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Helping Children/Youth with Technology Overuse

Northern Ontario Pediatrics Conference
 Fri, May 10, 2019, 0840-0940 hrs Plenary Session
 Dr. Michael Cheng, Psychiatrist, www.drcheng.ca
 Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), uOttawa



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Schedule

0840-0925 hrs	Presentation (45-min.)
0925-0940 hrs	Questions (15-min.)

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Faculty/Presenter Disclosure: Michael Cheng

- Faculty: Michael Cheng
- Relationships with financial sponsors:
 - Grants/Research Support: Lundbeck / Otsuka for eMentalHealth.ca/PrimaryCare
 - Speakers Bureau: None
 - Honoraria: Northern Ontario Pediatric Conference
 - Consulting Fees: None
 - Patents: I wish.
 - Other: None

3

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Mitigating Potential Bias: Michael Cheng

- Northern Ontario Pediatric Conference planning committee have reviewed and approved session learning objectives and speaker disclosures in the program to ensure mitigation of any biases.
- Recommendations are consistent with published guidelines
- Recommendations are consistent with current practice patterns

4

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Objectives

- By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
 - a) List ways in which modern technology is designed to be addictive;
 - b) Identify red flags suggesting inappropriate or excessive technology use;
 - c) List ways to work with children, youth and families to help reconnect them to healthier activities, and disconnect them from inappropriate or excessive technology use.

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When I was a kid...

- My parents wouldn't get us an Atari..
- For years, I resented them for that...
- And now...
- I am tell parents to cut back on their kids' technology...



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Let's start with a case...

- Dave is a 16-yr teenager
- Referred to see you for inattention, irritability, and depression




Image: Boggett Photography

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Case

- Your assessment with Dave shows...
 - Depressed mood, irritability and anger
 - 7.5 hrs a day on video games
 - Poor social skills
 - Cyberbullying, i.e. harassment online from people he has annoyed




Image: Boggett Photography

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Etiology of Wellness






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Thanks to the way we lived for millennia, human beings are wired to need certain things...



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Our Needs for Mental Wellness **Include...**


- Attachment 
- Sleep 
- Nutrition 
- Nature 
- Purpose, Belonging, Meaning, hope 



Health Canada, First Nations Mental Wellness Consortium Framework, 2014

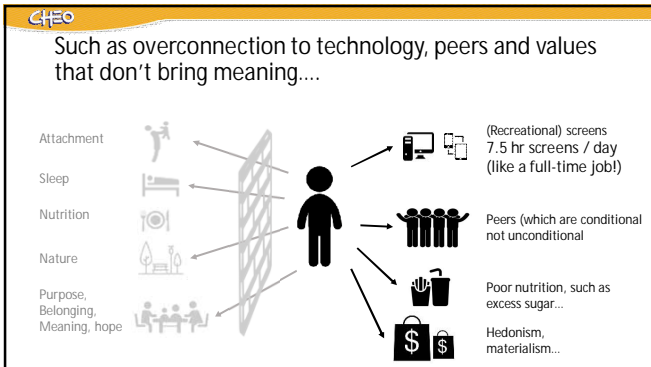
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Unfortunately, modern society tends to disconnect us from all the things we need for mental wellness...

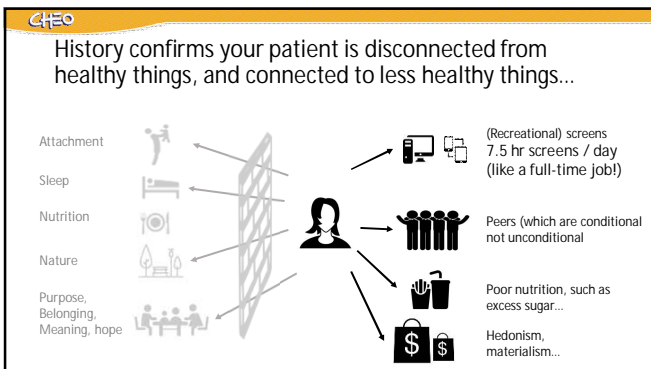
- Attachment 
- Sleep 
- Nutrition 
- Nature 
- Purpose, Belonging, Meaning, hope 



Health Canada, First Nations Mental Wellness Consortium Framework, 2014



Getting Back to Our Case



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Bad things happen when humans get disconnected from that which they need...

Attachment

Sleep

Nutrition

Nature

Purpose, Belonging, Meaning, hope

(Recreational) screens
7.5 hr screens / day
(like a full-time job!)

Peers (which are conditional
not unconditional)

Poor nutrition, such as
excess sugar...

Hedonism,
materialism...

