

UNDERSTANDING FOMO

Fear of Missing Out

WHAT IS IT?

FOMO is the anxiety kids and teens feel when they believe others are having fun, making memories, or living a better life without them.

Social media amplifies this feeling by constantly showing carefully curated highlights from other people's lives.

WHY IT MATTERS

☹️ **Emotional Impact:** Teens may feel insecure, left out, or anxious when scrolling.

📱 **Behavioral Shifts:** Kids might become glued to their phones, compare themselves constantly, or withdraw from real-life interactions.

👥 **Relationship Strain:** FOMO can make friendships feel competitive instead of supportive.

SIGNS OF FOMO

- Checking their phone constantly or feeling anxious when disconnected
- Frequently comparing themselves to friends or influencers
- Feeling irritable or sad after scrolling
- Saying things like "Everyone's doing this except me"
- Avoiding conversations about friends or events they weren't included in

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HELPFUL TIPS FOR TALKING WITH YOUR KIDS/TEENS

Normalize Feelings

“It makes sense you’d feel left out — everyone feels that sometimes, even adults.”
Validating their emotions helps reduce shame and opens the door for healthy conversations.

Remind: Social Media ≠ Reality

Explain that people post highlight reels, not their whole lives.
“That picture looks perfect, but it’s only one moment — you’re not seeing the boring, stressful, or hard parts.”

Share Your Own Experiences

Open up about a time you’ve felt left out or anxious about missing something.
This builds trust and helps kids realize they’re not alone.

Set Healthy Tech Boundaries Together

Collaborate instead of controlling:

- Agree on phone-free zones (meals, bedtime, family time).
- Encourage screen breaks during emotionally charged moments.

Focus on Real Life Connections

Plan intentional, offline activities as a family — from movie nights to hikes.

Help them create meaningful memories in real life instead of chasing them online.