

Social Media and Adolescent Mental Health

Megan Hanrahan

City University of Seattle

CPC 695: Counselling Psychology Research Project

Dr. Heather Macdonald

December 12, 2020

Social Media and Adolescent Mental Health

In the late 1990s, the first emergence of social media platforms began to change the way humans communicate within society (van Dijck, 2013). Before this time, connecting with others meant personal telephone calls, emails, letter writing, or face-to-face interactions. Through modern day social media platforms, it is now possible to be continuously connected, whether by posting a photo on Instagram, changing a status on Facebook, or networking on LinkedIn. Because these platforms are so prominent in our current society, it is essential to examine both the benefits they present as well as the potential costs. Some of these benefits might include ease of access, new forms of personal expression, and creating new connections. There could also be impacts on mental health, whether positive or negative. Some of these costs may include body image difficulties, depression or anxiety (Bányai et al., 2017; Durak, 2018; Ferguson et al., 2014).

This research focuses on the social media platforms' impact on adolescent mental health in particular. According to the World Health Organization (n.d.), the adolescent age group consists of individuals 10-19 years old. I chose this age group because of their unique exposure to social media. Today's adolescents were born after the emergence of the first forms of social media. As a result, they have never known a world in which social media did not exist.

It is essential to understand the way social media is affecting adolescents since it has such a massive presence in their lives. Research reveals that 95% of adolescents report they either have a smartphone or have access to one, with 45% saying they are almost always online (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). If the literature indicates that social media has overall harmful effects on teens, researchers, and practitioners should consider preventative action and new forms of treatment. The impacts on mental health will have implications for the way counsellors

conceptualize therapy for their adolescent clients. Understanding the potential adverse effects might aid counsellors in developing strategies for dealing with the specific kind of distress their clients are experiencing. The findings may also have implications for the way parents choose to raise their teens. It might encourage parents to create more restrictions on social media use.

For this research, social media will include all platforms that adolescents might access, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Snapchat. These platforms allow anyone to join their community and create an online profile (Bányai et al., 2017). Some of these platforms are catered to a private audience of the user's choosing (Facebook and Snapchat) and some allow for public access (Twitter and YouTube) (Franchina et al., 2018). These platforms involve various activities such as status changes, posting photos, viewing the profiles of others, "liking" photos of others, commenting on photos of others, requesting "friends," direct messaging, group messaging, reading shared articles, and following celebrities. The mental health effects examined will include impacts on mood, anxiety, body image, substance abuse, fear of missing out (FoMO), bullying, as well as the potential positive impacts on mental health.

This paper will include a self-positioning statement in which I will discuss any potential biases that might arise as I complete my research, how I will address them, and how I will approach the project. I will then begin my discussion of the current literature on the subject. The literature review will be structured thematically in terms of the effects on mental health because this approach will present a well-rounded summary of the potential harms and benefits of social media for adolescents. The articles included are all peer-reviewed and published within the last five years, with some older seminal articles. The research included is both qualitative and quantitative, utilizing various forms of data collection.

Self-Positioning Statement

In conducting this research project, I needed to reflect on how I must review the literature. I had to consider that there is a significant possibility that my own experiences, perspective, and opinions might impact my ability to fully and accurately present the results. I needed to consider this because my biases have the potential to look for things and interpret things in a certain way. An individual without my experiences might have developed a different understanding of the literature.

I chose to research this topic because it is both an area of interest in my career and something I have witnessed in my own life. During my adolescence, I remember the first emergence of many social media platforms that are popular today. I enjoyed participating in these platforms, but I occasionally noticed a change in my mood after using social media for long periods. Sometimes I felt anxious and sometimes I felt lonely, but I did not necessarily know why.

I also noticed many of my family members and friends of the same age experienced similar reactions when they were teens. I witnessed many peers interacting with social media in an almost addictive fashion, being unable to go anywhere without their phones, and feeling the compulsive need to check their news feeds. A preoccupation with their accounts often accompanied this sense of addiction. If they did not receive enough likes on their posts or photos, it would lead to feelings of inadequacy. These reactions made me wonder whether social media's harms might outweigh its benefits.

This curiosity has led to an interest in counselling adolescents. I have seen first-hand how intensely this age group experiences life, and I know there is a need for support. I would be interested in finding out how social media impacts this population because it would provide me with additional tools for best supporting them.

With these factors in mind, I needed to develop a research strategy to prevent searching for what I predicted might be the result. It was essential to pay attention to the methods I used for searching. I used neutral terms that did not imply the results I was expecting. For example, I used words such as “social media” and “adolescent” to show results on any relationship between the two. This search method ensured that I saw the full picture of research in the area, not just on the information I expected. I did not search for terms such as “harm”, “negative,” or even “mental health,” which would create a bias in my search. The results of these searches would likely only support my hypothesis and rule out anything that might contradict it.

I also focused on being mindful as I researched. I made sure to pay attention to all the findings presented and not just ones that supported my expectations. If I came across unexpected results, I made sure to document them in the same way I would anything else. In reading research articles, it is easy to disregard potential limitations when summarizing results. I read each of the limitations sections and brainstormed potential limitations myself, which allowed me to understand that the results I found were not necessarily conclusive.

I have also undertaken personal reflection to anticipate that the results I come across might not be consistent with my expectations. Just because I had certain emotional reactions after participating in social media as a teen, it does not necessarily mean that these experiences were consistent with my peers’ experiences. Teens might feel more connected and accepted after spending time on social media. There are many possibilities as to what adolescents generally experience with social media.

I must remind myself that my interpretations of how my family and friends experience social media may be biased. While I believe many of them experienced difficulties with self-esteem partly resulting from high exposure to social media, this is not necessarily the reality. I do

not know the entirety of their experience, and they might have been experiencing something different than what I interpreted. My expectations might have coloured my perception of what was happening. Even if some of my friends and family experienced low self-esteem and addiction to social media, this might not be a generalizable experience for all adolescents. It is also not generalizable to conclude there is a causal connection between social media use and low self-esteem or social media use and addiction. These results could involve other factors.

I must also be mindful not to let feelings of empathy impact my ability to conduct impartial research. I am aware that many teens had very negative experiences with social media. These experiences include cyberbullying, feelings of inadequacy, difficulties with body image, and increased anxiety. There could be underlying feelings of wanting to justify their experiences and to ensure they are not alone. However, this potential feeling must be accounted for and mitigated if it exists. If the results are contrary to these experiences, it does not mean they are any less valuable or important to share with the community.

Awareness of these biases and implementing strategies for bracketing them was an essential part of the research process. It ensured my summary of the literature was as objective as possible. Although my own experiences and interests largely contributed to my desire to complete this project, I needed to be open to whatever results I came across. The conclusions made might be contrary to my hopes. Still, it does not mean that this area is any less valuable to me as a counsellor or to the psychology research community in general.

Literature Review

The following literature review will focus on the effects of social media use on the mental health of adolescents. It will highlight various themes discovered in terms of the effects of social media on adolescents. These themes will include both positive and negative impacts on

mental health. I will discuss the general findings and relevance for each of these mental health areas.

It is clear from the literature that social media has a significant impact on the well-being of adolescents. As social media is so current and prevalent, research is abundant in this area. The categories of research that will be covered in this review include social media's impact on existing mental disorders, problematic thinking and behaviours, social interactions, positive well-being, as well as evidence-based practice for treatment and prevention of the negative effects. Because it continues to be so popular, it will likely be an evolving discussion, creating the need for new research.

Social Media and Existing Mental Disorders

Eating Disorders and Body Image

The current literature in this area generates mixed findings as to whether social media in its various forms impacts the nature of adolescents' body image. The impacts of social media on internalizing body type ideals, dissatisfaction with one's own body, disordered eating, and even eating disorders will be examined. It is clear from the literature that the different results generated have much to do with moderating variables, including competition with peers, self-monitoring and type of social media behaviour (de Vries et al., 2019; Ferguson et al., 2014; Salomon & Brown, 2018; Vandebosch & Eggermont, 2016). This finding indicates that it is likely that social media does not have a direct impact on body image.

A study by Ferguson et al. (2014) found that social media mediates the relationship between peer competition and body image and eating disorders. They found that peer competition has an impact on developing body and eating issues. Social media, although weaker, also played a role in the development of these symptoms. The study found that, over time, social

media did slightly contribute to more peer competition in the future. This relationship generates support for the idea that social media itself does not create more disordered eating and negative body image but contributes to other variables (such as peer competition) that will more likely result in those thoughts and behaviours (Ferguson et al., 2014).

Another study also lent support for mediating roles of other variables, including body surveillance and self-monitoring (Salomon & Brown, 2018). Body surveillance involves paying excessive attention to how one's body looks. This behaviour is harmful in that the focus is on body appearance versus body well-being (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). It also highlighted that the specific actions adolescents engage in on social media have an impact on the resulting symptoms (Salomon & Brown, 2018). On social media, teens have a great deal of autonomy and ability for self-expression. They can choose the nature of what to post and what to engage with. Salomon and Brown (2018) assessed whether adolescents who engaged in more self-objectifying behaviour on social media would be more likely to possess shame about their bodies. The study revealed that self-objectifying behaviour on social media was more likely to predict body shame than more neutral social media behaviour. This relationship, however, was only the case if the individual had higher levels of body surveillance. Body surveillance was also more likely to contribute to body shame for adolescent girls who were more likely to look to others for approval. From this study, it is apparent that many factors affect the relationship between social media and harm to body image. It is not simply exposure to social media alone but the interplay of how adolescents behave online and adolescent characteristics such as body surveillance (Salomon & Brown, 2018).

Body dissatisfaction may be due to exposure to more traditional types of media, and not just social media. One study measured appearance comparison and body dissatisfaction after

using Facebook and magazine covers or advertisements. The researchers described appearance comparison as the relationship between one's own standards of appearance and that of society. The study indicates that it is not the type of media exposure generating greater body dissatisfaction, but the extent to which adolescents internalize thin-ideals (Cohen & Blaszczynski, 2015). Other studies conclude that thin-ideal content shows a relationship between appearance comparison and body dissatisfaction (Kalpidou et al., 2011; van den Berg et al., 2002). In Cohen and Blaszczynski's (2015) study, they used thin-ideal content both on Facebook and the magazines, which may be the factor leading to higher body dissatisfaction and appearance comparison. These results lend support for the idea that media content more directly impacts one's body image than the type of media used.

The research shows that internalizing the ideal appearance as well as monitoring the attractiveness of others on social media contributes to objectifying oneself and surveying one's own body (Chang et al., 2019; Rousseau et al., 2017; Salomon & Brown, 2018; Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2016). In Vandenbosch and Eggermont's (2016) study, this was only evident for adolescents engaging in sexualizing mass media. These internalized ideals impacted the resulting standards of these adolescents and altered the type of appearance they wanted to pursue. These effects were demonstrated through monitoring peers and using sexualized mass media for one year (Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2016). This relationship lends support to the idea that the content impacts individual teens more who partake in particular types of social media behaviours in terms of adverse effects on their body image. However, exposure to different forms of media in general also appears to increase self-objectification in adolescents (Slater & Tiggemann, 2014). These forms of media include magazines, TV shows, the Internet and social media. With

these findings in mind, it could be the case that other factors have an impact on the resulting self-objectification seen besides sexualization.

A 2019 study by de Vries et al. indicated that the relationship between social media and body dissatisfaction is dependent on the adolescent's relationship with their parents. Despite being contrary to previous evidence, this study discovered a connection between social media use in general with greater levels of body dissatisfaction in adolescents. However, the extent of these symptoms depended on the relationship the participant had with his/her mother. In general, having a more positive relationship with one's mother helped to prevent developing lowered levels of body dissatisfaction with social media use. Curiously, the researchers did not find these effects with the paternal relationship in either gender (de Vries et al., 2019). This finding might lend support for the idea that adolescents who already have a stronger relationship with their mothers possess traits that make them more resistant to the harmful effects of social media. It might also be the case that the relationship specifically helps them to fight these effects. For example, it could be that mothers can have conversations with their teens about what they are seeing, which moderates the impact of body dissatisfaction.

