

# Screen Time and Mental Health

# Overview

- What is screen time?
- Different types of screen time
- Statistics
- Benefits of screen time
- Potential harms
- How can we support?
- Looking after yourself

# What is screen time?

*“Time spent using a device  
such as a computer or a  
games console”*

# Types of Screen Time

- Watching TV  
(Documentaries, news, movies)
- Creating or consuming content
- Accessing peer support
- Learning, being creative, improving skills
- Connecting with others
- Playing online games
- Accessing support services
- Accessing information  
(Current affairs, health information)
- Doing work or homework
- Listening to music, podcasts, audiobooks, radio
- Exercising
- Engaging with social and political issues.



# Statistics

- In Scotland in 2022, children aged 11-15 years old were spending an average of:
  - 3.0 hours gaming
  - 2.8 hours on social media
  - 2.4 hours watching TV
  - 1.2 hours browsing the internet
- Those aged 18-24 are also reported to spend an average of **6 hours and 1 minute** online each day.



# Statistics

- In one study, more than 2 hours of screens a day was linked with higher depressive symptoms.
- Another study found that high screen time and less than 8 hours sleep was negatively associated with self-esteem, resilience, and flourishing.
- One study found **addictive use**, not total screen time, was linked to suicide risk in young people.
- **Almost three quarters (71%)** of users 13+ in Scotland have encountered a potential harm online recently.

# Benefits of screens

- Connecting with others
- Playing and being entertained
- Receiving peer support
- Learning and development (homework, new skills, hobbies)
- Developing digital literacy and skills
- Accessing information and support services
- Developing own identity

# Potential harms

- Mental health impacts (Depression and anxiety)
- Low self-esteem
- Impact on work or school
- Sleep
- Weight
- Physical activity
- Withdrawing from social interactions



# How can we support?

## Individual

- Talking
- Signposting to appropriate support
- Peer support and role modelling
- Providing self-help resources
- Promote digital literacy

## Society

- Education & awareness
- Digital wellbeing guidance
- Support services
- Regulation & policy
- Safer Internet Day, CyberScotland Week

# Looking after yourself

Things I can do

.....by myself

.....with others

People I can talk to.....