

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
- Connecting
- Playing online games
- Accessing support
- Accessing information
(Current affairs, health information)
- Doing work or homework
- Listening to music, podcasts, audiobooks
- 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 20 minutes** online each day.

Statistics

- Higher screen time associated with **increased risk of depression** in adolescents.
- Prolonged screen use (2+ hours) associated with **lower flourishing and wellbeing** scores across all major screen activities.
- One study found high and **addictive use** 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.....