FEAR OF MISSING OUT (FOMO)

This is very real, and it's why a lot of people can't stay away from social media for long periods of time. It's the fear you'll miss an important post, something funny, important information or just being nosey. It's the fear that you won't be 'in the know' about what's going on in the social media world. This is another way social media keeps us engaged and addicted.

ONLINE EGO (CONSTANTLY 'FLEXING')

There's no problem with posting about yourself, or whatever you like. What you need to understand is, why are you doing it and who are you doing it for?

Tip: *Whatever you're looking for on social media will be there later – it can wait.*

Enjoy exercising discipline but not having to check your phone every few minutes.

Social media is a platform on which we love to display the perfect part of ourselves. Perfect pictures, perfect scenery, perfect relationships, perfect food and so on. The online ego is very different to the person in real life. Consider asking yourself if you do the same amount of self-promotion in real life as you do online. Finding the right balance is key, but remember those questions: Why are you doing it and who are you doing it for?

Tip: *Ask yourself, am I posting to make people envious and for the sole purpose of showing a life I don't live? Ask yourself, what am I gaining from posting this? Would I portray the same message in real life?*

SOCIAL COMPASSION AND SELF-ESTEEM ISSUES

We're setting a trap for ourselves if we don't take the time to increase our own awareness about how we feel and behave online. Social media is a place where we mostly show our 'best side,' and it's tempting to compare ourselves to other people. As a parent, young person, partner, business owner, university student – whatever you are – you can find yourself comparing your life and progress to those of others you are connected with online.

It is very important to keep checking in with your feelings; to be aware of how your social media experience influences how you see yourself and those around you. Remember, not everything you see on social media is real, so stop comparing yourself to something that isn't entirely true!

Tip: *Unfollow, unlike, unfriend anything that makes you feel insecure, negative, or less of yourself. Also, it's a good idea to start realizing that a lot of what is on social isn't real/true. I know it may look or seem perfect, but please remember that sometimes it's just for show.*

ESCAPISM

Escapism is the tendency to seek distraction and relief from unpleasant or boring realities, especially through entertainment or by engaging in fantasy. If you start to pick up your phone at almost every available moment, you may realize you have a problem. If you find yourself spending long periods of time on social media when you should be present, then that is a good indicator of your level of reliance on these platforms. If you are knowingly jumping on social media to escape the challenges and difficulties of life, that is also a good indicator.

Social media offers a similar addictive escape mechanism to alcohol, smoking, drugs and gambling. Although the physical effects differ, the attachment and reasons for consumption are alike.

Simply put, escapism is a behavioural addiction led by an uncontrollable urge to use social media that begins to involve so much time and effort that it distracts and affects other areas of your life.

Tip: *Find other wholesome activities or hobbies to be involved in. Understand and acknowledge your level of addiction and adjust your attention to an activity of value.*

CONSIDER THE WAYS IN WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA MAY BE IMPACTING PARTS OF YOUR LIFE

- The amount of time you spend in front of a screen
- Impact on your relationships
- Quality of sleep
- Your ability to be present
- The decrease in human connection
- Becoming self-absorbed
- Isolation and loneliness

- Cyber-bullying
- Online scams
- Focusing on and counting likes
- Decrease in concentration and attention span
- Escaping from reality
- Negative body image from comparing
- Insecurities