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# Impact of social media on emotions and productivity

## Overview

This activity, designed for young adults aged 18–30, explores the emotional impact of rapid and contrasting stimuli on social media platforms. Using an interactive pedagogic approach—**I do, We do, You do**—the facilitator aims to break hierarchical barriers and build relatability. The session begins by presenting a recent study on social media’s emotional impact, followed by guided reflection and discussion.

Participants are encouraged to identify and analyze their emotional responses during recent social media sessions. Through interactive sharing, they recognize how frequent, abrupt emotional shifts can contribute to feelings of irritability, overwhelm, and emotional fragility. The activity concludes with a group discussion and evaluation, promoting awareness and mindfulness around digital consumption.

The exercise is straightforward, requiring minimal resources and adaptable for groups of 5–20 participants within a 20–25 minute timeframe.

## Target Group:

young adult from 18-30 year

## Themes addressed

Emotional Regulation

Digital Well-being

Mental Health Awareness

Social Media Influence

Mindfulness and Self-Reflection

## Complexity

Low to Moderate.

The activity is straightforward but requires participants to engage in self-reflection and articulate their emotions, which may be challenging for some.

## Group size

5 to 20 participants (can be adapted for larger groups).

	Guide
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To help participants recognize the impact of rapid emotional shifts caused by social media exposure.</li><li>• To encourage participants to reflect on their emotional states after engaging with social media content.</li><li>• To build awareness around emotional fragility and irritability linked to subconscious overstimulation.</li></ul>
Instructions	<p><b>Beginning of the session</b></p> <p>Reflect on a recent social media session. List down the emotions you experienced. (You can choose from the list provided or add your own)</p> <p>After spending time on social media, how did you feel overall?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Rejuvenated and inspired.</li><li>● Neutral or unaffected.</li></ul>

🟡 Drained or irritable.

🔴 Overwhelmed or anxious.

Which emotions do you notice more frequently during social media use?

😊 Positive (Joy, Pride, Inspiration, Gratitude)

😞 Negative (Anxiety, Loneliness, Regret, Jealousy)

😬 Complex (Ambivalence, Nostalgia, Empowerment, Skepticism)

👥 Social (Belongingness, Alienation, Admiration, Contempt)

You note down the answers and reflect at the end of the session.

### Work Session (Interactive Approach)

To break the hierarchy between the facilitator and participants, follow the **I do, We do, You do** approach. The "I Do, We Do, You Do" approach is a structured teaching and learning strategy rooted in gradual release of responsibility. It's a scaffolded instructional framework commonly used in education to guide students from teacher-directed learning to independent practice. This approach is also effective in training, coaching, mentoring, and skill-building activities across various domains. This strategy aims to build relatability and encourage participants to actively engage with the content.

#### I do (Instructor's Reflection):

- Share your own experience with scrolling through social media, describing the range of emotions experienced. For example:
  - "I was scrolling through Instagram and saw a funny **cat video**(<https://youtu.be/JxS5E-kZc2s>), and it made me smile. Right after, I saw a post from friends at a party I couldn't attend, and I felt a bit of FOMO."
  - "Then, I came across a post about someone's promotion, which made me feel a little insecure about my own progress."
  - Finally, I saw a sad reel about global warming, and I ended up feeling worried and emotionally drained."

### Time

90 minutes total.

### Resources needed

Quiet, comfortable space for reflection and discussion.

Writing materials (notebooks, pens) or digital devices if participants prefer typing.

### Materials

Printed instructions or slides outlining the activity.

Journals or sheets of paper for participants to note their reflections.

([https://www.canva.com/design/DAGjqLzPqEI/s5pXacA9s3xYbhpukDRfig/edit?utm\\_content=DAGjqLzPqEI&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGjqLzPqEI/s5pXacA9s3xYbhpukDRfig/edit?utm_content=DAGjqLzPqEI&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton))

Projector (if presenting visuals).

- Someone working out on gym with a good physique
- Someone travelling abroad many times
- Someone has a fancy car or a house
- Someone has a branded clothes
- Emphasize how quickly these emotional shifts occurred.

(Instructor can add their own examples depends on the people they are training, use examples where the participants can relate with)

**We do (Interactive Discussion):**

- Ask the participants:
  - “How many of you have experienced something similar? How did you feel?”
  - Encourage participants to share their emotional reactions and validate their experiences by acknowledging common patterns.
  - Create a relaxed and conversational environment to build rapport and relatability.

