

# INFLUENCE OF THE MEDIA ON THE ADOLESCENTS

Dr. Jasvir Kaur

# Negative Effects Of Media On Teens

- **Might lead to health and developmental issues:** Extended screen time is associated with poor academic performance, sleep deprivation, reduced physical activity, and face-to-face social interaction. All these factors are associated with health issues, such as obesity and the negative impact on the overall development.
- **Could develop unrealistic body image:** Media has a sharp effect on how teens interpret beauty and positive body image. For instance, the media usually creates an impression that “thin and fair” are beautiful features to have. Such misleading messages can have a negative effect on the child’s self-esteem.

- **Might instill wrong perceptions:** Media often portrays a grown-up to be cool if they eat junk food, smoke, drink alcohol, use drugs, drive fast, etc. All these presentations of adult life can have an influence on a tween or teen, making them emulate their favorite actors.
- **Might develop erroneous beliefs:** Social platforms sometimes are used to spread biased information and fake news. Teens may start believing the provided information, thus causing a shift in their attitude and behavior. Several real-life cases demonstrate how online platforms are used to promote hateful or biased attitudes towards a section of people, eventually causing dreadful results.
- **May develop mental health concerns:** Teens often get exposed to bullying, rumor spreading, unrealistic views of other people's lives, and peer pressure through the media. All these factors can cause a negative ripple effect on the teen's mental health. They may become depressed, anxious, isolated, and possibly suicidal.

- **Might develop violent behavior:** A study showed that watching violent television shows and an increase in children's violent and erratic behavior are positively correlated. Similarly, studies show that playing violent video games alters a teen's behavior and could make them aggressive.
- **Might cause addiction:** Habitual viewing or gaming may be the most speculated negative effect of the media, especially social media. Research shows that the overuse of social media networking could lead to stimulation that is similar to other addictive behaviors. Most teens post pictures or feelings online and eagerly wait for likes, shares, and positive comments from friends. These experiences activate the brain's reward system and increase the levels of dopamine. It can raise the likelihood of media addiction in the long run.
- The negative and positive effect of media on your child depends on the amount of time spent on media and how well parents regulate the child's exposure to it.

- The influence of the media on the psychosocial development of children is profound. Thus, it is important for physicians to discuss with parents their child's exposure to media and to provide guidance on age-appropriate use of all media, including television, radio, music, video games and the Internet.
- The objectives of this statement are to explore the beneficial and harmful effects of media on children's mental and physical health, and to identify how physicians can counsel patients and their families and promote the healthy use of the media in their communities.

- The role of media in the adolescents has undergone a “revolutionary change”. Recent research has shown that connections between children playing violent video games can cause later aggressive behavioral problems. In retrospect studies also shown a twelve percent increase in aggressive behavior after watching violent television as well. Some parents and psychologists have said that there are children who benefit from the proficiency and coordination of playing video games while others disagree. Critics of video games claim that watching violent television is less detrimental due to the children not physically playing out the violence (Child Development Institute, 2003). Research has also shown heavy viewers, which is four or more hours a day, put in less effort at school, have poorer reading skills, play less friendly with friends, have fewer hobbies and activities, and are more likely to be overweight. The American Psychological Association says there are three major effects of watching violence in the media (i.e. Video games/television) children may become less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others, children may be more fearful of the world around them, and children may be more likely to behave in aggressive or hurtful ways toward others (Clifford,2009).

# POSITIVE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA

- **Mode of entertainment and self-expression:** Social media platforms, like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, provide space for teens to interact with people of similar interests across the globe. Teens find this interaction entertaining and satisfying for their self-expression, thus boosting their confidence and self-esteem.
- **Could be a source of inspiration:** Online documentaries, movies, inspirational stories on the internet, print, and broadcast media can be a source of inspiration for your teen. For instance, you and your teen could watch real life-based movies such as *Steve Jobs* and *Chaplin* to get inspired in life.

