

Social Media, Depression, & Suicide: What We Know and How Social Work Can Help

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Objectives:


- Does Social Media Increase Adolescent Depression?
 - Causation Vs. Correlation
 - What the Research Says
- Tips for Engaging Youth and Families around this discussion
- Where to find fellow social workers and professionals interested in Depression, Suicide Prevention, and Technology?




What We Know:


☰ COSMOPOLITAN STYLE BEAUTY LOVE VIDEO OLYMPICS 2018 SUBSCRIBE FOLLOW

'Why Don't I Look Like Her?': How Instagram Is Ruining Our Self Esteem

The scary truth behind warped self-perception on social media—and the lengths we all go to curate our 'perfect' virtual self.

 By [Olivia Fleming](#) Jan 15, 2017

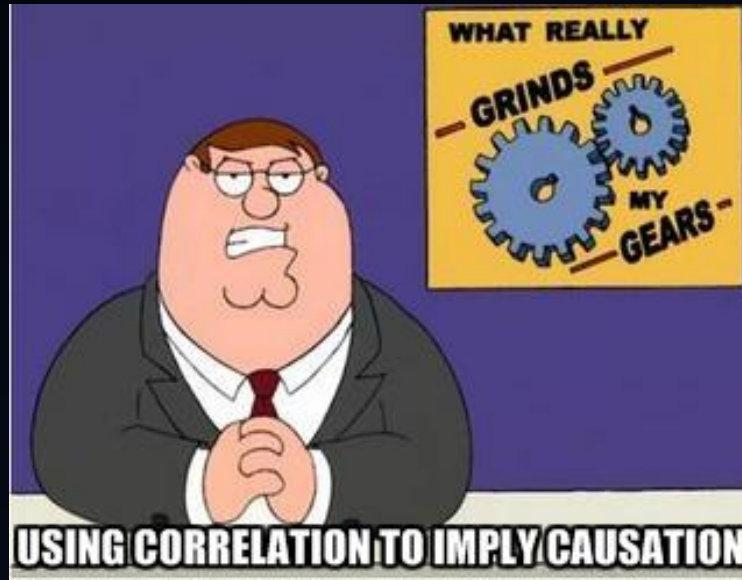
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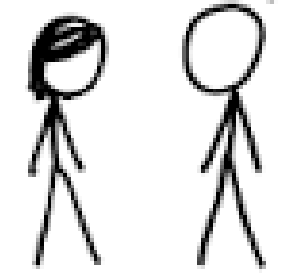
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What We Know:

- Young Adults who use Instagram frequently compare their body image, and this leads to increased anxiety.
- The number of “likes” that one achieves (or not) has an impact and creates a feedback loop
- But does this mean social media “causes” mental health problems?
- In what ways does social media impact mental health?



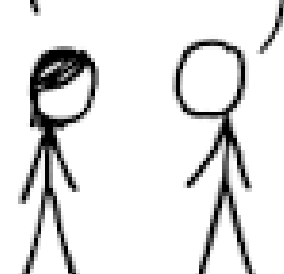
I USED TO THINK
CORRELATION IMPLIED
CAUSATION.



THEN I TOOK A
STATISTICS CLASS.
NOW I DON'T.



SOUNDS LIKE THE
CLASS HELPED.
WELL, MAYBE.



The Bad

- “Recreational use of social media is associated with poor mental health outcomes in Adolescents” (Babic Et. Al. 2017)
- “We find that Facebook usage increases users' engagement in social comparison and consequently decreases their happiness. Social comparison mediates the effect of Facebook on happiness, but only for the younger half of our sample and only for those who believe that others have many more positive experiences than they do” (Arad, Barzilay, & Perchick 2017).
- “ ..it was demonstrated that taking a break from Facebook has positive effects on the two dimensions of well-being: our life satisfaction increases and our emotions become more positive.” Tromholt (2016)

The Bad

- “Adolescents who spent more time on new media (including social media and electronic devices such as smartphones) were more likely to report mental health issues, and adolescents who spent more time on nonscreen activities (in-person social interaction, sports/exercise, homework, print media, and attending religious services) were less likely” (Twenge et. al. 2018)
- Compared with those in the lowest quartile, individuals in the highest quartiles of SM site visits per week and those with a higher global frequency score had significantly increased odds of depression (AOR=2.74, 95% CI=1.86–4.04; AOR=3.05, 95% CI=2.03–4.59, respectively). All associations between independent variables and depression had strong, linear, dose-response trends. Results were robust to all sensitivity analyses. (Sadini 2016 et. al)

