



January: Social Media and Mental Well-being

January is Mental Wellbeing Month. Mental well-being, in general, is the state of thriving in various areas of life, such as in relationships, at work, and play, despite some ups and downs. Human beings are social creatures that require the companionship of others to make progress in life. Being socially connected with others can relieve stress, anxiety, and sadness. Lack of social connection can pose serious risks to overall mental well-being.

Social media has opened a new avenue for social experiences since the early 2000s, extending the possibilities for connectedness and communication. It can enhance connection, give us an outlet to express ourselves, keep us entertained, and help to create a sense of global belonging. However, the use of social media can negatively impact mental health, leading to stress, pressure to compare your life to others, and increased feelings of isolation.

Disadvantages associated with the use of Social Media:

- **Feeling insecure about your life or appearance.**
- **Feeling excluded and isolated.** Generally, the more you use social media, the more you feel isolated, excluded, and lonely. The fear of missing out (FOMO) can lead to compulsive and obsessive tendencies that can increase anxiety and negatively impact self-esteem.
- **Depression and anxiety.** Excessive use of social media often limits face-to-face interactions with others. It's essential to spend quality time with people.
- **Misinformation and cyberbullying.** Social media platforms are notorious hubs for those who wish to spread rumors and verbally abuse others.

You can minimize the negative impacts of social media in your life by:

- **Decreasing your screen time.** Limit the constant need to check your social media platforms. Also, don't be afraid to delete them if necessary.
- **Changing your focus.** Spend more time with your friends and family.
- **Practice mindfulness.** Express gratitude, love, and a true appreciation for the blessings in your life, big and small.

Remember, mindful use is essential to social media consumption.

Additional Resources:

- BMC Psychology: <https://bmcpyschology.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40359-023-01243-x>
- Psychreg: <https://www.psychreg.org/social-media-positive-negative-impact-mental-health/>
- HelpGuide.org: <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/social-media-and-mental-health.htm>
- MHA: <https://www.mhanational.org/living-mentally-healthy>

