

TechWell

**Digital Awareness Program Preventing
Smartphone Addiction
(GUIDANCE COUNSELOR WORKSHOP)**



PROTECTIVE AND PREVENTIVE INTERVENTION

Purpose: The goal is not to completely disconnect students from technology, but to provide them with the mental and emotional tools necessary to lead healthy, balanced, and meaningful lives in the digital age. At the end of this digital journey of discovery, each student will have taken an important step toward becoming a competent "captain" charting the course of their own life.

Goal:

- To help students gain awareness about their own technology usage habits and the emotional reasons that trigger these habits.
- To develop fundamental life skills such as self-regulation, time management, and emotional regulation.
- To encourage a shift toward social, physical, and creative activities outside the internet, thereby restoring life balance.
- To empower students to become healthy and conscious "individuals" in the digital world.

MODULE 1: DIGITAL COMPASS ADVENTURE

This program is applicable to all high school students and aims to instill healthy digital habits and awareness skills before problematic use arises. The main metaphor is that each student develops their own internal "compass" so they don't lose their way in the digital world.

Game 1: Master of Time

Objective: To develop time management and self-awareness skills.

Psychological Basis: This game is a self-monitoring technique that allows students to recognize their own technology usage habits and how aligned they are with their goals.

Expected Outcome: Students see concretely where they spend their time. They understand that reducing technology use is not a loss, but an opportunity to gain new "energy spheres" in real life.

Metaphors used: Time crystals and Energy spheres.

Required Materials:

- Whiteboard or smartboard
- Two different colored whiteboard marker
- A printed "Time Map" template or a blank notebook page and pencils for each student.

Implementation

1. Step: Warm-up Questions

- What are your most valuable resources in most online games? (gold, diamonds, energy, mana, etc.)
- So what is your most valuable resource in real life? (The answer we are looking for is time. Discuss the idea that time is a resource that can be "spent" or "earned," just like in games.)

MODULE 1: DIGITAL COMPASS

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2.Step: Introduce the Metaphors

"Time crystals are the 'resources' we spend in the digital world. Activities such as browsing social media, watching videos, and playing games 'spend' our time crystals. And we all have a limited number of 'time crystals' that we can spend in a day. Energy Spheres, on the other hand, are the resources that power us and recharge us in real life. Exercising, chatting face-to-face with a friend, pursuing a hobby, or spending time with our family "earns" us energy spheres. The more energy spheres we have, the stronger and happier we are."

2.Step: Create the Time Map

Divide the board into two sections, with one side labeled "TimeCrystals" and the other "Energy Spheres," and ask students to provide examples.

Distribute the "TimeMap" you created or blank A4 sheets to the students.

Guide the students:

Think about the past week and create your own "Time Map" based on what you remember. Our goal is to be able to see where we spend our resources, i.e., our "crystals and spheres," and where we gain them.

After students have created their own time maps, ask them to calculate their weekly total number of crystals and spheres.

Scoring system: For every half hour of digital activity, you "spend" 1 crystal; for every half hour of real-life activity, you earn 1 sphere.

3.Step: Discuss the Time Maps Ask students and discuss as a group:

- What was the first thing you noticed when looking at your map?
- Was there anything that surprised you?
- Where did you spend the most crystals?
- When did you earn the most spheres?
- Are crystals and spheres balanced? Looking at your week overall, did you spend more (crystals) or earn more (spheres)?
- Which activities used the most crystals? As a group, where do we spend most of our time crystals on digital activities?
- How can we earn more energy spheres? Looking at your map, where could you add a small activity to earn more energy spheres during your week?

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4.Step: Closing and Assignment Direct students:

The purpose of this game was simply to become aware of how we use our resources. Now, everyone should look at their own map and think of just one "small change" for the coming week. Maybe reduce one crystal, or maybe add one sphere. Let's think about what this small change would be until our next meeting.

Important reminder!

Remind students throughout the week that this is not a competition, and there is no "right" or "wrong" map. The goal is simply to observe ourselves honestly.

Students are given a new "Time Map" and asked to fill it out daily at the end of each day for one week.

