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Mental Health Awareness in Adolescents and the Impact of Social Media

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Capstone Project for the Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Science

Introduction

This capstone project focuses on informing parents of the effects of social media on adolescents' mental health. Adolescents are frequent users of social media as they are more likely to explore online content and be unaware of the potential dangers that can pose a threat to their mental health (Rapee et al. 2019). Due to social media being difficult to monitor at all times, along with advances in technology through school curriculums, we want to acknowledge its presence and usage. Social media allows the opportunity to connect with others digitally but there needs to be awareness of the potentially harmful effects of social media that can disrupt adolescents' mental well-being, as they are more vulnerable to negative psychological outcomes. Social media may negatively impact adolescents ' psychological development which may result in adolescents developing mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, or poor self body image. Parents may be unaware of the potential dangers but parents need to be educated on how to stay proactive when it comes to guiding their children through social media. The first topic will discuss the adolescent stage and how it differs from early adulthood. Secondly, they will find indicators of negative mental health through social media. Lastly, they will identify the resources and methods that promote positive mental well-being for an adolescent either online or offline. This project was presented to parents in a one-hour workshop session to educate them about mental health awareness and social media usage, whether or not their adolescents use social media. This was made available to parents of adolescent-aged children via Zoom. The target age for participants was for parents with children aged 12-17.

Needs Statement

As technology advances, so does the need to have access to social media. Whether it is to explore the digital world or to complete school work, many individuals will find themselves relying on technology for various aspects of their lives. Technology has increased drastically over the years and with the most recent COVID-19 pandemic there has been a shift to spend time online for educational tasks (Odgers & Jensen, 2020). During the pandemic, switching towards digital technologies kept the educational system afloat as students were able to engage online socially and academically (Haleem et al. 2022). The utilization of computers in the classroom and the introduction of social platforms bring excitement to adolescents to explore digital technologies. Digital technologies is an umbrella term that encompasses various other devices, mobile devices being the most commonly used, that can offer access to social networking sites and instant messaging apps (Dienlin & Joannes, 2020). With near unlimited access to a social community, there is also the potential for developing adverse mental health effects with the usage of social media. This workshop helped develop an understanding of the impact social media has on an adolescent's mental well-being development and bringing awareness of the potential effects to parents.

Adolescence is defined as a time between puberty and early adult independence. This unique stage of life deals with both specific health needs and developmental knowledge and skills that adolescents will carry into adulthood. During this time, adolescents are actively developing their personalities and setting up their social foundations. In comparison to adults, adolescents are more socially oriented, impulsive, are risk-takers, and strive for life satisfaction from other peers (Dienlin & Johannes, 2020). Adolescents represent a crucial period for developing social interaction as an adolescent's social world grows and transforms. During this

period, adolescents spend more time with their peers than family. In addition, they are more sensitive to the peer acceptance around them (Orben et al. 2020). In contrast, while adolescents are filled with opportunities and new learning experiences, there is still the factor of vulnerability in inspiring young adults. To further explain, the developing adolescent brain will adapt and learn behaviors that are essential for their mental well-being. If development is disrupted or impacted then mental health problems begin to arise (Belcher et al. 2020). Due to the rapid speed of brain development, there is a push for aspiring young adults to have an understanding of their decision-making and personal feelings. Puberty has been indicated as a potential risk factor for the onset of social-emotional disorders (Rapee et al. 2019). Furthermore, approximately one in five adolescents will experience some sort of mental health problems with half of all lifetime diagnoses occurring by age fourteen and increasing by the age of eighteen (Belcher et al. 2020; Keles et al. 2020). While most mental health problems are often externalizing, such as Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity disorder, there are also internalized symptoms such as anxiety and depression (Belcher et al. 2020). Through this statement, we can understand how the adolescent period is crucial for establishing social, physical, and cognitive development that will lead into adulthood.

Understanding the diversity of social media and its digital consumption is essential for adolescents. As reported by Dienlin & Joannes (2020), in the United States the most common forms of digital services used are YouTube (85%), Instagram (72%), Snapchat (69%), and TikTok (63%). It is estimated that around 90% of teens residing in the United States have access to social media and other technologies granting access to the internet (Giovanelli et al. 2020). In addition, adolescents in the United States on average were found to spend nearly 7.5 hours each day on digital entertainment media alone, excluding the time spent online for education purposes

(Odgers & Jensen, 2020). With the evident influence of social media, there is a need to understand the changing influences that social media has to offer. Usually, when the term social media is used, it is often referred to as a negative phenomenon. Most would argue that social media causes more harm than good but there are positive elements that can either provide a sense of community or produce the ability to network and establish social activities (Haleem et al. 2022). We have reached a point in our culture where technology and social media have become more present and accessible for many.

