



The Role of Social Media with Depression and Anxiety in Daily Life

In today's society, social media is a large part of most people's everyday life. It is a great way to share updates and photos with friends and family, receive real time news headlines, and build your personal and professional networks. The most popular social media platforms are Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for people of all ages.

If you log onto Instagram, you may see pictures of a friend's brand new sports car. On Facebook, you may see photos of your co-worker's latest vacation. On LinkedIn, one of your contacts may be announcing a major job promotion. Studies have shown that seeing only positive moments of someone's life through social media platforms can lead to two issues: Fear of Missing Out and Social Comparison; both of which can make users feel left out, depressed, or anxious.

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

Imagine that you spent your whole weekend having little or no fun, and when you log on to Facebook you see that your friends attended a party and didn't invite you. You would probably feel upset about this. Oxford dictionary defines this feeling as "Fear of Missing Out" (FOMO), which is feelings of "anxiety that an exciting or interesting event may currently be happening elsewhere; often brought to our attention by posts seen on a social media website." A recent study reported that young adults show higher levels of FOMO. Those who reported high levels of FOMO, also scored low in satisfaction of basic emotional needs. Those with higher levels of FOMO also reported lower levels of life happiness and positive mood. Not surprisingly those who scored high in FOMO were more likely to use social media right before sleep, upon waking, and during meal times; in other words, they were heavy social media users.

Social Comparison

The action of comparing oneself with others to assess or boost some aspect of yourself is known as social comparison. A recent study found that online networking platforms often portray positive life events; for example, weddings, babies, graduations, and new major purchases. If there are not many exciting things happening in your life, this can make you feel that you are not up to par. This fact is reinforced by studies that show that people who use social media often are more likely to feel that others are "more joyful" and "have better lives" than people who use social media less often.

Below are four tips to help manage FOMO and Social Comparison, and improve your social media experience as well as your wellbeing.

WAYS TO CONQUER FEAR OF MISSING OUT AND SOCIAL COMPARISON

- 1. Limit the amount of time you spend on social media:** Studies show that people who experience an increase in depression or anxiety from social media, log in first thing in the morning, during meal times, and before bed. If you are experiencing sadness while viewing social media, try limiting your activity to once a day and not first thing in the morning or right before bed.



2. **Remember, people are only showing what they want you to see:** People are going to post what they want others to see. Keep things in perspective. Social media is a highlight reel, not actual day-to-day life.
3. **Practice gratitude:** Start by writing down three things that you are thankful for every day. The more a person practices gratitude, the less likely he or she is to be depressed, anxious, or envious.
4. **Be proactive:** If you find yourself always feeling down when you compare yourself to others online, you are reacting. Instead of feeling down, do something to make you feel better. You can even start with something small, like planning a small get together with friends.

If you feel stress and anxiety, and it's taking a toll on your health and well-being as a result of "fear of missing out" and social comparison, visit your healthcare provider.

Key References:

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