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Bad things happen when humans get disconnected from that which they need...

Emotional problems

- Mood
- Anxiety

Physical problems

- Myopia from lack of nature, near work
- Sedentary syndrome

Behavioural

- Frustration
- Aggression

(Recreational) screens
7.5 hr screens / day
(like a full-time job!)

Peers (which are conditional
not unconditional)

Poor nutrition, such as
excess sugar...

Hedonism,
materialism...

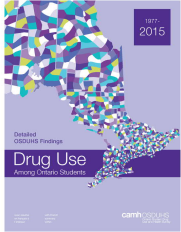
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Epidemiology

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Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS) shows...

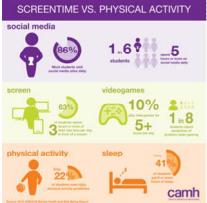
- 2013
 - 24% of Ontario students report elevated psychological distress (Ontario Student Drug use and Health Survey)
- 2015
 - 34% of Ontario students report elevated psychological distress
 - 70% increase in distress in only 2 years!



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Why are students more distressed in 2015?

- ↑
 - Screen time
 - Social media
 - Problem video gaming
 - 63% (almost 2/3) spend >3 hrs/day of free-time in front of a screen
- ↓
 - Sleep
 - Only 41% of students have >6 hrs of sleep
 - Physical activity
 - Only 22% meet daily physical activity guidelines
 - Face-to-face time with fellow humans



OSDUHS, 2015

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The Atlantic Magazine, 2017



Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?

More comfortable online than out partying, post-Millennials are safer, physically, than adolescents have ever been. But they're on the brink of a mental health crisis.

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Empirical Article

Increases in Depressive Symptoms, Suicide-Related Outcomes, and Suicide Rates Among U.S. Adolescents After 2010 and Links to Increased New Media Screen Time

Jean M. Twenge¹, Thomas E. Joiner², Megan L. Rogers², and Gabrielle N. Martin¹
¹San Diego State University and ²Florida State University

Clinical Psychological Science
2018, Vol. 4(1), 3–17
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DOI: 10.1177/2167702617728176
www.psychologicalscience.org/APS
SAGE

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(Neuro)Pathophysiology of Technology Overuse

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Before video games, we had nature and physical activity...

- Nature is calming and restorative
- Nature provides "pink noise" is what our brains are designed / evolved to handle
 - Optimal sensory experience
 - Soothing, i.e. brain does not interpret nature sounds as "threats" (Buxton, 2012)
 - Improved recovery from stress (Alvarsson, 2010)
- To get your dose of adrenaline, dopamine, kids had to go outside... where they had to expend calories and effort to get adrenaline and dopamine...



Image Credit: GettyImages
Sales Order 2054016814

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Modern technology provide "easy dopamine"...

- Video games are designed to be addictive and immersive
- They give our hunter gatherer brains a jolt of dopamine with little effort ("easy dopamine") which leaves us wanting more (Kuhn et al.: Neural basis of video gaming, Transl. Psychiatry 2011)



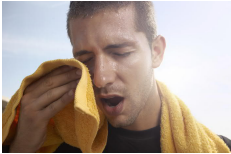




Image: Adobe Stock

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Why bother with the real world?



When your brain can get "easy dopamine/adrenaline"?



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Problem with technology: Overstimulation and Stress

- Screens are not calming nor refreshing, and can trigger the body's alarm, i.e. chronic stress
 - Blood flow shifts from frontal (developed brain) to the more primitive parts of the brain
 - Leads to problems with regulation, attention, creativity, social behaviour
 - Cortisol, a stress hormone
 - High cortisol impairs memory (from hippocampus), disturbs sleep, disturbs concentration, causes weight gain





➔


Image credit: Fair Use Policy

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Problem with technology: Screens don't give us oxytocin

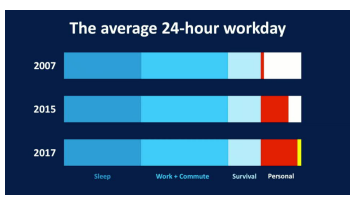


The diagram on the left shows a couple embracing, with a green checkmark to its left. Labels include 'Oxytocin release', 'Social interaction', 'Physical touch', 'Emotional connection', and 'Trust'. The photo on the right shows three people at a table, each looking at their phone, with a large red 'X' over it.

Image credit: Scientific American Image credit: Adobe Stock

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Problem with technology: Excessive screen time means no more time left for meaningful, purposeful life activities



Year	Sleep	Work + Commute	Survival	Personal
2007	~8h	~8h	~4h	~0h
2015	~7h	~9h	~4h	~0h
2017	~7h	~9h	~4h	~0h

Adam Alter, TEDS Talk

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Types of Technology Overuse / Inappropriate Use

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Types of Technology Overuse and Inappropriate Use include...

