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How Parents can be involved in Their Adolescents' Social Media Life

Social media has a large impact on adolescents, one that is often bad. It brings many issues upon them and is becoming the only topic that they think about. According to *Prevention India*, social media can be the cause of “poor academic performance, and sleep disorders, to obesity, and poor self-image, impulsiveness and aggression, even the fear of cyber bullying” (“Keep Your Teen Safe”). Every adolescent experiences one of these effects at least once in their life, and it is not right. Social media can cause them to not pay attention to family, friends, and those around them. It encourages teens to talk to somebody by messaging them over social media instead of in person. Parents need to step in and prevent their adolescents from being negatively affected by social media.

Social media can be a good source and a bad source that people use. The benefit of social media is that it allows people to communicate with others near and far. It lets them share thoughts and pictures from each other that may include happy events, vacation plans, the birth of a child and more. Social media can also be known to be a bad source. Along with the happy posts and thoughts people see, there are always negative pictures and social media posts as well. People can see posts and feel that they are not good enough, which also could lead to suicide. According to *Time Magazine*, there has been a rise in teen suicides. Research shows that it may be caused by cyberbullying and people posting pictures or posts showing perfect lives. Teens do not think they can measure up making them feel like they are not good enough (Tanner). It is

horrible that teens have to end their lives because of posts on social media. The article brought up a campaign for teens to keep them off of social media for a month, which may help (Tanner). Schools, other teens, and parents around a teen need to be there for support. Making sure the teen is confident and not being affected by others' posts. Teens who are in school can also suffer in school and not get enough sleep because they are constantly worried about checking their social media accounts. *Educational Journal* reports that one in five people's amount of sleep goes down because of social media ("1 in 5"). There are more bad issues that social media brings than good issues.

Social media affects the academic performance of adolescents. Because of this, parents need to put a limit on how much their children use social media. According to *The Egyptian Journal of Hospital Medicine*, social media causes academic performance to drop, and when adolescents use social media for a long time and during lectures, it has affected academic performance (Aljabry, et al.). This is because adolescents are focused on social media instead of homework, so they do not get homework done. They can be staying up at night and not getting enough sleep, causing them to do poorly in school. Adolescents also view social media during class, which can prevent them from learning what they are supposed to. Teachers need to have a no cell phone policy in their classrooms, and parents should enforce a certain amount of time each day their adolescent can spend on social media. If teachers and parents do these things, academic grades are more likely to rise instead of drop.

Social media allows men and women to meet people online and date; therefore, parents should warn their children of the dangers of encountering strangers online. *USA Today Magazine* points out that almost a quarter of adolescents met their dating partner online ("Parents Need to Be"). Adolescents need to stay away from online dating because it brings up many concerns

from parents and is very risky. An article from *Health, Risk and Society* was about a study on twenty nine people that were online daters all of whom said they thought online dating was risky (Couch). People do not know if people they meet are telling the truth about who they are and if they are dangerous. One of the dating partners can hack the computer the person they met is using; they can then look that person up online, and find an address, stalk people, and can even find people and hurt them. The way the world is today, anything can happen on a date. If an individual chooses to meet the person somewhere, they should meet in a public place not at their home, or anywhere where they are alone with the other person. People should not stop online dating because of these risks. Parents and teens should just be aware of the risks that could happen. Parents should be able to see what dating sites and apps their children are using and monitor them. They can also monitor and view what is happening on the sites and apps, so their adolescent is not affected by the dangers of online dating.

Parents must talk to their children about privacy on social media. Adolescents need to think before they share something and before putting personal information on their profile including their birthdate, phone number, relationship status and more. According to the *American Medical Writers Association Journal*, teens have to be aware of the privacy settings where they can make sure that only certain people can see their posts and information. They should actually read the privacy settings agreement and not just hit "I agree". They can make sure that they will not regret what they post after the fact by thinking about the future and whether people will think the picture is bad. For example, one teenager may post something now and in the future apply for a job. The boss or someone that the adolescent may work for/with may look at the young applicant's profile to see if they should hire or not. A boss who sees bad posts may not hire the person. Good posts mean the person has a better chance of getting hired

(Kryder). By keeping some of these tips in mind, teens should not have a problem with their privacy on social media. Parents again can make sure their teenagers' social media privacy is appropriate. Parents could ask their adolescents to show the parents the picture, post, or comment before posting for approval.

Parents can inform their teenager that sending inappropriate pictures through social media messaging or through texts is a risk and puts the adolescent in a bad position. According to a *Pediatric Nursing* magazine article, adolescents do not realize the consequences that come from sharing a nude image. After an image is shared, it can be shared with other people who were not supposed to see it and without the pictured person's permission. If the image gets out, the person who sent the image in the first place will feel embarrassed and humiliated (Guinta). The article describes that suspects can get into serious trouble including getting suspended from school, and legal consequences, along with felony child pornography charges (Guinta). Young users of social media need to be careful of what they share with other people. Sending a nude image to someone that they trust still is not the smartest idea. Parents informing their adolescents about this situation can help and hopefully prevent humiliating situations from happening.

