



INTENTIONALLY
*Unplugged*TM 

CONNECT TO WHAT COUNTS.

Introduction to Digital Wellness

Teacher Guide

Welcome to Intentionally Unplugged: Digital Wellness Curriculum

Introduction:

Through data, ongoing research, and simply looking around the dinner table, it has become increasingly clear that screens are an impediment to human connection. With so many kids struggling with their dependency on technology, screens are robbing them of time, focus, and meaningful experiences. This curriculum aims to educate and guide open conversation with students about the importance of digital wellness while providing them with the tools they need to carve out quality time in a digital world.

***Please be advised that suggested times per lesson are meant to serve as a guide. Educators should follow this curriculum at a pace that feels appropriate for their student's needs, understanding, and engagement, as well as their own course objectives.*

** Depending on class size and circumstances, teachers can decide if students should work individually, or in groups, throughout each part of the curriculum.

This Guide Includes:

- Standards
- Related Links
- Discussion Questions
- Activities for Students
- Reproducible Materials

The Purpose of this Curriculum:

- Introduce the concept of “screen time”
- Discuss healthy and unhealthy screen habits
- Introduce alternatives to screen time and their benefits
- Identify personal and family use of screens
- Identify potential benefits of decreasing screen time
- Identify healthy alternatives to screen time
- Set goals for screen time reduction

Curriculum Overview:

The most ideal way to use this curriculum is to allow each student to have access to their own copy of the presentation. Through a screen, teachers can assess student work by viewing presentations shared in Google Drive. If devices are limited, or a traditional writing method is preferred, students can receive a printed packet divided by section or lesson.

National Family and Consumer Science Standards Addressed in this Curriculum:

[1.0 Career, Community and Family Connections](#)

1.3 Evaluate the reciprocal effects of individual and family participation in community and civic activities.

[2.0 Consumer and Family Resources](#)

2.4 Evaluate the effects of technology on individual and family resources in a global context.

[4.0 Education and Early Childhood](#)

4.2 Analyze developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive practices to plan for early childhood, education, and services.

4.5 Demonstrate skills for building and maintaining positive collaborative relationships with children, youth and adults in their family and community environments, considering gender, ethnicity, geographical, cultural, and global influences.

[12.0 Human Development](#)

12.1 Analyze principles of human growth and development across the lifespan.

12.2 Analyze conditions that influence human growth and development.

12.3 Analyze strategies that promote growth and development across the lifespan.

[13.0 Interpersonal Relationships](#)

13.2 Analyze personal needs and characteristics and their effects on interpersonal relationships.

13.3 Demonstrate communication skills that contribute to positive relationships.

13.5 Demonstrate teamwork and leadership skills in the family, workplace, and community.

13.6 Demonstrate standards that guide behavior in interpersonal relationships.

[14.0 Nutrition and Wellness](#)

14.1 Analyze factors that influence nutrition and wellness practices across the life span.

14.5 Evaluate the influence of science and technology on food, nutrition, and wellness.

National Health Education Standards Addressed in this Curriculum:

[Standard 1:](#)

1.8.1 Analyze the relationship between healthy behavior and personal health

1.8.2 Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health in adolescence.

1.12.2 Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health.

1.12.3 Analyze how environment and personal health are interrelated.

[Standard 2:](#)

2.8.5 Analyze how messages from the media influence behaviors.

2.8.6 Analyze the influence of technology on personal and family health.

2.12.5 Evaluate the effect of media on personal and family health.

2.12.6 Evaluate the impact of technology on personal, family, and community health.

[Standard 7:](#)

7.12.1 Analyze the role of individual responsibility for enhancing health.

[Standard 8:](#)

8.8.1 State a health-enhancing position on a topic and support it with accurate information.

8.12.4 Adapt health messages and communication techniques to a specific target audience.

WELCOME TO OUR
Intentionally Unplugged
LEARNING SPACE

YOU ARE KINDLY INVITED TO
turn off YOUR DISTRACTIONS.

TOGETHER, WE TURN OUR *focus*
TOWARDS INVESTING IN MEANINGFUL
human connection AND
PRACTICING GRATITUDE BY
EMBRACING THE *present* MOMENT.