- Problematic Video Gaming / Video gaming addiction
- Cyberbullying
- Social media addiction
- Internet addiction
- Pornography addiction
- Websites with negative messages such as
 - "Pro-Ana" eating disorder website
 - Pro-self-injury websites
- And many others...


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Clinical Presentation

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Red Flags for Excessive Technology Use in the Office

- Child/youth (or parent!) that cannot tolerate even short periods of time without using a device, e.g. texting
- Parent nags child/youth to put down device



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Excessive screen time has been associated with numerous issues including

- Impaired function
 - School, work and relationships
 - Preoccupation with technology
- Physical symptoms
 - Insomnia
 - Physical complaints, including repetitive strain syndrome in texting or video gaming
- Neurovegetative symptoms
 - Mood problems
 - Attention problems
 - Hallucinations

Dunckley, 2015

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Assessment

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Technology History

- Ask parents / youth together, and separately
 - What types of technologies does your child use?
 - How many hours a day on weekdays? Weekends?
 - What's the worst thing that has happened online?
 - Done anything that you've regretted, e.g. sexting, posting certain comments, etc.?
 - Any cyberbullying?
- Ask parents
 - Any rules around the technology use?
 - Any conflicts that arise from the use?

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Activities / Attachments

- Ask parents / youth
 - "Walk me through a typical weekday / weekend... What's it look like?"
 - "How do you spend your time?"
 - "How much time
 - In front of a screen?
 - Outside?"
 - "Who do you spend time with
 - Face-to-face?
 - Online?"

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(Non-validated) Screening Questions from Dr. Dunckley

- 1) Does your child become listless, tearful, irritable or even aggressive when they can't use a screen device?
- 2) Does your child exhibit symptoms of mood dysregulation, poor concentration, oppositional-defiance or disorganization that seem inappropriate for their age, or that seem to be getting worse?
- 3) Would your child identify with the feeling that a device (e.g. cell phone) is "part of my identity", or "part of my brain" or "I can't live without it"?
- 4) Is your child receiving mental health treatment but doesn't seem to be getting better? Is he or she resistant to medication, therapy, discipline, or reward systems? Is he or she receiving extra help at school to no avail?
- 5) Do you find yourself saying your child "is just not the same as they used to be" ?
- 6) Is your child losing friends because they are super-competitive, bossy, controlling, or defensive?

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mental-issues/201209/game-over-screening-problematic-screen-time>

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(Non-validated) Screening Questions from Dr. Dunckley

- 7) Does your child avoid making eye contact, but used to be able to do so?
- 8) Is your child disinterested in other types of non-electronic play or activities? Have you said to yourself "I'd take it away but she'd have nothing to do" or "I'd remove it but he'd become suicidal/explosive/despondent" or "If I take it away he'll just lie in bed all day"?
- 9) Are you afraid of giving your child consequences that involve removing screen privileges?
- 10) Does your child become extremely argumentative or nasty when you try taking away screen-time? Do they try to rationalize why they "need it" or that "it's the only thing that makes me happy"?
- 11) Does your child "sneak" playing electronic games? have they ever found a device that you've hidden because they were desperately looking for it? Gotten around a password or other blocking mechanism in order to get computer access?
- 12) Does your child seemed "revved up" all the time? Overstimulated or spacey? Have tics or exhibit other abnormal movements that weren't always there or are becoming worse? Do they have trouble falling asleep or awaken feeling exhausted?

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mental-issues/201209/game-over-screening-problematic-screen-time>

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Screening Tools for Technology Overuse

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Ways to Screen for Technology Overuse

- Screening measures exist for
 - Social media
 - Video gaming
- Alternatively...
 - Simply asking about screen use
 - Much of the time, parents will themselves acknowledge there is too much screen time

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Dr. Doug Gentile's Video Game Addiction Scale

In the past year, please answer "Yes" / "No" / "Sometimes"...

1. Over time, have you been spending much more time thinking about playing video games, learning about video-game playing, or planning the next opportunity to play?
2. Do you need to spend more and more time and/or money on video games in order to feel the same amount of excitement?
3. Have you tried to play video games less often or for shorter periods of time, but are unsuccessful?
4. Do you become restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop playing video games?
5. Have you played video games as a way of escaping from problems or bad feelings?
6. Have you ever lied to family or friends about how much time you play video games?
7. Have you ever stolen a video game from a store or a friend, or have you ever stolen money to buy a video game?
8. Do you sometimes skip household chores in order to spend more time playing video games?
9. Do you sometimes skip doing homework in order to spend more time playing video games?
10. Have you ever done poorly on a school assignment or test because you spent too much time playing video games?
11. Have you ever needed friends or family to give you extra money because you spent too much money on video game equipment, software, or game/Internet fees?

