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TECHNOLOGY

These days, the word "connected" often makes us think about technology. Like most students, you probably have a Facebook page, carry a cell phone and use computers daily for personal and academic reasons. The connections we have through technology can make us more productive, help us keep up with our friends and family, and make life easier. But it's important to make sure that technology is supporting our lives and not controlling them. And it's important that we take time to actually speak with and see the people in our lives, especially when we need support or want to help a friend.

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

Digital communication is an essential part of our lives. You can stay connected through your phone and your laptop, and you're probably receiving texts, messages and emails even while you're sleeping. The question is – are you controlling your digital devices or are they controlling you?

Do you find yourself constantly checking your texts, emails or Facebook? Do you get anxious or upset when you can't access your phone or computer for even a short period of time? Do you get stressed when people don't respond to your messages or posts right away? If so, you may be experiencing technology overload. Remember, technology is supposed to make our lives easier and make us feel more connected to others. If your digital life is stressing you out and preventing you from getting things done, you may need to set some boundaries:

- Checking messages or sites during class or while spending time with friends detracts from your ability to be present and participate. Limit when you check your email and social networking sites so you don't miss out on what's happening around you.
- While it's easy to text a friend or write on their wall, try picking up the phone or meeting up for a cup of coffee from time to time so you can really connect and catch up.
- If spending time online or on your phone is affecting your ability to get sleep, try limiting these activities to an hour or two so you have time to wind down and get some rest.

TECHNOLOGY AND OUR RELATIONSHIPS

Sometimes, written communication through texts, email or social networks is more convenient. But without body language, tone of voice and facial cues, it can be hard to understand what your friend is really saying or how they're really doing. When you need to talk to a friend or connect with someone, take time to think about the best way to do it. Is it something simple that can be communicated with a text or should you really pick up the phone or see them in person?

Technology can pose unique challenges for romantic relationships. Many people find themselves spending too much time on Facebook or Twitter checking up on their significant others. Some couples end up arguing because of misunderstandings that happen online or through texts. If technology is complicating your relationship, be proactive and talk about it – face-to-face, not online.

If someone is messaging you too much or harassing you online, here are some tips for managing the situation:

CONNECTING TO HELP


Everyone goes through ups and downs, especially when balancing the stresses of school, work, extracurricular activities and a social life. Sometimes we need support. While online friends and contacts can be great for chatting, sharing info, and goofing off, it's also important to identify your support network and think about the best way to communicate if you or a friend is having a hard time. It's sometimes easier to communicate our feelings through a text or a wall post, but if we really need support, it's better to reach out directly. If you aren't comfortable reaching out to any friends, talk to a family member or take advantage of your school's counseling center.

Likewise, if you're concerned about a friend because of their behavior in the real world or something you've seen online, don't be afraid to call or visit them. If a friend seems really distressed and isn't receptive to your outreach, talk to someone you trust or your counseling center for advice on how to help them. Sometimes, words on a screen can't replace a face-to-face conversation.


If issues related to technology are making you so stressed, anxious or sad, that you are feeling overwhelmed or can't get things done, use our [Check Yourself](#) tool or [Find Help Now](#).

If you are being harassed or disrespected online, visit www.sthinkins.org for tips on dealing with these situations.

Click here to find local resources in your community or on your college campus



SUPPORT OUR VETERANS



NEARLY 75% OF 18-29 YEAR OLDS KNOW SOMEONE WHO SERVED IN IRAQ OR AFGHANISTAN.

LEARN HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT VETERANS ON YOUR CAMPUS OR IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

OUR STORIES



Plagued by depression and suicidal thoughts, Stacy struggles for years before admitting her illness.