-

- **Makes them aware of the importance of health:** Media disseminates information on health and well-being. A teen, who pays attention to such information, is more likely to be aware of various health issues like teen depression, childhood obesity, etc., and their possible solutions. This might help them make informed and healthy lifestyle choices.
- **Aids in developing an identity:** TV shows, series, and movies with good-quality content can help your tween and teen develop an identity. For example, a movie that reflects gender equality may motivate a teen to follow that in their life. You can strike up a discussion on such issues to educate your child.



- **Helps develop social skills:** Some teens and tweens are introverted. For them, social media is a free environment where they can interact without much hesitation. Social networking helps them develop social skills that are necessary for effective communication. Effective communication is necessary to develop and maintain relationships.
- **Develops social and political sense:** Teens and tweens who take an interest in current affairs and news are highly likely to be interested in social, political, and human development issues, like poverty, global warming, etc. It is an important positive effect that could help determine your child's personality and interests.

-

# Tips For Parents To Protect Teens From Undue Media Influence

- It is essential to guide the teen on age-appropriate use of all media, including television, radio, music, video games, social media, and even the internet. It can help shield the child from undue media influence. Here are some simple steps that you could follow .
- **Stay aware of your child's likes and dislikes.** Keep a record of the movies, shows, games, and public figures/celebrities that your child likes. This way, you could stay on top of what influences your child the most.
- **Monitor your child's media activities.** For instance, if your child spends a significant amount of time on online platforms or forums, ask your child:

# How Can Media Celebrities Influence Teenagers?

- Celebrities are powerful influencers that have become an inevitable part of the media. Their power to influence is used to promote and advertise an idea, belief, behavior, or product. In particular, teenagers are one of the most vulnerable audiences that easily gets attracted to lifestyles, products, or behavior that celebrities promote on social media. These influences can be positive, but at times, they can be negative, as well.
- Thus, it is important for parents, educators, and caregivers to guide children and teenagers on responsible analysis of the content. It is crucial as most of the endorsements done by celebrities are paid.

- **Provide your teen with some digital support.** Consider it very important to keep track of any abnormal behavior in your teen. Social media may sometimes cause issues that may lead to anxiety and irritability. In such cases, spend time with them and pay attention to their behavior.
- **Discuss the pros and cons of media.** Encourage him/her to express his/her feelings about various programs and media outlets. Discuss various social media platforms that the teen uses frequently.
- **Be a role model for your child.** The use of digital media among adults is as prevalent as it is in teens. Thus, be your child's role model by limiting your screen time. Also, indulge in some social media activities with your child so that you could spend time together and understand your child's preferences.

- **Talk about media messages to help guide your teen on the ways to handle the influence** in life. For example, if your teen likes watching grooming channels on YouTube, then you could talk about the paid product endorsements, advertisements, and sponsorships.
- **Set rules and limits about screen time** for all media sources. This way, you will be able to monitor what your child is watching and for how long.
- **Do not keep a television, computer, or video game console** in your child's bedroom. It is best to keep digital media equipment in a common space and preferably have shared passwords.
- **Restrict shows, games, and apps that promote illicit behavior.** You should explain why some programs are not suitable. You could also block channels and websites on the internet that you think are inappropriate. However, in a calm and rational manner, discuss your motivation with the teen and explain why such content can be bad for them.

- **Advice your teen to plan the week's viewing schedule in advance.** As a parent, you can supervise these choices and be a role model by making your choices wisely. Praise your child for making good and appropriate choices.
- **Encourage your teen to spend time with the family** doing indoor and outdoor activities like swimming, skiing, camping, etc. Such activities are a great opportunity to talk to your teen and develop a rapport with them to understand their preferences.
- **Motivate your child to indulge in group activities** by joining local communities, groups, clubs, etc. This motivation will help your child balance media use with other activities.
- **Suggest your teen to analyze the content** presented in the media by asking some questions. For instance, watch a series with your teen and ask your teen:

- **Encourage your teen to question his/her role model.** Guide him/her to ask himself/herself:
  - Why he/she likes a certain public figure or celebrity
  - Reasons for following a celebrity/public figure
  - Specific values that interest him/her before he/she chooses to follow someone
- **Motivate your teen to participate in media awareness programs** in communities and schools. Such activities could equip your child with all the necessary skills needed to ensure the positive use of media. Participating in mentoring programs is another option that you and your child could discuss.