

Social Media and Identity

Adolescence is a critical time for developing your identity. During this stage, an adolescent is trying to figure out who they are, what they believe in, and what they want to achieve. This journey involves exploring different values, beliefs, goals, and deciding which ones matter. Social media can play a big role in this process, offering a unique space for self-expression and peer connection.

Online platforms allow adolescents to express themselves, connect with peers, and follow influencers. These digital spaces allow them to socialize and learn more about themselves. Through this, they receive instant feedback from others. This feedback helps to shape self-concept and therefore identity – or how oneself is seen. For example, posting a video of selfie and getting likes or comments can boost confidence and help them understand what aspects of oneself resonates with others. Social media allows adolescents to carefully craft how they are presented. Photos can be carefully selected to highlight achievements and create a certain image or identity. It's common to show a positive version of yourself online because peer acceptance is important during adolescence.

Adolescents often compare themselves to their peers on social media. This can help with self-improvement and self-evaluation. However, it can also make someone feel less confident about themselves. While it can be motivating for improvement, it can also lower self-esteem. Along with this, influencers (people with a large following on social media) can have a big impact on identity. Influencers are parts of their lives and create content around specific topics, such as beauty, lifestyle, and travel, that inspire others. Social media can promote cultural standards of beauty, which can influence how individuals see themselves. Posts that highlight physical attractiveness, success, and perfect social lives can create this idealized view of reality. This can lead adolescents to compare themselves, which could be positive or potentially reduce self-esteem and well-being.

Social Media and Identity

Overall, social media provides opportunities to curate identity, meaning someone can craft an online profile to reflect who they are and who they want to be. The feedback given - whether positive or negative - can affect adolescents self-esteem and sense of acceptance. Everyone is on their own journey to self-discovery and forming their identity. Social media is a great tool to express yourself but be mindful of the effects of comparison and the importance of staying true to yourself.