#PHONESDOWNEYESUP



CONNECT TO WHAT COUNTS.

INTENTIONALLY UNPLUGGED CLASSROOM SURVEY

In an effort to provide measurable evidence of growth and understanding of our digital wellness curriculum, please have all students participate in this entry/exit survey.

Circle TRUE or FALSE for each statement:

TRUE/FALSE: Digital wellness refers to preventative measures aimed at regulating and improving the healthy use of technology.

TRUE/FALSE: Technoference is a term that refers to distraction caused by a digital device.

TRUE/FALSE: Without social media, I would feel disconnected and uninspired.

TRUE/FALSE: Every popular celebrity uses social media regularly.

TRUE/FALSE: Steve Jobs encouraged his kids to use the screens he created.

TRUE/FALSE: Abraham Maslow identified a set of basic needs that need to be met in order for people to feel happy and motivated.

TRUE/FALSE: Screens can interfere with meeting my basic needs, as well as my ability to be happy.

TRUE/FALSE: Portable screened devices have been associated with improved mental and emotional health in teenagers.

TRUE/FALSE: When I'm on my phone, I am still emotionally present and available to the people around me.

TRUE/FALSE: I think it's beneficial to put my phone away at least 1 hour before bedtime.

TRUE/FALSE: All screen time is created equal.

TRUE/FALSE: Being away from my phone or iPad makes me feel anxious.

TRUE/FALSE: Passive screen use is preferred over active screen use.

TRUE/FALSE: In-person connection is not as important as it used to be because we now have screens and technology.

TRUE/FALSE: The average American teenager spends about 7 hours per day on a screen.

TRUE/FALSE: Smartphones and computers have always been an important part of communication and connection.

TRUE/FALSE: My personal screen use does not affect the people around me.

TRUE/FALSE: I wish that social media did not exist.

TRUE/FALSE: There are rules about screen use in my home.

TRUE/FALSE: My physical and mental health are impacted by my screen use.

TRUE/FALSE: I wish that my friends and family spent less time on their screens.

TRUE/FALSE: I have many interests outside of school.

TRUE/FALSE: Social media has no impact on the health of American teens

TRUE/FALSE: I am not sure how to limit my own screen use.

TRUE/FALSE: JOMO is a real acronym that refers to the “joy of missing out.”



SECTION 1: THE RISE OF THE DIGITAL ERA

This section will cover:

- Defining “Screen Time”
- Life before and after screens
- Screens effects on human behavior and connection
- Still Face Paradigm and how we relate this experiment to everyday experiences
- Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs as it relates to screens
- “Technoference”
- The difference between being emotionally and physically present
- Vision Board creation highlighting motivation and excitement for life outside of screen us

LESSON 1: LIFE BEFORE SCREENS

Approximately 1 or 2 class periods | 45-60 minutes

Lesson Overview: In this lesson, students will make important observations about how screens have changed the way that we spend time together. Additionally, students will be encouraged to reflect upon their own screen use, and how it influences their relationships.

Additional Resources Required: “For better or for worse?” assignment outline and grading rubric (see “Homework Assignments” below)

LESSON 1 PROCEDURE:

Define:

Screen Time: *Time spent using a device such as a computer, television, games, console, tablet or smartphone.*

Review and Discuss: *“15 Examples of How Life was Different before the Internet”*

Observe and Discuss: After looking at a series of photos that represent technoference, students will discuss whether or not they feel that the images are an accurate depiction of their experiences with human connection and relationships. Next, students will repeat the same process—this time, with a series of images that represent unplugged human connection.

Reflect: Students will reflect on their own screen use. After that, the teacher will facilitate a class discussion about the most common uses of screen time.

Closure: Students will close by sharing ways in which screens can both add and detract from their life.

Homework Assignment: None

LESSON 2: STILL FACE PARADIGM

Approximately 2 class periods | (80-90 minutes)

Lesson Overview: Using Dr. Tronick’s *Still-Face Paradigm Experiment*, this lesson aims to help students understand the important distinction between being *physically present* vs. *emotionally present*. Most importantly, the lesson aims to highlight negative social and emotional impacts that screens can have, as they interfere with our ability to be fully present with one another.

Additional Resources Needed: Teachers should consider preparing a detailed assignment outline and grading rubric for this lesson’s homework assignment.