Scoring: Pathological gaming is "Yes" or "Sometimes" to at least 6 out of 11 questions

Online version available on eMentalHealth.ca | Special thanks to Dr. Doug Gentile! 


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Social Media Disorder (SMD) Scale (9-items)

Please answer YES/NO...
Have you in the past month...

- 1) ...regularly found that you can't think of anything else but the moment that you will be able to use social media again?
- 2) ...regularly felt dissatisfied because you wanted to spend more time on social media?
- 3) ...often felt bad when you could not use social media?
- 4) ...tried to spend less time on social media, but failed?
- 5) ...regularly neglected other activities (e.g. hobbies, sport) because you wanted to use social media?
- 6) ...regularly had arguments with others because of your social media use?
- 7) ...regularly lied to your parents or friends about the amount of time you spend on social media?
- 8) ...often used social media to escape from negative feelings?
- 9) ...had serious conflict with your parents, brother(s) or sister(s) because of your social media use?

Scoring: Each YES counts as 1 point; score of 5 or more suggests problematic social media use (Eijnden, 2016)

Online version available on eMentalHealth.ca | Special thanks to Dr. Regina Eijnden! 

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Internet Addiction Diagnostic Questionnaire (IADQ)

Please answer the following questions about your use of the internet, which includes use of any 'screen' (such as a computer screen, mobile device or tablet):

- 1) Do you feel preoccupied with the Internet (thinking about previous online activity or anticipating the next online session)?
- 2) Do you feel the need to use the Internet for increasing amounts of time in order to achieve satisfaction?
- 3) Have you repeatedly made unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop Internet use?
- 4) Do you feel restless, moody, depressed, or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop Internet use?
- 5) Do you stay online longer than originally intended?
- 6) Have you jeopardized or risked the loss of significant relationship, job, educational or career opportunity because of the Internet?
- 7) Have you lied to family members, therapist, or others to conceal the extent of involvement with the Internet?
- 8) Do you use the Internet as a way of escaping from problems or of relieving mood problems? (such as feeling helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed)

Scoring

- Addiction is suggested by five or more "yes" answers to the questionnaire.

Online version available on eMentalHealth.ca (special thanks to Dr. Kimberley Young) 

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Diagnosis

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How Much Screen Time is Too Much?

- There is no specific hard number; what constitutes excessive screen time for a given child depends on many factors
- Guidelines from various organizations exist
 - American Academy of Paediatrics (AAP)
 - Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines (2011)
 - Age 0-2 → Max screen time = none
 - Age 2-4 → Max screen time 1 hr/day; less is better
 - Age 5-17 → Max recreational screen time 2 hrs/day; less is better
- Less is better
 - Lower levels of sedentary behaviour (especially screen time) associated with better health

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Clinically, this is what we see..

- It's a problem when the parent has troubles removing the technology from the child, whether in your office or at home...



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Not yet any official 'technology overuse diagnosis...'; though DSM-5 Internet Gaming Disorder exists...

Repetitive use of Internet-based games, often with other players, that leads to significant issues with functioning. Five of the following criteria must be met within one year:

- 1) Preoccupation or obsession with Internet games.
- 2) Withdrawal symptoms when not playing Internet games.
- 3) A buildup of tolerance – more time needs to be spent playing the games.
- 4) The person has tried to stop or curb playing Internet games, but has failed to do so.
- 5) The person has had a loss of interest in other life activities, such as hobbies.
- 6) A person has had continued overuse of Internet games even with the knowledge of how much they impact a person's life.
- 7) The person lied to others about his or her Internet game usage.
- 8) The person uses Internet games to relieve anxiety or guilt—it's a way to escape.
- 9) The person has lost or put at risk and opportunity or relationship because of Internet games.



Physical Exam / MSE

- Non-specific findings anecdotally reported:
 - Problems with weight due to physical inactivity.
 - Fatigue from sleep deprivation.
 - Child/youth using devices in the waiting room, as opposed to talking with each other.
 - Child/youth that can't put down the device even during the office visit, e.g. wanting to continue playing or texting with others.
 - Repetitive stress injury from excess texting or video game use



Diagnostic Testing

- There are currently not yet diagnostic tests for technology overuse in clinical practice
- Anecdotal signs
 - Child/youth who is unable to tolerate even short periods of time without using a device of some sort
 - Parent has to nag child to put down device





Diagnostic Testing

- No diagnostic tests (yet) for technology overuse
- However, there are instances of sleep studies where video telemetry confirms teen's usage of devices as the behavioural cause of insomnia




Courtesy of NJTV -- <http://watch.njtvonline.org/video/2365634913/>

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Management of Technology Overuse

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If we were in China...