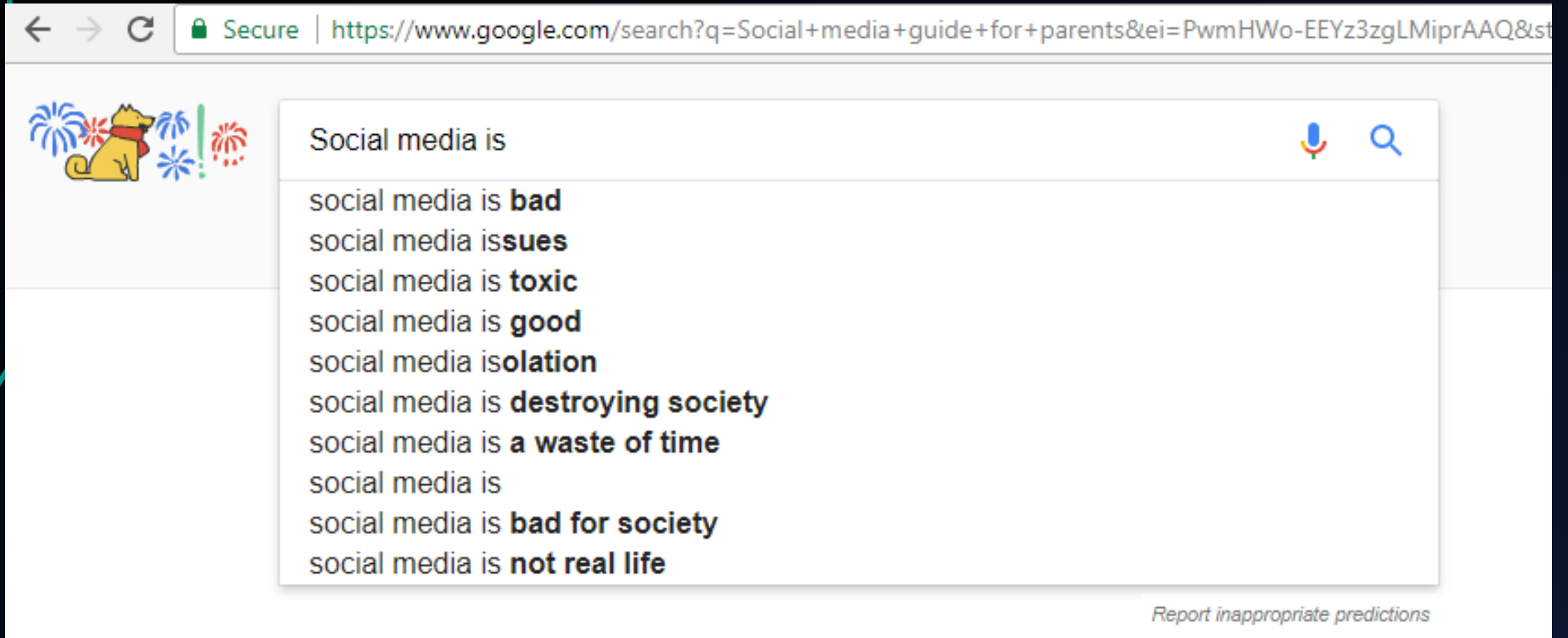
The Good

- “Girls endorsed some appearance concerns and social comparison, particularly with peers. However, they displayed high media literacy, appreciation of differences, and confidence, strategies that appeared helpful in mitigating the potential negative association between social media exposure and body image.” (Burnette, Kwitowski, & Mazzeo 2017).
- Knutson (2017) demonstrated that Youth were more comfortable sharing feeling of grief on social media than face to face.

The Ugly

- Those who used 7-11 social media platforms had higher levels of anxiety than those with 0-2 platforms (Primack Et. Al. 2017)
- “The benefits of using online technologies were reported as increased self-esteem, perceived social support, increased social capital, safe identity experimentation and increased opportunity for self-disclosure. Harmful effects were reported as increased exposure to harm, social isolation, depression and cyber-bullying” (Best, Manktelow, and Taylor, 2014)

Let's ask the Internet



The image shows a screenshot of a Google search page. The browser's address bar displays the URL: <https://www.google.com/search?q=Social+media+guide+for+parents&ei=PwmHWO-EEYz3zgLMiprAAQ&st>. The search bar contains the text "Social media is". To the left of the search bar is a festive illustration of a yellow dog sitting next to blue and red fireworks. To the right of the search bar are icons for voice search and a magnifying glass. Below the search bar, a list of search suggestions is displayed:

- social media is **bad**
- social media **issues**
- social media is **toxic**
- social media is **good**
- social media **isolation**
- social media is **destroying society**
- social media is **a waste of time**
- social media is
- social media is **bad for society**
- social media is **not real life**

At the bottom right of the search suggestions area, there is a link that says "Report inappropriate predictions".

Implications for Practice

Transitioning from research to practice, the study conducted by (Gritton Et. Al. 2017) asked youth how they recognize “troubling content” ; they concluded ..

“Many described feeling personally responsible for engaging with the person who posted the concerning content, but ill-equipped to offer help effectively. Youth recognized that they needed tools and training to help with these situations and referenced the importance of trusted adults.”

