Digital Well-Being: An Innovative and Research-Based Approach for Schools

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Who are we?

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What problems are we trying to solve?

Unprecedented, fast-paced technology change
Always-on, always connected digital environment
Lack of real interpersonal connections → Eroding social skills
Unclear boundaries between social life, home, and school
Cyberbullying, sexting, hate speech, and more
Distraction and decreased focus on academics
Educating the Anxious Brain

Key takeaway: *We need something more than a citizenship curriculum.*
Digital Well-Being: Why?

- Build student agency
- Empower young people to formulate strategies to manage their digital lives
- Develop resilience in the face of online challenges
- Engage in critical discourse on digital dilemmas to hone SEL skills
- Promote and sustain overall student health and wellness
- Amplify capacity to look after safety, healthy relationships, and work-life balance

*Key takeaway: Student well-being is inextricably linked to the digital technologies impacting their lives.*
Session Takeaways

Latest research to understand the impact of technology on well-being
Digital dilemmas to build dispositions, resilience, and emotional intelligence
Strategies to implement a sustainable digital well-being program at home

Key takeaway: We want you to walk away with a starting framework to help students build skills and dispositions in support of Digital Well-Being.
Takeaway #1: Latest Research

Dramatic growth in smartphone and social media use across all ages

Top 3 educator concerns: (1) Healthy media balance and digital distraction, (2) cyberbullying and hate speech, (3) fake news and misinformation

Eroding social skills

Sleep disruption: 1 in 3 teens and 1 in 4 parents say that they have their sleep disrupted by mobile notifications at night.

Anxiety and depression
Digital distraction

69% of parents check their devices at least hourly.

78% of teens.

48% of parents feel the need to immediately respond to texts, social-networking messages, and other notifications.

72% of teens.

77% of parents feel their teens get distracted by devices and don’t pay attention when they are together.

41% of teens feel their parents get distracted by devices and don’t pay attention when they are together.
Is tech eroding kids’ social skills?

Teens don’t value face-to-face communication with friends as much as they used to.

Teens’ favorite way of communicating, 2012 vs. 2018:

- In Person: 49% in 2012, 35% in 2018
- Texting: 33% in 2012, 32% in 2018
- Social Media: 7% in 2012, 16% in 2018
- Video-Chatting: 2% in 2012, 10% in 2018

72% of teens think they’re being manipulated by tech companies, making users spend more time on their devices.
Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?

More comfortable online than out partying, post-Millennials are safer, physically, than adolescents have ever been. But they’re on the brink of a mental-health crisis.
Partner Share

What are the most challenging technology impacts you see at your school?
Hello, world.
We are digital citizens.

We find balance in our digital lives.

We care about everyone’s privacy.

We define who we are.

We know the power of words & actions.

We are kind & courageous.

We are critical thinkers & creators.
Takeaway #2: Digital dilemmas to build dispositions, resilience, and emotional intelligence

- Slow down & self-reflect
- Seek facts & evidence
- Consider other perspectives
- Envision options
- Take action
Takeaway #2: Digital dilemmas to build dispositions, resilience, and emotional intelligence

Digital dilemmas = case studies that foreground authentic tensions and do not necessarily have right or wrong answers
DIGITAL DILEMMA

Kevin sends his friend José a short video he made at home, a reenactment of a famous fantasy movie scene. José, laughing at how Kevin looks, shows it to another boy, Max, at school. Max laughs at Kevin, too, and then decides to post it on a video-sharing website. Hundreds of people then view Kevin's video. Many nasty comments are posted. Every day, Kevin goes online to check the site and sees more comments like “idiot” and “fat nerd.” Every day, he goes to school and hears similar cruel comments from some of his classmates. No adults know about the situation, not even Kevin’s parents. One teacher at school overhears the boys laughing about the video but isn’t sure what they're talking about.
I am taking the viewpoint of ____________________________________.

Based on that viewpoint ...

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<th>I acted the way I did because...</th>
<th>One thing I could have done differently was...</th>
<th>Something that might have stopped me from doing something differently was...</th>
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How might you implement digital dilemmas in your school?
Takeaway #3: Strategies for implementation

- Stay current
- Start early
- Team teach
- Leverage existing programs
- Empower students
- Engage parents
Small Groups of 3 or 4

How could you translate one of the suggested strategies into your school context?
PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER
THANK YOU!

Access Common Sense’s free K-12 Digital Citizenship Curriculum @ www.commonsense.org/education/digitalcitizenship
Takeaway #1: Research

Schools and families grappling with the ubiquity of technology and its impact

The number of incidents of bullying and harassment in U.S. K-12 schools reported to the ADL doubled each year between 2015 and 2017.

Teachers worry their students lack skills to critically evaluate online content (35% observed “frequently” or “very frequently”) in the classroom.

50% of teens say they are online almost constantly.
Takeaway #1: Research

Top 3 Concerns

- Digital distraction and the impact on kids’ mental health, social relationships, and academics
- Cyberbullying and online hate speech
- Fake news and misinformation

25% of kids own their own smartphone by age 9 and 70% by age 12 (up from 40% in 2016).

More than half of teens agree social media distracts them from doing homework (57%) and from paying attention to people (54%).

But they are more likely to say social media has a positive than a negative effect on how they feel.

More than a quarter of HS teachers report sexting is an issue (vs. 19% MS, 5% 3rd-5th).

26% of MS teachers and 31% of HS teachers reported online hate speech in their classroom.

56% of kids ages 10-18 feel they can’t tell fake news stories from real ones.
Takeaway #1: Research

Schools and families grappling with the ubiquity of technology and its impact

Top 3 Concerns

1. Digital distraction and the impact on kids’ mental health, social relationships, academics
2. Cyberbullying and the rise of online hate speech
3. Fake news and misinformation: Students lack skills to critically evaluate online content.