



MANAGING OR REDUCING INTERNET/ TECH USE

Ideas for starting the conversation

- Be Proactive—talk about the ways we use technology, the pros and cons—before you have a problem.
- Use your communication skills. Listen, Listen, Listen.
- Talk about healthy use rather than cutting off all use. Be a role model of balanced technology use.
- Seek to understand their opinions about the pros and cons of social media. Explore both.
- Pick a time when everyone is calm and not rushed. Some find talking in the car helps. Others like to go out for together. Explore the topic without resolving anything. It's okay to have a few conversations.
- Problem-solve with youth around reasonable guidelines for computer use. Be prepared to listen to their point of view, and to try to understand it. Try to get inside their heads. Be prepared to negotiate.
- Problem-solve with youth around the pressures & stresses created by social media in youth lives. Again, listen and explore options together.
- For excessive use, you could try a screen-time contract, if you are able to negotiate together something both people agree with. Read a little about collaborative problem solving or attend the SACY "Holding a Family Meeting" workshop for support in doing this.
- It can be helpful to acknowledge that reducing technology use might be hard, and may not be the teen's choice. If you can, acknowledge how you've participated in things reaching this point. Maybe you didn't know it was better to set limits, or to keep the computer out of the bedroom? Think about how you model technology use. Youth appreciate a parent reflecting on their own behaviour.

Ideas for maintaining limits:

- Use transitional warnings. Setting a timer set for 15 minutes may make it easier on the teen.
- With younger teens, you might try revoke or reward privileges. Older teens may do better with a collaborative process, and the use of friendly reminders and support to keep to their plan.
- Be consistent. If you use consequences, make sure they are ones you are able to supervise or enforce.
- Help youth find other ways to fill their time—your child may need support in figuring out what else to do. (not chores or homework!) Help them explore new passions (theatre arts? Paint ball? Kayaking?).

Some material adapted from VCH FACES "what to do before you pull the plug"