Teens and Screens:
How To Help Adolescents Build Empathy and Connection In A Digital World.

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● The mere presence of a smartphone can disrupt the connection between two people, having negative effects on closeness, connection, and conversation quality.
● 72% of teens and 48% of parents feel the need to immediately respond to texts, social-networking messages, and other notifications.
● A systematic review of meta-analysis (of 20 studies) showed strong, consistent evidence of an association between bedtime access to or use of devices and reduced sleep quantity and quality, as well as increased daytime sleepiness.

ADOLESCENT BRAIN

Prefrontal Cortex = planning, judgement, managing emotions. This part of the brain is under construction and therefore unreliable.

Amygdala = Fight/Flight/Freeze. This part of the brain is very sensitive and easily activated for young adolescents.

Dopamine = The reward system in the brain. The positive feeling we get in response to experiences. Adolescents experience more of this than adults or children do.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Most popular social media apps among teens (in order):
Snapchat
Youtube
Instagram
Facebook
Twitter
Other popular apps: Reddit, Tumblr, TikTok, Discord

● A 2019 study at Oxford University found that the relationship between social media and adolescent well being is “tiny”.

2018 COMMON SENSE MEDIA POLL
• Teens with “Low Social Emotional Well Being” are more likely to experience the negative aspects of social media AS WELL AS the positive aspects of it.

2018 PEW POLL
Teens perception of positive impact of social media.
1. “Connecting with friends and family.”
2. “Easier to find news and info.”
3. “Meeting others with same interests.”
4. “Keeps you entertained and upbeat.”

Teens perception of negative impact of social media.
1. “Bullying and rumor spreading.”
2. “Harms relationships/in person contact.”
3. “Unrealistic views of others lives.”
4. “Causes distractions/addictions.”

SCREEN TIME
5C’s
Consuming
Collaborating
Communicating
Creating
CLeaning

7 Priorities Every Adolescent Needs To Build Empathy and Connection In Our Digital World

1. Sleep (phones out of their room at bedtime).
2. Device-free zones and/or times.
3. Balance between their online and offline world.
4. Social/emotional and mindfulness skills.
5. Modeling from adults.
7. Listening and empathy.

Recommended Books
Websites Worth Checking Out

www.commonsensemedia.org  www.alexandrasamuel.com
www.scarleteen.com  www.ahaparenting.com
www.kidsinthehouse.com  www.humanetech.com

Podcasts and Apps