

Parents may fret, but even experts say social media use has its benefits

Young people like to post on social media sites like Twitter and Facebook. They talk about their lives. Things can seem perfect.

In real life, however, things might not be so perfect.

Social media lets teenagers connect. They can talk to people anywhere. Still, spending hours on social media could be harmful, experts say.



Behavioral Problems

Studies show problems could come from using social media too much. Those can include anxiety, which can make it hard to relax.

Most teenagers today are on social media sites. Some teens feel anxious if they can't share posts. They want to see what their friends are doing. They also might feel bad if they don't have many friends online.

Shreya Hessler is a psychologist in Bel Air, Maryland. Psychologists look at how people behave and think. Teens often fear they are missing out on something, she said. Social media can make teens feel left out.

Good Points

It is not all bad, though. Experts don't think teenagers should stay off social media.

Leslie Parker works with teens in Baltimore, Maryland. She said there are good things about social media. One is staying connected to people. It depends on how students use it, she said. Many use social media for good reasons.

Hessler said, "People can share their life stories."

Bullied Kids

Social media can be more of a risk than adults think. Some teenagers may face online bullying, for example.

Social media also might create body image issues. Teens see photos of someone who looks perfect. Then they feel they don't look as good. The photos might have been changed to make someone look perfect.

Octavia Sykes works with girls. She helps those who struggle with their body image.

She said social media can increase these worries.

Anxious Teens

Hessler said some teenagers get upset if they cannot get online. This can happen when their phone dies. It can also happen if a parent takes away their phone.

Kristina Dyson goes to Mercy High School in Baltimore. She uses Snapchat and Twitter to talk to friends.

Dyson feels like she needs to know what is going on. She uses social media for that, she said.

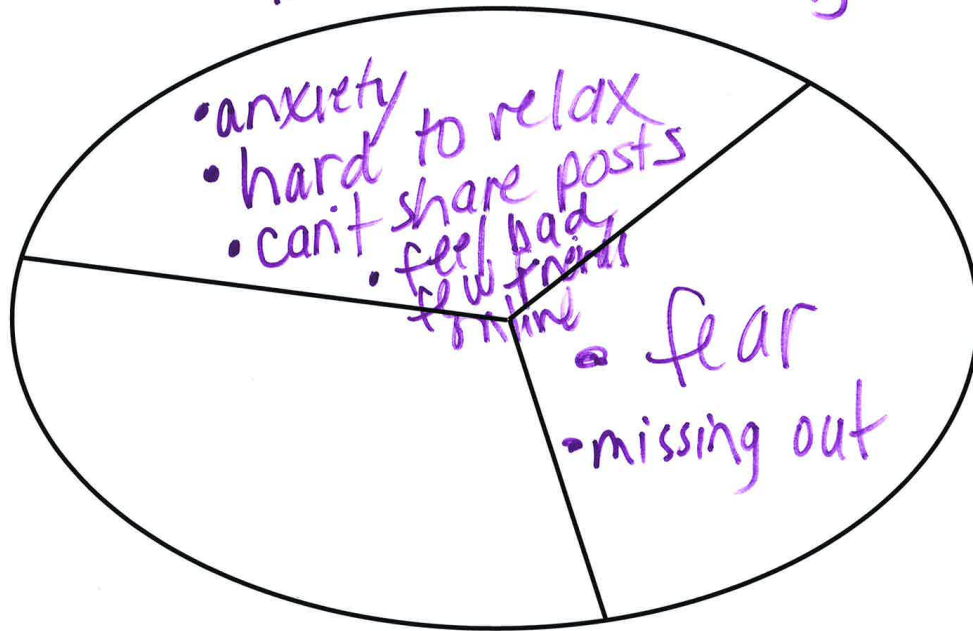
Teens can fear missing out. This might create anxiety. It could distract from school work.

Parker said social media can keep teenagers away from family time. They should talk to people in real life, she said.

Hessler suggested setting times for social media.

Teenagers can also learn to be more aware of their social media use, Sykes said. Is using social media making you anxious? It may be time to pull back. You aren't going to miss out on anything.

Behavioral Problems



Good Points