Research indicates that the child-parent relationship, in general, is significant in terms of the long-term impact social media has on adolescents' body image (Jones et al., 2018; Szalai et al., 2017; Wansink et al., 2017). Wansink et al.'s (2017) study looked at the perceptions of adult women as to how their parents spoke to them about their weight and eating habits growing up. The researchers compared these perceptions to how the woman felt about her body. The findings reveal that recollections of parental comments on weight related to body dissatisfaction while recollections of parental comments about diet were not, irrespective of whether the participant was within a healthy weight range (Wansink et al., 2017). These results suggest that it is also

possible that parental conversations with their children about body weight can have adverse long-term effects on body satisfaction. It might be necessary to explore the content of these conversations and determine how to discuss body image with adolescents without harming body satisfaction.

Contrary to previous studies, Wilksch et al. (2019) generated support for a correlation between social media and disordered eating and thinking. The study measured disordered eating behaviours along with the number of social media accounts each participant had. They found that the more social media accounts the teens had, the greater the disordered eating behaviours and thoughts. The study also monitored specific behaviours on social media for each gender. They found that girls more often posted pictures of people both on Instagram and Snapchat than boys did. They were also more likely to post pictures of food on their social media platforms. The researchers postulated from this information that girls might be more consumed with the way people look as well as with food. They related this to the finding that girls tend to be more at risk of disordered eating (Wilksch et al., 2019).

Considering the association between social media and eating disorders, McLean et al.'s (2017) study implemented interventions emphasizing social media competencies for adolescents. One of these interventions involved classes which catered to social media literacy skills. The classes focused on allowing adolescents to take a critical perspective, refrain from social comparisons, and decrease the value of appearance on social media. Exposure to these interventions resulted in improvements in symptoms relating to eating disorders as well as increased social media competency. These findings generate support for a connection between a lack of critical thinking in the face of social media and eating disorder symptoms (McLean et al., 2017).

Depression

The currently available literature in this area indicates a certain relationship between social media use in adolescents and symptoms of depression or low mood. However, the research does not lead to a direct relationship; certain factors influence the association. These include the kind of social media behaviour and the baseline mood and mental health of the adolescent (Bányai et al., 2017; Heffer et al., 2019; Raudsepp & Kais, 2019).

Much of the current research discusses social media use in terms of its addictive nature. One study addressed the concept of problematic social media use, which involves being preoccupied with social media so much so that it negatively affects other aspects of life such as other recreational activities, school work, relationships, and overall well-being (Shensa et al., 2017). This study assessed problematic social media use utilizing the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS; Andreassen et al., 2017). This scale assesses whether the adolescent is experiencing addiction to social media by evaluating various factors. These include time spent thinking about social media, intent to change their mood, frequency of urges to use, presence of negative symptoms without use, presence of conflict as a result of use, and attempts to live without social media (Andreassen et al., 2017). This study demonstrated that adolescent girls who rated higher on the BSMAS or with more problematic social media use indicated more depressive symptoms. However, teen girls with pre-existing problematic social media use did not necessarily predict depression over a longer period (Raudsepp & Kais, 2019).

Bányai et al. (2017) used the same scale to measure problematic social media use or addiction. Although the participants did not indicate problematic social media use, some at-risk participants exhibited higher levels of depression. The researchers discovered this association; however, the number of participants presenting in the at-risk category was low (4.5%). This

finding suggests that although few adolescents have addictive social media behaviours, those that do face negative mental health consequences, including increased risk of depression (Bányai et al., 2017).

Other specific behaviours that adolescents engage in on social media have the potential to increase the likelihood of developing depressive symptoms. Some of these behaviours include the extent to which adolescents compare themselves with others and aim to receive feedback from their peers (Nesi & Prinstein, 2015). Nesi and Prinstein (2015) found that these variables were associated with self-reported depressive symptoms but were also influenced by other variables. The study demonstrated that the relationship between these online behaviours and depressive symptoms was even stronger for females. The participants who identified as being less popular also were more likely to exhibit this relationship. The researchers in this study indicate the importance of understanding how the ways adolescents with depression interact interpersonally translate to the online context. It is essential to understand how the online context could contribute more to these problematic interpersonal ways of relating (Nesi & Prinstein, 2015).

Rosenthal et al. (2016) support that when adolescents have negative experiences on social media, it is highly likely that they will experience depressive symptoms. The researchers in this study examined specific negative experiences that adolescents have had on Facebook. These experiences ranged from bullying to misunderstandings. This research study found that every reported negative experience on Facebook correlated with measures of depression. These findings were consistent even when accounting for demographic factors, the amount of support the adolescent had in their life, and parental psychological distress. This consistency indicates that when negative things occur on social media, it greatly impacts the resulting mood and

psychological well-being of adolescents (Rosenthal et al., 2016). The researchers indicated that the consistency of adverse outcomes suggests a need to consider reducing using Facebook for those adolescents who are most likely to be exposed to harmful online events or who are likely to be impacted by these events the most. With this in mind, it would be necessary for future research to examine whether these events create symptoms of depression or whether they exacerbate symptoms of depression that adolescents are already experiencing (Rosenthal et al., 2016).

As depression symptoms appear to increase with addictive social media use, particularly for those with pre-existing mood disorders, it is necessary to determine the severity of these symptoms (Bányai et al., 2017; Heffer et al., 2019; Raudsepp & Kais, 2019). Twenge and Campbell (2019) indicate that there appears to be a link between the time spent on digital media, including social media, and reduced well-being. Well-being was measured using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale. This scale measures depression, suicidality, and overall happiness. The researchers discovered that heavy users of digital media (e.g., 5 or more hours a day) were more likely to experience poor mental well-being, including suicide risk factors. Of significance in this study is that poor mental well-being is only seen with heavy use and improves with moderate and light use.

A more specific result that occurs for some adolescents on social media is the activation of feelings of envy. A study by Tandoc et al. (2015) measured feelings of envy by combining items from previous studies to create a scale of Facebook envy. The researchers asked participants how much they agreed with various statements related to this construct. When these feelings arise, particularly on Facebook, it is more likely that adolescents will experience depressive symptoms. Contrary to other evidence of the correlation of depression with social

media use, this study indicates that the correlation would not exist unless adolescents experience envy (Tandoc et al., 2015). This result was so evident that when the researchers controlled for Facebook envy, adolescents experienced fewer indications of depression. This finding supports the idea that Facebook might have a positive impact on mental health, as long as the adolescent is not struggling with feelings of envy. However, Facebook, as a social media platform, allows the user to engage in multiple different activities. With this in mind, each activity might have a different effect on whether the adolescent experiences depressive symptoms. Although this study looked specifically at surveillance of Facebook, it might be necessary to examine more specifically, which activities on Facebook lead to which mental health outcomes (Tandoc et al., 2015).

It appears that the pre-existing mental health of adolescents is an essential factor to consider when determining the influence of social media. Raudsepp and Kais (2019) found that adolescent girls with pre-existing high levels of depression indicated more problematic social media use. Even if the resulting social media use by those individual adolescents with symptoms of depression is not addictive, it is still more frequent. Another study found this to be the case, with an association between depressive symptoms and more frequent social media use (Heffer et al., 2019).

Overall, the literature does not conclude any direct influence of social media use on the development of depressive symptoms (Heffer et al., 2019). However, O'Reilly et al. (2018) have indicated otherwise. This study utilized various focus groups where adolescents expressed their beliefs about the relationship between social media and mental health. From these discussions, the researchers generated several themes. Overall, these adolescents believed social media to be harmful to mental well-being. Many believed that participating in social media caused mood

disorders. More specifically, they indicated that depressive symptoms were more likely the result of partaking in the comments section of many platforms. Participants relayed that this is where views are shared, which can often lead to a lowered mood when reading or participating. It is interesting to note, however, that the participants in this study generally made these attributions about adolescents in general as opposed to attributing it to themselves. They did not necessarily speak from experience but described what they felt to be the case for many. The group also discussed the theme of suicide. Many believed that social media was a direct cause of suicide. Participants related this to the depressed feelings adolescents can develop from participating in social media as well as cyberbullying (O'Reilly et al., 2018).

Anxiety

The literature on social media and anxiety levels indicates that social media affects adolescent anxiety levels. The articles included in this literature review concerning anxiety levels are mostly qualitative and from the perspectives of parents and adolescents themselves. This fact is indicative of the possibility that anxiety is a common perceived negative outcome of social media. The research indicates the presence of different forms of anxiety, including pressure, social anxiety, and general anxiety (Barry et al., 2017; Durak, 2018; O'Reilly, 2020; O'Reilly et al., 2018; Woods & Scott, 2016)

It appears that although social media use is high amongst adolescents, this population tends to believe that it leads to feelings of anxiety (O'Reilly, 2020). This belief about the effect of social media use is evident in the findings in one study, which indicates that higher numbers of social media accounts are consistent with parental reports of high anxiety in their adolescents. The participants with the highest levels of anxiety were those whose parents conveyed that they had a high number of accounts (Barry et al., 2017). Adolescents tend to agree with this finding.

They feel the need to be on these sites to stay connected but also experience some pressure while using them. They think they must perform on social media and get as many “likes” on their photos as possible. If they do not receive these “likes,” they think they are at risk of being anxious (O’Reilly, 2020). Some adolescents believe social media can be a direct cause of anxiety disorders (O’Reilly et al., 2018). Durak (2018) supported this belief but showed a connection between anxiety and problematic social media use. As discussed above, problematic social media use is different than the average use of social media because it implies addiction to the sites. There is a significant relationship between problematic social media use and social anxiety in teenagers (Durak, 2018). Durak (2018) relates this connection to previous research by Alkis et al. (2017) stating that adolescents tend to use social media to isolate themselves from real-world interactions. They feel that this will help them avoid the negative criticism that they might receive in face-to-face social interactions (Alkis et al., 2017). Adolescents have also indicated they use social media to be more social, maintain friendships and relieve stress (O’Reilly, 2020).

Social Media and Social Interactions

Cyberbullying

An essential factor to consider when assessing the effects of social media on mental health for adolescents is the concept of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying has been defined as “an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself” (Smith et al., 2008, p. 376). Although it is difficult to determine the prevalence rates with differing definitions of the topic, some estimates of lifetime victimization rates of cyberbullying are as high as 65% (Kowalski et al., 2019). In the literature, many adolescents highlighted the negative impact of

cyberbullying. It is also clear that social media leads to adverse outcomes indirectly through cyberbullying (Cole et al., 2016).

Teens have indicated in the research that social media has a dangerous side (O'Reilly, 2020). They see social media as the primary source of cyberbullying, and it affects the way they live day-to-day. They generally feel that because social media is in use every day, cyberbullying is also present for them just as often. They also assert that online bullies have a significant impact. Some teens compare what bullies say online to what will happen to them in the real world. If adolescents are treated negatively online by others, they believe they will always receive this treatment. There also appears to be a sense of embarrassment and shame in cyberbullying. Adolescents have indicated that it is often the case that they will not tell their parents or friends if they experience cyberbullying (O'Reilly, 2020).

These high rates of cyberbullying have implications for adolescents' mental health. Teens themselves assert they believe these effects are extreme enough to create negative mental health symptoms. Participants from O'Reilly et al.'s (2018) focus group study conveyed active frustration with social media for creating a space for this kind of behaviour to exist. They describe that because of social media platforms, cyberbullying has become a standard part of adolescent daily life (O'Reilly et al., 2018).

