Supporting teens with mindful screen time

Spending a lot of time on screens watching TV, using computers or playing video games, can have negative effects on our physical and mental health. Parents and caregivers can help teens develop mindful screen time habits by setting good examples and providing guidance.

Tips

Create screen time rules together

- Talk and listen – work together to decide how to have mindful screen time
- Develop a plan the whole family can follow; review the plan every few months
- Try to include no more than two hours of recreational screen time per day
- Set time limits to help reduce periods of prolonged sitting
- Turn off screens when no one is using them
- Allow time for gradual changes in behaviour
- Be consistent and model healthy habits

Enjoy screen-free times

- Keep mealtimes screen-free
- Take screen-free breaks during the day
- Challenge the family to a screen-free day once a week

Avoid screens before bedtime

- Set screens aside for at least one hour before bed
- Keep screens out of the bedroom to promote better sleep
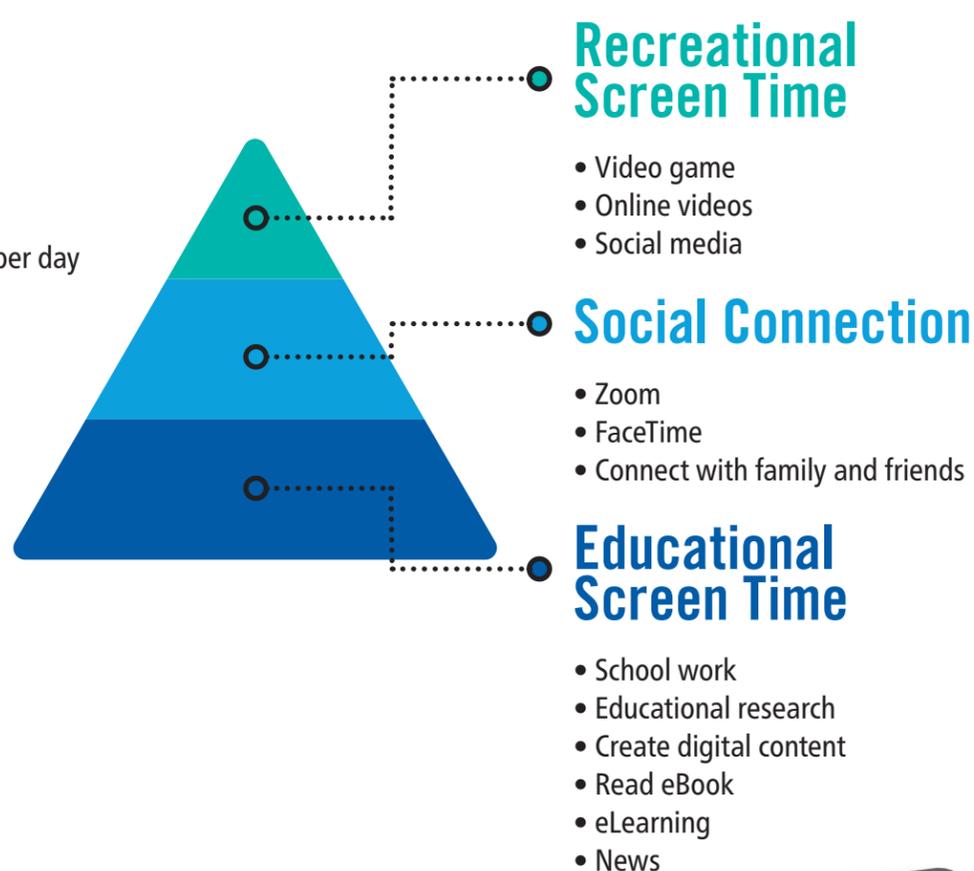
Socialize with family and friends

- Encourage teens to spend more time with friends, join clubs or after-school activities
- Plan family outings or get-togethers, use this time to talk

Be physically active everyday

- Let your teen pick physical activities they enjoy; at least 60 minutes a day can improve mental well-being
- Consider using active transportation like walking or biking to get to school
- Enjoy activities you can do with your teen such as long walks outside, hiking or biking on trails

Discuss the importance of online safety

- Have open and non-judgmental conversations about internet safety
- Be aware of what your teen posts online, including personal photos and information

Recreational Screen Time

- Video game
- Online videos
- Social media

Social Connection

- Zoom
- FaceTime
- Connect with family and friends

Educational Screen Time

- School work
- Educational research
- Create digital content
- Read eBook
- eLearning
- News

Mindful screen time is all about balance. Encouraging your teen to balance screen time with other activities like sports, hobbies and time with friends and family can build healthy habits for the future.

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