

Using social media to cope with these extraordinary times

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Original paper:

How Adolescents Use Social Media to Cope with Feelings of Loneliness and Anxiety During COVID-19 Lockdown.

Reference to the original paper:

Cauberghe, V., van Wesenbeeck, I., de Jans, S., Liselot Hudders, L., Ponnet, K. (2021). How Adolescents Use Social Media to Cope with Feelings of Loneliness and Anxiety During COVID-19 Lockdown. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 24(4) 250-257.
<http://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2020.0478>

Link to original paper online:

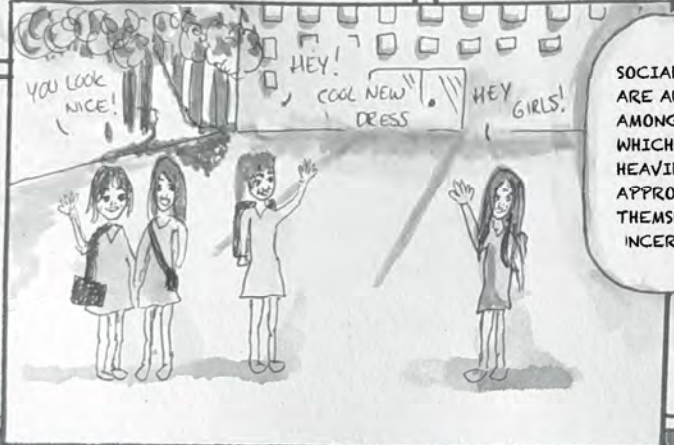
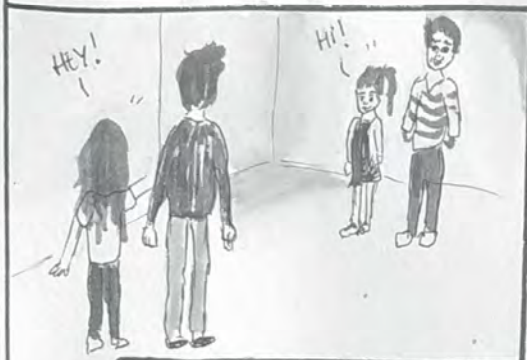
<https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/cyber.2020.0478>

Project created for the class:

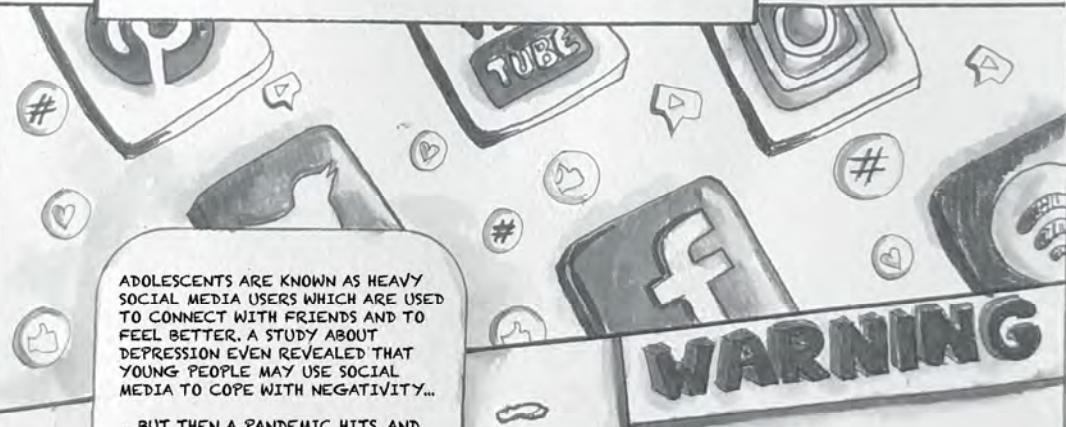
Visual Thinking and Composition, Winter 2021

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SOCIAL COMPARISON PROCESSES ARE AUTOMATICALLY ACTIVATED AMONG ADOLESCENTS (13-18), WHICH TRIGGERS THEM TO HEAVILY RELY ON PEERS-TO GAIN APPROVAL, FEEL GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES, AND REDUCE UNCERTAINTY.