The first issue that needs to be addressed is what adolescents do with their digital technologies which results in negative health. There are various applications with different functionalities that can offer active or passive usage. Active usage is defined as posting online or chatting with others while passive usage is browsing and consuming content of others online (Dienlin & Johannas, 2020). A term commonly used now by adolescents on social media is "FOMO" or the fear of missing out, which is defined as an emotional response to the belief that other peers are living better, more satisfying lives with more opportunities (Abi-Jaoude et al. 2020). These factors contribute to adolescents feeling stressed, and depressed, and an overall feeling of dissatisfaction towards their well-being. When reviewing the relationship between social media use and mental health problems, depression was the most commonly measured outcome (Keles et al. 2020). Depression can be described as a mental health disorder that results in the loss of interest and putting a stop to normal activities while harming an individual's sense of self. Adolescents who develop depression may have impaired social relationships, lower educational attainment, increased risk of substance abuse, and additional mental health problems that affect health (Keles et al. 2020).

Anxiety is something that has increased among all young people by over 70% in the past 25 years (Keles et al. 2020). Anxiety can be described as a feeling that causes uneasiness or fear that increases one's heart rate to beat rapidly. Anxiety is something that is a normal experience in certain situations, such as public speaking or taking a test. As previously discussed, there is a lot of brain development for adolescents and with their transition into puberty, if there is recurring emotional distress this leads to a change in the developmental trajectory of an adolescent brain (Xie et al. 2021). Some of the developmental traits that become compromised if there is an abnormal amount of anxiety is a decrease in cognitive control and stress regulation. A decrease in cognitive control is what is necessary to influence behavior, such as controlling an impulse to procrastinate. Stress regulation is aimed toward problem-focused coping strategies that help distinguish the source of the stress rather than sitting with the symptoms (Keles et al. 2020). While there has been a link found to connect social media with the rise of mental health problems, there are multiple factors that may not reflect similarly to other adolescents. For some adolescents, the presence of social media causes overwhelming feelings of demand leading to anxiety whereas others find it to strengthen bonds and create new online friendships (Keles et al. 2020).

In addition, adolescents who spend the majority of their time on social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram were found to have associated links with poor body image concerns and disordered eating (Abi-Jaoude et al. 2020). Furthermore, this data has found that young female adolescents are at an increased risk than their male counterparts of developing depressive symptoms and other emotional problems as they are more likely to internalize differing body images online and be exposed to cyberbullying (Odgers & Jensen 2020). While posting a selfie may not be harmful in and of itself, the effects that may come out of this stem

from issues with body image. Young female adolescents are at a higher risk of developing poor body image as they spend more time online than their male counterparts and with a rise in digitally altered photos, known as Photoshop, more female adolescents have an increased desire to alter their appearance of either their face, hair or skin tone (Abi-Jaoude et al. 2020; Biernesser et al. 2020).

We understand that social media offers opportunities to expand a young adolescent's social network, but these networking sites also hold the power to expose adolescents to harmful content such as cyberbullying. Cyberbullying has taken over the place of traditional bullying today and is the most common among adolescents. Cyberbullying is described as intentional and repeated harm from one or more peers that occurs through computers, smartphones, or other technological devices (Zhu et al. 2021). While learning about cyberbullying is still considered new it is a public health issue that relates to adolescents ' development and mental health being affected. The adverse effects caused by cyberbullying include a reduced sense of safety, poorer mental health, higher anxiety, and a greater scale of unhappiness that could lead to self-harm or suicide (Zhu et al. 2021). Parents of adolescents need to understand how social media usage is tackled and how it may affect their children's well-being in the future. Parents taking the time to have a better understanding of how social media works allows them to have a strong foundation on the potential harmful effects and on how to approach their children about it.

The second issue is that when it comes to managing mental health through social media, it is important to discuss its usage and how it can affect an adolescent differently from another. It should also be noted that adolescents who may have already experienced mental health difficulties will be at an increased risk of developing more issues through social media usage (Abi-Jaoude et al. 2020). One of the biggest resources given to those who are experiencing poor

mental health through the usage of social media is often just being told to put the phone down. While this can fix the solution of viewing content online, adolescents, in turn, report a larger scale of boredom and a worse mood as social media serves their social interaction needs (Abi-Jaoude et al. 2020). Introducing adolescents to physical activity and exercise can help not only improve adolescents' strength and fitness but also contribute to good health (Belcher et al. 2020). To further explain, good health in this context is the ability to improve or maintain physiologic well-being, this can look like the ability to recover or grow from stressors that would normally impact an adolescent. Stressors may vary from school activities or family challenges. It is recommended that the youths aged 6-17 participate in at least an hour of moderate to vigorous intensity exercise to receive healthy benefits for physical and mental health. Specifically, the use of aerobic fitness was better associated with buffering against internalizing and externalizing symptoms such as depression and ADHD (Belcher et al. 2020). The usage of physical activity in adolescents provides an alternative to social media usage while aiding in their overall well-being. In addition, parents may also further educate their adolescents in navigating life offline, such as introducing after-school programs, community-based organizations, or a school sport (Odgers & Jensen, 2020).

