When Technology Use Becomes a Concern

As a parent, do you notice yourself consistently asking or maybe even arguing with your child/ youth to put away their cell phone, to get off social media, youTube, Netflix or their favorite video game? Sometimes when this happens we may tell our child/youth they are addicted but unfortunately when we use the term addicted or addict this often shuts down the conversation. Instead it helps to focus on the behaviors or concerns we have around the technology overuse or misuse such as not sleeping properly, falling behind in school work or becoming agitated or aggressive when asked to turn off the devices.

Cam Adair is a fellow Canadian who has written a book and has a website called Gamequitters: https://gamequitters.com for parents and gamers that are concerned about the behaviors they are seeing. Cam posts videos about how to talk to your child/youth about quitting video gaming, provides a 60 + list of other activities to do instead of gaming and even has an online support group for people who struggle with gaming. This site does promote quitting gaming all together that some child/youth may need to do but it also has helpful ideas for those youth/parents that just want or need to reduce gaming hours. I also have other approaches to reducing game use so if you are interested please feel free to contact me anytime at 250-588-3861.

On the other hand, if Netflix is your child/youth’s rabbit hole than you could choose to disable the post-play’s auto-play feature. You just need to sign in and click on the drop-down arrow next to your icon and select account option. Then you scroll down a bit to locate playback settings under my profile section. Here you can uncheck the box marked play next episode automatically. You can also change the settings in youtube to put on daily limits.

In addition, your family could sit down and discuss a family media use plan that includes where, how much time, and when technology is used in your home. Healthychildren.org has a family media use plan https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/How-to-Make-a-Family-Media-Use-Plan.aspx . Commonsense media has some great information for parents around screen use https://www.commonsensemedia.org/screen-time/age/teens.

Furthermore, some children/youth even become physically aggressive or share suicidal thoughts when their devices are taken away or when they are asked to get off their technology. If this occurs it is best to give your child/youth that is behaving aggressively space and then talk to them the next day when they are calm and are not on the device. It may be at this time that you connect them with some outside supports. If the child/youth talks about suicide it is a good idea to call the Vancouver Island Crisis line immediately at 1-888-494-3888 and they will get you and your child/youth some support.

Sincerely,

Shannon Husk

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https://www.bcresponsiblegambling.ca

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