ADOLESCENTS ARE KNOWN AS HEAVY SOCIAL MEDIA USERS WHICH ARE USED TO CONNECT WITH FRIENDS AND TO FEEL BETTER. A STUDY ABOUT DEPRESSION EVEN REVEALED THAT YOUNG PEOPLE MAY USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO COPE WITH NEGATIVITY...
 ... BUT THEN A PANDEMIC HITS, AND NOTHING IS AS BLACK AND WHITE AS IT SEEMS....





...WHEN ALL PHYSICAL SOCIAL CONTACTS ARE CUT OFF IN LOCKDOWN, FEELINGS OF LONELINESS INCREASE AND HAVE A VERY NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THEIR HAPPY FEELINGS...



... HOWEVER, SOCIAL MEDIA MAY BE USED TO ACTIVELY HANDLE THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIOR TO FACE THE PROBLEM IN THE CURRENT CRISISACTIVE COPING IS NEEDED TO ACCEPTING SUCH EXTRAORDINARY SITUATION...



...WITH HUMOR, SOCIAL CONTACTS ADD HAPPINESS BY REDUCING THE ATTENTION ON NEGATIVE FEELINGS. ALSO, LAUGHTER HAS ALSO SHOWN TO INCREASE PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND WELL-BEING.

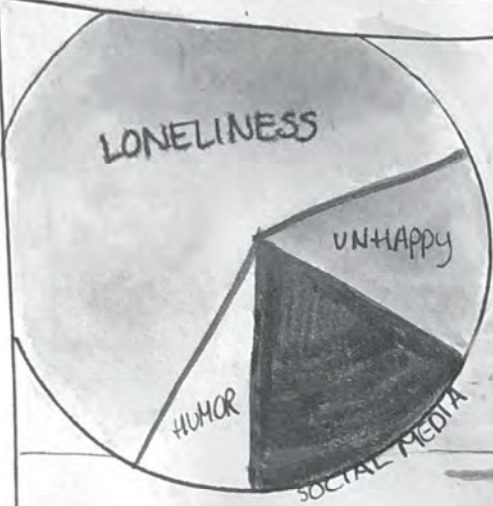
OH WELL, IN THE END COVID DOESN'T SEEM AS BAD AS EATING A BAT...

I WONDER WHAT THAT WOULD TASTE LIKE... BACARDI?

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE WOULD EAT A SQUIRREL?

HAHAHA DON'T BE SILLY!

TO TEST IF CONTACT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA MAKES IT EASIER TO COPE WITH A PANDEMIC, AN ONLINE SURVEY STUDY WAS DEVELOPED. DATA COLLECTION TOOK PLACE BETWEEN APRIL 16 AND 30, 2020, IN BELGIUM.



2165 PARTICIPANTS

MOST OF THE ADOLESCENTS INDICATED A MAJOR INCREASE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE DURING THE LOCKDOWN... ALMOST GETTING "SQUARE EYES"* AS WE HOPED, PARTICIPANTS REPORTED TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA FOR ACTIVELY COPING WITH THE CURRENT SITUATION....



...THOUGHT THAT USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO ACTIVELY FACE THE SITUATION RELIEVED THEIR FEELINGS OF DISTRESS AND ANXIETY TO SOME DEGREE, INCREASING HAPPINESS FEELINGS!



* SQUARE EYES IS A DUTCH EXPRESSION FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE WARNED BECAUSE OF THEIR EXCESSIVE DIGITAL DISPLAY USE

