Destiny Bower

Professor Gautreau

WRI 1

2 December 2019

I Can’t Photoshop My Mental Health

Technology is great and all, I mean it allows us to connect with friends and family in another state or even country. With technology we can capture a moment with a high definition picture, surf the internet for some of our deepest concerns and questions and we have all types of social media to share our lives with the world. I will never discredit the incredible advancements our generation has been gifted, with the development of technology. However, with all these significant new achievements of technology comes some dark spots.

As I said before, social media allows (mostly) teens to share their lives with the world. Social media gives teens the opportunity to share where they are, who they’re with and what they’re doing with all their followers. One of the most used applications of social media is Instagram. With Instagram Sarah can see a luxurious vacation that her classmate is on and John can see his classmate at the Warriors game. This all sounds really cool right? But there’s a downside to all this luxury. All Sarah and John see are they things they don’t have. Sarah sees the body she wishes she had on the luxurious vacation and John sees the money he’s reminded that he doesn’t have. Social media in and of itself takes a toll on its users especially teens and if Instagram is one of the most used social media applications out there then Instagram is a major cause of mental health issues in teens.

Instagram is full of pictures. People post pictures sharing the happy, perfect, loving and idealistic aspects of their lives. People choose what they want others to see. If people want their followers to see them have a perfect body, they’ll make it happen, it’s called photoshop. Photoshop practically comes hand in hand with Instagram. Does your picture need clear skin? How about a skinny waist and curvy hips? Whiter teeth? All of this can be made possible with photoshop. Sometimes it’s hard to tell what’s real and what’s photoshopped anymore. With people posting their “perfect bodies” all over Instagram, they get a lot of likes. And a lot of likes equals popularity.

Young teenagers are on the receiving end of this photoshop epidemic. Teenage girls who are still forming their own self-love and perspective of themselves are seeing that the things that get the most attention and that are receiving the most likes are the pictures of perfect bodies. If they do not have the perfect body that they see on the popular girls’ Instagram their self confidence goes down. A report done by the American Association of University Women states that “for girls, ‘the way I look’ is the most important indicator of self-worth” (Croll, Jillian). Jillian Croll also states that, “Drive to attain the ideal standard of attractiveness … has been associated with poor self-esteem and depression”. These young adolescences who are still trying to understand self love and who are still building their self confidence up are immediately being shut down by impractical and unobtainable depictions of beauty and they are driven to poor mental health, as Croll states.

I personally have gone through this stage of body issues when I was around the age of 14, entering my freshmen year of high school. I knew that I was entering a new stage of my life and I wanted to, as embarrassing as it is to say, be pretty to all the new people I would be meeting. I knew, or I thought I knew that to be pretty meant that I had to look like all the other girls at my high school, skinny. And the only way I knew what they looked like yet was because of their instagrams. I thought less of myself because I wasn’t skinny. And because of my low self esteem I then began my bad habits of not eating for days and when I would eat something I would immediately have to exercise until I felt I worked off the food I just ate. My mom began to get worried because I was loosing too much weight, which in cause can lead to other more serious health concerns.

Poor body image can have a detrimental effect one a person, especially when it’s young adults and teenagers who have a poor view of themselves. Jillian Croll says that, “Overconcern with body image and shape can lead to restrictive dieting and unhealthy weight control methods which may lead to potentially dangerous disordered eating behaviors” (Croll, Jillian). Some things that can be a result of such poor self esteem can be “Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD), causing ‘persistent and intrusive preoccupations with an imagined or slight defect in one’s appearance’ leading to ‘severe emotional distress and difficulties in daily functioning.’” (mindthatego.com). Along with BDD, other disorders that can result from poor body image are “anxiety and self-disgust to [suicidal thoughts](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/may/13/body-image-survey-one-in-eight-uk-adults-suicidal-thoughts)” (thegaurdian.com). Some figures even show that 10% of women in a study reported to have hurt themselves because of their body image (thegaurdian.com). All of these horrible and horrifying poor health behaviors are all a direct effect of poor body image.

Yes, technology is great! I love being able to call my friends and family who are in other states. Being in college technology is such a great tool to be able to look up the answers to burning questions I have, or being able to use internet sites to do research and watch Netflix in my free time! So is Instagram, I love sharing about all the things I’m doing out here away at college. But I also admit that along with all these wonderful commodities of technology comes some harsh consequences. Social media takes a toll on the mental health of teens in many ways and with Instagram being one of the biggest social media platforms, it is one of the leading causes of mental health issues in teens.

Works Cited

(from the school’s database) *🡪 Croll, Jillian, “Body Image and Adolescents,”2005* [*https://cmapspublic2.ihmc.us/rid=1JWW1ZDY3-11P9HDT-5HNV/body%20awareness.pdf*](https://cmapspublic2.ihmc.us/rid=1JWW1ZDY3-11P9HDT-5HNV/body%20awareness.pdf)

*Gonzales, Joyce. “Instagram Is Bad For Your Mental Health.” Medical Daily, 20 June 2019,* [*www.medicaldaily.com/instagram-bad-mental-health-437048*](http://www.medicaldaily.com/instagram-bad-mental-health-437048)*.*

*January, Kelly Shedd. “Which Is Worst for Your Mental Health: Instagram, Facebook or YouTube?” PsychAlive, 17 July 2017,* [*www.psychalive.org/worst-mental-health-instagram-facebook-youtube/*](http://www.psychalive.org/worst-mental-health-instagram-facebook-youtube/)*.*

*Ricky, et al. “Instagram's Influence On Body Image - Mind That Ego.” MindThatEgo, 26 Jan. 2019,* [*www.mindthatego.com/instagram-influence-body-image-part-1/*](http://www.mindthatego.com/instagram-influence-body-image-part-1/)*.*

*Warren, Rossalyn. “How Much Does Poor Body Image Affect Mental Health?” The Guardian, Guardian News and Media, 17 May 2019,* [*www.theguardian.com/society/2019/may/17/poor-body-image-mental-health*](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/may/17/poor-body-image-mental-health)*.*