

How Social Media Impacts Teen Suicide

New evidence suggests there's a link between teenage suicide and social media use.

From 2007 through 2015, suicide rates doubled among teenage girls, reaching a 40-year high. Among teenage boys, they rose by 30 percent.

At the same time, social media use has exploded.

For example, the Pew Research Center found 90 percent of people age 18-29 now use social media compared to just 12 percent 10 years earlier.

According to a study in the November issue of *Clinical Psychological Science*, teenagers spending five hours a day on social media were 70 percent more likely to have suicidal thoughts than those reporting only one hour of daily use.

So what are parents to do?

While there isn't one perfect solution for parents, there are helpful tips that can protect your children from these negative influences.

Here are a few:

1. Enact parental controls on your children's devices, computers, and your home TV.
2. Engage with your children about the dangers that come with being on social media. Just as you'd talk about safety while driving, show them safety measures you put in place while online, such as not talking to strangers or giving out your personal information. Also, discuss the dangers of cyberbullying.
3. Show your children by example that human interaction is

more beneficial than texting and instant messaging. Show this by making the dinner table a “phone-free zone,” or enjoying nature together with your family.

4. Limit the amount of time you allow your children to be on their phones or tablets.
5. When it comes to consuming entertainment, keep movies and TV a communal family experience instead of individual experiences that separate children from their parents, and parents from the children.
6. Read and implement: THE MEDIA WISE FAMILY and THE CULTURE WISE FAMILY

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