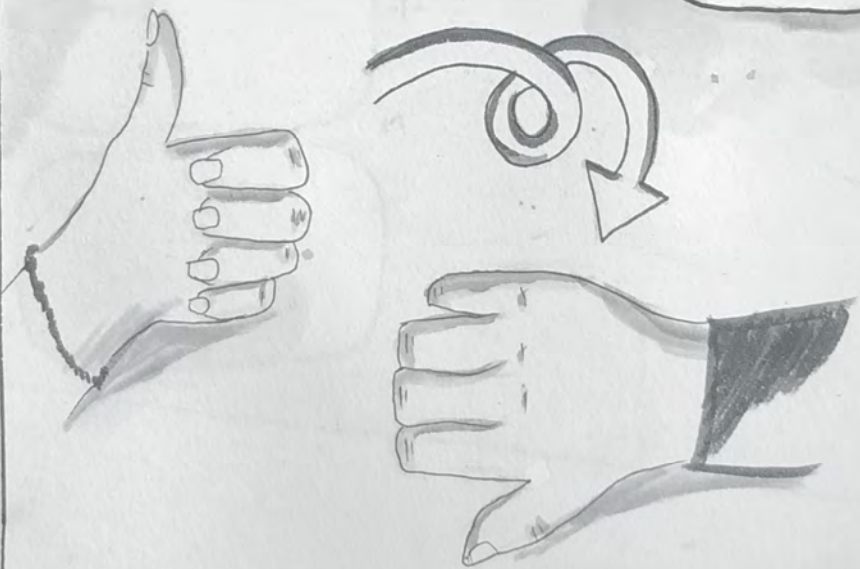
I MISS MY FRIENDS


HOWEVER...

IT UNFORTUNATELY ALSO SHOWED THAT USING SOCIAL MEDIA AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR PHYSICAL SOCIAL RELATIONS MAKES ADOLESCENTS FEEL LESS HAPPY, SO THE PARTICIPANTS STILL MISSED THEIR SOCIAL LIFE..



... AND EMOTIONAL TWEETS INCREASED FEELINGS OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION, AND THE USE OF INTERNET HAS NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF SUCH ADOLESCENTS DURING COVID-19, EVEN THOUGH IT SEEMED DIFFERENT IN OTHER RESEARCHES.





THIS MAY LEAD TO EMOTIONAL COPING BEHAVIOR AND POSSIBLE PANIC REACTIONS, SUCH AS THE HOARDING OF TOILET PAPER DURING COVID-19, WHICH WAS INITIATED ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

MAY THERE EVER, EVER BE A PANDEMIC AGAIN WITH SUCH MAJOR EFFECTS AS COVID-19, THIS RESEARCH DEFINES 3 SOLUTIONS TO PREVENT THE PEOPLE (AND ESPECIALLY ADOLESCENTS FROM GETTING SAD, LONELY, DEPRESSED AND TO PREVENT THEM FROM PANIC REACTIONS:

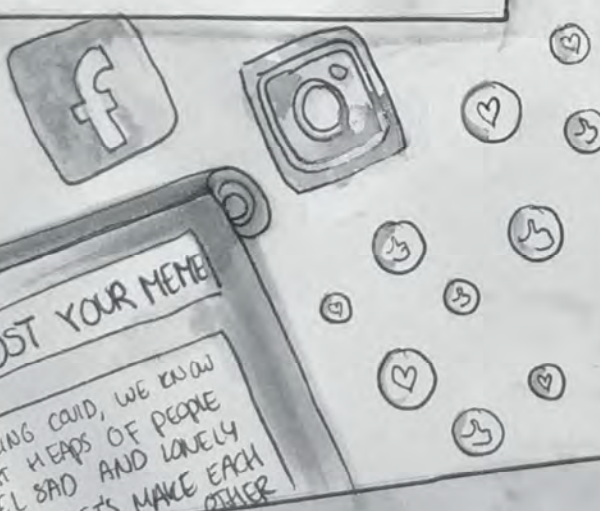
1. SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BE USED AS AN INSTRUMENT TO ACTIVELY COPE WITH THE SITUATION TO RELIEVE FEELINGS OF ANXIETY, AND FEEL BETTER.

AND

2. ALSO, HUMOR ON SOCIAL MEDIA IS BENEFICIAL FOR ADOLESCENTS' WELL-BEING DURING LOCKDOWN.

AND

3. SOCIAL MEDIA SHOULD BE USED FOR FUNNY INTERACTIVE CAMPAIGNS (I.E., "POST YOUR MOST HUMOROUS COVID MEME"). IN ADDITION, SOCIAL MEDIA MAY PROMOTE THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ITS POTENTIAL TO REDUCE ANXIETY AND STRESS AMONG THEIR TEENAGERS.



POST YOUR MEME

DURING COVID, WE KNOW THAT HEAPS OF PEOPLE FEEL SAD AND LONELY LET'S MAKE EACH OTHER

THE END