LESSON 2 PROCEDURE:

View and Discuss: Dr. Tronick’s, *“Still-Face Paradigm Experiment”* video.

Leading Questions:

What is the significance of this experiment?

What happened when the caregiver was loving and responsive?

What about when her face became “still” and unresponsive?

Was the baby ever in physical danger?

View, Discuss, and Compare: View the “*Still-Face Paradigm with Device*” video. Afterwards, compare how the two videos are similar and different. Discuss if the students can relate to this version of the experiment.

Leading Questions:

How does it feel when someone is too distracted to be fully present for you?
Have you ever been guilty of distraction-by-device?

Define:

Technoference: *The interruptions in interpersonal communication caused by attention paid to personal technological devices.*

Students should record the meaning of this term, and add it to their screen-related vocabulary.

Read and Discuss: “*Screens are Keeping us Connected now-but they’re still Disruptive to in-person Communication.*”

Define:

Emotionally Available: *To be reachable, emotionally, to another person or self. The ability to listen intently, feel deeply, and be present to communicate those feelings to another person.*

Physically Available: *To be in close proximity or near another person, physically.*

Leading Questions:

What’s the Difference?

It is possible to be physically near another person, but not attentive or available to them, emotionally?

Closure: Are you “fully present” when you are with other people?

Homework Assignment: Students will write about a time when they may have been physically, but not emotionally present, due to technoference. They will reflect upon and describe how that experience may have been different, if they had not been distracted by a screen.

LESSON 3: MASLOW’S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Approximately 2 class periods | (40-60 minutes)

Lesson Overview: This lesson will serve to provide students with a basic understanding of Abraham Maslow’s *Hierarchy of Needs*. Based on this theory of human motivation, students will identify, discuss and analyze ways in which screens may be positively and/or negatively influencing their own needs and happiness.

Additional Resources Needed:

- Supplies to complete the vision board assignment. Some suggestions include: magazines, glue, photographs, construction paper, colored pencils, crayons, etc.
- Detailed assignment outline for the “Vision Board” project, including a grading rubric.

LESSON 3 PROCEDURE:

Introduction: Teacher will introduce lesson 3 by providing a brief overview of Abraham Maslow and his “Theory of Human Motivation” paper, as well as his studies related to what makes people happy.

Research: Using the diagram provided, students will identify the 5 levels of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, using their available online resources.

Discuss:

According to Maslow, which levels of the pyramid are considered the most essential?

How does one move “up” thy pyramid?

What obstacles may prevent a person from achieving a particular level of need?

Analyze:

How can screens positively and/or negatively impact our ability to attain each level of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs?

Further, what does this indicate about their potential impact on our happiness and motivation?

Closure:

Are screens a negative or positive impact on your happiness?

Why do you feel that way?

Homework Assignments/Section 1 Culminating Project: Create a Vision Board

Students will use a variety of materials and supplies to create their own motivational vision boards. The boards should be uplifting, depicting future goals, personal inspiration, travel, family, culture, etc. Students should be allotted a sufficient amount of time to complete this project (we suggest 1 week, if completing as a homework assignment).



SECTION 2: NOT ALL SCREEN TIME IS CREATED EQUAL

This section will cover:

- Active and Passive Screen use
- Screen time during COVID
- Calculating your own screen use
- The emotional effects of technology
- Nomophobia
- Family Interviews
- Pro and Anti Screen debate
- Social Media Mindfulness
- Cyber-bullying
- Create a social media public service announcement

LESSON 1: ACTIVE AND PASSIVE SCREEN USE

Approximately 2-3 class periods| (80-120 minutes)

Lesson overview: Not all screen time is considered equal and this lesson emphasizes that fact. This lesson serves to identify the important distinctions between “active” and “passive” screen use and encourages young people to start giving thought to their own types of screen use. Perhaps the most eye opening portion of this lesson is spent calculating the actual time spent on screened devices.

This lesson should be introduced with the concept of “digital nutrition,” as a metaphorical way of identifying the “nutritional values” of different types of screen use. Students should be able to compare “active” screen use as the more nutritional and preferred type of use, while comparing “passive” screen use to a less healthy diet.

