

Social Networking: Intervention & Treatment

Youth & Digital Technology: Growing Up Online Toolkit

Balancing Internet Use & Digital Resilience

While limiting internet access for youth may reduce online risks, it can also hinder opportunities to develop digital citizenship skills and build resilience. Given the internet's ubiquity and its rapidly evolving nature, it is unrealistic to shield children and young people from all online risks.

Therefore, the goal of treatment should not be total abstinence from the internet. Instead, both treatment approaches and public policy should focus on fostering resilience in children and youth, helping them maintain emotional and mental well-being through responsible digital engagement [1].

Several prevention and intervention strategies can be implemented in schools, homes, and healthcare settings. These strategies include:

- Teaching children and youth about respectful digital communication
- Promoting safe and informed internet use
- Educating on the benefits and risks of social networking sites (SNSs)
- Preventing cyberbullying
- Encouraging responsible and balanced use of SNSs

Schools and communities play a crucial role in educating children and youth on respectful communication, safe internet use, the benefits and risks of digital technology, responsible social networking, and cyberbullying prevention [2].

Psychological Treatment Approaches

Effective psychological treatments include:

- Stimulus control and gradual re-exposure to the internet.
- Psychoeducation to increase awareness and understanding of digital behaviors.
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to address problematic internet use patterns [3].
- Additional therapeutic approaches, such as Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Solution-Focused Therapy, Psychodynamic Therapy, Trauma-Informed Care, and the Recovery Model.

The primary goal is to enhance psychosocial functioning by developing coping strategies for cravings, social isolation, and self-regulation of internet use. Service providers should collaborate closely with families to create personalized treatment plans that promote healthy digital habits and overall well-being [4].

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<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page17564.aspx>

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