As previously discussed, social media can consume an adolescent's attention. Still, parents can redirect their children to more positive social media usage and introduce online communities that cater to healthy well-being. In the past, mental health problems used to be something dealt with in isolation but today we have the technology and resources to introduce online support groups that allow for some social interaction (Keles et al. 2020). Research has found some benefits of social media usage in adolescents as they have better self-esteem and new social support systems (Ivie et al. 2020). Parents can further assist their children by

introducing time regulations and also including topics such as privacy and ways to protect themselves for their benefit (Giovanelli et al. 2020). This can also apply to protection from potential online predators such as setting up a private account can prevent one from having access to personal information. Parents can also educate their children on how to avoid negative interactions online and offline as those factors can increase stress and lead to negative mental health (Odgers & Jensen, 2020). Parents may further this assistance by staying connected online themselves to stay up to date on the current events and trends that may arise. In addition, by educating adolescents on how to use social media to navigate daily life, including friends and family interactions, can aid in a more positive usage and presence online. In addition, parents may also further educate their adolescents in navigating life offline, by introducing after-school programs or community-based organizations (Odgers & Jensen, 2020).

Positive mental health is a state of mind in which an individual experiences mental health well-being that leads to being productive and using their abilities. To further explain, positive emotions serve as a stress buffer that can deteriorate the effects of stress on the immune system (Sirgy. 2019). Positive characteristics that teens should strive towards include creativity, bonding with others, close connections, playfulness, and the prompt to engage in certain activities and challenges with others (Sirgy. 2019). Parents can aid in positive mental development by not only supporting but also providing them with opportunities for self-reflection and allowing them to express their thoughts, concerns, and aspirations. In regards to promoting positive well-being for adolescents with technology usage, parents can establish clear boundaries and communication about online activities. According to Keles (2020), parental involvement and high social support can aid in reducing adverse mental health problems. Parents who involve themselves in understanding online activities and fostering an environment that encourages a balanced

approach to technology and offline, such as face-to-face interactions, are linked to healthier mental health outcomes and habits to foster. When parents lead and demonstrate positive habits themselves, they may help support their adolescents by setting examples and expectations.

Having addressed these issues on the impact of social media on parents of adolescents, it's important to create an awareness to avoid potential harm and consequences. By bringing awareness of mental well-being around social media to parents, there may be an opportunity for them to educate their adolescents on the impact of social media while taking the time to check on their adolescents during this stage of development. This project addresses parents with the information and tools they may use at home with their adolescents to educate and bring awareness on social media and the mental health effects that may pose a threat to their children.

Theories

Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory of human development guided this project. Erikson's theory proposes that personalities are developed in a series of 8 stages that range from infancy to older adulthood. Erikson focused on social interaction and relationships and how they play a role in the development and growth of a human being. In each stage of development, an individual is faced with challenges and struggles that will contribute to their personality based on how they respond. Each stage serves as a different psychosocial struggle that must be resolved to move on to the next stage, such as establishing a healthy personality or basic characteristics to help resolve any conflicts or crises. Failure to acquire the qualities of each life stage leads to a weak sense of self, reduced ability to progress onto the next stage, and an unhealthy personality of self (Kesavelu et al. 2021).

This project focused on Erikson's fifth psychosocial stage of adolescence, which focuses on identity vs role confusion. This stage covers the ages of 12 through 18 years. When discussing

identity, it encompasses our beliefs, values, memories, and experiences. (Zhang & Qin, 2023). In Erikson's theory, he believed all stages were important as the success of each stage would lead to a developed sense of self and personal identity. If the adolescent stage is successful, meaning they have established confidence in their identity, then adolescents gain a clearer direction in life with a better understanding of their identity development which helps support their transition into adulthood. (Zhang & Qin, 2023). Role confusion refers to an adolescent being unsure of their placement in life, whether it be in regards to their self-identity or how they fit in. Other complications from not establishing an identity are having difficulty with careers, and relationships, and being left with greater feelings of disappointment in their lives while having a more difficult time maintaining their mental health and well-being (Kesavelu et al. 2021). I felt that these characteristics are related to mental health awareness around social media use, as adolescents may become confused or have alternate influences based on the content seen that may limit them from reaching their true identity. On the other hand, social media may also help an adolescent develop their identity depending on how they approach the platform. By incorporating Erikson's theory, parents can gain valuable insights into their adolescents' development and acquire practical strategies to help support them through the crucial stage of identity.

Consideration of Diversity

My workshop was held over Zoom because the participants all had different schedules and one participant did not reside in California. My participants were five parents with different cultural backgrounds and socioeconomic status. Their ages ranged from 31-50 years and there were three fathers and two mothers. The participants in the group were all individuals with no couples in the session. Parents resided in various parts of California ranging from southern to

northern California. One out of the five participants reside in Colorado. Regarding ethnicity, 60% of parents were Hispanic and 40% were White. Regarding education, 40% of parents had no college degree, 40% with a bachelor's degree, and 20% with a master's degree.

Because there is a stigma in Hispanic culture about mental health, presenting a topic including mental health awareness was necessary. There is a mindset within the older Hispanic community, that discussing mental health problems would cause embarrassment or disappointment for the family. This results in new generations feeling less inclined to seek help for their well-being. Providing Hispanic parents with information on mental health awareness, especially during an era of technology, helped reduce the stigma and educate parents on how to approach mental health issues while promoting a healthier well-being for their children.

