

Tips to Help Youth Avoid Social Comparison

Social comparison is an unfortunate part of the social media experience, but there are things you can encourage young people to do to avoid it:



REMINDE THEM TO TAKE SOCIAL MEDIA BREAKS.

The break can be for a few days, hours, or weeks. No matter the length of time, it will help give them a break from what they see online.

ENCOURAGE THEM TO CONNECT OFFLINE.

While social media is great for building relationships virtually, it doesn't replace our need for face-to-face interaction and connection to others. Hanging out with friends or talking on the phone is a good way to combat the loneliness they may experience when scrolling on social media.

SUGGEST THEY CLEAN UP THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA FEED.

Have them think about what on social media makes them feel bad about themselves, scared, anxious, or lonely. Remind them that it's always OK to mute, snooze, unfollow, block, and report harmful posts and accounts. Also, remind them that they do not need to react to, respond, or engage with posts that make them uncomfortable.

HELP THEM BUILD SELF-ESTEEM.

Teach them that they can find validation within themselves instead of seeking it from others online. They can reflect on their own lives – what makes them proud, what they love about themselves, their goals, hopes, and dreams.

Someone's life on social media is only a fraction of what their life is really like. Reminding young people that what they see online isn't always accurate and that they can create real and valuable experiences offline will help them cope with social comparison.

If you think your child's time online is impacting their mental health, take the parent mental health test at mhascreening.org, and check out MHA's book "Where to Start" for tips on how to take action.

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