Historically, researchers found that cyberbullying led to more severe outcomes such as poor psychosocial adjustment for the victims than in-person bullying (Campbell, 2005; Dooley et al., 2009; Tokunaga, 2010). More recent research in this area, however, suggests that we cannot make this conclusion. It appears there are factors aside from being online that more greatly contribute to the adverse outcomes (Estévez et al., 2019; Litwiler & Brausch, 2013; Sticca & Perren, 2013). For example, bullying is perceived to have more harmful consequences or victims

when there is a larger audience and when the bully is anonymous. These harmful consequences include poor academic standing, deteriorating family relationships, psychosocial challenges and increased mental disorders (Machmutow et al., 2012; Tokunaga, 2010). There is some evidence that cyberbullying is worse for victims than in-person bullying, but the evidence is not as strong as for the previous two circumstances (Sticca & Perren, 2013).

Cole et al. (2016) conclude that cyberbullying has multiple adverse effects on adolescents' mental health. They indicate that online bullying can lead to changes in the way teens think about themselves. Over time, with more exposure to cyberbullying, teens are more likely to think about themselves in negative terms. This thinking pattern creates a greater likelihood of developing depressive symptoms. Adolescents who experienced cyberbullying also led to a greater chance of them reacting as a victim cognitively. For example, participants in the study reacted to staged bullying situations by identifying more with statements relating to being a victim. These results persisted even after taking pre-existing depressive symptoms, negative cognitions, and victim-related thinking into consideration (Cole et al., 2016). It is clear from the literature that cyberbullying is a common occurrence for adolescents over social media and that it results in adverse mental health outcomes.

These findings generate the idea that bullying, in general, leads to feelings of depression and victimization. It might be the case that if these bullying scenarios were face-to-face, the effects would be the same. It would be useful to identify additional factors that create a difference. As indicated in the research above, the results might be more dependent on factors such as exposure to a large audience and anonymity (Sticca & Perren, 2013).

Social Media and Problematic Thoughts and Behaviours

FoMO

The literature indicates that the FoMO is both a consequence and predictor of social media use in teens. Franchina et al. (2018) define FoMO as “feelings of anxiety that arise from the realization that you may be missing out on rewarding experiences that others are having” (Franchina et al., 2018, Abstract section). This fear can lead to further feelings of pressure and anxiety (Barry et al., 2017; O’Reilly et al., 2018).

It appears that FoMO is a large motivator for adolescents to use social media. Researchers postulate that many adolescents choose to engage in these sites more because of concern that they might be missing out on things socially than out of pleasure and entertainment (Barry et al., 2017; Franchina et al., 2018). It could be less about gaining benefit from socializing and more about avoiding isolation (Barry et al., 2017). This aim relates to the finding that FoMO appears to influence the frequency of adolescent use of private social media platforms (e.g., Facebook and Snapchat) as opposed to public platforms (e.g., Twitter and YouTube). This finding is related to the idea that more private platforms allow users to gain information about friends they have from the face-to-face world (Franchina et al., 2018).

Not only is FoMO a motivator for social media use, but it also appears to be an effect. Several studies indicate that the greater the frequency of use, the more resulting FoMO there is (Barry et al., 2017). This correlation is present in both adolescent and parent self-reports (Barry et al., 2017; Franchina et al., 2018). In a qualitative analysis, adolescents indicated that FoMO is a big part of the way they interface with social media. They believed having no access to social media would have significant implications for their ability to feel a part of their social community. They thought it would likely result in being seen negatively by others. As a result, the participants generally felt that social media caused pressure and anxiety (O’Reilly et al., 2018).

Alcohol Consumption

In recent literature, researchers concluded that engaging in social media has an impact on the degree of alcohol consumption for adolescents. They found that specific behaviours on social media related to alcohol have the most impact on future alcohol use (Critchlow et al., 2019; Pegg et al., 2018). These behaviours relate to the ways adolescents construct their self-concept and identify themselves in different social groups (Pegg et al., 2018).

Despite the general findings that future alcohol consumption by teens is related to specific behaviours on social media, they have also found that social media use, in general, can contribute. Brunborg et al. (2017) found that the amount of time spent on social media correlated to an increased risk of episodic heavy drinking in adolescents. This finding is important to note as it specifically ties to episodic heavy drinking and not drinking in general. To make this connection, the researchers controlled for other variables that had the possibility of contributing to episodic binge drinking. These variables included grades in school, the impulsivity of the participant, the degree of sensation seeking, depression, and difficulties with peers (Brunborg et al., 2017).

Other studies, however, found an increase in alcohol consumption resulting from exposure to social media content related to drinking and alcohol (Critchlow et al., 2019; Pegg et al., 2018). This finding includes adolescents viewing other posts with drinking in the content or posting pictures themselves related to drinking. Critchlow et al. (2019) indicated that social media is a platform that allows adolescents to promote alcohol as well as specific brands. These promotional activities are associated with high-risk alcohol consumption. Although researchers found that participation in these promotional activities was greater for adolescents who were of legal drinking age, it also existed in the younger population (Critchlow et al., 2019). The extent

of the connection between alcohol content on social media and high levels of alcohol use is also related to the adolescent's sense of identity. This association was stronger when the adolescent indicated a greater sense of online social identity. Researchers determined online social identity by calculating the means of the participants' responses to three items reflecting the importance they placed on being a member of their online community (Cameron, 2004). They explained these findings by relating to recent research suggesting that individuals tend to act in similar ways to those in their social groups. They do this to maintain their identity within the group (Pegg et al., 2018). In considering these findings, it appears that adolescents who engage in more drinking behaviours do so because of their desire to relate to a social community that participates in drinking.

Social Media and Positive Well-Being

Despite the adverse outcomes for mental health discussed above, the literature also highlights the various benefits that can result from adolescent engagement in social media. These benefits mostly relate to the social outcomes inherent in this activity. Some sources indicate that social media use predominantly has positive effects on adolescents, while others argue that outcomes are balanced (van den Eijnden et al., 2018; Weinstein, 2018).

Based on the literature, it appears that the outcomes afforded through social media can be both positive and negative. For example, adolescents indicate that their ability to connect with others on social media can provide a sense of closeness but also a sense of disconnection. They can express themselves, which often provides affirmations but also can cause them to worry about the judgments they receive from others. It appears that adolescents see the use of social media as something that presents many positives, but they are also aware of the consequences that might result (Weinstein, 2018).

Along with many potential adverse outcomes of adolescent social media discussed by O'Reilly (2020), many positives exist. Overall, social media platforms present an opportunity for adolescents to thrive socially. Adolescents themselves agree with this, stating they feel less isolated, have more social skills, can communicate, can maintain friendships, and can avoid stress by engaging in social media. Daily life is full of stressors, and adolescents often view social media as an escape and a way of relaxing.

Social media can also provide benefits in terms of increased psychological well-being for adolescents. This relationship was the strongest for those adolescents with lower levels of mental resilience. With these results, Ziv and Kiasi (2016) concluded that Facebook could provide a platform for a supportive environment that some adolescents might not experience in the face-to-face world. These individuals might not have the appropriate social skills required within traditional in-person social circles. Online environments may be more supportive environments for those adolescents who do not necessarily have the confidence to engage in social situations otherwise (Ziv & Kiasi, 2016).

Przybylski and Weinstein (2017) propose that the extent to which adolescents experience harmful mental health effects depends on the amount of exposure to social media. They examined this idea by measuring mental well-being and screen time in a sample of 15-year-olds. There did not appear to be harmful effects at every level of screen time. Only those who indicated high screen time displayed negative impacts on mental well-being. Of further interest is that time of the week of screen-time affected mental well-being observed. Adolescents could engage in screen-time longer on the weekends without adverse effects in comparison to weekday use (Przybylski & Weinstein, 2017). This finding supports the idea that moderate or low levels

of social media use could not only lack harmful effects on mental well-being but could conversely contribute to more positive outcomes.

The benefits adolescents receive from social media can depend on the type of site. It appears that engaging in social media sites that more heavily utilize images can lead to benefits (Pittman & Reich, 2016). These outcomes include greater feelings of connection, happiness and satisfaction with life. Pittman and Reich (2016) propose that these positive outcomes are the result of the sites creating a sense of being in a social environment. It may be the case that adolescents are more likely to receive mental health benefits from social media if they are also receiving them in face-to-face interactions. For example, the researchers found that adolescents with high levels of online socialization had the highest level of self-concept when they also had in-person social support (Khan et al., 2016). This finding generates support for the idea that social media use can produce mental health benefits as long as it is in combination with offline socialization.

The research also supports the idea that social media can be a beneficial platform to reach adolescents for physical and mental health services (Pase et al., 2018). Pase et al. (2018) discuss the benefits of using social media and more modern technologies to communicate about health care. The study involved adolescent participants who were to undergo renal transplants. The participants received access to a Facebook group providing more information about guidelines and general health information. Facebook provided adolescents with a platform to share their experiences, improve communication with their healthcare team, further understand their illness, and improve their self-esteem. The researchers emphasize the importance of further developing online platforms to educate teens about health care as these platforms are familiar and accessible with this age demographic (Pase et al., 2018).

Researchers also conducted a study to determine how adolescents feel about communicating through social media with their mental health care providers (van Rensburg et al., 2016). This communication with mental health care providers through social media is considered by the researchers as similar to how adolescents would communicate with their friends and family. This includes sharing thoughts with a broad audience of followers, contacting others individually or publicly and viewing what others share (van Rensburg et al., 2016). The participants in the study were teen patients in an outpatient psychiatric program. The participants' diagnoses included attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, mood disorder, major depressive disorder, anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, psychosis, learning disability, and oppositional defiant disorder. The study found that adolescents had a mixed view of social media as a mental health care communication platform. They indicated that they appreciated how it allowed for more frequent communication and generated less anxiety than other forms of communication. However, they also expressed concern about the possibility that they would not receive responses through the platform as quickly as they would like and that the communication would be less deep (van Rensburg et al., 2016). Overall, this study shows evidence for the possibility that social media could be a useful platform for communicating with psychiatric patients, potentially leading to improvements in their mental health. The researchers in this study conceptualized social media use between the client and mental health care provider in the same way as with a friend or family member (van Rensburg et al., 2016). However, future efforts to use social media in this context could involve Facebook groups as discussed above or more private forms of communicating (Pase et al., 2018). Because of the potential risks discussed, however, further research must be done for these communication platforms to be widely used (van Rensburg et al., 2016).

The extent of use is an essential consideration for determining the positive impacts of social media. Many adolescents engage with social media frequently and do not experience adverse outcomes. These effects are more substantial, however, when social media use becomes addictive and problematic. As discussed above, even heavy use of social media appears to have a positive impact on how adolescents perceive themselves socially in some cases. With greater social media use, researchers found that adolescents believe they have greater competence in the social arena in some situations. It can lead to the forming of friendships as well as the maintenance of existing friendships. When adolescents engage in disordered social media use, these effects are not present (van den Eijnden et al., 2018).

Evidence-Based Practice for Treatment and Prevention

It is essential to also provide a summary of what the literature suggests as interventions for the above effects. Although the research offers few evidence-based interventions directly used for social media addiction in teens, it does include interventions for the effects discussed above. Practitioners can use these interventions in the individual counselling setting with the teen or parent or the family counselling setting.

Psychoeducation and Media Literacy

One of the interventions supported in the literature is psychoeducation. This intervention involves teaching parents and children about the effects of social media use and what they can do to counter the adverse effects and maintain the positive ones. For parents, psychoeducation efforts should focus on how they can implement effective restrictions on time spent on social media (Fardouly et al., 2018; Livingstone et al., 2017; Panetta et al., 2014).