I made my workshop inclusive for all parents by introducing the topic and providing information as if it were parents' first time hearing about adolescent development or social media. This allowed all my participants to have the same established definitions of the terminologies discussed and the resources provided. Even with parents having different education levels, all parents had learned a new slang term that was being used around social media. I did not consider gender for this project as my understanding of parents willing to participate in my workshop all had the same mindset in wanting to provide a more positive environment for their children. I did provide a section in my workshop about parents gaining a base knowledge of the topic presented was already setting up a strong foundation to help their adolescents. I made it known to the parents that I am no expert in raising a child, but parents taking the time out of their day to participate in the workshop and leave with new information on social media usage already made for a meaningful experience they would use to influence their teens.

This data on parents' backgrounds helped my approach with parents participating in my workshop as it allowed me to see a range of education amongst the families with diverse backgrounds and allowed me to further understand their concerns when it comes to social media.

Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes listed below are targeted to focus on the parent participants for this project. The participants were parents with adolescents who are either about to start using social media or are already active users.

1. Parents will be able to identify three developmental traits that distinguish adolescence and how it differs from emerging adulthood.

2. Parents will be able to identify three ways social media usage can negatively affect adolescents' mental health.

3. Parents will be able to demonstrate the two methods, one involving social media and one without, to promote positive well-being for an adolescent.

Method

Location and Participants

The project on adolescent mental health and the impact of social media was conducted via Zoom in one session with all five parent participants. Four out of five parents resided in various parts of California with one participant residing in Colorado. The parents had one or more adolescents between the ages of 12-16. Two out of five parents had only one adolescent child and three out of five parents had two adolescent children. Participants were recruited via Facebook in addition to assistance from personal family friends. This included two mothers and

three fathers. There were no mother-father pairs. To give some cultural background, three parents were of Hispanic descent, and two parents were of Caucasian descent. In addition, a total of three out of the five participants have completed a bachelor's degree or higher in their lifetime.

Procedures Section 1

The presentation made by Canva slides included over three lessons and a Google form assessment given at the end of the slideshow presentation. Each participant was sent via email a sheet with key terms where they could write down definitions given to them throughout the lesson or use a piece of paper they already have at home for note-taking (see Appendix B). The first lesson consisted of general information about adolescents and how the adolescent stage is a crucial period for development. The parents were instructed to take notes of the definitions of the key terms on their worksheet. In addition, a document had been sent out previously containing all three sections if they preferred to print out the worksheet to reference during the workshop. First, via shared screen on Zoom, I began the session by introducing myself and my connection with my topic of the impact social media has on adolescents (see Appendix A). I began presenting my slideshow to the parents and introduced them to the adolescent period and how it differs from adulthood. Next, I discussed how adolescents are beginning to branch out from their caregivers in addition to socializing among peers. I began a discussion by asking parents if they were their child's best friend. Jokingly many of the parents laughed before anyone spoke but this allowed for the parents to later detail how they have personally witnessed changes in their adolescence. I then followed up with the parents, ensuring them that the behavior was normal for the age stage. This was then followed by a discussion of the brain development of an adolescent and introducing the parents to the topic of internal and external disorders, which included references to Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory of human development. This allowed the

participants to write any notes they had along with any definition clarifications. After this, I left

the participants to write some key points after I had asked, "What are some things we want to see

in an adolescent then?" Lastly, I concluded this first portion of the workshop by reassuring

parents we want to bring awareness to the social media usage of adolescents.

Procedures Section 2

In the second lesson, I focused on introducing the topic of social media. First, I began this

session by asking the question to parents, "How many of you personally have social media

accounts?" This allowed for a small discussion amongst parents on talking about their personal

experiences and to examine which parents are already familiar with its usage. All of the parents

reported at least having a Facebook or Instagram account but admitted that they were never on

the applications longer than an hour a day. Secondly, I began to discuss the general information

regarding social media, what it entails, and how there are two different ways of using social

media, such as the difference between active and passive usage. Thirdly, I discussed the statistics

on adolescent social media usage in addition to what applications are commonly used. Fourthly,

after establishing general information about social media, I transitioned into how social media

can pose a danger to adolescents. I began this section by informing parents that not all

adolescents are bound to experience the adverse effects, but I emphasized to them how

technology and social media are constantly evolving which does result in a need to monitor both

social media and their adolescents' wellbeing. Fifthly, I brought up the statistics of female

adolescents compared to males in response to adverse negative mental health from social media

usage.

Next, I began to bring up the terms depression, anxiety, cyberbullying, FOMO (Fear of

missing out), and body issues that may stem from social media usage. During this section, I

allowed time for parents to write down the definitions along with notes, especially on what the

term "FOMO" meant as the majority of parents had never heard the word and what it may lead to

for their adolescents. This also led to a question from one of the parents who asked, "How are we

able to apply this or give our children their safety without pushing too much into their privacy?"

To this I suggested parents take a gentle approach when talking to their children about what

social media can instill and by already having used social media personally, they can build a

stronger connection with their children in expressing concerns for their mental health and

wellbeing. Lastly, I concluded this session on how parents can be of assistance to their children

just by providing their support and guidance. I provided the parents with a few community-based

organizations followed by some after-school activities which helped transition into my third

section.

