

## Psychology between screens

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In recent years, we have witnessed the quick evolution of teenagers' use of digital devices and social media. Given this new reality, it is essential to understand how these changes are shaping the psychological and social development of these young people regarding the negative aspects arising from the use of technology.

Studies point out that excessive screen time can negatively impact teenagers' and adults' attention span and concentration, resulting in learning difficulties and issues in social and family relationships. The practice of teenagers, and even adults, searching for solutions to personal and general problems on the internet can have devastating consequences in their lives, especially in interpersonal relationships.

Technology provides access to all kinds of information, offering instant answers and quick solutions. But usually, other answers are more appropriate and effective than these. Searching for answers on questionable and biased websites can lead young people to deconstruct their identities and opinions.

It is essential to understand that digital platforms often use algorithms to personalize user content. It shows them only what interests the individual based on their platform use.

From a psychological perspective, it is fundamental to note that face-to-face interaction is still the most effective way of bringing young people into reality. Nowadays, technology tends to alienate teenagers from their friends and family.

Human interaction allows for a more authentic connection, as it allows people to interpret emotions, signals, body language and tone of voice. This brings greater closeness, trust, and intimacy to interpersonal relationships, as eye, touch and other forms of physical contact build a more enduring emotional

bond.

Social networks have been affecting issues related to bullying. Cyberbullying has become more aggressive and threatening. Once defamatory content is on the net, the probability of it going viral takes minutes. Hence, the importance of working in educational institutions on the dangers of cyberbullying.

With the speed with which information spreads, insulting or threatening messages, photos or forged videos without the user's permission, malicious rumors and fake profiles may cause emotional and psychological distress. They may also trigger anxiety, depression, stress, and a lack of interest in socializing.

Young people's tendency to compare their lives with those of their friends, public figures, and those they perceive as more capable or successful may negatively impact their emotional and mental balance. This comparison can lead youngsters to feel dissatisfied with their lives or displaced. It gives an erroneous perception of failure and doubt in their abilities and values.

The risk of dependency and addiction to social networks, celebrity profiles and games is another problem.

The difficulty for parents today is deciding how much time they should allow their children to use digital devices and social networks. Lack of control can lead to serious abstinence problems, boredom and frustration,

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irritability, depression, bad moods, and social distancing. Digital addiction can hurt physical health. Prolonged screen time can lead to vision problems, muscle pain, neck and back strain and sleep disturbances. A sedentary lifestyle combined with excessive use of technology can increase the risk of obesity and other health problems. So, consciously and educationally, it is essential to use technology appropriately.

Psychology plays a crucial role in understanding the impacts of technology on young people's educational and social development. It offers valuable insights for parents and educators to set clear limits on screen time and promote offline activities that encourage social interaction and cognitive development.

Educating young people about the safe and responsible use of technology includes privacy and online safety issues. Encouraging participation in extracurricular activities promotes social and emotional skills.

By considering the psychological implications, we can adopt more effective measures to promote a healthy balance between the digital and the real worlds. It is necessary to show young people that there are alternatives that contribute to life without dependence and addiction to technology.

It is important to understand that family, friends, and teachers are key players in this re-socialization. Techniques such as mindfulness (full attention, concentration on the present through meditation exercises) can promote self-awareness, self-control, and emotional self-regulation.

Excessive use of social networks is increasing the number of teenagers seeking psychological help. They report crises of anxiety, depression, negative thoughts, and difficulty concentrating. Unfortunately, it is common to find young people with suicidal thoughts, self-harm attitudes, complaints of loneliness and panic syndrome, among other disorders.

In schools, the psychologist's role is of the utmost importance in helping welcome and guide youngsters towards a more balanced use of technology. It helps parents deal with and get closer to their children, reducing the difficulties of the present or those that may arise from using technology. Parents' participation is fundamental. Having more time with their children helps to strengthen family ties.



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This article is a result of the author's ascertainment and analysis, without compulsorily reflecting CEST's opinion.