Psychoeducation efforts for adolescents would involve both raising awareness of the positive and negative effects of social media and also teaching media literacy (O'Reilly et al.,

2018). These efforts allow the adolescents to think more critically about what they see online and how to develop strategies for interacting with it (Raudsepp & Kais, 2019; Wilksch & Wade, 2009; Wilksch et al., 2015, 2019)

Relationship Building

Another category of intervention for targeting the harmful effects of social media use is building strong relationships. Having these strong relationships has been shown to protect against these harmful effects (de Vries et al., 2019; Tandoc et al., 2015). In improving the parent-adolescent relationship, mindful parenting can be a useful strategy (Lippold et al., 2015).

Family interventions that aim to improve relationships focus on working as a family to develop strategies to address their problems and provide a supportive network (Lock et al., 2010). Interventions involving time away from technology and time spent outdoors have helped develop adolescent self-esteem and an increased level of trust and closeness in parent-adolescent relationships (Liermann & Norton, 2016).

Prevention

The research also supports efforts to assess for problematic or addictive social media use, with the BSMAS being a psychometrically valid option. The research suggests treating some of the factors often associated with problematic social media use through counselling to prevent adverse outcomes (Bányai et al., 2017).

Self-Regulation

The literature supports the idea that working on self-regulation skills is a useful tool for combatting the harmful effects of social media use. Pandey et al. (2018) suggested several interventions for working on these skills, including physical activity and mindfulness.

Summary of Literature

There are several conclusions based on this review of the literature in the area of adolescent social media use and its effects on mental health. It is clear that social media has an impact on adolescents and their resulting well-being (Barry et al., 2017; Brunborg et al., 2017; de Vries et al., 2019; Durak, 2018; Nesi & Prinstein, 2015; O'Reilly, 2020; O'Reilly et al., 2018; Raudsepp & Kais, 2019; Rosenthal et al., 2016; Salomon & Brown, 2018; van den Eijnden et al., 2018; Weinstein, 2018; Ziv & Kiasi, 2016). The articles discussed, however, differ in terms of the type of effects on mental well-being. Many studies examine the negative impact that social media can have, including the potential to cause negative body image, depression, anxiety, FoMO, problematic drinking behaviours, and cyberbullying. These negative impacts on mental health, however, often result from the interaction of other variables. Some of these variables include the frequency of social media use, whether this use is addictive, whether the adolescents with these resulting outcomes already had pre-existing levels of poor mental health, the presence of certain personality characteristics, past experiences, and the types of behaviours they engaged in on social media. The literature suggests a clear connection between social media use and various adverse mental health outcomes. However, one must interpret these findings within the context of the individual adolescent. The individual's unique experience with social media, as well as pre-existing mental health, can contribute to the extent to which they develop poor mental health.

Although there may be negative impacts of engaging in social media, the literature also indicates that there are many positive mental health outcomes possible. Some sources even argue that the effects are mostly positive (Weinstein, 2018). These outcomes include social connection, self-expression, affirmation, social competence, improved relationships, and reduced isolation. These results are also dependent on similar variables discussed above. When an adolescent

engages with social media so much that it becomes disordered, for example, these positive effects are not present (van den Eijnden et al., 2018). There are also certain characteristics and pre-existing experiences that contribute more to some of these positive outcomes (Ziv & Kiasi, 2016).

In general, it appears that there are both positive and negative effects on the mental health of adolescents resulting from social media use. Based on the literature discussed above, it is difficult to say whether using social media has more positive or negative outcomes. Many factors go into determining these outcomes, and the resulting impact greatly depends on the circumstances surrounding the individual adolescent. The next section will discuss how understanding the factors that impact an adolescent's experience with social media is essential in determining how to best support this population.

Based on the above assessment of the literature in this area, it is clear that the impacts of adolescent social media engagement are varied. They can be either positive or negative and often depend on the individual. The individual's mental health history and maternal relationship are just a few elements that impact these outcomes (de Vries et al., 2019; Raudsepp & Kais, 2019). This research and the findings generated are essential for counselling practitioners to be aware of since they have implications for the field of practice.

Implications for Counselling Psychology

With further support and understanding of these findings, it would be possible to tailor counselling psychology practices to reduce the potential harms of social media and enhance the benefits for adolescents. Evidence from the literature indicates several implications for counselling practitioners. These include involving parents in monitoring adolescent social media use, education for adolescents, parents and counsellors about conceptualizing social media,

developing positive relationships, implementation of preventative and intervention efforts, assessing for risk, and using social media to engage adolescents (Bányai et al., 2017; de Vries et al., 2019; Durak, 2018; O'Reilly, 2020; O'Reilly et al., 2018; Wilksch et al., 2019).

Involving Parents

One element that appears to impact the healthy use of social media for teens is parental involvement, either concerning parental control of their adolescents' time spent on social media or how parents engage in discussions with their adolescents about healthy social media use (Fardouly et al., 2018; O'Reilly, 2020; Weinstein, 2018; Wilksch et al., 2019; Woods & Scott, 2016). One study, in particular, supports the idea that parents can influence the extent to which their adolescent children engage in social media (Wilksch et al., 2019). When parents have greater control over social media use, it leads to higher levels of life satisfaction overall in these teens (Fardouly et al., 2018). Although this evidence indicates there are positive outcomes of parental control of social media, there is also evidence in the literature that counters this.

The general findings relating to the outcomes of parental control over adolescent social media indicate that a balanced approach is beneficial. Although parental control can prevent some of the adverse effects of adolescent social media engagement, it also has the potential to eliminate the positive outcomes (O'Reilly, 2020). Potential benefits of restricted access would remove include digital literacy, relationship building, self-expression, and reduced isolation (O'Reilly, 2020; Weinstein, 2018). There is also an argument, however, that restricted access might prevent potential adverse mental health outcomes such as feelings of exclusion (Weinstein, 2018). A common argument is that there is not enough substantial evidence to support restricting adolescent engagement with social media (O'Reilly, 2020).

Conclusions generated in the literature about parental control of social media have implications for the practice of counselling psychology. Since the evidence supports both positive and negative aspects of parental control, it might be useful for counsellors to educate parents on the information available. Counsellors may advise parents that rules might be helpful, but that a certain amount of exposure to social media is also beneficial. Exerting this level of control may be more effective with younger adolescents since their parents can more easily influence them (Fardouly et al., 2018).

Researchers suggest that educating parents about parenting styles, in general, can help to lead to more positive outcomes. It appears that authoritative parenting from both the maternal and paternal side leads to a greater amount of life satisfaction in teens (Panetta et al., 2014). This parenting style is higher in demandingness and responsiveness (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). These parenting characteristics may help lead to a greater ability to facilitate appropriate social media restrictions. Greater adolescent life satisfaction might occur in this case because of the other ways the parents are implementing higher demandingness and responsiveness (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Panetta et al., 2014).

In addition to educational implications for parents, these findings might impact the way counsellors conduct family counselling sessions. For example, these findings might be significant in terms of the interventions used in the sessions, which would include both restrictive and enabling mediation strategies. The restrictive mediation strategies would involve parental disabling of certain forms of social media. The enabling mediation strategies would involve having regular conversations with the teen about social media and promoting safe and healthy use (Livingstone et al., 2017). The benefit of making these rules in the family

counselling setting is that the counsellor can potentially be a moderator. The counsellor could ensure the family sets rules that would likely lead to benefits.

Greater expertise in navigating parent-child conflict that results from social media use is another implication for counsellors. Either a parent or child could seek counselling to address the conflict arising from different perspectives on social media use. If the counsellor is well-equipped with knowledge about the benefits of a certain degree of parental restriction, they could address this with the client (Fardouly et al., 2018). The counsellor might encourage the implementation of both restrictive and enabling mediation strategies in the face of this conflict, as the research indicates certain benefits of doing so (Livingstone et al., 2017; O'Reilly, 2020; Pittman & Reich, 2016; Przybylski & Weinstein, 2017; Weinstein, 2018; Ziv & Kiasi, 2016).

Educating Adolescents

It would be helpful to educate adolescents themselves about the potential harms and benefits of social media to ensure they have a balanced understanding (Woods & Scott, 2016). Understanding the possible outcomes of engaging in social media could help adolescents change the way they engage online themselves. One aspect to become aware of could be in understanding whether it is helpful to make comparisons between social media images and self-images (Wilksch et al., 2019). This education might also come in the form of adolescents learning to take responsibility for their actions on social media. The research has supported the idea that adolescents tend to place blame on social media for directly contributing to the adverse outcomes in their lives. It would perhaps be useful to educate adolescents as to how the interactions they have with social media contribute to their mental health and that they are not merely passive participants (O'Reilly et al., 2018).

This idea has implications for counselling psychology in that it might emphasize the need for psychoeducation about social media and its interaction with mental health. Adolescents seem to be lacking an understanding of how adverse mental health outcomes arise from social media, and providing them with this information might be beneficial. It would emphasize what kind of behaviours are helpful on social media and which are harmful (Raudsepp & Kais, 2019). It is also necessary to provide psychoeducation about mental health in general. Young people need to understand what it means to have mental health difficulties, how to prevent them, and what to do if they receive a diagnosis (O'Reilly et al., 2018).

Awareness of the mental health difficulties resulting from the over-use of social media is also essential for ensuring safety. The research indicates that adolescents who heavily use social media are more likely to experience suicide risk. These risk indicators include depression symptoms, past suicide attempts, or suicidal ideation (Twenge & Campbell, 2019). Educating adolescents about potential harms could help to prevent use in general. This education could have implications for reducing the rates of adolescent suicidality. This safety risk also has the potential to draw further attention to intervention efforts.

There might also be implications for how counsellors can integrate this into their practice with adolescents. Without understanding the research about social media, counsellor bias could come into play. This bias might centre around the counsellor's personal experience with social media or their judgment about the effects. With knowledge of the research, one can utilize interventions that are backed by the research. It might be necessary for counsellors to investigate evidence-based interventions around this kind of psychoeducation.

Developing Positive Relationships

The research in this area also supports the idea that social relationships create a buffer against the harmful effects of social media (de Vries et al., 2019). These harmful effects often relate to the messages adolescents receive through social media about body image and appearance. Having a strong relationship with one's mother, for example, might help to prevent poor body image and the harms that come with it. Tandoc et al. (2015) mentioned the idea that subordination is a common underlying feeling associated with depression. For cases in which adolescents experience depression symptoms related to social media engagement developing a strong social support network would be advised (Tandoc et al., 2015).

The finding that a stronger maternal relationship helps the adolescent maintain a positive body image in the face of harmful social media message has implications for the interventions that could be used (Tandoc et al., 2015). Interventions should focus on improving the adolescent-mother relationship. Researchers propose mindful parenting to improve communication between the teen and the parent (Lippold et al., 2015). This parenting strategy involves multiple components. The first component involves paying close and careful attention to what the adolescent is saying in every interaction. The second is the parent's ability to pay attention to the reaction they have to their adolescent's behaviour and choose parenting strategies with intention. The third is for parents to raise awareness of their adolescent's emotions and their own during interactions. The fourth involves the parent building a level of acceptance of both their own and their child's characteristics and behaviours. The final element is for the parent to develop a sense of genuine regard for the child's well-being and their journey as a parent (Duncan et al., 2009). Cultivating the techniques presented could help to improve communication and the mother-adolescent relationship, leading to a greater amount of resilience against the harmful messages about body images shown in social media.

The idea that positive relationships help treat the harmful effects of adolescent social media use has implications for counselling psychology (de Vries et al., 2019; Tandoc et al., 2015). Counsellors need to utilize this information to both educate and encourage teens. One of the strategies might be to use family therapy-based approaches for treating the teen. One study found support for family-based interventions on treating body image difficulties (Lock et al., 2010). This family intervention might also be helpful, given that positive relationships may limit the negative impacts of harmful messages about appearance on social media. This intervention focuses on removing parental responsibility for the harms generated, focusing on the things they did well, developing family strategies for how to resolve problems, and how to build healthier parent-child relationships (Lock et al., 2010). These approaches would allow for the development of stronger relationships within the family and support the adolescent.