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Evidence for technology restriction for technology overuse

- Studies on technology restriction on various problems...
- For depression:
 - Stopping social media use led to improvements in mood (Happiness Research Institute, 2014)
- For social skills
 - In children with social skills problems, five days at an outdoor education camp without screens improved their non-verbal skills (e.g. reading facial expressions) (Uhls, 2014).



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Treat any treatable DSM-5 conditions

- Manage any comorbid issues such
 - ADHD
 - Mood/anxiety disorders
 - Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
 - Learning disabilities
 - Social skills problems...
 - Etc...

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Technology Overuse: Psychoeducation for Parents

- Thank you for bringing in your child, who has troubles with mood, attention, and low frustration tolerance
- At some level, your child's brain is overloaded
- One of the main factors right now, may be the several hours of recreational screen time that your child is getting
- This gets in the way of healthier activities that contribute to mental health such as
 - Sleep
 - Face-to-face time with fellow humans, in particular family time
 - Nature time
 - Doing boring but necessary things such as homework

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Psychoeducation for Parents

- What children/youth need above all, is healthy connections with parents
- Technology is no replacement for genuine human interaction
- Ensure you have a close relationship with your child that is nurturing and caring
 - Spend 1:1 time with your child
 - Be sure that you are the primary influence in your child's development rather than technology, to protect yourself against negative influences from television, media, video games
 - Be close so that your child can turn to you to meet their core needs rather than technology

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Psychoeducation for Parents

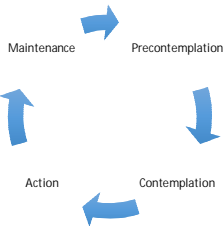
- Steve Jobs on the iPad in 2010...
 - "They haven't used it. We limit how much technology our kids use at home."



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Motivational interviewing

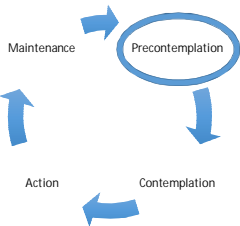
- As with other addictions, use motivational interviewing approaches
- What stage of change is the parent / child at?
 - Clinician to parent: "Any concerns about your child's technology use?"
 - Clinician to child: "What do you think about your screen time? Do you think it's too much, too little or just right?"



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Interventions depending on the stage: Pre-contemplation "We don't have any problem"

Strategy	What the clinician might say
Validation	"I appreciate, that at this point, you don't feel a need to make changes."
What needs are being met by technology	"What sorts of benefits do you get from using technology / screen time?" "How does it help your child?"
Keeping the connection	"How else can I support you?" e.g. you can work on other goals together with the family, such as improving family communication, etc. "Let's meet in a few weeks to review things."



Interventions depending on the stage:
Contemplation “We might have a problem, but...”

Strategy	What the clinician might say
Validation	“I can see that part of you wants to change, and another part is unsure.”
Explore obstacles to change	<p>What are your main concerns about cutting back on technology?</p> <p>Lack of alternative activities: “Screen time is the only thing that keeps them occupied so that I can get dinner done.”</p> <p>Worry about child’s reaction: e.g. “I’m worried my child will get depressed, or have a tantrum.”</p> <p>Peer concerns: e.g. “How will my child fit in with peers? They only connect through technology these days.”</p>

If parents agree, “connection before direction”

Step 1:
 Increase (+) connection, i.e. attachment with parents

- Empathy, validation, acceptance
- Family dinners
- Family nature time, board game night
- Family weekends with outdoor activities

Hoo, 2015

Step 2:
 Decrease (-) connections (i.e. recreational screen time)

- Parent modelling through parent reduction in technology use
- Setting family limits on technology
 - No devices at dinner – every puts devices into the ‘device bowl’
 - At bedtime, teens turn in devices to parents

Teaching the youth self-regulation using non-electronic means...