What we hope to achieve here is for students to understand that reducing technology use is not a loss, but an opportunity to gain new "energy spheres" in real life.

Game 2: Dopamine Hunters

Objective: To understand the brain's reward system and discover natural ways to gain dopamine.

Psychological Basis: This game explains, in metaphorical language, how video games and social media rapidly and intensely stimulate the brain's reward system. The goal is to help students find more lasting and healthy sources of dopamine.

Expected Outcome: Students will recognize that real-life achievements and social connections provide deeper and more lasting satisfaction than fleeting digital pleasures.

Metaphors Used: Quick Treasures, Lasting Treasures

Required Materials

- Whiteboard or smartboard
- Two different colored whiteboard markers
- A printed "Treasure Map" template or a blank notebook page and pencils for each student.

Implementation

1. Step: Warm-up Questions

• When you level up in a game or receive a message you've been eagerly awaiting, what might be triggering that "Yes!" feeling in your brain? Could it be that your brain is giving you a small reward?

• Why do you sometimes feel a very strong urge to look at your phone? What do you think drives your brain to feel this urge?

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2.Step: Introduce Metaphors

When we are happy or achieve something, our brain releases a reward hormone called dopamine. We can think of this as "finding treasure." Some treasures are very easy to find but disappear quickly; we call these "Quick Treasures." For example, getting a like on social media or leveling up in a game. It makes you feel good for a moment, but the effect wears off quickly.

There are also treasures that take a little more effort to find, but once we find them, they make us happy for a longer time. These are "Lasting Treasures." For example, succeeding in a difficult lecture, helping a friend, or learning something new. In other words, we reach treasures as a result of "our actions." Today, we will go on a treasure hunt to discover the "Lasting Treasures" in our own lives.

3.Step: Create the Treasure Map

Divide the board into two sections, one labeled "Quick Treasures" and the other "Lasting Treasures," and ask them to give examples of where these treasures can be found.

- Distribute a "Treasure Map" you have created or blank A4 sheets to the students.

Ask them to divide the page into "Quick Treasures" and "Lasting Treasures" and draw treasure chests.

- Introduce the chests to the students and ask them to think about what treasures might be inside.
- Ask students to think about the past week and create the contents of their own chests.

Quick Treasures

Virtual Success Chest: Digital victories that provide instant gratification, replacing real-life achievements that require effort.

Instant Approval Chest: Treasures based on quick and temporary external approval rather than deep connection.

Ready-Made Entertainment Chest: Pleasures that require no effort or creativity, are passively consumed, and quickly fade away.

Distraction Chest: Treasures that save the moment but add nothing, sought as an escape from boredom or a task that needs to be done.

Lasting Treasures

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Success Chest: Real victories achieved through hard work, patience, and overcoming challenges, providing a sense of pride and competence.

Connection Chest: Treasures obtained by establishing real and meaningful relationships with others, creating feelings of belonging, love, and trust.

Creativity Chest: The satisfaction that comes from using your imagination or trying new things to produce a tangible or intangible product.

Helping Others Chest: The inner peace and happiness that comes from positively impacting someone else's life without expecting anything in return.

2.Step: Discuss the Treasure Maps Ask students and discuss as a group:

· When comparing "lasting treasures" and "quick treasures," which one evoked a more genuine feeling?

- Which chest was the most difficult to fill?
- Which chest was easiest to fill?
- Is there a new "treasure" you would like to add to your daily life after this treasure hunt?

3.Step: Closing and Assignment

At the end of the "Dopamine Hunters" game, a decorated box called the "Lasting Treasure Chest" is placed in a corner of the classroom.

Throughout the week, students anonymously write down a lasting treasure they experienced that made them feel good on a small piece of paper, add a short note about the feelings it evoked, and place it in the box.

At the beginning of the next session, the chest is opened and these treasures are read out randomly. This allows students to see how many healthy sources of dopamine there are and to learn different approaches from others' experiences.

