Moderate usage, especially for teens (e.g., under 3 hours daily).
- **Foster Awareness:** Educate users about risks like comparison and cyberbullying.
- **Promote Healthy Habits:** Encourage breaks, focus on real-world connections, and monitor content.