When teenagers see posts about drugs and alcohol, it can influence them to do drugs, or drink alcohol when they are not supposed to. Parents can make strict rules about drugs and alcohol, and teachers also can inform students what happens when people do drugs or drink alcohol. The *Journal of American College Health*, states that "college student drinking is influenced by friends' alcohol-related content posted on social networking sites and by greater engagement with traditional and online alcohol marketing" (Roberson et al.). Many things can happen to teens when consuming drugs and alcohol. By doing drugs and alcohol, adolescents can become addicted if the adolescents do not have control over how much they consume. An article

from the *Advance Recovery* claims seventy five percent of adolescents ages twelve to seventeen have seen their friends posts' on social media showing drinking and the use of drugs. The adolescents who saw the posts felt like they needed to copy the behavior (Keller). People can die from the overdose of drugs. Teens can get into bad car accidents and kill themselves or the other driver because they were drinking then driving. Social media is a bad influence on teens these days. Teens often post pictures of themselves doing drugs and drinking alcohol. Other teens will see that and think that it is cool and they should be doing it too, so they start consuming. Parents need to be stricter with their children and tell them that consuming drugs and alcohol is a terrible thing, especially when under the age of twenty-one.

Social media can cause people to commit suicide. Parents need to find a way to figure out how their children are feeling, so they do not choose suicide. In social media, people portray their lives as perfect, never anything bad. When teens see these "perfect" posts, it harms their mental health. These posts often leave teens feeling like they do not belong (Tanner). There are times when people see a post from someone with a good body or an almost perfect life. When people view the posts, they end up wanting the perfect life or feel as if they should look like the picture in the post or have lives similar to the post. That post would then make the teens feel bad about themselves and make teens feel as if they are not good enough. That could lead to suicide. *Time magazine* states that seventy percent of teens who used social media more than five hours a day, had suicidal thoughts or actions compared to those who used it one hour a day (Tanner). The students who were more exposed to it had more bad thoughts than the teens who did not use it as much. Parents need to talk to their adolescents to make sure the teens are fine, and not just assume this. Usually when adolescents do commit suicide, the parents have no idea why. Parents

need to be on top of monitoring social media and constantly talking to their teens, and tell them that they have people around them that they can talk to for support.

Parents can set a time limit on phone apps and social media. Apple states that the new IOS 12 update allows for a downtime where apps cannot be used and notifications will not be received. Parents can monitor the time on their adolescents' phone apps and websites by using the families' Apple IDs. Parents can set up screen time to monitor app usage, and the teenager can request more time if needed. Parents can also allow important apps like education apps and messages to not have a time limit and keep these apps on during downtime ("New Features"). This is a great feature of the IOS 12 update because it allows parents and adolescents to set the amount of screen time they have. The downside is it only is an update on iPhones and not Android phones. People with Android phones may want to switch to have this feature. Parents need to decide if they want to use this feature or not.

Parents can introduce their children to another great feature on the iPhone that is called the "Do Not Disturb" feature. When people turn this setting on, they will not receive notifications or calls. It is great when at school learning and doing homework, when somebody is at work and when people go to bed. IOS 12 now has the setting where people can click on different settings for when people use the "Do Not Disturb" feature including "at the end of the day, when you leave a certain location, and at the end of your meeting on your calendar" ("New Features"). Using it while driving is the most important, so teens do not feel tempted to text a friend back or answer a phone call while driving. It can help reduce the amount of accidents there are due to texting and driving. All they have to do is press the icon in the control center or go into settings and turn it on. Parents really need to persuade their children or make them use the feature.

Parents can prevent their adolescents from getting “hurt” by social media. *Prevention India* suggests that parents should not let their child get on social media until a certain age, have a limit to how much teens are on social media, and need to inform their children and make them social media savvy. Parents must tell their children about how privacy settings work. This article also suggests that parents should make sure their children have a day off from social media (“Keep Your Teen Safe”). By following these suggestions, adolescents will have less of a chance of getting negatively impacted by social media. The minimum age should probably be thirteen. CNN states that the majority of social media apps and websites have the minimum age of thirteen (Elgersma). Social media account owners need to make sure someone is a certain age by proving it in some way because often younger people make up an age in order to be able to use a social media account. *Education Journal* points out that a majority of parents are unaware that there is an age limit on social media apps (“Parents Unaware”). Parents need to be more aware of the age limit on social media. That way young people are less likely to fake their age. Putting a limit on how much adolescents use social media is difficult, but one hour per day would probably be a reasonable limit. It is up to parents to show how privacy settings work and set strict rules. Parents could also give themselves time to check their adolescent’s phone. If they do not want to do this, parents can follow the social media accounts and can keep an eye on their teens’ accounts that way as well.

Some researchers think that parents should not snoop through their adolescents’ mobile devices. According to the *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, snooping might uncover additional information, but also strongly violates privacy expectations (Hawk et al). The researchers are wrong. Parents should have the right to snoop if they are not getting the answers they want from their children. Parents cannot know what is going on in their adolescent’s life if

their teen does not reveal what is going on in their life. The only way to find that information out is to go through and monitor the teen's social media. Most parents pay for their phones, so they should have the right to go through their adolescent's phone.

Parents need to be an active part in their adolescent's life, so suicide, online dating, and other events do not happen. The United States, at least has to put an age restriction on social media at thirteen and require adolescents to provide identification to prove their age. There are many ways parents and those around their children can monitor the adolescents' social media. In the United States, social media has become a big problem. Parents and people around an adolescent or child need to prevent the many negative effects from happening, so the next generation does not experience these bad effects either.

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