Procedures Section 3

For the third lesson, I discussed the strategies for managing social media and the positive

mental health characteristics we want to see adolescents strive for. The first half of this section

covered the strategies for using social media. First, I reminded the parents again that we do not

want to ban social media or discredit its presence, but we solely want to have a better

understanding of its contents and become aware of the potential negative effects that stem from

it, especially during a vulnerable age stage. The first method I discussed with parents was

reintroducing the idea of social media as a source of social support with online-based

communities focused on mental health and the youth. I assured parents that by being educated in

topics such as privacy, regulation, and how to protect themselves online, they may guide their

adolescents to more positive online usage. Next, I covered the second method of how physical

activity and exercise can benefit an adolescent's mental health. This served as an option for

parents who preferred a gap away from social media. This section was found to have a better

response amongst the parents, who had resonated with finding healthier lifestyles and mental

well-being through physical activities and after-school programs. Next, I covered the positive

mental health characteristics that we want to see during adolescence development. In this

section, I prompted my participants to discuss this by asking them, "What is your definition of a

positive mental health state?" This allowed parents to share what they see as a positive mindset

and give different viewpoints on what it may look like on their adolescents. Lastly, I supported

this topic by discussing how positive emotions aid in the health of an adolescent and the traits

that come out of it. I discussed further the positive characteristics that teens should engage in

with the addition of how parents can guide and support their development of self-identity to help

navigate challenges.

Assessment

I assessed all learning outcomes with one quiz at the end of the workshop. I

completed my assessment by having the participants access the Google form sent via email

labeled, "Impact of Social Media Assessment." The Google form allowed participants to write in

their answers for six of the questions, one quiz question being multiple choice for a total of 11

points. I made a note that they were allowed to access any notes they had written during the

workshop, as the quiz was held off until the end.

Results

The first learning outcome was that parents would be able to identify three traits that

distinguish adolescence from adulthood. This assessment was completed at the very end of a

one-time Zoom workshop. The parents were sent via email a Google form with seven quiz questions. The first question asked participants, "According to Erikson's theory, what makes the fifth stage of identity vs role confusion crucial?" The second question asked, "What are three characteristics or traits we see in an adolescent's development that differ from adults?" The first question allowed for one point total if participants identified why the fifth stage of development marks an important step before adulthood. The second question allowed a point for each trait identified that differed from adulthood, with the highest score of three points total. The highest possible score for this section is four points. Four out of the five parents (80%) were able to receive full points. The other parent scored 3 out of 4. The learning outcome was fully met, as four parents received a perfect score with one parent missing only one point.

The second learning outcome was parents will be able to identify three ways social media usage can negatively affect adolescents' mental health. This assessment was completed on the same Google form at the end of a one-time Zoom workshop. This section covered questions three through five. The third question asked parents "What is Cyberbullying?" The fourth question asked "How does FOMO lead to depression?" and the fifth question asked parents to "Indicate the three ways social media usage can negatively affect an adolescent's mental health." For this section, participants were given one point if they appropriately defined cyberbullying. Another point was given if participants were able to define how FOMO ties into depression. The last prompt allowed for three points if participants were able to indicate the negative effects social media usage can have on adolescents. These negative effects were anxiety, depression, poor body image, and cyberbullying. The highest score for this section is five points. Three out of the five parents (60%) were able to receive the full five points. The other two parents (40%) both scored 3 out of 5 points. Therefore, the second learning outcome was partially met.

The last learning outcome asked parents to indicate the two methods that promote positive well-being for an adolescent. This assessment was completed on the same Google form at the end of a one-time Zoom workshop. This section covered questions six and seven. The sixth prompt asked parents "What is one of the methods discussed that aids in a positive well-being for an adolescent? The seventh question asked parents, "Following the previous question, what is the second method that aids in a positive well-being for an adolescent?" For this section parents were given a point each if they were able to list at least two of the techniques that were discussed in the slideshow presentation. The most frequently mentioned was the use of physical activity as an alternative. The second most frequently mentioned method was after-school programs which is another alternative to social media. All of the 5 parents (100%) were able to achieve the maximum points, making the learning outcome fully met.

Discussion

The focus of this capstone project was to increase awareness of the impact that social media can have on an adolescent's mental health. This was completed by holding a workshop via Zoom with parents who currently have children of adolescent age and teaching parents about social media and how the adolescent stage serves as a vulnerable time for personal and mental development. This project contained three learning outcomes, two out of the three being fully met. The first learning outcome was fully met with 80% of the participants successfully addressing the concepts of the adolescent stage. I believe that this was successful as parents already had a general knowledge of the teen stage from their personal experiences. The third learning outcome was fully met as all participants were able to provide the various methods that aid in positive well-being for an adolescent. The participants favored the alternatives away from social media and again having personal experiences helped assist.