A family therapy program that could be beneficial for families with adolescents with problematic social media use is Intercept, based out of Voyageur Outward Bound School (Liermann & Norton, 2016). This program involves wilderness missions that focus on the ability of adolescents to develop independence. It also focuses on helping teens to develop a sense of self-esteem. Parents join the program in the final few days and are involved in discussions with their adolescents about the skills learned. As discussed in the study, parents indicated experiencing better communication and improved trust within the family as a result of participating in the program (Liermann & Norton, 2016). Research shows that developing positive relationships within the family should be a focus to improve the adverse effects seen from excessive social media use (de Vries et al., 2019). Thus, this program could be beneficial for families. Based on the benefits seen as a result of this program, other wilderness programs besides Intercept could have similar benefits.

Another strategy is to encourage the adolescent to engage with others, work on their relationships, and seek others out for support. Psychoeducation efforts might also be useful in this case and would involve explaining to the adolescent the value of social relationships in protecting and treating social media's harmful effects. Suppose the adolescent is experiencing depression as a result of active social media use, for example. Here it might be helpful to explain to the teen that subordination is often related to depression and that having healthy, encouraging relationships helps to reduce this feeling (Tandoc et al., 2015).

Prevention and Intervention Strategies

The research generated in this area also emphasizes the potential utility of developing tools for assessing adolescents who might be more likely to engage in problematic social media use (O'Reilly, 2020). Determining the adolescents who are more at risk would allow for the development of preventative measures as well as interventions (Bányai et al., 2017). The BSMAS could be a helpful tool. Since it has been shown to have appropriate psychometric utility, it could be a valuable tool for assessing problematic social media use (Bányai et al., 2017). Using tools such as these could help practitioners become aware of some of the traits or attributions that are likely to put adolescents at risk.

Practitioners could develop prevention efforts to suit this population and address these vulnerabilities. It would also be possible to understand what intervention efforts might be necessary (Bányai et al., 2017). As shown by Bányai et al. (2017), some of the typical traits associated with problematic social media use are low self-esteem, high levels of depression, and more time spent online. Knowing that these traits are more often problematic, it might be necessary to develop interventions to address these items specifically. These interventions might come in the form of group therapy, individual counselling, or other efforts (Bányai et al., 2017).

Another key for generating preventative and intervention efforts is to engage the adolescents themselves in developing programs and strategies (O'Reilly et al., 2018). Doing so would likely improve engagement and use methods that would resonate with the population. The adolescents' active involvement in these interventions could also help educate them about utilizing social media in a way that does not negatively impact mental health (O'Reilly et al., 2018).

These interventions and preventative efforts would ideally include the development of skills that would help the adolescent. These skills could include self-regulation. When adolescents are less able to use self-control to put limits on social media use, they are at greater risk of becoming addicted. Implementing counselling efforts to focus on these skills might help to prevent or eliminate these addictive behaviours (Durak, 2018). Multiple interventions to improve self-regulation have been researched and developed (Pandey et al., 2018). Pandey et al. (2018) identified the categories of curriculum, physical activity, mindfulness, family, and social and personal skills to differentiate these interventions. Curriculum interventions are used in the classroom and involve activities such as role-playing and group therapy sessions. Physical activity interventions focus on utilizing exercise to improve self-regulation. Mindfulness interventions utilize mindfulness and yoga and appear to improve self-regulation. Family interventions include activities such as meetings with the family, skill-building, after-school programs, and individual parent meetings. Finally, the social and personal skills interventions are completed in small groups and focus on taking responsibility, improving behaviours, and handling conflict (Pandey et al., 2018). There are many other risk factors for addictive social media behaviours. These include being single, being female, belonging to a lower age group, having a lower SES, having less education, having a negative self-concept, and being narcissistic

(Andreassen et al., 2017). With these factors in mind, preventative efforts might be most helpful to implement with those who meet some of the above criteria.

In developing interventions aimed at the reduction of cyberbullying behaviours, practitioners need to understand the different forms that cyberbullying can take. Cyberbullying presents itself in unique ways depending on the age group. Practitioners should be mindful that there may be unique skills to work on for each age category. Along with differences in cyberbullying presentation, different age groups also have unique risks and protective factors (Kowalski et al., 2019). Being aware of these factors will also dictate the nature of the interventions.

The research also suggests certain evidence-based practices for addressing these mental health concerns. One of these interventions focuses on the need for adolescents to develop strategies for interacting with various forms of social media (Wilksch et al., 2015; Wilksch & Wade, 2009). The literature refers to this as “media literacy.” This intervention involves asking adolescents questions about the possible intent behind social media content. These questions might be about the utility of comparing oneself to others online, questioning how “real” the images might be, or what the individual posting the photo might want to achieve. These questions aim to encourage adolescents to develop their own beliefs about social media and how they wish to interact with it in the future (Wilksch et al., 2015; Wilksch & Wade, 2009).

Engaging with Social Media

As discussed in the previous section of this project, there are certain benefits associated with adolescent social media use (O’Reilly, 2020; van den Eijnden et al., 2018; Weinstein, 2018; Ziv & Kiasi, 2016). It can help to develop more positive social relationships, teach social skills, and provide an outlet for self-expression (O’Reilly, 2020; van den Eijnden et al., 2018;

Weinstein, 2018). These findings have implications for counselling psychology in that social media could be a tool for more positively engaging with adolescents. Instead of making it a space for negativity, it might be possible to utilize the positive aspects of the sites to improve their mental health. One consideration would be to continue to promote positive well-being online (O'Reilly et al., 2018). A current example is online mental health supports such as the Kids Help Phone. This service provides children and adolescents with the option to receive support over text (Kids Help Phone, n.d.). Many other mental health services are now utilizing social media to share mental health information (Miller, 2013). Online mental health services have the potential to be widely accessed by the adolescent population as a result of the large proportion who have access to these technologies (Aschbrenner et al., 2019).

There are also possibilities for implementing mental health initiatives through social media. The research indicates that adolescents prefer forms of mental health care available online. For individuals experiencing anxiety, it is sometimes a more comfortable medium (Durak, 2018).

As adolescents are already frequently engaging with these platforms, using them for mental health promotion as well as educational purposes should be further considered (Durak, 2018). This idea lends support for developing the advancement of mental health initiatives through social media (O'Reilly, 2020). There are situations in which counselling practitioners might promote social media use.

Counsellors might promote social media to help a teen achieve certain positive outcomes in their lives. For example, Facebook use can provide a community of support, especially for those lacking social skills in face-to-face interactions. Social media might provide a platform for these individuals to gain the necessary confidence to engage in person (Ziv & Kiasi, 2016).

Counsellors might encourage individuals lacking these social skills to engage in online communities that are consistent with their interests. This behaviour might help to turn the negative social media narrative into one that is more positive and contributes to healthier outcomes.

Limitations of Implications

There are many possible implications of this research for the field of counselling psychology. However, it is crucial to consider these with a critical perspective and to understand that any potential research limitations would affect the validity of these implications. Some studies referenced in this project have indicated the need for further research in the area (de Vries et al., 2019; Nesi & Prinstein, 2015; Rosenthal et al., 2016). Some indicate that further research is needed to learn more about the association between variables (Wilksch et al., 2019).

Some studies indicate that there is an association, but they do not imply causality. For example, Wilksch et al. (2019) found an association between social media use and higher levels of disordered eating and highlighted the importance of more research on the temporal relationship between the two. The researchers also suggested further research on what particular elements of social media use contribute to the increase in disordered eating (Wilksch et al., 2019). Other sources indicate a need to have further research in the area to provide support for the conclusions made (de Vries et al., 2019; Nesi & Prinstein, 2015). Another point presented is that there are likely interactions between social media use and other variables that impact the mental health of adolescents. These additional variables may be contributing to the poor mental health of adolescents, not social media use alone (O'Reilly, 2020).

It is essential to consider the implications of these research limitations for counselling psychology. Although these studies present ideas for changing practices, the data is not

necessarily valid and reliable. The research may not consider some imperfections and other factors. The findings may have undiscovered alternative explanations. There could also be research variables such as sample size or certain methods that could limit the generalizability of the results (Heffer et al., 2019). To generate more support for the implications discussed, further research into these topics is necessary. Despite the limitations, the research in question still provides value for developing new practices in counselling psychology. The conclusions made should simply be taken with a critical, open mind.

Next Steps for Research

With the first developments of social media platforms beginning in the late 1990s, it is clear that social media is a relatively new concept (van Dijck, 2013). There are still many unknowns about the effects and long-term impacts. Adolescents today are the first age cohort to grow up with a social media presence. As a result, the field requires more research evidence for the topic in question. Future research should involve looking into alternative variables, implementing different research methods, and generating further support for the conclusions already made.

One step for future research is to further examine temporal relationships between the variables (Wilksch et al., 2019). This research would generate support for the causal relationship between the two. If positive or negative mental health variables increase right after prolonged exposure to social media, it will develop further support for the relationship between the variables. The longer the amount of time between the two variables, the less certain the relationship link is.

Some researchers indicate that the use of different methodologies is a requirement for future research. For example, some have noted that their studies' effect sizes are too small to

generate causality (Heffer et al., 2019). In consideration of this, future research should be mindful of ensuring a sample size that is large enough and perhaps diverse enough to increase this effect size (de Vries et al., 2019; Ferguson et al., 2014; Salomon & Brown, 2018; Wilksch et al., 2019).

Future research also needs to explore other possible variables that could be impacting the effects shown. In Ferguson et al.'s (2014) study, the adverse outcomes measured were not the result of social media exposure but rather peer competition in teens. Social media did have a minor contribution, but not enough to imply causality. Social media use had a slight predictive relation with peer competition but did not directly lead to adverse outcomes (Ferguson et al., 2014).

The research in this area needs to further examine the particular type of social media content and what kind of outcomes they produce. Certain types of content online could be more positive and beneficial to mental health than others. For example, Salomon and Brown (2018) conclude that self-objectifying social media use predicts higher levels of body shaming in teens. The self-objectifying nature of the content could have been what caused a higher level of body shame, not social media in general.

As discussed above, the effects adolescents experience from social media depend on how they use it. When adolescents use social media in a way that is addictive or problematic, more negative outcomes occur. Adolescents who experience social media addiction or problematic social media use are more likely to be depressed and have low self-esteem (Bányai et al., 2017; Heffer et al., 2019; Raudsepp & Kais, 2019). Although these effects have been shown, future research on additional effects of addictive and problematic social media use would be useful.

Using social media to access community support generally leads to positive outcomes for youth (Ziv & Kiasi, 2016). Understanding different kinds and elements of social media that adolescents engage in and the impacts they have would be helpful for future mental health practices. These practices could include educating adolescents about different social media platforms and the risks and benefits of them. It would also allow practitioners to understand what types of social media could be beneficial for their clients based on particular needs. “Likes” is a potential concept to examine in more detail. Researchers could explore whether utilizing types of social media that include the ability to “like” photos or posts lead to more positive or negative outcomes for teens than others. Another element to consider is the kind of content that adolescents are viewing. For example, does viewing posts of their peers create different outcomes than viewing the posts of celebrities?

The field requires further research on variables such as individual characteristics, traits, and experiences of the adolescents sampled. Taking these variables into consideration might impact the effects of social media use found (de Vries et al., 2019; Salomon & Brown, 2018). Neuroticism may potentially have an impact on these outcomes. Researchers postulate that neurotic personality traits might be related to thin ideals in social media as opposed to pre-existing body image difficulties as previously proposed (Ferguson et al., 2014). Having a further understanding of the individual differences between adolescents that contribute to these results could highlight which teens are more resilient and more at risk of social media's harms. This research could have implications for counsellors that would allow them to become aware of which of their clients might be at greater risk and might, therefore, need additional attention or interventions.

