

# DEALING WITH THE DIGITAL HANGOVER



SUMMARY SHEET BY DR KRISTY GOODWIN

Understanding why your child/teen is infatuated/obsessed (not 'addicted' to) technology will help you to develop strategies to develop healthy digital behaviours and habits. Remember, to plan don't ban tech.



## Why the tech hangover?

Is their behaviour a signal that they've seen something inappropriate or been cyberbullied? Have they developed a new habit? Is tech a coping or avoidance mechanism? Do they have unmet psychological needs (that their device time is fulfilling)?



## Online appeal

Are their digital behaviours giving them their Vitamin Cs: connection, competence, control? Persuasive design techniques like the bottomless bowl, flow state and use of rewards may also explain their digital infatuation. Neurobiological changes (dopamine dumps, hyper-aroused state, adrenaline and cortisol) may all be at play



## Managing Tech-tantrums

Remember, tantrums can be an age-appropriate response in some instances. Set firm boundaries and stick to them. Even if you're firm with your boundaries it may get worse, before it gets better. Remember, stress lasts for 90 seconds, so try to ride the wave. See next page for strategy summary.



## Red flags

Internet Gaming Disorder, according to the DSM-5, is indicated by the support of at least five core symptoms being present over one 12-month period. It includes the following clinical symptoms: preoccupation, withdrawal, tolerance, failed attempts to control activity, surrender from other activities, continuation, fraud, escapism & negative consequences.



## Practical tips

Crowd out the time available for devices with other activities- nature abhors a vacuum. Be a good digital role model yourself. Involve your child or teen in planning their tech time during (& after) holiday periods and focus on more than simply 'how much' time they'll spend online. Establish boundaries around what, when, where, how, with whom AND how long they'll play. Download the Holiday Bucket List and remember boredom is essential for kids' (and adults') wellbeing.

# MANAGING TECHNO-TANTRUMS



Remember, what's happening when your child or adolescent emotionally-combusts when you ask them to digitally-disconnect may be developmentally-appropriate, may indicate a 'typical' neurobiological response, or may indicate that tech is being used as a coping mechanism.



## PRIMING

Cognitively prime your child, or warn them that their time online is ending. Their brain is getting hits of dopamine and other pleasure neurotransmitters so warn them before you want them to switch off.



## TRANSITION

Offer a choice of two appealing transition activities when you want your child or teen to come off the device. Physical activity, physical touch (releases oxytocin the love hormone) and laughter can help.



## ENDPOINTS

Find 'natural' endpoints for kids to finish their tech time. For example, at the end of a TV episode, when they send the next message, when they complete a level in a game. **BONUS**-get them to turn off the device, not you, as it gives them a sense of agency.



## TIMER

Don't rely on willpower. Remember, kids and teens enter the flow state and experience the state of insufficiency. Set a timer on the device, or oven or microwave. Use the Family Zone to set time limits.

# HOLIDAY TECH PLAN



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Each week or two, spend some time planning how you want to use digital devices during the holidays. Remember, keep the plan somewhere visible.

WHAT:

WHEN:

WHERE:

WITH WHOM:

HOW LONG:

UNPLUGGED ACTIVITIES: