

Critical reflection on social media.

Social media is known to be a computer based technology that is used to promote the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through virtual networks and communities. Furthermore, social media has been designed to give individuals quick and easy communication of content such as personal information, documents, videos and photos electronically. It is uncommon for individuals to go a day without using or referring to social media. Particularly, in today's world, social media is heavily important on society and human beings. Whether it is used for communicating, learning, or decision making, social media affects our society in some way. In addition, many of us rely on social media like Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube, TikTok and Instagram to find and connect with each other and as a result of this, social media has become a necessary daily activity. To take this point further, these factors have caused social networks to evolve in ways that have a real impact on society. **(1)**

With the rapid growth of technology, many people are grasping the benefits of social media which highlights the advantages it has on society and within communities. An important advantage social media has, is that it creates a sense of awareness; people are enabled to discover new and important information which can play a significant role in enhancing their personal lives. Every individual can benefit from social media and its awareness factor. Another benefit of the use of social media is that it positively connects individuals. Research has shown, that social networking is the cause of huge numbers of relationships around the world. These connections are important in helping with a variety of things from seeking a new job to staying connected to loved ones no matter how far away they are. Offering an instant audience and attention, can help to overcome barriers of feeling lonely highlighting the benefits of being able to easily keep in touch. Also, social media carries the benefit of having successful platforms and ways for individuals to seek or offer emotional support through tough times. Being able to find new friends and communities with others who share similar interests and ambitions and finding vital social connections is beneficial for individuals who have limited independence, social anxiety or are part of a marginalised group. They will be able to help each other as well as being able to find an outlet for their creativity and self-expression that they might not have done in the outside world. **(2)**

On the other hand, social media has also affected society in a negative way. In addition, while many individuals enjoy staying connected on social media, excessive use can create feelings of anxiety, depression and isolation. Multiple studies have found that social media increases the risk of mental health disorders. This is because, to be mentally healthy people need face-to-face contact; it reduces stress and boosts an individual's moods faster. Furthermore, the more individuals prioritise social media interaction over in-person relationships, the more they are at risk of developing mood disorders such as depression and anxiety. Also, another disadvantage social media holds is that it creates health issues. Exercise has been proven to be an important factor in losing weight. However, with the excessive use of social networking sites, there is an increased level of laziness. There is an overall disadvantage on health, as it negatively brings disorder in the routine of life. Thirdly, social media creates an inadequacy about an individual's life or appearance. Despite having a slight awareness that the images a person is viewing are manipulated, they still have a sense of insecurity about how they look or what is going on in their own life. Therefore,

social media causes individuals to feel envious and dissatisfied which can lead on to create an increased risk of self-harm and suicide. (3)

In conclusion, social media is a very important factor that holds significant power over society across all parts of the world. Although it is beneficial in some aspects, such as being able to keep and create connections from anywhere, it removes in-person and real life relationships. Social media and technology can create an illusion and prevent society from living in the moment and taking in its surroundings. Human beings yearn for connection and belonging so overall, social media can be supportive towards positive mental health but also negative as it can create an emotional impact of loneliness. (4)

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