ON CALL

Lay Community Health Advisors

Preventing technology addictions among young and adolescent

Introduction

This short handbook will provide you with some additional information about how to avoid getting too addicted to technology.

This handbook will be useful in promoting positive mental health with members of your local health network. Thanks to reading this handbook you will know about importance of using technology in moderation.

Technology is everywhere and it is not possible to eliminate it from our life completely- we need to use it in order to learn, teach and work, not only for entertainment purposes. Even though, we need too remember that we definitely need to use it in moderation.

Technological development on the one hand is pushing development of human race in various fields like science or teaching, and contributes to development of human race in general. On the other hand nowadays we can easily spot its influence of on youngsters and adolescents. It is hard to take a walk down street and not to spot some people staring down at their phones. Even if technological development influences all age groups, and even some young kids learn how to use tablet or smartphone before they learn how to walk and speak properly it is young people who make the group which is most susceptible.

Even if it can be really tempting, spending to much time while using technology is bad for our physical and psychical health.

Negative influence

Our psychical health is as important as physical one. When it comes to psychical consequences technical dependence can lead to mild or strong annoyance or anxiety when away from technology, constant need to check what happens online, problems with communicating in real life, feelings of isolation, anxiety, and even depression.

Modern media teach us to compare ourselves to others, while we are checking out our friends and colleagues social media profiles we may need to become jealous of their perfect life, ignoring the fact that we know than behand one perfect photoshoot there are dozens not so perfect ones. We start to feel the need to impress them with our lifestyle, which in a long term can lead to depression,

When it comes to our physical health technology can influence it in a bad way as well.

Let's start with skin condition. Cell phones we carry around for whole day and keep lying down on different surfaces, can be covered in bacteria, causing oils to collect when placed against the face. In result we can get acne from simply using our cell phone.

Cell phones emit radiation, and even research has yet to prove the amount can be harmful it definitely has some bad effects it we carry it around with us foe whole day. Radiation that cell phones emit can be absorbed by the user and it becomes a concern nowadays as more and more people are using cellular devices.

Constant use of technological devices requires sitting sown or standing still a lot. Most people also ten to keep their head down and stoop, which can cause pain in the neck and back.

Talking about small physical inconveniences we need to mention so-called blackberry thumb. The little scrolling ball from blackberry cell phones, can actually cause stress injuries to the thumb.

Most common effect of using too technological devices too much and for too long are straining eyes by staring at the computer screen for too long, headaches, blurred vision and problems with falling asleep.

Becoming addicted

The main reasons why adolescents and youngsters become addicted to technology is their desire to fit in.
Thanks to browsing internet they can keep up with all trends, stay in contact with all friends and avoid being rejected by peers.

Internet has become such interesting and lively place that this reality is often more tempting to youngsters and adolescents than real life. When we see them as a zombies starring down the phone, they spend their days sharing photos and information with friends from other countries, or those living down the street, searching for a date or a party to attend, starting job as an influencer making real money or just mindlessly watching some memes to improve their mood.

Moreover, technology fulfils natural need for stimulation, interaction, and changes in environment. When youngsters experience stress like rejection or poor grade on an exam, technology can become a quick and easy way to forget that for a moment and focus on something else instead. And while used in this way. It can become really addictive.

Furthermore, technology impacts the pleasure systems of the brain in ways similar to addictive substances. It provides

some of the same reward that alcohol and or drugs:

Last, but not least reason why technology can become that addictive for youngsters and adolescents is the fact that it can be a great, easy and almost effortless mean to kill boredom and provide an escape from reality.

Preventing technology addiction

1. **Set time limits** –If you only give yourself a certain amount of time for specific applications you can help break yourself from the addiction. The point is to keep those time frames. You can try to limit your smartphone use to only using it as a phone for a most of the day, and yourself surf on web or play games on it only in certain point of time – like when travelling by bus or waiting in a queue. If you want to teach this to your kids – remember to set a good example, if they will see you with your nose in your smartphone for most of the day, they will consider this as normal behaviour.

2. **Turn off notifications** – Most of application you install on your phone will ask for your consent to send you notifications. Even if it may seem tempting, checking

them will make you check your phone even more often during the day. If you are already getting some you can usually turn them off inside the application itself.

3. **Make house rules regarding technology** – make sure that no one in your house is on their phone while eating meals or while they have possibility to spend quality time with other house members (e.g. while goodnight reading, playing board games on family trip).

4. **Use other rewards** – Spending time using technology devices makes dopamine hit in your brain, so the one way to fight this addiction is to find other ways to reward yourself. You can make it traditional way like treating yourself to something good or even download an app that will give you a reward for NOT picking up your phone for some time. There are many different rewards you can come up with that will help you break these habits.

How to use this Resource with your Local Health Group?

This handbook presents information on the topic of how can you prevent technology addiction among young and adolescents, It helps us understand that spending less time online helps us not to miss important things in our life.

Reviewing this handbook before each session with the group will help you to lead a discussion about the topic.

In the resources you will also find a PowerPoint presentation which will help you to explain the topic to your group and start a conversation with them.

Group Activity

After you have shared the digital resource and the PowerPoint presentation with your

group, you can start a group discussion asking if all group members following questions and write their answers on whiteboard or flipchart

- How does technology use can affect our family life?
- How not using technology at all would influence our contacts with friends?

Once they are finished ask them to think about their selves and their technology use level/ Are members of your group consider themselves addicted? How many hours can they go without using their computer? How many without checking social media? How many of their friend online have they met in real life?

Let them think about it for a moment and decide themselves if they are addicted or not and encourage them to follow advices mentioned in the handbook.

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