Additional resources needed: Calculators may be recommended for the “*how much of your life will you spend on a screen?*” activity.

Read & Discuss: Screen use has been perceived as a blessing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Encourage students to briefly reflect upon their perception of screen use during quarantine, before reading, “*Coronavirus Ended the Screen Time Debate. Screens Won.*” Next, reflect upon some of the helpful screen based activities mentioned in the article.

Define and Research: Using the slides as your guide, help students to define:

Active Screen Use: Screen use that encourages physical, social, emotional and/or cognitive engagement. Examples include: Facetime, virtual learning, and some video games.

Passive Screen Use: Screen use that does NOT encourage physical, social, emotional and/or cognitive engagement. Rather, the view simply absorbs information in a passive way. Examples include binge-watching shows, movies, social media and internet scrolling.

Analyze and Reflect: After defining and researching the difference between active and passive screen use, students will take an eye-opening survey about their own screen use behaviors.

View and Discuss: After some personal reflection, students will view the Ted Talk, “Why Screens Make us Less Happy.” In light of what they saw and heard in the Ted Talk, students will respond to the corresponding questions on the slides.

Investigate: How much of your life is spent on a screen? For this portion of the assignment, students may need calculators to identify the total number of hours they spend each day, week, and year on a screen.

Closure: Before the digital era, what do you think people spent the majority of their time doing? Have screens changed our lives for better, or for worse?

Homework Assignment: As noted in the lesson procedure, teachers may prefer to assign the Ted Talk activity and/or the “time spent on screens” activity for homework. If so, we recommend that teachers prepare an appropriate outline, as well as grading rubric, for each homework assignment, ahead of time.

LESSON 2: THE EMOTIONAL EFFECTS OF SCREEN USE

Approximately 3-4 class periods | (120-160 minutes)

Lesson Overview: In this lesson, we will explore the emotional side effects of screen use, and how obsession (or screen addiction, as many experts now refer to it) start to come into play. Students will use a variety of different resources (i.e., articles and video, interviews) to investigate how screens are impacting their ability to be present and connected to their relationships and real-life experiences.

Additional Resources Needed: This lesson requires PRO-screen use articles and ANTI-screen use articles, both provided below. We recommend that teachers select at least 2 research-based articles for each side of the PRO/ANTI screen debate.

PRO SCREEN Articles: [Option 1](#) or [Option 2](#)

ANTI SCREEN Articles: [Option 1](#) or [Option 2](#)

LESSON 2 PROCEDURE:

Introduction: Teachers should introduce this lesson by defining the term, “nomophobia”, as a real term that refers to, “*the fear of being without a mobile device, or beyond mobile phone contact.*” Students can reflect upon whether or not they personally identify with such a fear, before reading more about the term.

Read and Discuss: Using the article, “*iPhone Separation Anxiety,*” provided in the slide deck, students will be challenged to perform a task away from their phone. This portion of the lesson may need to take place at a later time or be assigned for homework, in which case, teachers may prefer to move ahead to the article, “*Does Technology Make us More Alone?*”

View, Read and Respond: Students will view a short video and read, “*Does Technology Make us more Alone?*”. Once everyone has had a chance to read the article, the teacher can facilitate a large group, small group or individual student assignment for students to respond to the corresponding questions. Afterwards, allow students to share their responses and viewpoints.

Distribute and Investigate: Teachers will distribute PRO or ANTI-screen articles to small groups of students. Ideally, about half of the class should be working on a pro-screen article, while the other half works on an anti-screen article. During class time, students will read through the article that they’ve been assigned, and summarize what they’ve read.

Debate and Analyze: Each group will take turns sharing their article summaries and key points. Teachers can appoint a speaker from each group to share the findings. When each group has had a chance to share, the class should have ample evidence supporting each side of this PRO/ANTI screen debate.

Closure: What does it all mean? Are screens all bad? Are they all good? Where do we go from here?

LESSON 3: SOCIAL MEDIA MINDFULNESS

Approximately 1-2 class periods| (40-60 minutes)

Lesson Overview: This lesson serves to address the relationship between social media and teen mental-emotional well-being. Through a series of teacher-facilitated activities, students will identify reasons for becoming more intentional and mindful with their social media use. Most importantly, they will brainstorm healthy practices to adopt going forward.