**You do (Participant Activity):**

- Invite participants to individually reflect on a recent social media session where they experienced multiple emotional shifts.
- Ask them to write down:
  - The emotions they felt during the session.
  - How did they feel afterward—drained? Irritable? Overwhelmed?
- **You can ask them a list of emotions they are feeling, you can show them the following list.**

Basic Emotions (Universal and Innate)

Happiness

Sadness  
Fear  
Anger  
Surprise  
Disgust

Positive Emotions (Often Related to Well-being and Satisfaction)

- Happiness – Feeling joy from social connections, entertainment, or inspiring content. 😊
- Excitement – Engaging in new trends, opportunities, or creative expression. ⚡
- Motivation – Inspired by success stories and educational content. 🚀
- Belonging – Feeling connected to online communities. 🤝
- Confidence – Gaining positive feedback and support. 💪
- Gratitude – Appreciating shared experiences and kindness. 🙏
- Hope – Encouraged by change and inspiration online. 🌈
- Amusement – Enjoying memes, humor, and fun content. 😄

Negative Emotions (Often Related to Stress, Pain, or Displeasure)

- Anxiety – FOMO, pressure to always be available. 😰
- Stress – Overwhelmed by notifications and content. 😫
- Loneliness – Feeling alone despite online presence. 😞
- Jealousy – Comparing with others' curated lives. 😡
- Frustration – Dealing with low engagement or negative feedback. 😡
- Sadness – Affected by bad news or toxic content. 😞
- Insecurity – Feeling “not enough” due to comparisons. 😞
- Guilt – Time wasted, unread messages, or overuse. 😞
- Anger – Encountering hate, trolls, or unfairness. 😡
- Disappointment – Expectations not met online. 😞

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

Complex Emotions (Often Combinations of Basic Emotions)

Nostalgia (Happiness + Sadness)

Bittersweetness (Joy + Sadness)

Ambivalence (Mixed Feelings)

Suspicion (Fear + Distrust)

Reluctance (Hesitation + Fear/Disinterest)

Contempt (Disgust + Anger)

Passion (Intense Love/Excitement)

Empowerment (Joy + Confidence)

Curiosity (Interest + Anticipation)

Skepticism (Doubt + Concern)  
Social Emotions (Tied to Relationships and Social Interactions)

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### **Discussion**

- Explain that these emotional shifts wouldn't happen so quickly in real life. Emotions naturally transition gradually, giving the mind time to process them.
  - Social media disrupts this natural flow, resulting in emotional instability and subconscious irritability. Social media can harm mental health by causing emotional instability, fostering unhealthy comparisons, promoting addiction, enabling cyberbullying, and reducing productivity. Its design encourages instant gratification through likes, comments, and notifications, triggering dopamine release that fosters addiction and diminishes emotional regulation.
  - Constant exposure to idealized versions of others' lives often leads to feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and anxiety. Comparison culture, particularly related to body image, lifestyle, and achievements, promotes negative emotions such as jealousy, loneliness, and frustration. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) further heightens anxiety and dissatisfaction.
  - Additionally, social media disrupts productivity by fragmenting attention and encouraging procrastination. The endless scroll mechanism reduces focus, creativity, and the ability to engage in deep work. Cognitive overload from consuming excessive information can lead to emotional fatigue, stress, and burnout.
  - Constant exposure to idealized versions of others' lives often leads to feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and anxiety. People rarely post their failures or struggles, creating a distorted reality where only successes, celebrations, and curated perfection are showcased.
  - Cyberbullying and online harassment are also significant concerns, leading to depression, anxiety, and in severe cases, suicidal thoughts. Emotional shifts induced by social media are rapid and intense, often leaving users feeling overwhelmed or irritable. While social media is not inherently harmful, unregulated use can severely impact mental health, emotional stability, and productivity.
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**End the session with more interactions (you can also use I do, We do, You do method:**

**Behavioral Choices**

When you have free time, what activity are you most likely to choose?

- Going for a walk or engaging in physical activity.
- Scrolling through social media or playing games on your phone.
- Reading a book or pursuing a hobby.
- Socializing with friends or family.

Which of the following scenarios are you more likely to choose?

- Spending time outdoors, disconnected from devices.
- Browsing social media for entertainment or information.
- Practicing mindfulness or relaxation activities.
- Engaging in a creative project or skill-building.

<p><b>Debriefing and evaluation</b></p>	<p><b>Debriefing and Evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Group Discussion:</b> Invite participants to share their reflections if comfortable.</li> <li>● <b>Guiding Questions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Did you notice patterns in your emotional responses?</li> <li>○ How did the rapid shift of emotions affect your mood afterward?</li> <li>○ Can you identify any emotions that lingered beyond the session?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Evaluation:</b> Gauge participants' understanding through their insights and willingness to share.</li> </ul> <p>What is the one thing that they liked about the session?</p> <p>What will they take home from today's session?</p>
<p><b>Tips for facilitators</b></p>	<p>Encourage a non-judgmental and empathetic environment to make participants feel comfortable sharing.</p> <p>Be mindful of participants who may find reflecting on negative emotions challenging or triggering.</p> <p>If participants seem reluctant to share, offer insights from your own experiences to model openness.</p>
<p><b>Suggestions for follow up</b></p>	<p>Encourage participants to keep a <b>journal tracking their emotional reactions</b> after using social media for a week.</p> <p><b>Facilitate a follow-up session to discuss whether participants have noticed changes</b> in their emotional resilience or irritability.</p> <p>(Depending on the group ) Suggest mindfulness or emotional regulation techniques to help mitigate the effects of rapid emotional shifts.</p>