- Technology is used by many youth to self-regulate
 - To cope with boredom
 - To cope with emotional upset
 - To connect with others socially
- See if there is a particular primary function that the technology serves
 - Then you can focus on finding an alternate activity or strategy to meet that particular need, i.e. alternate ways to
 - Keep occupied,
 - Deal with upset,
 - Connect with others

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Screen detox

- With technology overuse (i.e. too much recreational screens), goal is to reduce the recreational screens to ZERO hours/day, followed by a "detox" period of a few weeks
- For mild to moderate overuse, stopping 'cold turkey' can be tried.
 - For example, the family tells the child they are going away on a 1-week family trip, and it just so happens that there is no internet
 - Anecdotally, these include camping trips, trips to Cuba, and cruises
- For moderate to severe overuse, a more gradual reduction might be recommended.
 - For example, over a period of weeks, parents gradually reduce the amount of allowable screen time
 - The goal is to reach a 3-4 week period of "screen detox" without any electronics.

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Stopping cold turkey is not recommended for moderate to severe technology overuse

- There have been documented instances in the media where parents have suddenly cut off video games from youth, with catastrophic results
 - E.g. youth with ASD who ran away and died
- From an attachment perspective, it is better to work on connection before direction
 - I.e. connect the child to healthy adults and non-electronic activities prior to cutting off the technology

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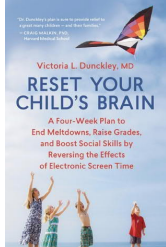
After the screen detox period...?

- After screen detox, parents should report improvement
- Now what?
- Options
 - Some families choose to continue with no recreational screen use after
 - Some families choose to re-introduce technology, while following the usual screen guidelines by CPS and other organizations (i.e. max 1-2 hrs/daily of recreational time); or no recreational screens on weekdays, only on weekends...
- Research is in early stages...

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For More Information about Screen Detox

- Consider
 - 1) Dr. Dunckley's "Reset Your Child's Brain", which has a four-week 'electronic detox' protocol for parents
 - 2) Going to <http://www.drdunckley.com> and signing up for the "Save Your Child's Brain" mini course – 4 newsletters that summarize the electronic detox protocol



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Prevention of Technology Overuse: Parent Guidance

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If you only do one thing...

- Be a good role model for
 - Healthy connections
 - Not disconnecting from your kids

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Do the same thing that Silicon Valley executives do...


- Steve Jobs, Bill Gates and many others all limited technology use in their own kids
- Steve Jobs
 - Didn't let his own teens use the iPad when it came out
- Bill Gates
 - Didn't let his daughter have a cellphone until age 14
 - Current average age of cell phone acquisition in USA is age 10



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Consider sending your child to a nature-based school...

- Nature-based education is mainstream in many European countries (e.g. Waldorf movement from Germany; nature schools in Scandinavia)
- Unlike a many schools that have (recreational) TV in daycare and iPads in kindergarten, nature-based schools typically have no screen (for educational use) until Gr. 6-8
- Examples in Ottawa:
 - Trille des bois, French public board, Ottawa
 - "Nouvelle école" (Finnish model) with French Catholic board, Ottawa
 - Ottawa Forest and Nature School (demonstration school through Child & Nature Alliance)




<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/23/technology/waldorf-school-in-silicon-valley-technology-can-wait.html?pagewanted=all>

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General Principles: Connect to Healthy Things

- Spend face-to-face time with your kids
- Get more nature!
 - Walk/bike to work
 - Walk outside after dinner
 - Have regular nature time (e.g. walks, mornings, afternoons, weekends) away from technology
 - Sit outside
 - Get a dog
- Ensure they have skill such as
 - Emotional intelligence skills
 - Social skills
- Ensure they have a sense of belonging, purpose, hope and meaning



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General Principles: Limit Recreational Technology


- Have rules/limits about technology
 - Max < 1-2 hrs/day for children/youth
 - No screens in bedroom
- Limit technology and have "tech free zones" during times when people should be connecting with each other
 - E.g. meals (not even TV), in the car
 - Have "device bowl"
- Don't use technology to meet a child's (attachment) needs that can be met in non-electronic ways
 - E.g. don't give a toddler a device to soothe, but instead, pick up the child and co-regulate yourself

American Academy of Paediatrics, 2013

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General Principles: Permit Technology to Create and Invent

- Allow technology when it is used to create
 - Music
 - Art
 - Programming
 - Videos



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Do Periodic Detox, e.g. Screen Free Week



April 30 - May 6, 2018

- Initiative of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood
- From April 30-May 6, 2018, children, families, entire schools, and communities will rediscover the joys of life beyond the screen.
- Plan to unplug from digital entertainment and spend all that free time playing, reading, daydreaming, creating, exploring, and connecting with family and friends!
- www.screenfree.org

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Screen Use Guidelines by Age

Note: There is variability with screen use guidelines from different sources...