Additional resources needed: This lesson will require that teachers prepare a detailed outline and overview of the PSA announcement assignment, including a grading rubric. Students should have a clear understanding of expectations, objectives and timeline to be successful in this assignment. We recommend allowing 1-3 days to complete the PSA. [CANVA.com](https://www.canva.com) is a great FREE resource available to students to use for this assignment.

LESSON 3 PROCEDURE:

Introduction: At the start of this lesson, teachers should introduce this statistic: *“The average US teenager spends almost nine hours a day on digital devices. Much of that time is spent on social media.”* Allow time for students to share their reactions to this statistic, before moving further along to celebrities who choose to practice *“digital detoxing.”*

Read and Discuss: Using the link provided, read *“7 Famous Faces who Struggled with the Pressure of Social Media.”* Afterwards, read through statistics provided from the Royal Society for Public Health, leading into the next class activity.

Reflect, Discuss and Share: Working in small groups, students will respond to a series of personal experiences with social media use. Following along with the slides, they will record examples when social media has made them feel both good and bad. Lastly, they will identify ways in which they could be more mindful and careful about how they use social media. When groups have had a fair amount of time to complete the activity, they will take turns sharing with the entire class.

Define: Once each group has had a chance to share, teachers can make sure that students understand what it means to be mindful. Please refer to the following definition for mindfulness: *“a choice that we make to be intentional about our actions.”* Next, remind them that there is good reason to be mindful when it comes to our social media practices. Refer to the examples on the slide to complete this portion of the less.

Review: We’ve learned about our own social media practices, what feels good and what feels bad. We’ve learned about why it is important to be mindful with our social media practices. But, now what? How can we spread the word to others? Let’s create our own PSAs!

Public service announcements are advertisements that a television or radio station airs for a cause or charity. As an example, a PSA can show the importance of medical check-ups for children or request that you donate money to a charity. PSAs go far to alert and remind people about their safety, and the safety of others.

Closure: What will be the most important information that you’d like to convey in your PSA?

Homework Assignment: Students will create their own PSAs, based on what they learned about mindful social media use.



SECTION 3: EXPLORING YOUR DIGITAL WELLNESS

This section will cover:

- Establishing healthy tech boundaries
- Household screen use rules and regulations
- Create a screen time agreement
- Defining “what counts”
- Ways to connect outside of screens
- Create a “Connect to what Counts” poster
- Screen free challenge
- Reflection and review
- JOMO

LESSON 1: ESTABLISHING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Approximately 1-2 class periods | (40-80 minutes)

Lesson Overview:

In this lesson, teachers will facilitate important conversations to get students thinking about how to establish healthy boundaries around their technology use. They will examine different examples of screen use agreements, before moving on to create their own. Lastly, they will reflect upon how setting healthy boundaries can result in personal benefits.

Additional Resources Needed: None

Introduction: Begin this lesson by sharing with students that not all parents allow their children to have free-use of screens and smartphones. Next, use the link provided to read, “14 Celebrities who limit their children’s screen time and tech use.” After the class has had a chance to read the article, invite students to share any rules that are established in their own homes around screen use.

Assignment: Using the ideas shared by classmates, as well as the link provided (“Examples of screen-use boundaries”), students will be given time to create their own idea of a reasonable screen-time agreement for their family. If time runs over, teachers may choose to assign the completion of this task for homework.

Share: Once students have come up with an agreement that they feel is reasonable, they will have a chance to share with the class. Students will pay close attention to any overlapping boundaries and themes, taking note of them on the appropriate slide.

Reflect: As a final part of this assignment, students will reflect upon the perceived benefits of setting tech boundaries in their home. What positive changes could happen if we were able to commit to following our own plans for just one week?

Close: Do you feel you could stick to your own plan? Could your family? Where are the gaps?

Homework Assignment: If necessary, students may need to finish writing their proposed family tech agreement at home.

LESSON 2: HOW TO CONNECT TO WHAT COUNTS

Approximately 1-2 class periods | 40-80 minutes

Lesson Overview: In these lessons, students will have a chance to start putting all the pieces together. With all that they have learned, this lesson will encourage them to think about what it means to *connect to what counts*, and how to start putting quality human connection into practice. Best of all, the culminating activity in this lesson will get them spreading the word to others!