Implications for Practice

- Give youth and families the tools they need to navigate the complexity of Social Media
- Clinically working with youth emphasize choices and more harm reduction stance
- Carefully think about SOCIAL MEDIA = BAD but also be aware of risks

Working with Youth:

- Have an open conversation about risks and benefits about social media
- Discuss the short term versus long term nature. Things like screen shots are FOREVER.
- We as adults know what is unsafe but engage with them around concerns them about social media.
- Ask questions and don't assume it is having a negative impact.
- Internet Safety Tips:

http://www.casey.org/media/CLS_ResourceGuides_subdocs_SocialNetworkingTweensTeens.pdf

Working with Youth



BEFORE YOU POST...

THINK!



T - is it true?

H - is it hurtful?

I - is it illegal?



N - is it necessary?

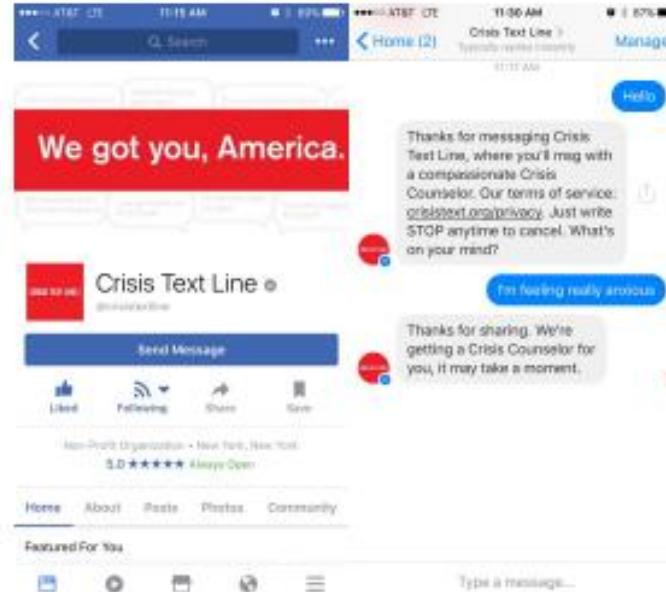
K - is it kind?

Crisis Text Line on Facebook Messenger

How to Contact Crisis Text Line over Messenger

Anyone in the US can reach a live, trained Crisis Text Line Crisis Counselor from the organization's [Facebook page](#) for free, 24/7.

1. Click the "Send Message" button on the [Crisis Text Line Facebook page](#).
2. Just say "hello" or anything else you'd like to share to start the conversation.
3. We will connect you to a live Crisis Counselor who will help you sort through your feelings and develop a plan to stay safe.



Popular Social Media Sites & Their Safety Policy

- Facebook Safety: <https://www.facebook.com/safety>
- Instagram:

Tips for Safety

[https://help.instagram.com/377830165708421/?helpref=hc_fnav&bc\[0\]=Instagram%20Help&bc\[1\]=Privacy%20and%20Safety%20Center](https://help.instagram.com/377830165708421/?helpref=hc_fnav&bc[0]=Instagram%20Help&bc[1]=Privacy%20and%20Safety%20Center)

Tips for Parents

[https://help.instagram.com/154475974694511/?helpref=hc_fnav&bc\[0\]=Instagram%20Help&bc\[1\]=Privacy%20and%20Safety%20Center](https://help.instagram.com/154475974694511/?helpref=hc_fnav&bc[0]=Instagram%20Help&bc[1]=Privacy%20and%20Safety%20Center)

- Snapchat Safety: <https://www.snapchat.com/safety>
- WhatsApp: <https://faq.whatsapp.com/sv/general/21197244>

Work with Parents

- Social Media use is complicated with the Erickson's developmental conflict of identity versus vs. role Confusion.
- Transferring from child to young adulthood it can be difficult to define roles and increase independence.
- Clinically, how is social media and usage of technology any different?

Implications for Parents

- Encourage discussion and engagement around social media
- Schedule weekly reviews of posts, timely news articles, celebrity use of social media
- Read the youth guide provided earlier together
- Consider using an app like Bark.us where parents and youth co-create what it going to be monitored.

Parental Control Apps

- Researchers (Wisniewski et. al 2017) noted that most parental control apps were more about parents blocking and monitoring than co-creating what social media content is looked at.
- From the social work perspective we should be working towards co-creating social media safety.
- Perhaps examining from a more harm reduction stance.

Professional to Professional Use of Social Media

- Social Work and Technology:

Google Plus Group:

<https://plus.google.com/communities/115588985317830085141>

Hashtag #SWtech

- Suicide Prevention on Social Media Twitter Chat

Information at www.spsmchat.com

Hashtag #SPSM

Connect and Contact

- Sean Erreger, LCSW
- www.StuckOnSocialWork.com
- @stuckonsw on Twitter and Instagram
- serreger@gmail.com

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