A setback that occurred came from my second learning outcome being partially met. A potential reason for this outcome not being fully met was due to my presentation to the parents such as my wording and phrasing. Learning outcome 2 was partially met as some participants did not connect the link between depression coming from an adolescent experiencing FOMO. In addition to the multiple choice questions, some participants missed the additional third point in defining another adverse effect. I believe this section was partially met due to my part in phrasing the question and my handling of the workshop for this section. This occurred due to my pacing and explaining too many of the smaller details rather than staying with the main focus and its supporting factors. However, another limitation included having one participant residing in the state of Colorado. While I was eager to have a participant out of the state, this led to a crunch in establishing a date and time that would accommodate all my parent participants and time zones. While the workshop went smoothly with no internet issues for anybody, the only technical issue that occurred was sending the Google form. Due to using my school email address, participants did not have access to the Google forms as they were considered not to ve a verified address. This led to me having to go back and resend the Google form as quickly as possible to not take up any more of my participants' time.

Even though my project was mostly successful, I believe that with the information and experience, I have learned from the workshop and overall process, my future approaches to projects similar to this will be more accessible to a larger participation group. In the future, I hope that I can recruit more participants to have a more diverse range of responses in data and establish a more solid foundation for understanding if my learning outcomes were met by my presentation. If I were to add additional information to teach regarding this project, I would include protection and how to spot predators online. While this project focused primarily on

bringing awareness of mental health to adolescents in the digital age, there is the additional

factor of unrestricted access online. Over the past few years since the introduction of social

media applications, there have been situations in which older individuals pretend to be someone

of adolescent age in hopes of meeting and interacting with a minor either with malicious

intentions or manipulative behavior. Overall, I would describe this project to have gone as

successfully as it can be. Participants were able to walk away from this project with new

terminology and methods to apply to either work alongside social media or alternatives away

from it. I hope this project helps to bring awareness to social media as it evolves in time while

continuing to observe the stages of development for any age.

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Appendix A

Workshop Presentation

Slide 1:
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS IN ADOLESCENTS AND THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA
Vanessa Clark

Slide 2: Introduction
Hello Caregivers! My name is Vanessa Clark and I am completing my last semester at California State University of Monterey Bay, pursing my bachelors of science in Human Development and Family Science.

I am considered to be Get Z, meaning my generation grew up with the advances of technology and witnessed the introduction of a new era through social media.

I hope to bring Mental Health awareness to adolescents but firstly begin with caregivers/parents as you are their first source of information and guidance.

I look forward to providing you with information regarding the adolescent stage in addition to how social media can impact mental health as it evolves. There will also be methods provided that you may apply to either work around social media or alternatives away from social media.

Slide 3: ADOLESCENT PERIOD
How Does it Differ from Adulthood?
Adolescence is a time between puberty and early adult independence.

Unlike Adults, adolescents are more...
-Social Oriented
-Impulsive
-Risk-taking
-Likely to thrive off life satisfactions from other peers

Slide 4: Why is the adolescent period important?
Brain Development!
Adolescents that are undergoing puberty reach at a point where their brain begins to adapt and learn behaviors that aid their mental wellbeing and social behavior.
Disruption can impact the development of an adolescent's brain resulting in the development of onset social emotional disorders.

Slide 5: Will all adolescents face these same issues?
While puberty can serve as its own risk factor for developing social emotional disorders, not all mental health problems are experienced, and if so , not all are externalized disorders.

1 in 5 adolescents will experience some sort of mental health disorder by the age of 14
Internalized disorders: **Anxiety** and **depression**
Externalized disorders: **ADHD** and **OCD**

Slide 6: Erik Eriksons Theory of Human Development
Identity v Role Confusion
Focused on social interaction and relationships. How it will play a role in the development and growth of a human being.
Identity is more than how we see ourselves...
-Beliefs -Experiences
-Ideals -Memories
-Values

All stages are important but this stage specifically...
• Gives adolescents a clearer direction in life
• Better understanding of values and goals
• Aids into future careers and relationships.

Failure to secure identity results in role confusion.
Unsure of their placement in life or self identity.

Slide 7: Questions, Comments, Concerns?
Next session: Covering Social Media

Slide 8: Let's Have A Discussion!
Which of the following social apps do you personally use and how often?
• Instagram
• Snapchat
• Facebook
• Twitter
• TikTok
• Messenger
• WhatsApp
• WeChat
• Other not listed

Slide 9: SOCIAL MEDIA
Active Usage
Defined as chatting socially with others online and engaging in content.
• Posting On Social Media
• Using online chatting sites
• Commenting/Liking

Slide 10: SOCIAL MEDIA
Passive Usage
Defined as a behavior pattern of only browsing and consuming content.
• Scrolling through homepages/sites
• Reading comments or postings
• Monitoring online life of others

Slide 11: Who is using social media?
According to Giovanelli (2020), they estimated that 90% of teens residing in the United States have access to social media.
Furthermore, teens surveyed in the United States were found to have spent nearly 7.5 hours each day on digital entertainment media alone. (Odgers & Jensen, 2020)

Slide 12: What Social Media Apps are most popular?
Conducted by Dienlin & Joannes (2020) in the United States the most common form of digitial services are...
1. Youtube 85%
2. Instagram 72%
3. Snapchat 69%
4. TikTok 63%

Slide 13: Impact of Social Media for Adolescents
Not all adolescents are bound to experience the adverse effects of social media!
This being said, we want to remain proactive about the evolving platform and become aware of an adolescent's wellbeing in an environment that is including technological advances. Whether you allow your adolescent to have social media or not, we want to bring in awareness to their mental health around social media.