Additional Resources Needed: Poster-making supplies, if preferred.

Introduction: Teachers will ask students: “*What does it mean to CONNECT TO WHAT COUNTS?*”

Reflect and Share: Using the slides as their guide, teachers will encourage students to reflect upon their relationships, who they want to feel connected to, and ways to work on building meaningful bonds with others. Next, students will brainstorm ways to be creative about their connection to others, during the time of COVID-19 and quarantine experiences. Students will share their ideas with the class.

Review and Discuss: Once the students have had a chance to share their original ideas, teachers will provide a list of creative ways to connect when we can resume human contact, post pandemic.

Implement and Advocate: In the last part of this lesson, students will take what they have learned and apply it to poster messages that can be displayed throughout the school, as a means of educating others. This poster activity can be completed as a group or individual assignment, in class or for homework. Teachers may choose accordingly, based on what works best for their class.

Close: If we were to display our posters in the school, what areas do you feel would be most important?

Homework Assignment: “CONNECT TO WHAT COUNTS” poster activity, if applicable.

LESSON 3: REFLECTION AND INSIGHT

Approximately 1 class period | (40 minutes)

Lesson Overview: Congratulations! You’ve made it to the FINAL LESSON of this curriculum. As expected, this lesson serves to tie it all together—we’ve covered so much! When students walk away from this lesson, they should leave feeling confident that they know how to use technology as a tool that serves them well, without having a negative impact on their mental/emotional wellbeing.

Additional Resources Needed: None

LESSON 3 PROCEDURE:

Introduction: To start this lesson, teachers should pose the question, “Moving forward, how can we continue to utilize technology as a tool that *brings people together?*”

Discuss: Using the lesson slides as their guide, teachers will encourage students to reflect upon 5 changes that they would like to make in their lives, now that they are more informed about screen use. Once students have made their list, teachers should invite a few students to share.

Read and Reflect: Using the link provided, read, “*100 Things Teenagers can do without Screens.*” Afterwards, students should share their favorite ways to spend time offline and away from a screen.

Close: How do you find your JOMO? In other words, what are your favorite ways to find joy when you are unplugged and off of screens?

Homework Assignments:

- Spend 2 hours away from your phone.
- SPREAD THE WORD ON DIGITAL WELLNESS & change the world for the better!

Extension Activity:

1. Interview a family member

- Make a list of 10 questions you want to know about your family member and include a few questions about their relationship with technology. Example: Do you think screens have improved your life?
- You can conduct the interview over the phone, via screen, or in person. **It may not be conducted via email or text message.**
- Write down their responses, as well as your relationship to the interviewee on a clean sheet of paper.

We recommend assigning this extension activity over the weekend, as many students don't have enough time to connect with adults during the week. We recommend allowing a minimum of 3-5 days for students to complete the assignment.

For additional resources, visit www.intentionallyunplugged.com

Visit us on Instagram [@intentionallyunplugged](https://www.instagram.com/intentionallyunplugged)

Teacher Reimbursement Request Form

Date: _____

Teacher Requesting: _____

School: _____

Subject: _____

Grade: _____

Materials Purchased: *Intentionally Unplugged Classroom: Digital Wellness Curriculum*

Total Amount: _____ **(receipt attached if applicable)**

Dear Administrator,

Through data, ongoing research, and by simply looking around the dinner table, it has become increasingly clear that screens are an impediment to human connection. With so many kids struggling with their dependency on technology, screens are robbing them of time, focus, and meaningful connection.

This curriculum aims to educate students about the importance of digital wellness. Digital wellness refers to the state of one’s physical and mental health in the Digital Age. More specifically, digital wellness refers to preventative measures aimed at regulating and improving the healthy use of technology. It’s about making sure our students’ have control, understanding, and trust when it comes to the role that tech plays in their lives. It’s about asking ourselves, as parents, as educators, and as kids: Is this technology making my life better or is it pulling me away from what really counts?

By teaching our kids about the impact screens have on their lives, they will learn to use technology responsibly, safely, and effectively- helping them to set healthy tech boundaries in a digital world.

Thank you for your support.

All the best,
