

Know! Tip Special Edition: 27 Minutes - Youth Anxiety and Depression

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About 27 Minutes

27 Minutes is an educational campaign created by Bridgett Bajorek, Samantha Happel, and Audrey Williams, three students at Olentangy High School in Central Ohio. The campaign focuses on educating parents and guardians about the dangers and issues of social media. In the coming six weeks, Special Edition Know! Tips will be released on topics related to sextortion, depression, anxiety and self-esteem, personal safety, addiction to social media, and Ohio's Social Media Parental Notification Act. These tips will be written by teens, for caring adults everywhere.

Imagine you're staring at your illuminating phone screen and hesitate before sharing a post. The pressure to have the perfect post weighs on you as you scroll through all of the flawlessly filtered lives. Your post goes through, and with each like comes validation, but the seconds of silence cause unease. Your self-worth is based on the digital applause from your post, and the comparison to others makes you incredibly anxious. The fear of missing out and the need for affirmation transformed the joyous act of posting into an anxiety-inducing activity. Friendships are decided by whether they comment or not, and happiness is measured in pixels. The pressure to look as though you have a perfect life dictates your happiness, and you fall into an anxiety and depressive episode.

This is how adolescents live. Their lives are dependent on their like count or other people's post. People only want to portray themselves as a perfect image and don't share the negative aspects of their lives on the internet. This can affect people in many ways. "In 2021, an estimated 3.7 million adolescents aged 12 to 17 in the United States had at least one major depressive episode with severe impairment in the past year" ([National Institute of Mental Health](#)). Depression and anxiety are two of the most common side effects of having social media and spending a plentiful amount of time on it.

When spending time on social media, I have seen different aspects that can decide my mood and how I feel. The following instances are examples of potential causes of that:

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- The pressure of what to post, in fear of getting made fun of.
- How many likes and comments your post gets in comparison to my friends.
- Noticing your friends are hanging out without you and questioning if they like you or want to be friends with you.
- When you aren't allowed to hang out with your friends and become anxious that you're being left out.

Social media is a material to receive validation and could leave positive or negative impacts on mental health. As children under the age of 16 are on social media, they are not excluded from getting depression and anxiety; it is a real issue in today's society. When parents/guardians are considering allowing their children to get social media, they need to take into consideration what stems from it.

Written by Bridgett Bajorek, current Senior at Olentangy High School, working with a group project focusing on the issues associated with social media and teens, and educating parents on Ohio House Bill 33

Resources

[Social Media and Youth Mental Health | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](#)

[Social Media and Youth Mental Health — Current Priorities of the U.S. Surgeon General \(hhs.gov\)](#)

[Know! To Start a Conversation about Mental Health - Prevention Action Alliance](#)

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