

The pressures of being an influencer

Mental illness in the entertainment industry has been a huge topic of discussion in South Africa. Social media influencers and celebrities are no strangers to the struggles of keeping up appearances or being bullied and criticised by 'online trolls'.



Source: www.pexels.com

While the influencer industry is fast-growing, attracting millions of people who are desperate to get in on the piece of the action, all that glitter isn't always gold when it comes to the cost of your mental health. It is common for social media users to set unrealistic expectations for influencers and view them as 'characters' instead of real people with feelings, but it is never okay to accept this as a reality.

If you are an influencer, here is what you can do to protect your mental well-being:

1. Maintain a private personal life

Just like any job, striking a balance is crucial. In the world of influencers, it is easy for the line between a personal and professional life to become blurred. But influencers need to keep in mind that they are not obligated to share every aspect of their lives with their followers. This includes details of their relationships, whereabouts and other private information.

2. Take some downtime

Being constantly connected has resulted in many people being ironically disconnected. Social media is not, and cannot, replace the real world. Maintaining a life that does not revolve around social media is crucial for protecting your mental health. Just like everyone else, influencers also need to take a break. Although this can be difficult (they have practically built a life on social media!), allowing yourself to tune out can help you in the long run.

3. Develop a niche

By establishing a niche, influencers can plan their content to be structured around a specific topic or industry; this can assist in maintaining a personal and professional social media presence. Although authenticity is key to a successful career in influencer marketing, sharing content on specific topics can prevent overexposing yourself.

4. Restrict comments

Influencers are only human, and harsh words via 'keyboard warriors' can be hurtful. However, knowing when to turn off the comments is not a sign of weakness. No one should be willing to expose themselves to virtual abuse in the name of fame or endorsements. It is possible to expose yourself to criticism, especially when standing up for causes or beliefs, on social media, but if you feel that comments are fast getting out of hand, you have the power to turn them off!

5. Speak up

The influencer industry has come under fire for being too commercialised through the years. Many influencers have been called out for promoting unrealistic standards and not being authentic enough. It is now crucial for current and aspiring influencers to develop and maintain a unique voice. In doing so, influencers should not be afraid to speak out about important subjects that matter to them. It is also important for influencers to use their platform to create a safe space for their followers to share their own beliefs and struggles, such as mental health challenges.

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