

## How Movies and TV shows affect Teens

By: Tierra Ola

Homework or binge watch tonight? Decisions, decisions. But, have you ever considered how what you watch may affect your actions and way of thinking? While many shows seem informal or entertaining, they aren't very accurate and realistic. This can be a problem for teens who rely on shows and movies when dealing with problems such as Depression and Anxiety. Even though these platforms may help, most of them can impact teens or approach situations with a fictional and negative connotation. Movies and TV shows affect teens in a negative limelight, due to adult actors portraying teens, exposure to violence/sex/drugs, and lack of parental involvement in teen choices.

Despite children growing up on television and technological devices, once become a teen, their focus tends to change. One of the most common shifts in a tween's life is romance. Starting to become interested in other boys and girls, teenagers may try to relate to certain romance movies that seem relatable. However, the movie and characters are written and viewed through an adult perception of "teenage love." For instance, "Romeo and Juliet" is a love tragedy as old as time, yet, many teens still feel as though they relate to the story in some way. However, we must ask the questions, is it appropriate for teens to relate to a story where it results in suicide?

Another way Movies and TV shows may affect teens negatively, is when they see teen roles being played by adults. Adults acting as teens further gives teens the impression that they must look a distinguished way, which affects body image. Since a teen's appearance constantly

changes, an adult playing a teen role makes teens question themselves.

<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/problem-teen-characters-played-by-adults>, Barbara Greenberg, a Clinical Psychologist and Teen family expert, claims that casting actors in their 20's and older can complicate an already "difficult" time for teens. "It can give the message that they're supposed to look good all the time," Greenberg quoted. She also added, "That leads to all kinds of body image and social comparison issues." According to a 2017 article in [Teen Vogue](#), the idea of adults portraying themselves as teens for roles came about, due to the legal limitations set on having minors on set because of schooling. However, the overall effect of teens on tv being played by adults, contributes toward more pressure amongst puberty and negative self image. Shows like "13 Reasons Why", "Riverdale," "On My Block," and many more all contain one of the three, if not all, of the main issues that negatively impact teens.

Another way that movies and tv shows negatively impact teens, is through exposure to explicit content. Explicit content includes sex, drugs, violence and even vulgar behavior. Movies and Tv shows such as Riverdale, Big Mouth and The Kissing Booth are a few examples of outlets that contain explicit content that negatively impacts teens due to exposure. According to [https://teens.lovetoknow.com/TV\\_Effect\\_on\\_Teenagers](https://teens.lovetoknow.com/TV_Effect_on_Teenagers), a study showed that in 2015, <https://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/gun-violence-in-pg-13-movies-continues-to-climb-past-r-rated-films/>, PG-13 movies featured over 2.5 instances of gun violence per hour without showing extensive scenes depicting the real consequences of those actions. This gives teens an altered view of reality. Many movies also portray teens encouraging underage drinking and smoking. Through these platforms, teens perceive these actions as acceptance without

consequence, since “everyone is doing it,” or it seems common amongst peers. As a teenager, it is a known fact that the brain is still underdeveloped. Due to this, many teens aren’t able to process and handle certain situations maturely. Being a tremendous influence, movies and tv shows contribute towards providing a fictional outlook, which impacts teens.

Although this is showcased on media platforms, they aren’t the only guilty parties here. As the saying goes, “It starts at home!” This is referencing towards parental involvement with children and teen actions. Not only does parental involvement include being aware of their kids activities, but it also means being able to communicate with your child. Without a good ear, you’ll never be able to understand someone else. Though the media portrays fictional and negative outlets, teens wouldn’t become so vulnerable towards these outlets if they were getting the proper engagement from parents. Parental involvement is vital during a time and age like this. Compared to shows and movies 5 to 10 years ago, the media currently far more adult content, despite movies and tv shows being appropriately rated “PG-13.” For every teen, during a certain period of time, they become more restricted from what parents or guardians may feel is “Adult Activity,” yet shows and movies always seem more for mature audiences, rather than teens, over the course of each decade. However, teens would sneak around to watch more “adult based” content by waiting till their parents fall asleep to sneak their computer. Now the roles have reversed, due to production companies such as Netflix and Hulu, creating content for teens that is very explicit and encourages “adult activities.” If the parents aren’t involved in their teen’s endeavors, then the teens have no choice but to rely on media.

Second guessing what to watch? Don't worry, although media can be negatively impactful, it's up to you to decide and control your actions or environment. At the end of the day, everyone's free to do whatever he, she, or they please to do. Just remember, think for yourself and be careful or pay attention to what you or your siblings feeds into. You can watch something, without having to put yourself in that situation. Especially, if the situation is more than likely unrealistic. Media changes and portrays situations unrealistically, so make sure that you distinguish fiction from reality, and protect your mental health.