Social Media & Comparison Culture

1. **Encourage** open communication

2. **Set realistic** expectations

3. **Limit** screen time

4. **Encourage** self-reflection

5. **Demonstrate** positive role modelling

6. **Teach** resilience

7. **Promote** empathy

8. **Lead** by example

In today's hyper-connected world, young people are constantly exposed to carefully curated snapshots of other people's lives — from picture-perfect holidays and academic achievements to the latest fashion trends and fitness goals. This relentless stream of comparisons, often amplified through social media, creates what is known as comparison culture.

Comparison culture fosters a mindset where individuals constantly evaluate their own worth by measuring themselves against others. This leaves many young people feeling as though they're falling short. For children and adolescents who are still developing their sense of identity, this environment can be especially harmful — contributing to feelings of inadequacy, self-doubt and anxiety.

It's important to understand how comparison culture shapes the way children see themselves and their place in the world. When young people constantly compare their appearance, achievements, or social lives to their peers or online influencers, they can develop unrealistic expectations and a distorted sense of self-worth. This can lead to low self-esteem, perfectionism, and a constant need for external validation.

1. Encourage open communication

Create a safe environment where your child can express their feelings and concerns without fear of judgement. Encourage them to talk about their experiences with comparing themselves to others.

2. Set realistic expectations

Help your child understand that nobody is perfect, and everyone has their own strengths and weaknesses. Set realistic expectations for them, and let them know that it's okay to make mistakes and learn from them.

3. Limit screen time

Monitor and limit your child's exposure to social media and other platforms that promote comparison culture. Encourage them to engage in activities that build self-esteem and confidence.

4. Encourage self-reflection

Teach your child the importance of self-reflection and self-acceptance. Help them identify their unique strengths and interests and celebrate them.

5. Demonstrate positive role modelling

Ensure you are a positive role model and consider introducing your child to other positive role models who have faced challenges, setbacks, and failures but have persevered and succeeded. Share their stories of determination and bravery.

6. Teach resilience

Encourage your child to view setbacks as an opportunity for growth and learning. This will help them develop problem-solving skills and build resilience.

7. Promote empathy

Help your child develop empathy by teaching them to understand that everyone has their struggles. Encourage acts of kindness and participating in volunteer work to build a sense of community and compassion.

8. Lead by example

Children often learn by observing their parents. Be mindful of your own behaviours and attitudes toward comparison culture, and demonstrate self-acceptance and a positive self-image.