Slide 14: Impact of Social Media for Adolescents
Depression
A mental health disorder that negatively affects how one feels
How can this directly impact an adolescent?
Depression can result in one losing interest in activities and developing a poor sense of self. Adolescents who experience depression may...
• Develop impaired social relationships
• Become less attentive towards education
• Be at higher risk of developing substance abuse
• Develop further mental health problems
In addition depression alters the way teens would normally think, feel, and behave.

Slide 15: Impact of Social Media for Adolescents
Anxiety
A feeling that causes uneasiness, fear, or dread
How can this directly impact an adolescent?
As mentioned earlier, adolescents are seeking peer acceptance and venturing out of their shells. Adolescents who experience anxiety will...
• Experience restlessness
• Become fatigued more easily
• Have difficulty in concentrating
• Experience physical symptoms such as muscle tension, headaches, stomachaches and insomnia

Impact of Social Media for Adolescents

"FOMO" - Fear of missing out

Defined as an emotional response to the belief that other peers are living better, more satisfying lives with more opportunities. These contribute to an adolescent feeling...

Stressed
Depressed
Life dissatisfaction

(Abi-Jaoude et al, 2020)

Impact of Social Media for Adolescents

Body Image

Female adolescents are at an increased risk compared to their male counterparts for developing depressive symptoms and other emotional problems previously discussed

According to Odgers & Jensen (2020), young female adolescents are more likely to internalize differing body images online and be exposed to cyberbullying.

Posting a selfie isn't harmful, but due to the rise in digitally altered photos, more female adolescents have an increased desire in altering their physical appearances.

Impact of Social Media for Adolescents

Cyber-Bullying

Defined as intentional and repeated harm from one or more peers the occurs throughout smartphones, computers, and other technological devices

Adverse Effects
- Reduced sense of safety
- Higher levels of anxiety
- Decline in mental health and greater scale of unhappiness

(Zhu et al, 2021)

How can we support adolescents?

While there is much more information we can dive into on social media alone. The key takeaway during this session is that you can assist adolescents just by being their support and guidance. Having a base understanding on how social media works with the addition of indicators of mental health declining is a beautiful foundation to being an adolescent's support system.

Have any questions, thoughts or concerns? Before we move forward to our last session of our workshop!

Strategies Towards Managing Social Media

First Section:
Social Media usage as support.

Third Section:
Positive mental health characteristics for an adolescents.

Second Section:
Alternatives away from social media usage.

Social Media as a source of social support

Social media can be redirected towards a more positive online presence!

Studies have shown that social media allows for individuals to express their thought and feelings, while receiving support online from others who share similarities (Keles et al, 2020).

This being said, as caregivers you may introduce policies to help protect online.
- Privacy settings
- Time limits/regulation.
- Avoidance with negative interactions

Online based communities

Youth Voices
- Specifically designed for youths of all ages to share their thoughts and ideas. Organized by teachers with support from the National Writing Project.
- Conversations about their passions or new things they have learned.

GoodReads
- A lively community for bookworms.
- Covers English language arts, news & media literacy

MyPlate by Livestrong
- Community focused on health and wellness
- Covers food intake and exercise

Charlie Health
- Personalized therapy at home
- Evidence-based approach caters to teen needs
- Art & Music therapy
- Attachment-based family therapy

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health
- Evidence-based education and technical assistance to support the mental health of children and adolescents as they navigate social media.
- Starts conversations on social media usage
- Provide tools and resources to help your family develop healthy digital habits.

Physical Activity as an alternative away from Social Media

According to Abi-Jaoude (2020), physical activity not only improved an adolescent's fitness but contributed towards a healthier mindset and good health.

At least an hour of physical activity can help an adolescent by...
- Adding a buffer against both internal and external mental health disorders
- Improving sense of control
- providing coping skills
- Improving self-esteem
- Improving social skills

Alternatives from Social Platforms

After-School Programs
- Provide lunch meals
- Homework sessions
- Tutoring
- Playtime or outdoor activities
*Some after-school programs may not provide meals.

Physical Activities
- Going on walks
- Yoga
- Running or Jogging
- Games like Tag or Sharks and Minnows
- Physical board games such as Twister.

Sports
- Participating in school programs or activities
- Marching Band
- Soccer
- Baseball
- Football
- Swim

Positive Mental Health Traits for Adolescents

Positive mental health is a state of mind in which an individual experiences mental health wellbeing that leads into being productive and the ability to use their skills.

Positive, healthy emotions aid in the development for an inspiring young adult as it acts as a buffer against negative health outcomes, such as the immune system. Traits we want to see in an adolescent include...
- Striving towards creativity
- Willing to bond with peers
- Developing connections amongst peers and family
- Engagement to participate in challenges and activities
- Being playful

(Sirgy, 2019)

Google Doc Quiz Time!

