

1 The teenage brain has confused parents for generations. Nowadays, with the lives of most teenagers so heavily hooked on social media, it's even harder for parents to know what's truly going on behind the screens. Although these apps can give voice to the voiceless, facilitate learning, and help people feel supported and uplifted, they can have a variety of negative effects on teenagers' brains by affecting how they process information, react to situations, and remember events. So, are parents right to be worried about the negative effects of social media on teens? Or are these concerns merely a sign of a generational-gap?



2 Current research indicates that a child's brain development is shaped by social media use and exposure in many ways. Adolescents suffering from Internet addiction may, over time, experience structural changes in their brain and have lower grey matter. The multitasking commonly associated with social media can cause adolescent children to take longer to accomplish tasks, which can also impact the quality of their homework or studies.



3 Besides, privacy on social media is almost non-existent. Any content posted in a private social space can be easily re-posted and consequently viewed by other people. This leads to problems for young users varying from image-based abuse to not getting accepted for a job or a University programme. Besides, today's teenagers are exposed to images and statuses that portray perfection. Research shows that constant exposure to unrealistic beauty standards through social media can affect how teenagers view their own bodies, i.e. it might negatively influence a teenager's physical and mental health.



4 Using social media can greatly disturb sleep patterns by obliging teens to stay up late or wake up throughout the night to check notifications. The blue light from mobile phone screens can also disturb sleep cycles. Research indicates that teenagers need 8-10 hours of sleep and not getting enough of that can result in



difficulties in concentration, feeling stressed or anxious and becoming irritable. It can also lead to health issues such as acne, viral illnesses, unhealthy eating and weight gain.

5 Developing social skills helps teenagers establish and maintain friendships. As teenagers and children spend a lot of time interacting over social media sites and apps, many of them establish social interaction skills that don't necessarily apply to the offline world. While, of course, social media can help to promote and strengthen existing relationships, it's integral that teenagers also learn how to have meaningful, face-to-face exchanges with people. Being socially isolated is a major risk factor for mental health problems.

6 Therefore, the best way to minimize the negative effects of social media on teens is to guide them, provide them with strong moral values and aid them in finding solutions that will help them safely lead a normal life.





