

ADULTS AND TEENS: CHECKING IN TOGETHER ABOUT OUR SCREEN USE

Ask yourself these questions out loud, and answer them without judgment.

HOW MUCH TIME A DAY DO I SPENT ON SCREENS (OUTSIDE SCHOOL AND WORK)?

- Less than 2 hours Between 2 and 4 hours More than 4 hours

According to a study by the Direction régionale de santé publique de Montréal, less than two hours of leisure screen time per day is associated with better health. Conversely, negative impacts on mental health and an increase in depressive symptoms can be observed starting at **3 to 4 hours of leisure screen time per day** (excluding screen time related to schoolwork or work). Note: It's not just how much time you spend on screens, but also **what you're doing**, that matters. Passively scrolling through your news feed doesn't have the same impact as actively interacting with friends or creating content, for example.

WHEN I USE SCREENS, IS IT SOMETHING I DO INTENTIONALLY - OR SOMETHING I DO OUT OF HABIT?

- Intentionally Out of habit Both

The idea isn't to ban screen use, but to use screens more intentionally, **in a way that adds value to your life**. Moderate use can even be beneficial: Screens can be a way of socializing and maintaining relationships, discovering new interests, getting information and learning, developing creativity, finding like-minded people, benefiting from social support or a sense of belonging, and experiencing a sense of freedom and intimacy. A good question to ask yourself regularly: **"Do I feel better or worse after using screens?"**

ON FAMILY OUTINGS, AM I REALLY PRESENT OR AM I GLUED TO MY PHONE?

- Really present Sometimes distracted by my phone Often on my phone

In our hyper-connected world, screens are a constant presence in our interactions, including those with our loved ones. This phenomenon is called **technoference**: the interference of technology in our relationships and daily lives. A parent who spends too much time on their phone, for example, may damage the parent-child relationship by sending the message that their child is unimportant, even when they're physically present. **The behaviour you model on a daily basis sends a powerful message to your teen.**

IS MY SCREEN TIME REPLACING ACTIVITIES OR INTERACTIONS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO ME?

- No, rarely Sometimes Yes, often

Work together to set rules to preserve family time: agree on when screens get put away—at meals, during morning and bedtime routines, and on family outings. Remember that your whole family will be more likely to follow these rules, adults included, if everyone had a say in setting them.

DO I NOTICE ANY CHANGES IN MY MOOD, SLEEP, OR ENERGY AFTER USING SCREENS?

- Not really Sometimes Yes, definitely

Screen use at night can disrupt sleep in three ways: it shortens sleep duration, stimulates the brain, and suppresses the production of melatonin, the hormone that induces sleep, due to blue light exposure. In turn, **disrupted sleep can affect mood, concentration, and energy levels** the next day—and that's true for teens and adults. A helpful tip: Agree as a family to stop using screens at least one hour before bedtime, and keep phones out of the bedroom at night.