Another consideration for further research is to dig deeper into understanding the value of positive relationships. Research supports that these relationships are helpful buffers in protecting against the potential harms of social media, but not necessarily why this is (de Vries et al., 2019). Further research into this area would be a helpful avenue to determine what about these relationships provide these effects. The development of other protective mechanisms might then be possible.

Although some studies have looked at the effects of engaging in social media for individuals who already have a mental health diagnosis, more research is necessary in this area (O'Reilly, 2020; Raudsepp & Kais, 2019). Research suggests that adolescents with pre-existing high levels of depression can experience even greater levels of problematic social media use than those without a diagnosis (Heffer et al., 2019; Raudsepp & Kais, 2019). This finding is indicative of the idea that symptoms of depression, such as loss of interest in things, trouble concentrating, and sad mood, increase an adolescent's attraction to social media in some way (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Not only does use increase, but it is also excessive and problematic. This pre-existing diagnosis and its relationship to social media use and reasons for the connection should be an area of further research.

Researchers should also explore other pre-existing diagnoses as a result of the connection between pre-existing depression symptoms and increased social media use (Raudsepp & Kais, 2019). Adolescents who have been diagnosed with other mental illnesses such as anxiety disorders or eating disorders might have a pre-existing inclination to engage in social media platforms. Researchers should consider the distinction between which variable preceded the other in future studies. It could be a potential limitation of the current research if levels of variables such as anxiety or depression existed regardless of social media use. The levels of these

symptoms could be difficult to accurately determine given the limited ability to measure the timing of exposure to social media. Thus, it would be challenging to examine mental health concerns independent of social media. Developing a methodology for this will be essential to consider in the future.

Recommendations for Practice

Considering the various implications for counsellors' changes to practice might be necessary. One opportunity might be to further involve parents in the lives of adolescents (O'Reilly, 2020; Weinstein, 2018; Wilksch et al., 2019; Woods & Scott, 2016). This involvement could mean exercising control over access or becoming more involved in the relationship (de Vries et al., 2019). The research suggests, however, that parental involvement or control over social media might be more effective for younger adolescents. As adolescents grow up, efforts from parents to exert control become less effective (Wilksch et al., 2019). Further education of adolescents is also necessary to generate an understanding of the potential harms and benefits of social media (O'Reilly et al., 2018; Tandoc et al., 2015; Wilksch et al., 2019; Woods & Scott, 2016). Making efforts to change the nature of adolescent social media use is also a general implication of this research (Durak, 2018; O'Reilly, 2020; O'Reilly et al., 2018; Tandoc et al., 2015; Ziv & Kiasi, 2016). Benefits of engaging in social media exist for adolescents, and practitioners should harness them to develop preventative efforts and reduce the potential harm that can arise. There are several suggestions for counselling practice to consider.

This research area is new and appears to have mental health implications for adolescents (Cole et al., 2016; van Dijck, 2013; Woods & Scott, 2016). Discussing these forms of technology in the therapeutic setting is vital for adolescents, making it necessary to integrate this content into training for mental health practitioners (Barth, 2014). In psychology Master's programs, for

instance, courses on adolescents might incorporate this research into the curriculum. Having a well-rounded understanding of the role social media plays in adolescents' lives would allow for a wider lens for interpreting their mental health concerns. It would also be beneficial to include knowledge of this topic as a prerequisite for becoming a licensed psychologist.

Workshops for Practitioners

In addition to implementing content in Master's programs and requirements for registration, a comprehensive workshop could be beneficial for practitioners. This workshop would involve various modules that would prepare counselling professionals for addressing the issue with their adolescent clients. The first module would include education about the research findings. This may take the form of an informative presentation about what the research says about the negative and positive mental health effects of social media for adolescents (Barry et al., 2017; Brunborg et al., 2017; de Vries et al., 2019; Durak, 2018; Nesi & Prinstein, 2015; O'Reilly, 2020; O'Reilly et al., 2018; Raudsepp & Kais, 2019; Rosenthal et al., 2016; Salomon & Brown, 2018; van den Eijnden et al., 2018; Weinstein, 2018; Ziv & Kiasi, 2016).

The second module would focus on helping practitioners learn how to assess for problematic or addictive social media use in adolescents. It would include training on how to use the BSMAS, along with information about what behaviours are indicative of addiction (Andreassen et al., 2017; Bányai et al., 2017). It would also provide information about what factors might indicate teens who are more at risk of social media addiction, such as depression (Bányai et al., 2017; Raudsepp & Kais, 2019).

The workshop would also include a module about cyberbullying. The literature indicates that cyberbullying can present itself in unique ways for different age groups (Kowalski et al., 2019). Thus, different interventions and conversations are necessary for each teen. It would also

highlight how cyberbullying can lead to different outcomes than in-person bullying. The research indicates that it is the different characteristics of cyberbullying and in-person bullying that create these outcomes. For example, it appears that victims experience the most damaging consequences when the bully is anonymous or when there is a large audience (Sticca & Perren, 2013). An awareness of these conditions would help the practitioner understand the unique nature of online bullying.

The next module would present the interventions discussed in this paper and how to effectively carry them out (Lippold et al., 2015; Livingstone et al., 2017; Lock et al., 2010; Pandey et al., 2018; Panetta et al., 2014; Wilksch et al., 2015; Wilksch & Wade, 2009). The explanation of these interventions would also come with a description of how they address the mental health effects of social media.

Finally, the last module would focus on a discussion of how practitioners can begin to use their social media accounts to promote mental well-being. As a result of adolescents' familiarity with this platform, they are often comfortable using it to access mental health services (Durak, 2018). This finding could, therefore, be an effective way to increase the positive outcomes and reduce the negative.

Workshops for Adolescents

As psychologists and psychology students become more knowledgeable about this topic, developing educational and practical workshops for teen clients might be the next step. These workshops could involve both adolescents and parents to create broader, more systemic-based learning. Adolescents participating in these workshops would first receive psychoeducation about the effects of adolescent social media engagement. As the research stands now, there are

both positive and negative outcomes. This education would adequately provide this population with an understanding of the impact of what they are engaging in daily.

The workshop would also provide adolescents with strategies for how to mitigate these effects. Explaining the positive side of social media and the way it creates a sense of community and gives its users a voice would help to encourage participants to focus on engaging in social media to ensure these benefits are realized (Weinstein, 2018; Ziv & Kiasi, 2016). One of these strategies might involve asking clients to find groups to join online that promote a shared interest.

Adolescents would also learn about potential adverse outcomes that can result from using social media. This workshop would share information about the risk of feeling as if they were missing out, having a lowered mood, and having heightened anxiety (Heffer et al., 2019; O'Reilly, 2020; O'Reilly et al., 2018). This information might help to normalize experiences that some adolescents have already had as a result of engaging in social media. As discussed above, one portion of the workshop would involve completing the BSMAS (Andreassen et al., 2017; Bányai et al., 2017). Upon receiving the results, the participants could reflect on the degree of addiction they are experiencing, thus creating an impetus for changing their online behaviours. The workshop could potentially suggest strategies for adolescents to monitor the time they spend online and how to check-in with their mood.

The workshop would also teach self-regulation interventions as a strategy to control their use (Durak, 2018). If adolescents can practise this skill, it might prevent the problematic and addictive nature of the use. These interventions would involve role-playing, group therapy, physical activity, mindfulness, and social skills training (Pandey et al., 2018).

Another element of the workshop would involve discussing the positive sides of social media based on the participants' perspectives and the research. This discussion would increase adolescents' consciousness of how to use the platforms positively. In addition to what the participants share, the conversation would revolve around social media's ability to promote positive relationships and self-expression, as well as the option to join social groups that have shared interests (O'Reilly, 2020; van Eijnden et al., 2018; Weinstein, 2018; Ziv & Kiasi, 2016).

Media literacy would also be a focus of the workshops. This intervention would help adolescents learn to look at social media from a more critical perspective. It would involve asking questions about individual posts' intent and understanding whether making social comparisons is helpful (Wilksch et al., 2015; Wilksch & Wade, 2009).

The workshop's next element would focus on allowing adolescents to brainstorm and discuss potential strategies for ways to address problematic and addictive social media use. The research emphasizes that involving adolescents in solutions is essential in creating change (O'Reilly et al., 2018).

Workshops for Parents

It would be beneficial to have parents join their teens in these workshops so they can understand the benefits and harms of their social media use. Workshops solely for parents could also provide them with an education about the topic and strategies for supporting their teen. One of the aspects of this workshop would be discussing the parental role in controlling use. The research presents mixed findings about this. One study points out that higher levels of parental control over adolescent social media use results in increased life satisfaction in the teens (Wilksch et al., 2019). Other sources indicate that parental control over social media use poses the risk that these adolescents will not gain the benefits that it has to offer. These missed benefits

include digital competency, friendship interactions, and social skills (O'Reilly, 2020; Weinstein, 2018; Ziv & Kiasi, 2016). The workshop would emphasize the need for parents to be aware of their adolescent's social media use while implementing restrictions only when the use becomes problematic. One aspect of the workshop would teach parents about the different parenting styles and their effectiveness (Panetta et al., 2014). The workshop would explain how the high demandingness and responsiveness of the authoritative parenting style could come in to play when considering social media restrictions for their teens (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Panetta et al., 2014)

The workshop might also provide information for parents on the utility of engaging with their child and building a strong relationship to help prevent the harmful effects sometimes seen because of social media (de Vries et al., 2019). The intervention discussed about mindful parenting would be implemented in the workshop as well (Lippold et al., 2015). The idea behind this portion of the workshop would be to create a foundation for improving the parent-adolescent relationship.

Finally, the workshop would discuss restrictive and enabling mediation strategies and how to find a balance between the two. This strategies would involve limiting the teen's social media use to an extent but also creating space to have conversations about how to use it in positive ways (Livingstone et al., 2017).

The workshop discussed above could incorporate some of the interventions that have been useful in treating problematic social media in the past. A study by Manwong et al. (2018) assessed a group therapy program aimed at preventing addictive social media behaviours and related mental health problems in adolescents. Developed by child and adolescent and clinical psychologists, the program involved three phases. The first phase involved education and

discussion about social media and self-assessments to determine the adolescents' social media addiction level. This first phase encouraged the teens to think about their social media use and consider changing their potentially addictive behaviours. The next step focused on how the adolescents might change this behaviour. The final stage emphasized motivation to follow through on their goals for change. The implementation of this program lowered the amount of social media use for the group and decreased their emotional behaviours and depression. This study is significant as it could help to lay the groundwork for the development of future preventative or intervention workshops. Future workshops could include similar discussions but would also include elements such as administering the BSMAS, psychoeducation about the mental health consequences, brainstorming about potential solutions, self-regulation interventions, and media literacy (Bányai et al., 2017; O'Reilly et al., 2018; Pandey et al., 2018; Wilksch et al., 2015; Wilksch & Wade, 2009).

Group Therapy

Implementing new strategies for adolescent group therapy might also be useful. These strategies might involve creating new practices to implement or creating a group therapy experience based entirely on social media. Expanding on the methods used by O'Reilly (2020), group processes around this topic would ask adolescents about their experiences with social media. Group members might share stories of good and bad experiences and how they dealt with those. Hearing the stories of others might help group members realize they are not alone in their experiences and come to understand the perspectives of others. This realization relates to the idea of universality discussed by Yalom and Leszcz (2005). The researchers indicate that in the initial stages of the group, members are often relieved to discover their problems are not unique to themselves. The group experience would also provide adolescents with psychoeducation about

the harms and risks involved. According to Yalom and Leszcz, providing this information is also an essential part of group therapy. Finally, it would help adolescents learn to interact with social media in more positive, healthy ways. These skills might involve homework assignments or in-session activities that help the teen understand when the use might be turning problematic or addictive, enforce self-regulation skills, or utilize media literacy (Bányai et al., 2017; Pandey et al., 2018; Shensa et al., 2017; Wilksch et al., 2015; Wilksch & Wade, 2009)

Family Therapy

Family therapy interventions might be necessary for engaging in positive relationships. These interventions might involve discussing social media for families with adolescents. Questions might include asking about the frequency, how it makes them feel, and what kind of rules there are in the family about use. These questions might bring up differing family opinions on the impact it is having on the family. Counsellors would use interventions to emphasize parental engagement with the child. As previously discussed, healthy, positive relationships can help adolescents to be more resilient in the face of stressful social media interactions (de Vries et al., 2019). The nature of these relationships might involve being able to have an open discussion with family members about what is online and the impact that it is having.

