

Fear of Missing Out:

Social Media, Wellness, and Connection

INTRODUCTION

FOMO, an acronym for Fear of Missing Out, describes the feeling of anxiety attached to the idea that others are experiencing something fundamentally more important elsewhere. This worry is often caused by the

emotional impact of social media and can lead to negative self-perception and deteriorative mental health. However, solutions exist to sidestep these harmful effects without discontinuing use of social networks.

INSIGHTS

Social media pushes users away from in-person experiences, contributes to stress and depression, and propagates an addictive usage cycle resulting in detrimental consequences. Users struggle to quit, battered by the negative psychological impacts of isolation and dopamine cravings. When engaged with social media, users suffer losses in self-worth while constantly comparing themselves to those who appear to be living better, more fulfilling lives. The first line of defense is for users to recognize these root problems and develop proper resources to cope.

HOBBIES AND COMMUNITY

A proven method to generate long-term happiness is the involvement in offline alternatives, particularly those that engender feelings of community. Hobbies, for example, provide a sense

of fulfillment and offer similar feelings as social media participation. Hobbies create self-awareness, connect individuals with similar interests, build skills, and create authentic social groupings. Further, they summon feelings of gratification, productivity, and happiness.

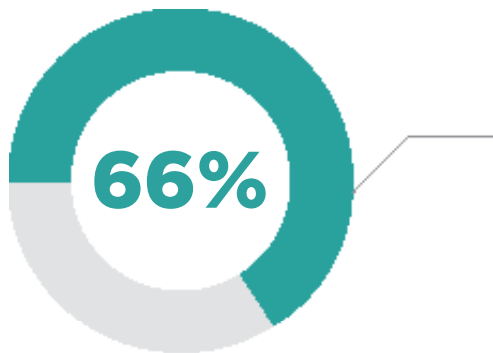
MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

Users who pursue mindfulness techniques feel less need to scroll. Studies show that meditation can change the chemical balance of the brain, promote happiness, and combat anxiety. Meditation, breath focus, and body scans cultivate present-moment awareness and help individuals develop a nonjudgmental, open attitude towards their experiences.

TIME LIMITS

Phones affect compulsive behaviors and attention span. Setting strategic time limits for app consumption is a proven method to keep social media users within healthy usage boundaries. Setting alarms, turning off notifications, and

silencing other alerts are all productive practices. As most users won't delete their social media platforms even if they know that social media usage causes damage to their mental health, it is paramount to understand the importance of minimizing time online.



Teenagers and young adults on social media are 66% more likely to have depression.

RESULTS

FOMO and social media addiction derive from the desire to belong. Often, however, virtual relationships are temporary and superficial. For many, social media leads to overwhelmed, anxious users who feel as if they are missing out. To rectify this imbalance, solutions abound. Users who limit

their social media usage, live more mindfully, seek real-world interactions, pursue hobbies, and build local communities can overcome FOMO and the perils of negative physical and mental health associated with social media addiction.

Fear of Missing Out is the result of contextual research conducted by Sydney Burns (advertising and branding), Maria Fontes (social strategy and management), Shannon Morales (service design), and Sid Worsham (industrial design).

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