

PARENT WORKSHOP: DIGITAL HEALTH



HEART & MIND
TEACHING

MIDDLE SCHOOL - EDITABLE

UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL HEALTH IN TEENS AND HOW TO HELP

Common Digital Health Challenges in Adolescence

- Social media comparison
- Cyberbullying or online conflict
- Difficulty unplugging
- Digital identity and reputation risks
- Reduced physical activity
- Exposure to inappropriate content
- Reduced attention and focus

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CHALLENGES

WHAT HELPS/HURTS

RESOURCES & SUPPORT

EDITABLE PARENT PRESENTATION

- MAKE IT YOUR OWN!

CHALLENGE

Cyberbullying & Online Conflict

Conflicts between students don't always stay at school.

Online communication can include:

- Group chat drama
- Hurtful comments
- Exclusion from online groups
- Pressure to respond quickly

Online conflict can feel constant and overwhelming.

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"Girls in virtual networks are subjected to hundreds of times more social comparison than girls had experienced for all of human evolution. They are exposed to more cruelty and bullying because social media platforms incentivize and facilitate relational aggression."
-"The Anxious Generation"

PREVIEW THE POWERPOINT

What Parents Can Do Cyberbullying & Online Conflict

Teach students how to respond safely:

Pause before responding

Save evidence if needed

Block or mute negative interactions

Talk to a trusted adult

Remind students that telling an adult is not tattling
— it's staying safe.

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PREVIEW THE POWERPOINT

CHALLENGE

Digital Identity and Reputation Risks

- Discussing the long-term impact of online posts
- Teaching teens to pause before sharing content
- Talking about privacy and digital footprints
- Encouraging respectful online communication
- Helping teens learn from mistakes rather than shaming them

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PREVIEW THE POWERPOINT

Helping Kids Game Safely

- Online gaming is one of the most common ways kids connect digitally.
- Games can be social, creative, and fun.
- Many games include chat features and online players, which means:
 - Exposure to strangers in multiplayer games
 - Unmoderated chat or voice communication
 - Inappropriate language or behavior

Online gaming also includes these challenges:

- Pressure to make in-game purchases
- Difficulty stopping play



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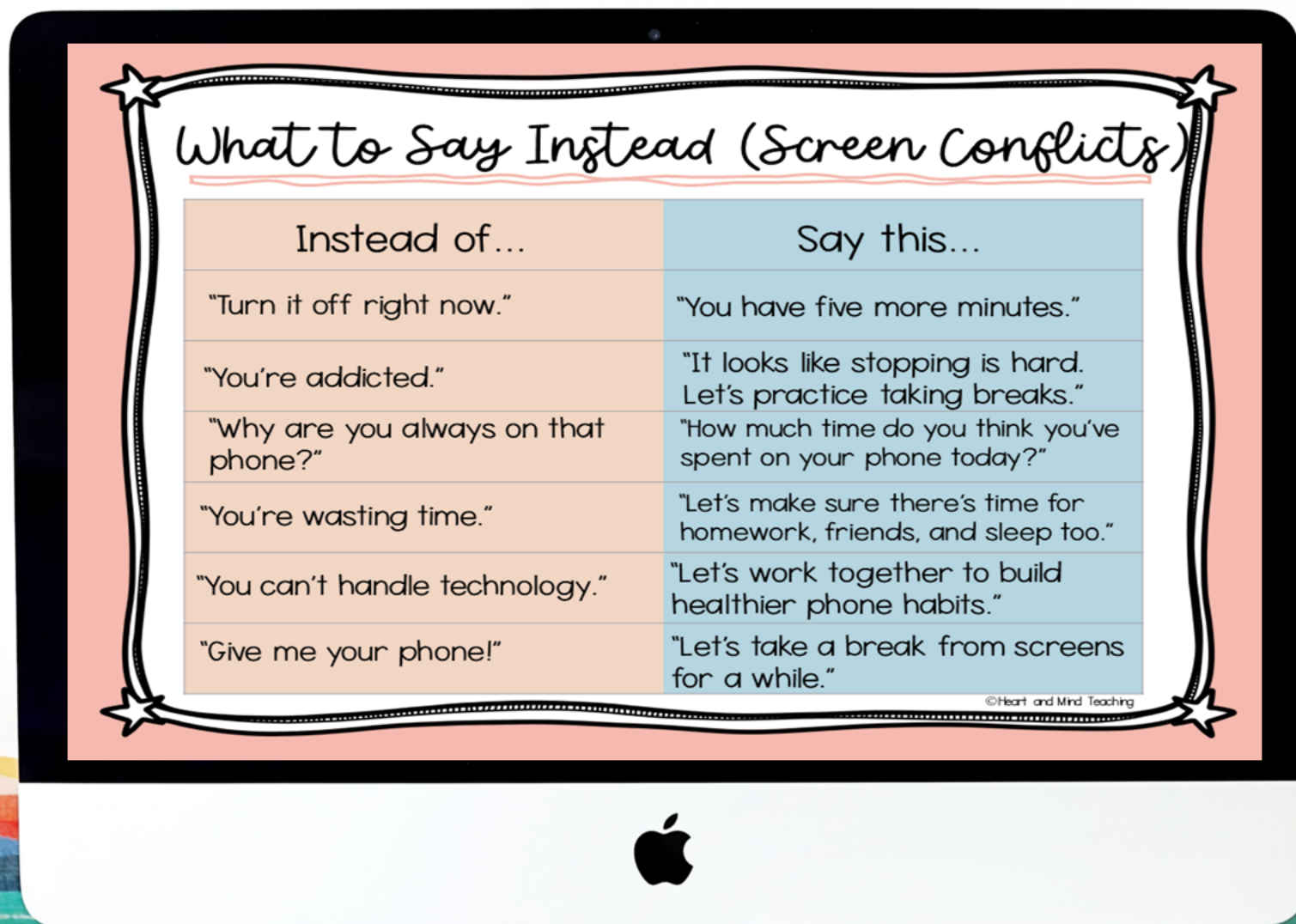
PREVIEW THE POWERPOINT