Please check your emails for a google form labeled "Impact of Social Media"

You will have 15 minutes to complete your assessment. You may use any notes that you have taken.

If you are unable to access the google form, please inform me asap so I may assist you.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Appendix B

Optional Worksheet for Workshop

Workshop Notes

Keywords

- Anxiety

- Depression

- ADHD

- FOMO

- Body Image

- Cyber-Bullying

Questions

Lecture Notes

Appendix C

Capstone Festival Slides

Mental Health Awareness in adolescents & the impact of social media

Vanessa Clark
Human Development and Family Science

Introduction

This project focused on educating parents on the impact social media can pose in an adolescents development and how the adolescent stage serves as a vulnerable period in development.

I chose to discuss this topic because my generation grew up with the introduction to various social media apps and platforms. I have personally struggled with social media as an adolescent and I have seen others close to me fall to the more negative mental health affects that stem from its usage.

Needs Statement

- Technology usage increasing since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Introduced social platforms for adolescents to stay connected with peers.
- Not all adolescents are prone to experiencing negative adverse effects!

- 90% of teens in the United States have access to social media platforms.
- On average in the United States, spend 7.5 hours online.
- More likely to internalize emotional and depressive symptoms.
- 1 in 5 adolescents will experience some sort of mental health problem by the age of 14.

This is a unique stage of life deals with both specific health needs and developmental of knowledge and skills.

The Psychosocial Theory
Erik Erikson

- 8 Stages of Psychosocial development ranging in the ages from birth to older adulthood.
- Believed that our personality develops through each stage of life. Each stage building from the successful completion of earlier stages.
- Focused on discovering how social interactions and relationships played a role in the development and growth for a human being.

Eriksons Identity vs Role Confusion

Refers to identity as more than how we see ourselves. Identity is made up of our
- Beliefs
- Values
- Ideals
- Experiences
- Memories
This allows for a positive psychosocial development and clearer direction in life.

Role Confusion refers to being unsure of one's own identity and where they fit in.

Role confusion may lead into drifting from one job or relationship to another. In addition to feelings of disappointment and difficult time maintaining mental health wellbeing

Social media may alter an adolescent's influence as they are finding their own identity.

Learning Outcomes

I designed a one-time workshop for parents of adolescents via zoom with a google form quiz given at the end. It focused on the following learning outcomes

LO I — Parents will be able to identify three developmental traits that distinguish adolescence and how it differs from emerging adulthood

LO II — Parents will be able to identify three ways social media usage can negatively affect adolescents' mental health.

LO III — Parents will be able to demonstrate the two methods, one involving social media and one without, to promote positive well-being for an adolescent

Method

Location: Zoom
All 5 parent participants have children between the ages of 12-16.

Parent Gender
- 2 Mothers
- 3 Fathers

Parent Education
- 40% No College Degree
- 40% Bachelors Degree
- 20% Masters Degree

Parent Demographics
- 60% Hispanic
- 40% White

Method
Procedure & Materials

My project was presented on a Canva slide via shared screen on zoom. The workshop was over an hour long including the Google form assessment and a discussion held after each section.

Part I
- Information on the adolescent stage.
- Brain Development
- External and internal disorders.
- Eriksons Psychosocial Theory

Part II
- What is social media
- Different types of usages
- Apps commonly used
- Potential impacts for an adolescent.

Part III
- Using social Media as a resource
- Alternatives away from social media
- Positive characteristics for an adolescent.

Assessment LO I

Parents will be able to identify three developmental traits that distinguish adolescence and how it differs from emerging adulthood.

Parents were given a google form with the first two questions covering LO I. Participants were able to achieve a total of four points if they were able to distinguish the concept traits.

LO I was fully met at 80%.
- Four out of five participants were able to address the concepts receiving a perfect score of 4/4
- One out of five participant scored 3/4

Assessment LO II

Parents will be able to identify three ways social media usage can negatively affect adolescents' mental health.

Parents were given the google form with questions 3-5 covering LO II. Participants were able to achieve a maximium total of five points if they were able to address the prompts

LO II was partially met at 60%.
- Three out of five participants were able to meet/address the prompts receiving a perfect score of 5/5
- Two out of five participants scored 3/5

Assessment LO III

Parents will be able to demonstrate the two methods, one involving social media and one without, to promote positive well-being for an adolescent

Parents were given a google form with the last two questions covering LO III. Participants were able to achieve a maximum of two points for addressing methods to apply.

LO III was fully met at 100%
- Five out of five participants were able to meet/address the methods receiving a perfect score of 2/2.

Discussion

Successes
- First and third learning outcome met.
- Participants were actively engaged & interested during our discussions.
- All parents reported something new learned or increased awareness within social media.

Limitations/Challenges
- Second learning outcome partially met.
- Time zone difference with one of the parent participants.
- Finding parents who were able to participate while currently having adolescent children.
- Breaking the stigma of mental health to Hispanic parents.

Future Directions

- Have a larger parent participant size.
- Have parents who have zero experience with social media usage.
- Improve my own skills in teaching a workshop.

HEALTH IS WEALTH

THANK YOU