Reflexive Self-Statement

Before this research project, I knew little about the actual impact social media has on adolescents. Based on my own experience as an adolescent and my perception of other adolescents around me, I assumed that social media was harmful to mental health. Although I always appreciated being able to stay connected to my peers, I often felt anxious. I believed I needed to continuously be checking and staying on top of others' posts. After engaging in conversations with adolescent friends and family members about social media and its presence in

our lives, I could sense a general sentiment of anxiety. People were concerned about receiving “enough” likes on photos, worrying about having enough followers, or feeling left out. I assumed the results generated in the research would be consistent with my own experience. I did not consider that social media can provide many benefits for adolescents. The association I had made between social media and poor mental health was so strong that I had neglected the positive experiences I had as an adolescent with social media and how it may have benefitted me.

This reflection on the literature and my personal experience has also allowed me to consider the vast variability in human experience. It is easy to assume that one’s own experiences are universal and considered the norm. One might think that having a positive or negative reaction to something must mean that everyone else is experiencing the same thing. Shared experiences are often bonding and helpful as they can increase feelings of sympathy. However, experiences may not always be universal. Making this assumption can do damage to relationships and the ability to understand society as a whole. Thinking critically and opening my mind to evidence contrary to my existing beliefs has prompted me to reflect on other aspects of my life where I might have assumed my experiences were the same as others. We must be mindful of differences in human individuality and experience before making these assumptions.

The research findings were not what I initially expected. The effects of social media on adolescent mental health seem to be varied and greatly dependent on a variety of factors. Although refraining from use creates the possibility of avoiding negative mental health symptoms, it also presents the chance of missing some of the benefits afforded. I had not imagined the possibility that the benefits might outweigh the costs of social media engagement and that it could be encouraged by practitioners.

These realizations have impacted my overall perception of how to engage with adolescents regarding social media. Before this project, my belief that social media causes harm to adolescent mental health might have created a bias in my counselling. This bias could have resulted in interventions aimed at reducing social media use altogether. I now feel confident that my approach moving forward will be inclusive of the research-based evidence that the harms generated from social media are conditional and that benefits also exist. For instance, some clients might benefit from social media in ways that personal interactions cannot provide for (Ziv & Kiasi, 2016). I believe I am also more equipped to provide parents of adolescents with adequate knowledge of what social media exposes their children to. This education would help parents be aware of the potential risks and understand that social media has positive attributes for teens.

Many of the specific results of using social media for adolescents were also ones that I had not considered before. For example, drinking behaviours in adolescents were not something I thought to be influenced by social media. However, dangerous drinking behaviours can result from viewing related behaviours online (Critchlow et al., 2019; Pegg et al., 2018). This awareness has helped me to understand the degree of the influence social media has on adolescents.

Another unanticipated aspect of the research was the extent to which pre-existing mental health concerns would have an impact on the way the individual engaged with social media. It appears that those with existing depression may use social media in a more problematic way than others. This discovery suggests that social media does not necessarily cause depression but can interact with pre-existing levels to produce continuing symptoms (Raudsepp & Kais, 2019). I have come to understand that there are multiple characteristics and experiences that can impact

the extent, nature, and results of social media use (Barry et al., 2017; Nesi & Prinstein, 2015). It is not a simple cause and effect relationship where social media use directly causes mental health issues.

Reflecting on what I discovered in the literature review, social media and adolescent mental health is a complex topic with many factors influencing the effects seen. There are many different kinds of mental health consequences, including depression, anxiety and eating disorders (Barry et al., 2017; Brunborg et al., 2017; de Vries et al., 2019; Durak, 2018; Nesi & Prinstein, 2015; O'Reilly, 2020; O'Reilly et al., 2018; Raudsepp & Kais, 2019; Rosenthal et al., 2016; Salomon & Brown, 2018; van den Eijnden et al., 2018; Weinstein, 2018; Ziv & Kiasi, 2016). With this in mind, it was only possible to examine the broad types of social media as well as the broad effects seen. Although the results were impactful and informative, it might also have been useful to examine one form of social media and one possible disorder or outcome.

Conclusion

Social media has a massive presence in our lives. For many, it is a part of everyday life, whether it is checking an Instagram feed, reading an article someone has posted on Facebook, or filming a Snapchat story. It has changed the way we communicate, thus changing our relationships in the process. Considering the presence social media has in our lives, one can only wonder the impact it might be having on our overall well-being.

Of great importance is the consideration of the way it is impacting the lives of our youth. Adolescents frequently engage in social media, and it is a large part of their social worlds. This fact is unique from previous generations of adolescents who did not grow up in the world of social media. We must address the effects on young people as this population is still in the stage

of development. The effects on them could be more permanent and harmful. However, if positive outcomes occur, it could also have implications for growth and identity development.

That is why this topic of research is essential to understand. If there are dangers for adolescents as a result of engaging in social media, we must be aware of this. If there are benefits, we could capitalize on these and ensure positive growth in this age group. This research is essential for the field of counselling psychology as it will shed light on the possibility of future interventions to address these findings. It has the potential to inform practice in a social media-informed way.

The conclusions generated in this research are widespread. It appears that social media can have a significant impact on adolescents in terms of their risk for developing mental disorders, changing their thinking and behaviours and impacting their social interactions (Cole et al., 2016; Ferguson et al., 2014; Franchina et al., 2018). These impacts, however, are not conclusively causal. There seem to be many factors that go into whether adolescents experience benefits or harms from social media. The outcomes are dependent on factors such as individual characteristics, personal experiences, pre-existing mental health, nature of use and relationships. These factors come together and can provide protective factors, risk factors, or factors enabling positive benefits.

It appears social media is neither all bad nor all good for teens. Adolescents can benefit from social media. Using social media to maintain social connectivity is a demonstrated benefit. To achieve these positive outcomes, however, adolescents need to learn about the potential risks of use. If adolescents are aware of the consequences of overuse or reliance on social media, it may help them to engage with these technologies in a healthier way.

Counselling practitioners can be helpful with psychoeducation efforts, development of new interventions involving social media, and emphasizing the development of healthy relationships. Counsellors have the potential to allow teens to thrive while engaging in social media. The research conducted to date provides helpful insights for the development of these future initiatives. However, the limitations of the research studies should be kept in mind. The need for more diverse, more generalizable studies in this area is needed. More research in this area will allow us to come closer to understanding the lived experiences of adolescents and to fostering an understanding of what can be done to best support them.

References

- Alkis, Y., Kadirhan, Z., & Sat, M. (2017). Development and validation of Social Anxiety Scale for social media users. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *72*, 296–303.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.03.011>
- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596>
- Anderson, M., & Jiang, J. (2018, May 31). *Teens, social media & technology 2018*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/>
- Andreassen, C. S., Pallesen, S., & Griffiths, M. D. (2017). The relationship between addictive use of social media, narcissism, and self-esteem: Findings from a large national survey. *Addictive Behaviors*, *64*(1), 287–293. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2016.03.006>
- Aschbrenner, K. A., Naslund, J. A., Tomlinson, E. F., Kinney, A., Pratt, S. I., & Brunette, M. F. (2019). Adolescents' use of digital technologies and preferences for mobile health coaching in public mental health settings. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *7*, Article 178.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2019.00178>
- Bányai, F., Zsila, Á., Király, O., Maraz, A., Elekes, Z., Griffiths, M. D., Andreassen, C. S., & Demetrovics, Z. (2017). Problematic social media use: Results from a large-scale nationally representative adolescent sample. *PLOS ONE*, *12*(1), 1–13.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0169839>
- Barry, C. T., Sidoti, C. L., Briggs, S. M., Reiter, S. R., & Lindsey, R. A. (2017). Adolescent social media use and mental health from adolescent and parent perspectives. *Journal of Adolescence*, *61*, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2017.08.005>

- Barth, F. D. (2014). Social media and adolescent development: Hazards, pitfalls and opportunities for growth. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, *43*, 201–208.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-014-0501-6>
- Brunborg, G. S., Andreas, J. B., & Kvaavik, E. (2017). Social media use and episodic heavy drinking among adolescents. *Psychological Reports*, *120*(3), 475–490.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294117697090>
- Cameron, J. E. (2004). A three-factor model of social identity. *Self and Identity*, *3*, 239–262.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13576500444000047>
- Campbell, M. (2005). Cyber-bullying: An old problem in a new guise? *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, *15*(1), 68–76. <https://doi.org/10.1375/ajgc.15.1.68>
- Chang, L., Li, P., Loh, R. S. M., & Chua, T. H. H. (2019). A study of Singapore adolescent girls' selfie practices, peer appearance comparisons, and body esteem on Instagram. *Body Image*, *29*, 90–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2019.03.005>
- Cohen, R., & Blaszczynski, A. (2015). Comparative effects of Facebook and conventional media on body image dissatisfaction. *Journal of Eating Disorders*, *3*, Article 23.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40337-015-0061-3>
- Cole, D. A., Zelkowitz, R. L., Nick, E., Martin, N. C., Roeder, K. M., Sinclair-McBride, K., & Spinelli, T. (2016). Longitudinal and incremental relation of cybervictimization to negative self-cognitions and depressive symptoms in young adolescents. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *44*, 1321–1332. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-015-0123-7>
- Critchlow, N., MacKintosh, A. M., Hooper, L., Thomas, C., & Vohra, J. (2019). Participation with alcohol marketing and user-created promotion on social media, and the association with higher-risk alcohol consumption and brand identification among adolescents in the

UK. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 27(6), 515–526.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/16066359.2019.1567715>

de Vries, D. A., Vossen, H. G. M., & van der Kolk-van der Boom, P. (2019). Social media and body dissatisfaction: Investigating the attenuating role of positive parent-adolescent relationships. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 48(3), 527–536.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-018-0956-9>

Dooley, J. J., Pyzalski, J., & Cross, D. (2009). Cyberbullying versus face-to-face bullying: A theoretical and conceptual review. *Journal of Psychology*, 217(4), 182–188.

<https://doi.org/10.1027/0044-3409.217.4.182>

Duncan, L. G., Coatsworth, J. D., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). A model of mindful parenting: Implications for parent–child relationships and prevention research. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 12(3), 255–270. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-009-0046-3>

Durak, H. Y. (2018). Modeling of variables related to problematic internet usage and problematic social media usage in adolescents. *Current Psychology*, 39, 1375–1387.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-018-9840-8>

Estévez, E., Estévez, J. F., Segura, L., & Suárez, C. (2019). The influence of bullying and cyberbullying in the psychological adjustment of victims and aggressors in adolescence.

