

FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) By Colleen Morrisette, Psy.D.

In an age where we can find out where people are and what they are doing with a click of a button, it is difficult to not think, am I missing out on something? FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) is a term that has been coined to refer to this phenomenon. It is defined as “an apprehension that others may be having a more rewarding experience that one may be absent from”. Individuals, especially young adults are continually connected to what is happening elsewhere through social media, but the novelty of this new technology is still developing and it can negatively impact people. First, this fear can lead to an “obsession” with constantly checking statuses on Facebook, looking at pictures on Instagram, and tweeting so that it interferes with productivity and decreases real-time social connections. Second, it can result in engaging in reckless behavior, such as texting while driving. Further, this fear can trigger feelings of negativity and depressed moods. It is an issue that is becoming more common; however, when FOMO begins to interfere with daily functioning, it is a problem that needs to be addressed.

What can you do about it?

- Set up times where phones are not allowed, such as at the dinner table. Have everyone (including parents) put away their phones and engage in conversation.
- Have a conversation with your children about why they feel as though they are missing out on something. What makes what someone else is doing better than what they are doing?
- Sign a no texting while driving contract. There are several websites out there to do this on, one is www.itcanwait.com
- Be a good example by not checking your phone as often and showing your children that things can wait.

Resources:

- [Alone Together: Why we expect for from technology and less from each other](#) by Sherry Turkle
- <http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2011/04/14/fomo-addiction-the-fear-of-missing-out/>
- http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/10/business/10ping.html?src=recg&_r=0
- http://www.andrewprzybylski.me/resources/2013_FearofMissingOut.pdf

If you have questions, we can help. Our providers specialize in working with children, teens, adults and families.

