

IS SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION REAL?

I was too busy. But with what? I constantly obsessed over what other people—many of them complete strangers—were posting on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, or my fraternity group chat. My time was being eroded by a hundred little distractions every day. I was literally clicking my life away... A.N. Turner in Breaking the Feedback Loop

WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ Social Media Addiction (SMA) is not a true addiction as defined by the DSM 5 although it can have overwhelming and adverse effects on one's personal, business and social lives
- ❖ SMA like an addiction is the continued use of a substance despite its negative effects
- ❖ Researchers have found that SMA is stronger than an addiction to cigarettes and alcohol
- ❖ Like an addict, people with SMA:
 - ❖ Have signs of withdrawal when social media is not or cannot be used
 - ❖ Use more and more social media than they planned to use
 - ❖ Have tried but are unable to stop or reduce social media usage
 - ❖ Think about SM when not able to be online
 - ❖ Are unable to control their impulse to share something online
 - ❖ Feel high when they receive likes and depressed when they receive no likes
 - ❖ Become very knowledgeable about new SM and sign up immediately
 - ❖ Lose interest in friends or other activities that are not SM
 - ❖ Use SM to feel better when depressed or have bad moods
 - ❖ Lie, sneak, or become deceitful to others in order to use their SM
 - ❖ Check their SM when they wake up, just before they go to sleep, and even during the night when awakened by an alert
- ❖ Excessive use of SM can lead to anxiety and depressive disorders, attentional problems, impulsivity, sleep disorders, eating disorders, and relationship problems
- ❖ Recent studies have found that teens check their SM more than 100 times per day
- ❖ Complex social media algorithms employ basic behavioral principles of reward and punishment; feeling good if liked, bad if no response or no likes, and prolonged and continued use when given intermittent reinforcement

WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ People with SMA must first acknowledge and admit that they have a problem and want to decrease their SM use
- ❖ Unlike other addictive behaviors, the goal should be limited or controlled use rather than complete abstinence as we are all dependent to some degree upon SM
- ❖ Reduce the amount of time you spend on SM:
 - ❖ Turn off all notifications so that you don't check after every update or alert
 - ❖ Go on a digital diet by scheduling when to check SM and looking only twice a day
 - ❖ Dedicate specific days or weekends to be SM Free Time
- ❖ Find alternative ways to communicate such as face-to-face, phone calls and not texts, socializing with others, and not giving in to the impulse to share with others
- ❖ Stop following trends and SM celebrities/personalities
- ❖ Decide before you post whether what you want to say is really that important or of interest to others
- ❖ Take a week off and attend to enriching personal relationships
- ❖ Seek professional help if you are unable to control your need to use Social Media

WE CAN HELP!

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com

Joel I. Kimmel, Ph.D. P.A. and Associates
5551 N University Drive, Suite 202
Coral Springs FL 33067