

The impact of social media on adolescent mental health and well-being in Singapore...

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What you interested in Adolescence is the period where a child transits to become a young adult, specifically between the ages of 10 to 19 years. It is a significant period of psychological and social change as they develop new skills, responsibilities and personal relationships. In this modern era of social connectedness, adolescents face multiple personal pressures not experienced by previous generations. The period of adolescence is arguably the most challenging in one's lifetime as it is during then that many mental illnesses are detected for the first time. However, despite the importance in ensuring mental health and emotional well-being, many adolescents lack knowledge of what it takes to be mentally sound.

Social Media platforms (e. g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, etc.) are widely used amongst adolescents in Singapore. In 2017, 92 per cent of youths aged between 15-24 years listed social media as their most common internet activity, much more than emailing and instant messaging. This figure will continue to rise as our society become increasingly technologically-savvy and interconnected. In fact, as Social Media continue to dominate a huge part of adolescents' lives today, secondary schools are even incorporating social media into their curriculum.

While Social Media's role and function is to facilitate networking, thought expression and memory sharing, it has garnered mixed responses and even criticism. In a study conducted by the University of Leicester, adolescents viewed Social Media as detrimental to their mental well-being despite reporting that it can help to connect people and be a source of support. The increased time spent on social media is said to result in anti-social behavior,

stress, depression and sleep deprivation, which is detrimental to mental health. These side effects will be particularly susceptible to adolescents as they enter a phase of development and growth.

As Singapore has one of the highest internet penetrations in the world with a whopping 83 per cent of Singaporeans on Social Media, the threats and risks such as exposure to inappropriate content, cyber-bullying, online grooming, toxic interactions with people are heightened. Being exposed to such dangers will certainly take a toll on an adolescent's mental health, even if they do not show it.

Despite the surge in adolescent use of Social Media, little research can be found on the negative impacts of these social sites on adolescent mental health and well-being. As such, the aim of this research is to explore the correlation between usage of social media and adolescent negative mental well-being, as well as factors that can protect adolescent's mental well-being from the harms of Social Media.