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Recommendations for age 0-2

- Permitted
 - Skyping with relatives
- Not permitted
 - No TV
 - No handheld devices, i.e. NO BABY APPS!
 - No video games
 - No non-violent
 - No violent games
 - No background radio or TV ideally
 - Background radio / TV delays language development

Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS)
Technology Guidelines




Image: Boggett Photography

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Recommendations for age 2-5

- Permitted
 - Non-violent TV up to 1-hr daily max - Less is better!
- Not permitted
 - No handheld devices (e.g. no smart phones, no iPads)
 - No video games
 - No evidence that video games (even educational video games) improve child development
 - "Positive studies" show improvements in isolated measures such as eye-hand coordination but not in development overall

Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS)



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Recommendations for age 6-9

- Permitted
 - On weekends, up to 2-hrs recreational screen time (i.e. non-violent TV) under parental supervision in public area
 - Computer use for schoolwork (i.e. creating content)
- Not permitted
 - No recreational screen time on weekdays
 - No mobile devices / no social media
 - No screen time in bedroom

Dr. Kimberly Young




Image: Boggett Photography

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Recommendations for aged 9-12

- Permitted
 - Up to 2-hrs recreational screen time / day
 - Video games / computer games
 - Internet under supervision in public area
- Not permitted
 - No online games such as multiplayer games
 - No social media
 - No cell phones
 - No computer or video games in bedroom

Dr. Kimberly Young

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Recommendations for aged 12-18

- Permitted
 - Recreational screen time (1-2 hrs a day max)
- Possibly permitted
 - Smart phones / Social media?
 - If the child appears responsible enough to agree to rules around smart phone / social media, and is able to talk to parents if problems arise...
 - On the other hand, many advocate no social media nor smart phones until age 16+

Canadian Pediatric Society;
Kimberly Young

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Set Limits on Technology: Parent Guidance

- Have limits on technology
- If and when you decide your kids are ready for technology (e.g. video games, social media), ensure you have limits
- Many examples of technology contracts (e.g. internet, video game contracts, social media contracts) exist
- Take one and cut/paste for your own use
- Here is an example
 - eMentalHealth.ca > Technology Contracts
 - <http://www.ementalhealth.ca/index.php?module&ID=57030>

Family Technology Agreement

- Television
- Cell Phones
- Computers & Laptops
- iPads, iPods, & Tablets
- General Internet Safety

SB
www.sarabergstedt.com

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Teach Cybersafety Online: Parent Guidance

- Teach your kids about cybersafety to prevent them from
 - Sextortion
 - And worse...
- Many resources
 - www.cybertip.ca
 - <http://dontgetsexorted.ca/>

DON'T GET SEXTORTED. SEND A NAKED MOLE RAT.



Sextortion campaign targeting male teens

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Screen Use Guidelines

Simpler version...

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Anecdotaly...

- It can be complicated for parents to set and enforce various technology rules...
- One simple option reported by many parents is the following...
 - Weekdays
 - No recreational technology
 - Weekends
 - Recreational technology is allowed, but with limits
 - One example of limits
 - Recreational technology is permitted after lunch, up until early evening like 8 PM
 - Ensure healthy activities (like with mealtimes, you can have dessert after you have your meal; you can play video games after you've met your obligations and participated with the family)
 - Techonology curfew at bedtime still enforced

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Where to Refer

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Where to Refer for Technology Overuse in Northern Ontario...

- Your local accredited child/youth mental health agency
- Your local addictions agency
- Private practitioners
- School resource officers (in cases of cyberbullying, bullying)

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Getting back to our case...

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Case

- You review his attachment with his mother, focusing on
 - What makes him disconnect from her
 - What would make him want to reconnect with her
- You review his attachment with his technology, focusing on 'stages of change'
 - What does he get out of it
 - What other alternatives might their be




Image: Boggett Photography

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Case

- You educate mother about importance of connection to that which that gives belonging (i.e. attachments), purpose, hope and meaning
- You show mom that he is overly attached to technology and materialism, and not attached to parents and others
- You help mother start by reconnecting to him first by spending 1-1 in nature with him, and by listening with empathy, validation and acceptance
- Once he is reconnected, mother starts to disconnect him from the tech with tech rules for the entire family including getting rid of the family TV cable subscription




Image: Boggett Photography

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Case

- And finally, this is what you see on your last visit with them...





Image: Boggett Photography

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Nature Valley Video

3-generations were asked:
"What is your favorite activity?"