Game 3: Border (Boundary) Guard

Objective: To establish healthy digital boundaries and strengthen self-control skills. Psychological

Basis: One of the most important protective factors in combating technology addiction is the individual's ability to set time and space boundaries for themselves. This game transforms this process into an "agreement" the person makes with themselves.

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Expected Outcome: Students embrace the rules not as an external obligation, but as a personal principle they have created to protect their own values and health.

Metaphors Used: Mind Castle and Border Guard

Required Materials:

- Whiteboard or smartboard
- Two different colored whiteboard markers
- A "Mind Castle Map" template (or a blank notebook page) with a castle gate and guard image for each student, and markers.

Implementation:

1. Step: Warm-up Questions

- Setting boundaries: In which areas do you find it most difficult to set boundaries with technology?

After gathering enough examples, move on to Question 2.

- Identifying Triggers: What might be causing these challenges with your boundaries?

2. Step: Introduce Metaphors

"Imagine that each of you has a castle made up of your own mental and emotional health. Your phones, computers, and the internet are the doors connecting this castle to the outside world. But sometimes, things that enter uncontrollably through these doors can disturb the peace of our castle. Today, we will be loyal "Border Guards" protecting this castle, and we will write our own personal "Guard Code" to protect our castle."

3. Step: Create a Mind Castle Map

Students are given a "Mind Castle Map" template featuring an image of a castle gate. Students are asked to draw a "Border Guard" figure representing themselves at the castle gate. Students are asked to write down the areas they struggle with and the triggers in those areas, as identified in the warm-up questions, outside the castle gate.

Next, students are asked to create the rules that the Border Guard must follow to protect the castle from these threats, that is, their own personal "Guard Codes." These codes should contain positive and action-oriented statements.

Example codes:

- At the dinner table, I put down my shield and take a break from technology. I savor the moment.
- After 10 p.m., I rest my mind and stay away from screens. A good night's sleep is my best armor.
- I keep distractions locked away until I finish my homework.
- When chatting with a friend, I keep my phone in my pocket to show respect for them and the moment.

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4.Step: Discuss the Mind Castle Map Direct students and discuss as a group:

- Is anyone willing to share their map or one of the codes they wrote with us?
- What was the most challenging part for you while writing this code?
- Which of the codes you wrote do you think will be most helpful to you? Why?
- Did any of your classmates' shared code resonate with you?
- How does it feel to think of these boundaries not as a requirement but as your own "guard code"?

5.Step: Closing and Assignment

Students are reminded that today everyone took very important steps to protect their own mental fortresses and wrote their own personal guard codes, and that these codes can serve as a guide for taking healthier and more conscious steps in the digital world.

Students are asked to observe situations and triggers that challenge the boundaries of their own mental fortresses throughout the week.

Students are asked to test the validity of the guard codes they have created: which codes work, and which ones are difficult to implement?

Creating Guards Wall: A corner called the "Border Guards Wall" is created on the classroom board. Students who wish to do so can anonymously post the codes they have created on this wall. This helps to establish a class norm and allows other students to learn from experience.

MODULE 2: FINDING THE WAY OUT OF THE EMOTION FOREST

This section aims to bring about behavioral change by addressing the underlying emotional causes of the problem. The main metaphor is to help students find their "way out" of the complex "emotional forest" in which they are lost within their own inner world.

Game 1: Trigger Trees

Objective: To identify and concretize the emotional triggers that lead to problematic internet use.

Psychological Basis: One of the fundamental steps of CBT is to identify the triggering situations and emotions that lead to problematic behavior. This game transforms this process into a visual and creative activity.

Expected Outcome: The student externalizes intangible emotions through a tangible metaphor. They realize that turning to the internet is an automatic response and that there are healthy alternatives they can choose instead.

Metaphors used: Emotion Forest, Trigger Trees, Shelter, Healthy Paths

Materials Needed:

- Large blank sheet of paper for each student
- Colored pencils, paints, markers
- Whiteboard or smartboard

Implementation:

1. Step: Warm-up Questions

- What do you usually feel right before picking up your phone/computer, even when you don't have an urgent task?
- Write the students' answers on the board. This list will give students ideas for the next step.

