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Take a Tech Break: Finding Balance in a Multimedia World

There's no escaping that we live in a technology-driven world with access to information at the touch of a few buttons. Technology allows us to work and to stay connected with others anywhere, at any time. And, while this increased access can make our lives easier in many ways, it also can complicate it if not properly managed.



Ways overuse of technology can impact emotional and mental health:

- **Enhanced Negative Feelings and Misperceptions**
Studies show that many people experience loneliness, jealousy, anxiety, and other negative emotions when using social media applications. We receive false impressions that our friends' and families' lives are perfect or much better than our own.
- **Tendency toward Isolation**
Technology can be addictive and result in withdrawal from usual activities. Studies have shown the difficulty many people encounter in breaking away from technology for even a short time.
- **Disrupted Sleep**
The blue light on computers, phones, and tablets make your brain believe that it is daytime and does not allow your natural sleep processes to engage, thereby negatively impacting your sleep.

Suggestions to assist you and your family in making conscious choices about technology use:

1. **Develop rules** such as restricting time spent each day watching TV, working on the computer, and using phones.
2. **Take a break** from social media and see if it helps you to develop a more positive outlook on life.
3. **Foster relationships** through regular social interaction at dinner, family game night, movie night, date night, and other non-technology related outings.

We need to help ourselves and our children find balance with the use of technology. Taking breaks from technology can have a positive impact on your relationships and also benefit your mental health. So put down that phone or tablet, take a walk, and enjoy your surroundings today!

Emotional Health:

Four Ways to Make College Life Easier

Heading off to college can be a difficult transition for anyone, but the adjustment can be even trickier for those with – or a history of – mental health problems.

Susan LaVelle Ficke PysD, a clinical psychologist for TriHealth’s School-Based Behavioral Health Services, shares four tips for making the shift to college life a little easier:



1. Determine How Close to Home Your Child Should Be

Before your child officially chooses a college, first ask:

- How debilitating is the mental health condition?
- How much support from family does he or she currently get or need?

For example, if your child receives a significant amount of support from friends or family, then it would make more sense to choose a college within a reasonable driving distance from home. This way, he or she can live at home and commute, or, if he or she does live on campus, you’ll be close enough for emergency situations

2. Note Resources on Campus

Many colleges and universities have counseling centers available on campus. Or, your son or daughter’s current mental healthcare provider may be able to provide information online.

On the other hand, if they don’t have a counseling center or your child doesn’t want to use that service, you could find a private practitioner in the area. “But, I think if they currently have services, and they are moving off to college, I think it can be really helpful for their current psychologist or mental health provider to be able to talk to the person that they are going to start seeing at college, just to help with continuity of care,” Susan points out.

3. Be Aware of Confidentiality Restrictions

Once your child turns 18, more confidentiality laws are in place. “They won’t be able to get information about their child’s treatment from the therapist without their child’s permission,” Susan says. “But, they can share information with that therapist without that therapist breaking confidentiality.” Susan recommends talking to your child if you have any questions and says not to do anything behind his or her back, to avoiding breaking trust.

4. Ensure Your Child is Prepared to Live Independently

Regardless of whether your child has a mental or behavioral health problem, he or she should be equipped to live independently once they reach adulthood. “They should know how to access the things they need, like medical care, that they know how to do laundry or address their meal card if there’s a problem with it. They should have the basic skills for independence so they don’t have those things contribute further to stress or anxiety,” Susan explains.