Why Social Media is Bad for You: Informative Speech

I love social media, I absolutely adore it. I spend hours scrolling through meaningless tik tok reels, instagram posts of people I haven't seen in three years, celebrity gossip on Daily Mail, and have sent countless "facebook" mom style snapchats. The truth of the matter is that I know that social media is most likely not the best use of my time and probably negatively affecting my own mental health. Because as someone who has been on social media for nearly her whole life and also has dealt with my own mental health issues, the negative effects of social media are something I have spent time and effort researching and understanding. We as a generation or at least as a class should recognize the potential negative consequences of social media because, chances are everyone in this room and on this campus spends more time on social media than would be recommended. Social media use has a negative impact on people's mental health and life, that is why we as a society need to rethink our relationship with social media. The points I will be discussing are that social media leads to negative self image and eating disorders, social isolation, and other mental illnesses.

Who here has seen a picture of someone on social media, and subconsciously or consciously compared yourself to them? I know I have, be that an influencer, celebrity, or even someone I know, I see pictures and automatically compare their waistline to mine, or their makeup, or their outfit, how they look in that outfit. And I know that I am not the only person who does this, in fact there is a scientific theory called the "Social Comparison Theory" in which is the idea that "individuals determine their own social and personal worth based on how they stack up against others." This is a theory that has existed since the mid-1950's but as social media has become more prevalent the more people there are to compare oneself to. In the mid-1950's people could compare themselves to a small circle of people they see and meet, but

now we can see and meet nearly everyone in the world. Comparing oneself to others immediately makes one feel inferior, and leads to an increased negative view of themself. One of the ways this manifests itself is through eating disorders, according to mentalhealthfirstaid.org thirty million people in the United States suffer from eating disorders, the median age being between the ages of 18 and 20. A study done by Dr. Jaime E. Sidani cited by The National Library of Medicine found that there is , " a strong and consistent association between social media use and eating concerns in a nationally-representative sample of young adults ages 19 to 32 years." The rampant increase in adolescents dealing with body image issues and eating disorders is most likely due to the also increasing use of social media. I know that social media has led me personally to dislike myself and the way I look, and there is proof that it makes other adolescents feel the same way.

I spoke briefly earlier on in my speech about the amount of time I personally spend on social media, which is a lot. This is time I could spend doing a multitude of other things including being with other people in real life. For reasons like this social media can isolate people or even give people the feeling of being isolated and missing out on things. According to regiscollege.edu 70% of American adults have at least one social media account, the average American has seven accounts. In addition to this 1 in 5 American adults report feeling lonely most of the time or all of the time. While researchers can't correlate this increased loneliness directly to social media, researchers believe that with the increased social media use the feeling of loneliness is exacerbated. Most of this perceived loneliness is from people seeing other people doing things and not feeling included or feeling as if they are missing out on something similar in their own life. This is commonly known as FOMO or the fear of missing out, and according to a study done by the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* cited on npr.org "people who

reported spending the most time on social media — more than two hours a day — had twice the odds of perceived social isolation than those who said they spent a half hour per day or less on those sites." In addition to eating disorders, social media use is also linked to other mental health illnesses, such as anxiety and depression. I know I for one don't necessarily feel super happy after I spend meaningless hours of continuous scrolling in my bed. According to a survey done by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, "the rate of young adults with suicidal thoughts or other suicide-related outcomes increased a staggering 47 percent from 2008 to 2017." The outburst of social media occurred around 2011, leading to the conclusion that this increase in mental health decline is at least correlated with the increased use of social media. To corroborate the aforementioned statistic a study cited on mitsloan.mit.edu, found that "access to Facebook led to an increase in severe depression by 7% and anxiety disorder by 20%."

I love social media, I adore social media but, throughout my speech I have said several negative things about social media, I have given several examples on why one shouldn't spend excessive amounts of time on social media. These main points being that social media can lead to body image issues and eating disorders, feelings of isolation, and other mental health issues, mainly anxiety and depression. However I am not naive and I know that none of the materials cited in my speech will lead to any of you or me to stop using social media. But I do want everyone in here to be more mindful of these potential consequences and be careful not to let them affect you as much as they would if you weren't aware of them.