Screen-free time

Tools and resources for educators
and professionals in school settings

RISK FACTORS AND APPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS

There are several factors that increase the probability of someone developing a problematic use of screens and the Internet. A solid grasp of these risk factors will allow you to identify those who are at risk and develop prevention practices better suited for their needs.

	RISK FACTORS	APPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS
INDIVIDUAL	• Age (15 to 24 years) • Mental health problems (anxiety, depression, etc.) • ADHD diagnosis • Learning disabilities and difficulty concentrating • Impulsiveness • Low self-esteem • Aggravating circumstances (breakup, move, death, etc.) • Sleep problems • Suicidal thoughts or past suicide attempts	• Raise awareness among youth about the negative physical, psychological and social effects of unbalanced use • Help the person identify the reasons for their use, as well as the advantages and disadvantages • Encourage socialising offline and the discovery of new activities • Help the person set small, realistic goals (avoid quick solutions or ones that are too removed from the person's reality) • Share the support resources available, helpful measures to manage use, and courses of action that foster balance • Refer for a clinical evaluation and an individual follow-up
RELATED TO THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT	• Lack of parental support • No or few family rules regarding Internet and technology use • Family conflicts • Values that foster excessive use	• Raise awareness among parents regarding rules for Internet and technology use at home • Help the person identify the moments when they fall into unbalanced use by making possible links with their past
RELATED TO THE LIFE ENVIRONMENT	• Lack of social support • Actions, attitudes and values that foster an intensive use of technologies • Lack of rules	• Raise awareness in the settings of the risks and consequences associated with use • Create environments conducive to balanced use • Implement rules to encourage balanced use • Create offline zones

RELATED TO THE INTERNET	• More than 13 hours per week online • Multiplayer online video games, online gambling games, online pornography, cybersex • See the reference tool: "*Why is it so easy to develop an unbalanced Internet use?*"	• Raise awareness among users about the risk of addiction associated with the Internet and technology • Change device settings to reduce triggers • Download applications (Moment, Space, etc.) to better understand and manage use

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION: BEST PRACTICES

- Establish a dialogue by remaining open and taking an interest in what the person is doing online.
- Offer guidance by adopting a neutral, non-judgmental attitude.
- Encourage the person to reflect on and question their use.
- Keep in mind that other causes could explain the person's difficulties.
- Recognize the positive aspects (well-being, socialising, entertainment, sense of effectiveness) of Internet use.
- Try to understand the function of the behaviour, the needs that are met through the use of technology and those that aren't met in the person's offline life.
- Make online habits, as well as their consequences in offline life, tangible (e.g., a young person scrolls on average the equivalent of a 12-floor building per day, 32.9 hours per week online represents a full-time job without pay, etc.).
- Help the person set personal, realistic goals, anticipate obstacles, and develop a plan to face them (see reference tool *"Take action"*).

REFERENCES

- Wu, C., Lee, M., Liao, S. & Chang, L. (2015). *Risk Factors of Internet Addiction among Internet Users: an Online Questionnaire Survey*. PLoS ONE, 10(10). Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4603790/pdf/pone.0137506.pdf
- *How to Recognize and Reduce Your Addiction Risk?* (March 2014). Promises, treatment centers. Retrieved from https://www.promises.com/articles/prevention/recognize-and-reduce-addiction-risk/
- Pihl, R. (2014). *Understanding the Risk Factors for Substance Abuse. Childhood and Adolescent Pathways to Substance Use Disorders.* Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. Retrieved from http://www.ccsa.ca/Resource%20Library/CCSA-ChildAdolescent-Substance-Use-Disorders-Report-2014-en.pdf
- Prabhakaran, M.C.A., Patel, V.R., Ganjiwale, D.J. & Nimbalkar, M.S. (2016). *Factors associated with internet addiction among school-going adolescents in Vadodara*. Journal of Family Medical Primary Care, 5(4), p.765-769. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5353810/
- Van Mourik, V. (2018). *L'intervention en cyberdépendance*. Programme jeu et cyberdépendance du Centre de réadaptation en dépendance de Montréal. Retrieved from https://iss.uqam.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2018/04/Grand-debat_ISS_VanMourik_2018.pdf

A campaign by: With the support of:

Pauseyourscreen.com   Capsana Activate your health   Québec