

Social Media Wellness: How to Help Kids *and* Adults Thrive in an Unbalanced Digital World

Using the three S's to help Teens cultivate compassion and empathy

I. HEALTHY SOCIALIZATION

- Identify: What is energizing and what is draining?
- Reflect: Figure out your why
- Decide: I can opt in, or opt out
- Goal: Help them feel empowered to curate their feed online and IRL

II. EFFECTIVE SELF-REGULATION

- Identify: How long is my (home) work going to take?
- Reflect: What would I do with an extra 7-10 hours of free time per week?
- Decide: I can compartmentalize my time to get work done faster and have more free time
- Goal: Build in regular offline time daily/weekly

III. OVERALL SAFETY

- Identify: What feels safe and unsafe online? What is appropriate and inappropriate?
- Reflect: Where do my children - and the children I care about - turn when something doesn't go as planned?
- Decide: What is our family mission statement around how we maintain social, emotional, and physical safety
- Goal: Build an emotional toolkit and focus on rest and stress management



There are free downloadable resources on the books section of my website (www.anahomayoun.com/books) to help implement some of the strategies we discussed as well.

My top 3 social media/technology tips:

1. Know what apps your kids are using (and learn how to use them!),
2. Create daily/weekly offline times, which includes taking cellphones out of the bedroom at night (here's a list of alarm clock options), and
3. Come up with a family use agreement (after all, parents and guardians are responsible for what children do on their phones)

One important note: I encourage you to know who your children are following and what they are "liking" online. For example, many adults don't realize Pinterest has also been a place where people discuss self-harm and disordered eating habits. Staying aware and making sure your children have trustworthy adults is key.

Also, become familiar with the new Screen Time features on the iPhone. I personally use it to keep my phone on "do not disturb" in the mornings and to give my phone a "bedtime." At the same time, collaboration is key - because kids can always find workarounds.

Another strategy: To grayscale your iPhone, go to Settings, then General, then Accessibility, then Color Filter. Try it for a week and notice the difference in how you use your phone (then try changing back and notice how bright everything looks...)