Social Media Discussion Board One

A diverse, broadening and increasingly alarming body of research has demonstrated the negative impacts of social-media use and screentime by adolescents. Unfortunately, the commercial promotion and social enticements of social media cause some teens to feel that the use of social media is inescapable. Use the following group discussion questions to introduce the topic and promote dialogue.

1. Have any of you ever stayed up too late at night, because you were checking social media & couldn't stop? Has this ever effected your mood or school performance?

2. How often would you say that you check your phone for social media updates? Has this ever distracted you, reduced your focus or limited your productivity?

3. Would any of you feel anxious if you were deprived access to your phone for more than two hours? Would you still feel anxious, even if you knew that you were safe and amongst friends – but could not check your phone for updates?

4. Do any of you feel anxious or self-conscious when you message someone, and they don't respond immediately? Do any of you feel anxious before or after posting something that may get attention online?

5. Do any of you feel that a significant portion of your self-confidence or self-perception comes from the amount of attention and discourse you receive on social media?

6. Have any of you ever doctored, filtered, or edited a photo of yourself, hoping that those who viewed online it would envy an enhanced version of you, that doesn't actually exist in real life? Is that good or bad for your mental health?

7. Have you ever posted a comment online that didn't truly represent your actual feelings, views or values? Why might someone do this? Could this ultimately cause a conflict with your self-perception or self-confidence?

Possible Interventions:

A. Real world interpersonal interaction and unadulterated/undistracted personal reflection, have both been shown to enhance social competency and self-image. Facilitators may achieve positive results by encouraging the addition of digital detox blocks in every student's day. The daily addition of these 60-90 minute screen-free time blocks, has a higher buy-in from teens, than we find with other self-limiting techniques.

B. Setting firm app and cell phone use limits on your phone has been shown to enhance digital hygienic practices, elevate mental health, increase productivity and reduce anxiety levels. Facilitators may discuss reasonable self-limits (2 Hours/daily) and instruct students how to change phone settings accordingly. (Instructional videos are available at www.TimothyShoemaker.com)

C. Peer facilitated social norms campaigns have been successful in re-integrating interpersonal social skills and reducing reliance upon social media for socialization. Facilitators may mentor students on the creation and promotion of a local campaign.