2. Step: Introduce Metaphors

"We all have a forest inside us where we sometimes lose our way. This forest is our emotional world. Sometimes there are places in this forest that bother us, that we want to escape from. We can escape to our shelter in the forest, but even if this saves us momentarily, we cannot leave the forest until we find a real way out. Today, we will discover these special places that drive us to take refuge in the virtual world of the internet, our 'Trigger Trees', and we will add new, healthy paths to them."

MODULE 2: FINDING THE WAY OUT OF THE EMOTION FOREST

1.Step: Create the EmotionForest Map

Creating a safe and non-judgmental atmosphere in this activity will help students explore their emotions. It is emphasized that creativity is what matters and that there is no right or wrong drawing. Students are reminded that this is not an art class and that the important thing is not to produce an aesthetic work, but to transfer their emotions and thoughts onto paper.

Drawing Trigger Trees: Students are given blank sheets of paper. Starting from the list on the board or their own emotions, they are asked to draw a tree for each triggering emotion that pushes them online.

Reflecting Emotions on the Tree: Students are asked to reflect the feelings that each trigger creates in them on the appearance of the tree. For example: The loneliness tree (dry, leafless, bent branches), the exam stress tree (thorny, complex, knotted branches), the boredom tree (colorless, faded, leafless) could be examples.

Adding Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms: Students are asked to write the unhealthy coping mechanisms they usually resort to when faced with these trees on the tree's roots or dry branches.

Adding New and Healthy Paths: Guide students: When you take refuge in the shade of this tree, instead of escaping to the internet, what different behaviors could you exhibit that would be good for you? Students are asked to add these healthy alternatives they find to their trees as new green leaves, flowers, or strong branches. For example: Green branches such as "call a friend," "chat with my family," or "listen to music" can be added to the loneliness tree. Flowering branches such as "take a 10-minute walk," "do breathing exercises," or "listen to a song I love" can be added to the exam stress tree.

2.Step: Discuss the Emotion Forest Map Guide the students and discuss as a group:

- Did you discover a trigger you hadn't noticed before while drawing this forest?
- How did writing unhealthy coping mechanisms on your tree make you feel?
- How did it feel to add new and healthy paths? Which one was the easiest to add?
- Did you notice anything new from the healthy paths your friends shared, or did you think, "I can implement this too"?

3.Step: Closing and Assignment

- What did drawing your own trigger tree and equipping it with healthy branches make you realize?
- This week, which of the new and healthy branches you added to your tree can you try?

MODULE 2: FINDING THE WAY OUT OF THE EMOTION FOREST

Game 2: Escaping the Thought Maze

Objective: To identify and change negative and automatic thought patterns that trigger internet use.

Psychological Basis: This game gamifies cognitive restructuring, a core technique of CBT. Expected

Outcome: The student understands that their thoughts are not absolute truths, but merely mental events. They gain the ability to break negative thought cycles and develop a healthier inner dialogue.

Metaphors Used: Thought Labyrinth, Labyrinth Walls, Exit Doors

Materials Needed:

· Large sheets of paper for each student or small group

· Colored pens, markers

· Whiteboard or smartboard

Implementation:

1. Step: Warm-up Questions

Important Reminder!

In the classroom, it is very important to create a safe, non-judgmental atmosphere where every thought is valued, encouraging students to explore their inner dialogue.

· What kinds of thoughts usually cross your mind just before you pick up your phone/computer, even when you don't have an urgent task?

· Write the students' answers on the board. This list will help students build their own labyrinths in the next step

MODULE 2: FINDING THE WAY OUT OF THE EMOTION FOREST

2.Step: Introduce Metaphors

"Our minds are sometimes like a maze. Certain thoughts that push us toward the internet or our phones are like the walls of this maze. They constrict us and make us think that technology is the only way out. Today, we will map out our own mental mazes together and discover new and 'secret exit doors' on the walls to escape this maze."

3.Step: Create a Map of Your Thought Maze

Students are reminded that this is not a drawing contest, that the important thing is to put the "labyrinth" in their minds on paper, and that all shared thoughts will be accepted without judgment.

