



# EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONNECTION

## MOVING LIVES FORWARD

### SCREEN TIME - OUR NEW NORMAL?

*How is it affecting our brains, relationships and health?*

Scientists know that there is a new world of internet reality, and yes, IT IS a Brave New World in some ways. Experts also know that this new world is changing how our brains work. (They are not quite sure exactly how or in how many ways.) It will take another few years before the full impact of extensive screen time affects children's social/emotional development and brains.

Forty million Americans struggle with internet addiction. It may be that one of the more difficult aspect of treating and understanding this disorder is the reality that the majority of us now have a constant exposure to the digital world. Of course some of this is necessary to do our jobs, teach our children, and stay in touch with our world at large. Plus, the fact that internet is a source of data and entertainment.

*So the question really is: how do we find a healthy balance in this new world?*

Even for those of us who can logically justify 1/3 of our waking hours on some type of screen, we still need to seriously look at simplifying and improving our lives by LESS screen time. Most of us presently socially interact with each other through some type of screen via emoji(S) or text language? Is this really a social interaction? This way of communicating plays out in many ways – both in the business and academic worlds. For example, colleges are finding that Freshmen have a hard time composing an essay of more than a few pages.

So before discussing any possible solutions, let's look at some more aspects of this issue:

1) It is taking you away from the REAL people in your lives. All you need to do is observe young adults: they text each other while in the same space. I have been in

vans where teenagers text a person in the front seat because they are in the back seat. I have watched young children in public places have a total melt down because some type of screen is taken away from them. I've observed couples out at nice restaurants on their phones – they being influenced by the pull (addiction) of social media more so then the importance of their relationship. Communication is one of the most important aspect of a healthy relationships.

2) It is influencing your spending habits. "Corporations do NOT spend billions of dollars online advertising because they HOPE to influence you. They do that because they KNOW it will influence you."

3) Big name online suppliers have multiplied profits many times over since COVID. I know some husbands who know more about their wives spending habits since being isolated the past year. Likewise, women see that their partners are on a first name basis as they wait for their latest purchases coming via Federal Express or UPS. Even though this is understandable because most human beings do not have delayed gratification abilities. Now we also have other issues to deal with: isolation and boredom. This only increases want (not need) for material things that we believe will make us happier.

4) It makes us less patient: over 40% of website visitors leave the page if it takes longer than few seconds to load.

*Cheryl's Corner of Caring*

*"Enough is abundance to the wise." (Euripides)*

As stated earlier, we really will not know for some time of the effects of TOO much screen time. In the meantime, should we not seriously consider why TOO much screen time is not bad for our overall health? What is more important than the health of ourselves and our children?

So in conclusion, think about this: Could we be exercising, reading a good book, playing with our children, or spending quality time (i.e. face to face)

with friends or family? Could we be practicing a skill or enjoying Mother Nature? Could we be working harder on fulfilling a dream? Each one of us needs to answer this for ourselves.

Even more importantly we need to answer it for our children.

*Resource: "Becoming Minimalist" blog.*

# MEET CENTENNIAL'S EARLY CHILDHOOD CONSULTATION TEAM



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## LAUNCHING ZOOM SECURE TELEHEALTH SERVICES!

Our ECMH team is excited to announce that consultation services are now available using Zoom Secure Telehealth Services. These services are available to client families, schools, childcare centers and community partners with group and individual meetings available. All services will be provided using this private, secure video platform, and can be accessed using most electronic devices. For more information or to set up a consultation appointment, please contact our ECMH team or your local Centennial Mental Health Center office.



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For additional support during  
the COVID-19 Pandemic you  
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SUPPORT LINE**

You can do this by calling your  
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Contact your local Centennial Mental Health Center for assistance with any Early Childhood need.

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