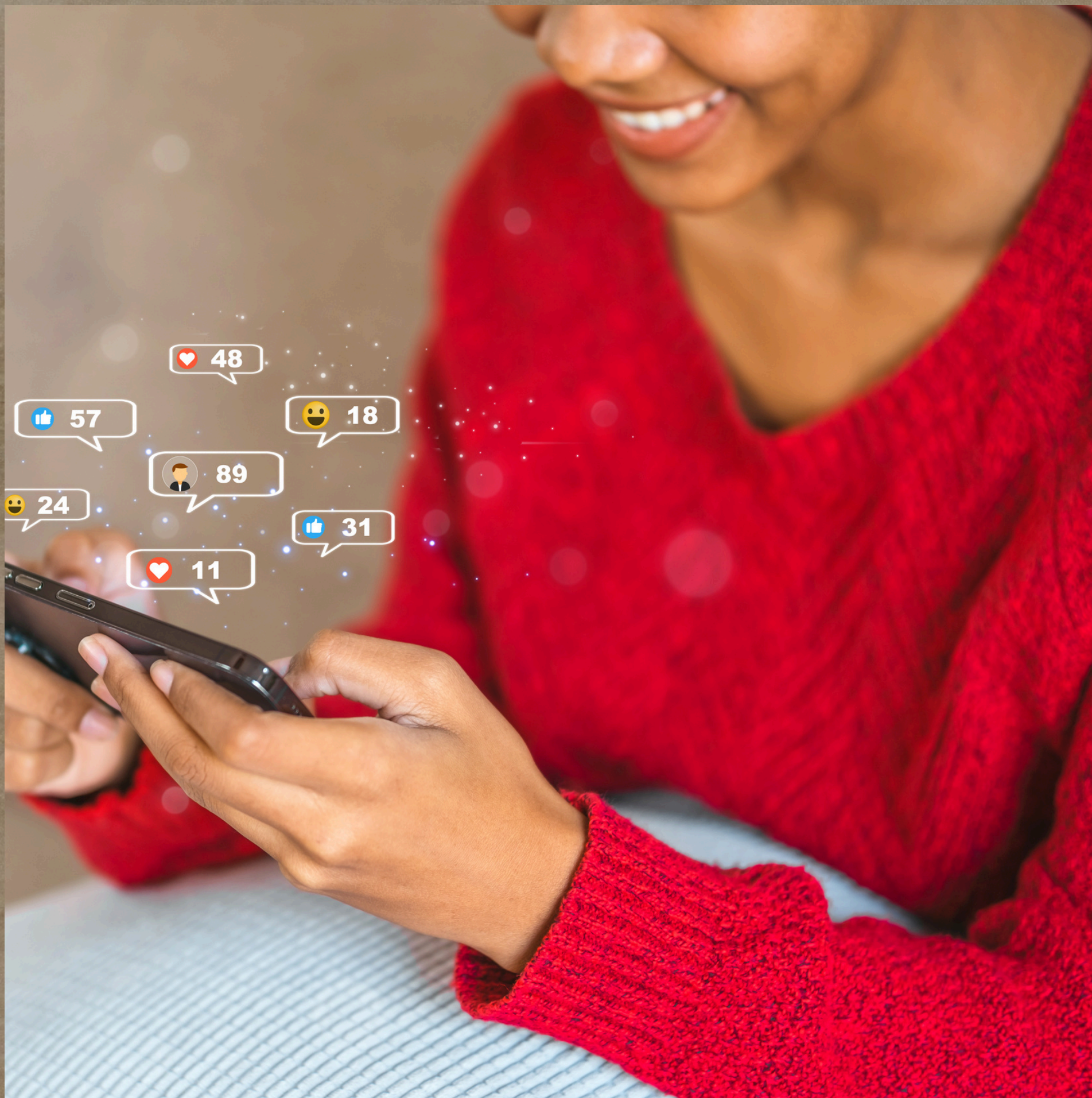


# SOCIAL MEDIA ANOTHER TYPE OF DRUG



## WHAT DOES SOCIAL MEDIA TO TEENAGERS?

For some teenagers, Social Media is a way to check up on others. However, like myself sometimes, Social Media can be their worst nightmare. For Gen Z, Social Media seems to be a new way of communicating. In my experience, whenever I hang out with my friend, we usually just end up using our phones. However, for some that pull get to be a lot farther than expected. Nowadays teens use 5.8 hours of social media. With that number, teenagers are all the more likely to develop mental health disorders. A study in Pew Research center shows, "38% of teens say that what they see on social media makes them feel overwhelmed because of all the drama" (Voegels and Watnick). That is roughly 3 in 10. But that begs the question why is social media making teens feel this way?

Teenagers frequently view posts that feature severely photoshopped images of users. Many teens do not realize that it is photoshopped, and they can feel dissonance which can cause them to develop anxiety. The anxiety can add or lead into depression, or eating disorders. The numbers of both these diseases have been up since past years, mainly due to social media. Cyberbullying is another issue that kids in this generation are facing today. A study conducted at Bradley Hospital and Brown University claims that, on average 37% of young people between the ages of 12 and 17 have been bullied online. 30% have had it happen more than once (Rocha, 2019 p. 5).





# MY EXPERIENCE

Social media has this magnetic pull that's hard to resist. It's like a reflex—I pick up my phone and before I know it, I'm scrolling through Instagram or Twitter. It's both a blessing and a curse. On one hand, it offers a temporary escape from the stresses of life, especially during busy times like tests and deadlines. Yet, it's also a source of unrealistic comparisons. It's easy to get lost in the illusion that everyone else's life is perfect. But deep down, I know it's not the full picture. I remind myself that what I see online is just a highlight reel. Despite its allure, I try not to let social media consume too much of my time. Ultimately, true happiness comes from real connections and experiences offline.