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16(12), Article 2089. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16122080>

Fardouly, J., Magson, N. R., Johnco, C. J., Oar, E. L., & Rapee, R. M. (2018). Parental control of the time preadolescents spend on social media: Links with preadolescents' social media appearance comparisons and mental health. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 47(7),

1456–1468. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-018-0870-1>

- Ferguson, C. J., Muñoz, M. E., Garza, A., & Galindo, M. (2014). Concurrent and prospective analyses of peer, television and social media influences on body dissatisfaction, eating disorder symptoms and life satisfaction in adolescent girls. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 43(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-012-9898-9>
- Franchina, V., Abeele, M. V., van Rooij, A. J., Lo Coco, G., & De Marez, L. (2018). Fear of missing out as a predictor of problematic social media use and phubbing behavior among Flemish adolescents. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 15(10), Article 2319. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15102319>
- Fredrickson, B. L., & Roberts, T. A. (1997). Objectification theory: Toward understanding women's lived experiences and mental health risks. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 21(2), 173–206. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1997.tb00108.x>
- Heffer, T., Good, M., Daly, O., MacDonell, E., & Willoughby, T. (2019). The longitudinal association between social-media use and depressive symptoms among adolescents and young adults: An empirical reply to Twenge et al. (2018). *Clinical Psychological Science*, 7(3), 462–470. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167702618812727>
- Jones, M. E., Blodgett Salafia, E. H., & Hill, B. D. (2018). The effect of parental warmth on girls' drive for thinness: Do both parents matter? *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 28(1), 182–191. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-018-1243-9>
- Kalpidou, M., Costin, D., & Morris, J. (2011). The relationship between Facebook and the well-being of undergraduate college students. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*, 14(4), 183–189. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2010.0061>

- Khan, S., Gagne, M., Yang, L., & Shapka, J. (2016). Exploring the relationship between adolescents' self-concept and their offline and online social worlds. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 55, 940–945. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.09.046>
- Kids Help Phone. (n.d.). *Need help now?* Retrieved November 14, 2020, from <https://kidshelpphone.ca/need-help-now-text-us/>
- Kowalski, R. M., Limber, S. P., & McCord, A. (2019). A developmental approach to cyberbullying: Prevalence and protective factors. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 45, 20–32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2018.02.009>
- Liermann, K., & Norton, C. L. (2016). Enhancing family communication: Examining the impact of a therapeutic wilderness program for struggling teens and parents. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 38(1), 14–22. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-015-9371-5>
- Lippold, M. A., Duncan, L. G., Coatsworth, J. D., Nix, R. L., & Greenberg, M. T. (2015). Understanding how mindful parenting may be linked to mother-adolescent communication. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 44(9), 1663–1673. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-015-0325-x>
- Litwiller, B. J., & Brausch, A. M. (2013). Cyber bullying and physical bullying in adolescent suicide: The role of violent behavior and substance abuse. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 42(5), 675–684.
- Livingstone, S., Olafsson, K., Helsper, E. J., Lupiáñez-Villanueva, F., Veltri, G. A., & Folkvord, F. (2017). Maximizing opportunities and minimizing risks for children online: The role of digital skills in emerging strategies of parental mediation. *Journal of Communication*, 67(1), 82–105. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12277>
- Lock, J., Le Grange, D., Agras, S. W., Moye, A., Bryson, S. W., & Jo, B. (2010). Randomized

- clinical trial comparing family-based treatment with adolescent-focused individual therapy for adolescents with anorexia nervosa. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 67(10), 1025–1032. <https://doi.org/10.1001/archgenpsychiatry.2010.128>
- Maccoby, E. E., & Martin, J. A. (1983). Socialization in the context of family: Parent-child interaction. In E. M. Hetherington & P. H. Mussen (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Socialization personality and social development* (4th ed., Vol. 4, pp. 1–101). Wiley.
- Machmutow, K., Perren, S., Sticca, F., & Alsaker, F. D. (2012). Peer victimization and depressive symptoms: Can specific coping strategies buffer the negative impact of cybervictimisation? *Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties*, 17(3), 403–420. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2012.704310>
- Manwong, M., Lohsoonthorn, V., Booranasuksakul, T., & Chaikoolvatana, A. (2018). Effects of a group activity-based motivational enhancement therapy program on social media addictive behaviors among junior high school students in Thailand: A cluster randomized trial. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 11, 329–339. <https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S168869>
- McLean, S. A., Wertheim, E. H., Masters, J., & Paxton, S. J. (2017). A pilot evaluation of a social media literacy intervention to reduce risk factors for eating disorders. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 50(7), 847–851. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.22708>
- Miller, A. (2013). Mental health awareness campaign exposes challenges in combatting stigma. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 185(6), E241–E242. <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.109-4415>
- Nesi, J., & Prinstein, M. J. (2015). Using social media for social comparison and feedback-seeking: Gender and popularity moderate associations with depressive symptoms.

Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 43(8), 1427–1438.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-015-0020-0>

O'Reilly, M. (2020). Social media and adolescent mental health: The good, the bad and the ugly.

Journal of Mental Health, 29(2), 200–206.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09638237.2020.1714007>

O'Reilly, M., Dogra, N., Whiteman, N., Hughes, J., Eruyar, S., & Reilly, P. (2018). Is social media bad for mental health and well-being? Exploring the perspectives of adolescents.

Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 23(4), 601–613.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1359104518775154>

Pandey, A., Hale, D., Das, S., Goddings, A., Blakemore, S., & Viner, R. M. (2018).

Effectiveness of universal self-regulation-based interventions in children and adolescents:

A systematic review and meta-analysis. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 172(6), 566–575.

<https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2018.0232>

Panetta, S. M., Somers, C. L., Ceresnie, A. R., Hillman, S. B., & Partridge, R. T. (2014).

Maternal and paternal parenting style patterns and adolescent emotional and behavioral outcomes. *Marriage & Family Review*, 50(4), 342–359.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2013.879557>

Pase, C., Mathias, A. D., Garcia, C. D., & Rodrigues, C. G. (2018). Using social media for the

promotion of education and consultation in adolescents who have undergone kidney

transplant: Protocol for a randomized control trial. *JMIR Research Protocols*, 7(1).

<https://doi.org/10.2196/resprot.8065>

Pegg, K. J., O'Donnell, A. W., Lala, G., & Barber, B. L. (2018). The role of online social

identity in the relationship between alcohol-related content on social networking sites and

- adolescent alcohol use. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*, 21(1), 50–55.
<https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2016.0665>
- Pittman, M., & Reich, B. (2016). Social media and loneliness: Why an Instagram picture may be worth more than a thousand Twitter words. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 62, 155–167.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.03.084>
- Przybylski, A. K., & Weinstein, N. (2017). A large-scale test of the Goldilocks hypothesis: Quantifying the relations between digital-screen use and the mental well-being of adolescents. *Psychological Science*, 28(1), 204–215.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976166678438>
- Raudsepp, L., & Kais, K. (2019). Longitudinal associations between problematic social media use and depressive symptoms in adolescent girls. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 15, Article 100925. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2019.100925>
- Rosenthal, S. R., Buka, S. L., Marshall, B. D. L., Carey, K. B., & Clark, M. A. (2016). Negative experiences on Facebook and depressive symptoms among young adults. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 59(5), 510–516. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2016.06.023>
- Rousseau, A., Beyens, I., Eggermont, S., & Vandebosch, L. (2017). The dual role of media internalization in adolescent sexual behavior. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 46(6), 1685–1697. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-016-0902-4>
- Salomon, I., & Brown, C. S. (2018). The selfie generation: Examining the relationship between social media use and early adolescent body image. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 39(4), 539–560. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431618770809>
- Shensa, A., Escobar-Viera, C. G., Sidani, J. E., Bowman, N. D., Marshal, M. P., & Primack, B. A. (2017). Problematic social media use and depressive symptoms among U.S. young

- adults: A nationally-representative study. *Social Science & Medicine*, 182(3), 150–157.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.03.061>
- Slater, A., & Tiggemann, M. (2014). Media exposure, extracurricular activities, and appearance-related comments as predictors of female adolescents' self-objectification. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 39(3), 375–389. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684314554606>
- Smith, P. K., Mahdavi, J., Carvalho, M., Fisher, S., Russell, S., & Tippett, N. (2008). Cyberbullying: Its nature and impact in secondary school pupils. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 49(4), 376–385. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2007.01846.x>
- Sticca, F., & Perren, S. (2013). Is cyberbullying worse than traditional bullying? Examining the differential roles of medium, publicity, and anonymity for the perceived severity of bullying. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 42(5), 739–750.
- Szalai, T. D., Czeglédi, E., Vargha, A., & Grezsa, F. (2017). Parental attachment and body satisfaction in adolescents. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 26(4), 1007–1017.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-016-0626-z>
- Tandoc, E. C., Ferrucci, P., & Duffy, M. (2015). Facebook use, envy, and depression among college students: Is Facebooking depressing? *Computers in Human Behavior*, 43, 139–146. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.10.053>
- Tokunaga, R. (2010). Following you home from school: A critical review and synthesis of research on cyberbullying victimization. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26(3), 277–287.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2009.11.014>
- Twenge, J. M., & Campbell, W. K. (2019). Media use is linked to lower psychological well-being: Evidence from three datasets. *Psychiatric Quarterly*, 90(2), 311–331.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11126-019-09630-7>

van den Berg, P., Thompson, J. K., Obremski-Brandon, K., & Covert, M. (2002). The Tripartite Influence model of body image and eating disturbance: A covariance structure modeling investigation testing the mediational role of appearance comparison. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 53(5), 1007–1020. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0022-3999\(02\)00499-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0022-3999(02)00499-3)

Vandenbosch, L., & Eggermont, S. (2016). The interrelated roles of mass media and social media in adolescents' development of an objectified self-concept: A longitudinal study. *Communication Research*, 43(8), 1116–1140. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650215600488>

van den Eijnden, R., Koning, I., Doornwaard, S., van Gorp, F., & Bogt, T. T. (2018). The impact of heavy and disordered use of games and social media on adolescents' psychological, social, and school functioning. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 7(3), 697–706. <https://doi.org/10.1556/2006.7.2018.65>

van Dijck, J. (2013). *The culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media*. Oxford University Press.

van Rensburg, S. H., Klingensmith, K., McLaughlin, P., Qayyum, Z., & van Schalkwyk, G. I. (2016). Patient-provider communication over social media: Perspectives of adolescents with psychiatric illness. *Health Expectations*, 19(1), 112–120. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.12334>

Wansink, B., Latimer, L. A., & Pope, L. (2017). “Don’t eat so much:” How parent comments relate to female weight satisfaction. *Eating and Weight Disorders*, 22(3), 475–481. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40519-016-0292-6>

- Weinstein, E. (2018). The social media see-saw: Positive and negative influences on adolescents' affective well-being. *New Media & Society*, 20(10), 3597–3623.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818755634>
- Wilksch, S. M., O'Shea, A., Ho, P., Byrne, S., & Wade, T. D. (2019). The relationship between social media use and disordered eating in young adolescents. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 53(1), 96–106. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.23198>
- Wilksch, S. M., Paxton, S. J., Byrne, S. M., Austin, S. B., McLean, S. A., Thompson, K. M., Dorairaj, K., & Wade, T. D. (2015). Prevention across the spectrum: A randomized controlled trial of three programs to reduce risk factors for both eating disorders and obesity. *Psychological Medicine*, 45(9), 1811–1823.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S003329171400289X>
- Wilksch, S. M., & Wade, T. D. (2009). Reduction of shape and weight concern in young adolescents: A 30-month controlled evaluation of a media literacy program. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 48(6), 652–661.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/CHI.0b013e3181a1f559>
- Woods, H. C., & Scott, H. (2016). #Sleepyteens: Social media use in adolescence is associated with poor sleep quality, anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. *Journal of Adolescence*, 51, 41–49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2016.05.008>
- World Health Organization. (n.d.) *Adolescent health in the South-East Asia region*. Retrieved December 2, 2020, from <https://www.who.int/southeastasia/health-topics/adolescent-health#:~:text=WHO%20defines%20'Adolescents'%20as%20individuals,age%20range%2010%2D24%20years>

Yalom, I. D., & Leszcz, M. (2005). *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy* (5th ed.).
Basic Books.

Ziv, I., & Kiasi, M. (2016). Facebook's contribution to well-being among adolescent and young
adults as a function of mental resilience. *The Journal of Psychology*, *150*(4), 527–541.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2015.1110556>