What Helps vs. What Hurts

What Helps	What Hurts
Clear and consistent screen rules	Changing rules frequently
Screen-free family time	Allowing devices during every activity
Calm conversations	Reacting with anger
Modeling healthy habits	Parents constantly on devices during family time
Keeping devices out of bedrooms overnight	Unlimited nighttime device use
Checking privacy settings and app safety	Ignoring apps and platforms students are using

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PREVIEW THE POWERPOINT



INCLUDED: PRESENTER SCRIPT WORKSHOP FLYER

Presenter Script

Slide 1: Welcome, everyone! Middle school is a time of enormous growth for kids – socially, emotionally, and developmentally. It's also often the age when technology, social media, and online communication become a much bigger part of their lives. In this workshop, we're going to talk about how technology impacts middle school students and what parents can do to guide healthy digital habits.

Slide 2: Middle school is when many kids become more independent. They may be using group chats more frequently. This identity and seeking peer approval can be emotionally impactful. The goal of this workshop is to help students learn how to use technology in a healthy way.

Slide 3: There are several digital health challenges for teens in adolescence. Over the next several weeks, we will discuss these challenges and how parents can help support their teens.

Slide 4: One of the biggest challenges is when teens see the best moments of their lives on social media and feel like they don't measure up. This can increase feelings of anxiety or insecurity.

Slide 5: Parents can help teens navigate social media by teaching them how it works. Encourage them to see online as a performance, not reality. Help them praise effort, character, and kindness. Helping teens build confidence in their own lives is key to resisting negative comparison.

Supporting your child's Digital Health

- No Social media before 16 years old, no smartphones before high school.
- Talk openly about how social media shows "highlight reels," not real life.
- Use parental controls, but don't rely on them alone.
- Periodically review apps and privacy settings together.
- Keep devices in shared spaces when possible.
- Teach teens to close apps and tell an adult if something feels wrong.
- Monitor group chats and gaming platforms.
- Encourage reporting of unkind behavior.
- No more than 2 hours of recreational screen time per day (AAP guideline).
- No screens 1 hour before bed.
- Keep devices out of bedrooms at night.
- At least 60 minutes of daily movement.
- Schedule outdoor time before screen time.
- Make movement a family activity (walk, bike).
- Use timers and give warnings.
- Keep daily screen limits consistent.

"The two big mistakes we've made: overprotecting children in the real world (where they need to learn from vast amounts of direct experience) and underprotecting them online (where they are particularly vulnerable during puberty)."
—Jonathan Haidt
"The Anxious Generation"

Check-In Challenge

Goal: Build regular emotional communication and awareness at home.
Instructions: Pick a regular time (like dinner, bedtime, or Sunday evening).

Ask each family member:

- "What are your favorite things to do on screen?"
- "What are some fun things we like to do that don't involve screens?"
- "How do you feel after being on screens for a while?"
- "What tech rule do you think is most important?"
- "What did we learn about our screen habits today?"

Conversation Starters

- "What apps are most popular at school?"
- "Do you ever feel pressure to respond to messages?"
- "What do you think makes someone a 'tech expert'?"
- "Has anything online ever made you feel bad?"
- "What do you think healthy screen time looks like?"
- "Do you think you're in control of your screen time?"

Screen Reset Challenge

Purpose: Short-term reset to healthy screen habits.

- Day 1: Set limits
- Day 2: Move devices out of bedrooms
- Day 3: 60 minutes outdoor time
- Day 4: Screen-free dinner
- Day 5: Family game night
- Day 6: Teach digital kindness
- Day 7: Family reflection

Family Digital Health Check-in

A 5-minute reflection to strengthen communication and increase digital and mental health.

What matters most to us?

- Protecting sleep
- Encouraging outdoor & movement
- Limiting social media exposure
- Reducing meltdowns over devices
- Improving focus and homework time
- Strengthening family connection
- Kindness and respect
- Other: _____

Our Daily Screen Plan

Recreational screen limit per day: _____

Screen-free times in our home: _____

Devices are stored at night in: _____

Our Family Rules

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

If rules are broken, we will respond by: _____

Replacement Activities

- When we reduce screen time, we will replace it with:
- Outdoor time
 - Board games
 - Reading
 - Art or building projects
 - Creative hobbies
 - Sports
 - Other: _____

Parent Workshop Digital Health

Join us for an engaging, practical workshop designed to help parents guide their children toward healthy, balanced technology habits.

What You'll Learn:

- ✓ How screen time affects teens.
- ✓ Healthy screen time guidelines for middle school-age children.
- ✓ Common digital health challenges teens experience.
- ✓ How to set clear and consistent screen boundaries.
- ✓ What to say during screen time conflicts.

Event Details

Date: Insert date here
Time: Insert time here
Location: Insert school name and room location
Presented by: Your Name, School Counselor
Contact info: Your phone/email

What Helps

What Hurts

- Changing rules frequently
- Allowing devices during every activity
- Reacting with anger
- Parents constantly on devices during family time
- Unlimited nighttime device use
- Ignoring apps and platforms students are using

PARENT TAKE HOMES:

-FAMILY CHECK IN

-SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S DIGITAL HEALTH

-FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES