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### How Social-media Addiction Is Similar to Drug Addiction.

How often do you see a family with kids in public place and each of them is stared in own device? How often do parents give kids tablets or smartphones just to make them busy? Can electronic devices substitute live communication or bring up children? Too many questions... We, as parents, would say that it is nothing serious, it is just harmless cartoons or special designated developmental games. Although modern children grow very quickly, their brain is not developed fully to understand media messages and especially, to distinguish real meaning of media's messages. Then parents blink and a child has a profile on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. A couple of months or years later, almost every second parent would be screaming at the child, "You are addicted to the smartphone! You are always on your Facebook, Instagram or whatever!" Although it is amusingly but parents are right in this situation because, according to the [Cambridge Dictionary](#), addiction is "the need or strong desire to do or to have something, or a very strong liking for something."

Jennifer Siebel Newsom in her documentary "[Miss Representation](#)" is talking about social media influence on young girls in term of sexualized girl-woman's image on public and political arenas. It is only one side of harmless power of social media on our children and teens but many others exist. Our children as sponges absorb everything and without stopping or

comprehension from laptop's or cellphone's screens. In 21 century, healthcare professionals start to talk about yet informal disorder as social media addiction, or internet in general.

From school, a science class, we know that addiction is something that with time will alter physical health of the body. But how Facebook can do it? Yep, maybe slight scoliosis or neck pain would be present. [WHO defines health](#) as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” At this point, mental and social well-being are entering the game. Is social-media addiction similar to the drug addictions in terms of behavior of an addicted person and withdrawal effects that potentially would harm a child's mental and social well-being?

Leslie Walker, a multimedia journalism professor, [in the article “What Is Social Networking Addiction?”](#) provides a simple and understandable definition of social networking addiction. According to Leslie Walker, “Social networking addiction is a phrase sometimes used to refer to someone spending too much time using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other forms of social media – so much so that interferes with other aspects of daily life.”

One of the trends in the behavior of the drug-addicted person is lying. They tend to lie about an immediate cessation of taking drugs or about where they are going like instead of going to the cinema with friends, they are going to a drug dealer for a new dose. Similarly, children could lie about going to bed for sleep but instead, under the duvet, they are seating hours and hours with a phone surfing online. According to [“Miss Representation”](#) by Jennifer Siebel Newsom, children and teenagers spend “10 hours and 45 minutes of media consumption a day.”

Next tendency, in the behavior, is constantly looking for a dose. When drug addiction becomes more serious and causes an increasing number of doses or amount of substance, you

can see an untidy dressed person who is looking for a new and cheap dose. In the same way, the first question from child in the shopping mall, an airport, and even in the library is about free wi-fi. Children are like “crackheads” not taking eyes off cellphone’s screen going around and looking for free wi-fi or a place with the best signal of it. “Our kids today live on Facebook and cellphones,” says J. S. Newsom in her film.

Can you imagine a reaction of a person when something that brings the highest pleasure and joy will be taken away? It will totally change the psychological state of a person. Your so loved child will become a devil in the human body. Withdrawal of social media from children or teens has the same characteristics as withdrawal of drugs in an addicted person.

Crying and irritability become a normal everyday ongoing. The necessity to check the profile on Facebook or Instagram is akin to the painful need for a dose. If you want to take away a cellphone from your child, be ready to attacks similar to psychotic one from a thriller movie. Your child will beg at the beginning followed with crying that gradually grow up to hysteric with falls on the floor and beat a head on the floor. Is it not similar to what a drug addicted person would do for a new dose of narcotics?

As stated in [the article “Internet Addiction and Excessive Social Networks Use: What About Facebook?”](#) by Eduardo Guedes and others, “...define Internet addiction as a syndrome with a set of symptoms that includes:...f) replacing other activities and relationships with recurrent Internet use despite awareness of the bad consequences.” So, with excessive use of Facebook or Instagram, your child creates a virtual world with unreal friends and at the same time loss connection with the actual world around him/her. Disorientation, feeling detached from self, severe anxiety, and depression are only a couple of signs that your child would exhibit in case of the withdrawal social media and Internet in general.

As soon as your child would quit with a habit check social media every 10 minutes, he or she will be able to see real world in a new bright color. This escape from online life can be compared with the escape of the prisoner from a cave in [“Plato’s Cave.”](#) The prisoner with time understands that another life exists, and this life is much better and colorful than in the cave. The same will happen with your child when you take away gadgets.

As drugs and addiction to them shape children as a human being, “... they are shaping children’s brains and lives and emotions,” says Jennifer Siebel Newsom about Internet and social media in her [movie “Miss Representation.”](#) Let’s help our children to escape from “online cave”. Let’s show our children how good real life. Children’s mind and emotions must be shaped by live communication and live people.