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Resources

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Parent Handouts from eMentalHealth.ca/CHEO

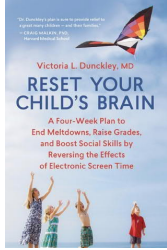
- Technology: Unplug and Connect
 - General advice for parents about technology
- Technology Contracts for Parents to Use
 - Contracts that parents can cut/paste and modify
- Nature
 - Strategies to help parents get their kids outside into nature, which naturally balances out technology



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Dr. Dunckley's Book and Website

- Dr. Dunckley's "Reset Your Child's Brain", which has a four-week 'electronic detox' protocol for parents
- You can
 - Read the book or
 - Visit <http://www.drduckley.com> and sign up for the "Save Your Child's Brain" mini course – 4 newsletters that summarize the electronic detox protocol



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Resource for Primary Care Providers


eMentalHealth.ca/PrimaryCare

Technology Overuse in Children and Youth: Information for Primary Care

Info Sheet | Screening Tools | Patient Handouts | Where to Refer | Practice Guidelines | School/Workplace Letters

External Links

Summary: Studies confirm that when human beings spend excess time in front of screens, it can cause all manner of problems, including insomnia, depression, anxiety, and attention difficulties. More recent data have pointed to specific effects on executive function, such as "electronic screen syndrome" (Dunckley, 2015), as well as conventional terms such as "video gaming addiction" (DASH). Treatment for excessive screen time includes 1) re-connecting the child to nature (human beings and healthier non-electronic activities), 2) removal of screen time, which can be done gradually or abruptly. After all screen time is removed, it is understood that the child/teens will go through a "screen detox" period of 3-4 weeks, during which time the brain can recover and improvements should be seen with mood, anxiety, and attention. If these persons then require and address other possible issues such as depression, anxiety, ADHD and autism spectrum disorder.



<http://primarycare.ementalhealth.ca/index.php?m=fpArticle&ID=53814>

Resources for Gamers

- Cam Adair's Game Quitters website, as featured on TED talk
- Consider watching TED talk with the youth Then recommending this website

Resources for General Audience

- Numerous TED talks on technology including tech addiction
 - Escaping video game addiction, Cam Adair
 - What you need to know about internet addiction, Dr. Kimberly Young
 - What you are missing while being a digital zombie, Patrik Wincent
 - Why I don't use a smart phone, Ann Makosinski
 - A year offline, what I have learned, Paul Miller

Clinical Pearls / Objectives

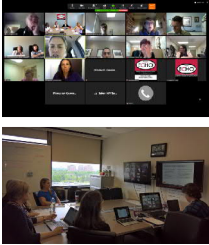
- 1) The elements for mental wellness
 - Belonging, purpose, hope and meaning
- 2) Unfortunately, modern society including technology disconnects us from that which we need for mental health
- 3) Fortunately, there are ways to
 - Reconnect children/youth to healthier attachments such as parents and nature, e.g. for parents to put their their devices and spend 1:1 time with their kids
 - Disconnect children/youth from technology overuse, e.g. for parents to start by setting limits on screen time, including electronic curfew, for example 9 PM

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Want to improve your ability to see child/youth with mental health issues, while earning free CME?

Consider Project ECHO


- A tele-distance CME program
- Through once a week sessions (e.g. Tuesdays at 12-1 PM), you will learn about a child/youth topic (e.g. ADHD in kids), and discuss a case with peers
- Qualifies for CME credit (Royal College / MainPro)
- Free! (funded by the MOHLTC)

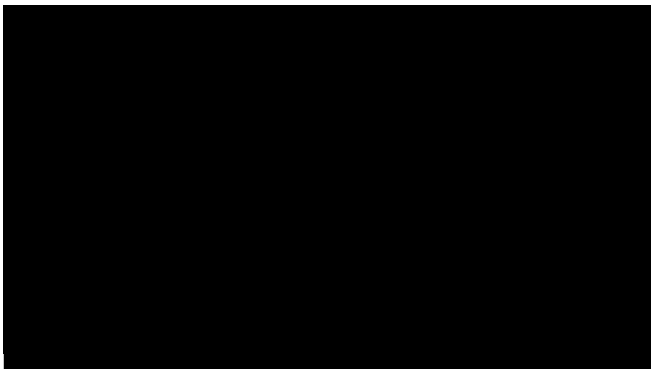


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Nature Valley Video

3-generations were asked:
"What is your favorite activity?"





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Thank you for your attention!

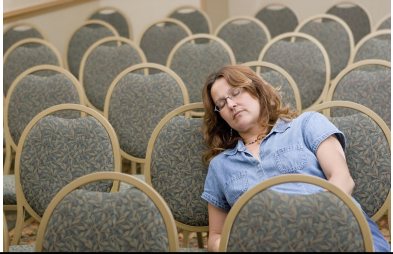


Image: Adobe
