

## TECHNOLOGY AND TEENS – Tips and Resources

*Chatting/texting      School work      Emailing      Assignments FaceTime/Skype/Research*  
*Gaming of many types      Creative pursuits      Shopping Extracurricular activities*  
*Twitter/Facebook/Instagram/Snapchat/Others      Movies/Music Social Connections*

Do we use technology the same way as our children/youth do?

### Sometimes our teens:

- Cannot follow time limits and turn devices off
- Neglect chores, homework or studies
- Have more online friends than real-life friends
- Get “secretive” (private?) about their technology use

### Research tells us:

- Children need enough nutrition, exercise, and sleep for healthy development!
- “Too much” screen time is linked to obesity, declining fitness, nutrition, and sleep problems
- Entertainment screen time should be limited to two hours a day for children ages 3-18.
- Teens should aim for at least 60 min moderate-to-vigorous-intensity physical activity daily
- Having at least 3 non-digital things you like to do that make you feel better is protective

### How much is too much? Start talking with your teen if:

- They seem to need to spend more and more time online
- They experience withdrawal symptoms when not online
- They are not able to get to school regularly
- They stay awake all night on their devices and sleep during the day (change in pattern)
- You think they use digital activity to deal with uncomfortable emotion (anxiety, sadness)

### What can parents do?

- Make peace with technology, it’s here to stay!
- Teens need parental mentoring more than excessive monitoring
- It’s about moderation, not elimination
- Help your child develop a healthy balance between sleeping, eating, school work, and fun
- Set realistic limits around technology for everyone in the home
- Model good technology etiquette/behaviour
- Modify the patterns of digital use (get them back to sleeping during the night)
- Explore what your child is watching/playing online – why do they like it?

**Some parents negotiate agreements with teens and use digital/behavioural contracts.**

**Some examples:**

- [https://www.common sense media.org/sites/default/files/uploads/pdfs/phase3\\_customizabledevicecontract\\_design1\\_interactive.pdf](https://www.common sense media.org/sites/default/files/uploads/pdfs/phase3_customizabledevicecontract_design1_interactive.pdf)
- <https://www.common sense media.org/research/technology-addiction-concern-controversy-and-finding-balance/resources>
- <http://www.pitcairn.com/electronic-device-contract/>

**You can also check the following resources/websites for other ideas:**

<http://www.screenagersmovie.com/> Screenager is available for screening. Website has resources.

<http://www.safeonline.ca/> Formerly known as SOLOS ( Safe Online Outreach Society) SafeOnline offers session to PACs and parents on this topic .

<http://dalailamacenter.org/> The Heart-Mind conference (run through the Dalai Lama Centre in Vancouver) 2015 on Human Connection in a Digital World. Keynote speakers were filmed and are archived on the site. <http://dalailamacenter.org/heart-mind-2015-human-connection-digital-world>

[www.keltymentalhealth.ca/about](http://www.keltymentalhealth.ca/about) and [www.familysmart.ca](http://www.familysmart.ca) and The In the Know series presentations that are archived on their site. <http://mediasite.phsa.ca/Mediasite/Showcase/itk>

[www.cw.bc.ca/OnlineCourses/mediasite/FORCE/Internet%20Addiction%20QRS%2020-April-2012.pdf](http://www.cw.bc.ca/OnlineCourses/mediasite/FORCE/Internet%20Addiction%20QRS%2020-April-2012.pdf) A tip sheet, put together by Kelty Mental Health, with various resources for internet addiction.

[www.lastdoor.org/videos/video-game-and-internet-addiction/](http://www.lastdoor.org/videos/video-game-and-internet-addiction/) Last Door Media Group is a focused therapy group for all media addictions.

[www.alexandrasamuel.com/parenting/what-kind-of-digital-parent-are-you](http://www.alexandrasamuel.com/parenting/what-kind-of-digital-parent-are-you) Researcher Digital Parenting

[www.ted.com/talks/sherry\\_turkle\\_alone\\_together](http://www.ted.com/talks/sherry_turkle_alone_together) Sherry Turkle: devices redefine human connection

**For immediate help, you can contact**

- **BC Distress and Information Line** 310-6789 (no area code required); provides 24/7 skilled assessment, emotional support, information and referral, and crisis and suicide intervention
- **Kids Help Phone** is a free, anonymous and confidential phone and on-line professional counselling service for youth. Big or small concerns. 24/7. 365 days a year
- **Youth in BC** is an on line crisis chat service, chat 1-on-1 with a trained volunteer from the Vancouver Crisis Centre, plus resources where you can get help
- If you or a friend, peer or sibling have been involved in a self/peer exploitation incident—otherwise known as “sexting”, [NeedHelpNow.ca](http://NeedHelpNow.ca) are there to help. This site provides you with guidance on steps you can take to get through the issue of sexting and reputation slander. Information includes removing pictures, dealing with others, getting help, coping and reporting.

**References:**

1. "The Digital Diet: the 4 step plan to break your tech addiction and regain balance in your life".  
By Daniel Sieberg
2. Video Game Play and Addiction: A guide for parents". By Kourosh Dini
3. "Just one more game!" Presentation by Tyler Black
4. "iMinds: How cell phones, computers, gaming, and social media are changing our brains, our behaviour, and the evolution of our species". By Mari K. Swingle