

Parenting & Technology:

Recognizing the Alarming Signs in your Junior High Teen



Did you know?

- ⇒ 39% of teens on social networks have been cyberbullied in some way
- ⇒ 70% of pre-teens admit to hiding online activities from their parents
- ⇒ 28% of teens partake in deliberately inflicting hatred, bigotry, racism and misogyny online
- ⇒ 23% of teens reported to have been bullied by someone they don't know online
- ⇒ 21% of teens believe it is safe and harmless to post personal information, including photos
- ⇒ 47% of youth said they looked up a site their parents would disapprove



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In today's world, technology is unavoidable. This series of nine newsletters will give parents practical tools to encourage a balance between screen time and time away from electronics for their family.

Screen Time: Any exposure to an electronic screen (television, smart phone, tablet, hand-held video game player, or computer)

Here are some tips that may allow you to pick up on the signs that your teen could be using social media as an outlet for their problems offline

A Change in their Presence at Home

Is your teen retreating to their room for long periods of time to go on the computer or use their phone in complete privacy? Are they skipping dinner and homework to play on their video game console all evening? Although these may be *normal behaviors* for teens in society, these are *not healthy behaviors*. The distinctiveness between these behaviors is important to be aware of.

A Noticeable Shift in their Mood

As we said before, junior high is hard for a lot of kids. Most parents have had their child come home from school in tears or visibly upset from something that was said or done to them whether online or in real life. This is where the fine line between healthy and unhealthy technology usage requires our attention. If your child is leaving their technology device upset or uneasy, it is important to have a conversation about cyberbullying and make sure they know that although it is common, it is not okay.

A Change in their Real Life Friendships

If your child is using technology to make online friends because they are losing real life friends, or if they are seeking refuge on online chat rooms or from strangers via Facebook or a video game, it is important to monitor who they are speaking to and what the nature of their conversations are about. We want to promote presence in the offline world more than in the online world. There have been far too many chat rooms and forums promoting dark material that teens have been known to frequent.

For more information check out:

<http://www.phonesheriff.com/blog/the-pros-and-cons-of-teens-on-social-media/>

<https://childmind.org/article/how-using-social-media-affects-teenagers/>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/suren-ramasubbu/influence-of-social-media-on-teenagers_b_7427740.html