Positioning Your Own Self: Students are asked to draw a figure representing themselves in the middle of the paper distributed to them.

Building the walls: Students are asked to draw a "wall" around the figure for each negative and automatic thought that drives them to use the internet. They write that negative thought on each wall.

Discovering the exit door: Guide the student: Now let's draw the magical exit doors on these walls that will get you out of the maze. These doors will be alternative thoughts that are more realistic and will make you feel better than the thoughts on the walls.

Meaning the doors: Students draw a door on each wall they have drawn and write a healthy and realistic alternative that challenges the negative thought on the wall on this door.

Example:

Wall: I'm already a failure, at least I'm good at gaming → Door: I may be struggling in this class, but I can ask for help. My success in gaming doesn't determine my worth in real life.

Wall: There's nothing better to do → Door: Actually, I could go for a 15-minute walk or spend time with my family.

Wall: No one understands me → Door: I feel lonely right now, but if I share my feelings, there might be people who can understand me.

4.Step: Discuss the Thought Labyrinth Map Direct students and discuss as a group:

- How did it feel to see your thoughts as walls in front of you?
- Which wall was the hardest to build?
- Which exit door made you feel the strongest or most free? Why?
- Did you notice any walls or doors in your friends' mazes that were similar to yours?

MODULE 2: FINDING THE WAY OUT OF THE EMOTION FOREST

5.Step: Closing and Assignment

- What did creating your own thought labyrinth and seeing your exit doors in front of you make you realize?
- This week, when you encounter a wall of thought, your labyrinth will come to mind. Which of the exit doors you drew can you try using this week?

Game 3: Reflections of Reality

Objective: To understand the difference between success in the virtual world and success in real life, and to build self-worth in non-technological areas.

Psychological Basis: To help students realize that their self-worth is based not on temporary validation in the virtual world, but on the skills they use in their real-life actions and the personal values these actions reflect.

Expected Outcome: The student realizes that their value is not dependent on virtual world standards. They understand that even small successes in real life have a deeper and more positive impact on mental health.

Metaphors Used: Virtual Mirrors, Reality Mirror

Required Materials:

- Whiteboard or large sheet of paper
- Two pens of different colors
- Small pieces of paper designed as "Reflection Cards" for each student

Implementation:

1. Step: Warm-up Questions

- Did you experience a moment this week in the virtual world that made you feel good about yourself? What was it?
- Did you experience a moment this week in real life, outside of technology, that made you feel good, successful, or valuable? What was it?

2.Step: Introduce Metaphors

Let's imagine that there are two types of mirrors we constantly look into in our lives. The first is the "virtual mirror." This mirror shows our reflection in social media and games. It is very bright and can sometimes make us appear different and popular than we really are. It shines momentarily with the likes we receive and the levels we achieve. However, the image in this mirror is temporary; when a new trend emerges or the internet connection is lost, that bright reflection disappears. The second is the "reality mirror." This mirror reflects who we truly are. It shows not only our outward appearance but also our personality traits, and this mirror does not shine on its own. The only thing that makes it shine is our actions in real life.

MODULE 2: FINDING THE WAY OUT OF THE EMOTION FOREST

3.Step: Create a MirrorReflections Map

At this stage, a "shared" map is created by the class using metaphors, and then students individually prepare their own "Reflection Cards."

The board is divided into two sections: "Virtual Mirror" and "Reality Mirror."

First, students are asked to describe the reflections they see in the virtual mirror that make them feel good momentarily but are temporary, and these are listed in the "Virtual Mirror" section.

To help students notice the reflections in the Reality Mirror, guide them:

- When you think about the past week, did you see any reflections in your Reality Mirror?
- What kind of sparkle did you see in your mirror?
- Which of your actions added a reflection to your mirror?

Creating the Reflection Card:

A sample application is done with the students, and then everyone is asked to create their own card.

Teacher: Think about an action you took this week that you believe brightened your "Reality Mirror."

Student: I invited a friend who no one else wanted on their team to join our group work. Teacher: "You've polished a very important aspect of your Reality Mirror! What skill did you use to do this, and how might this behavior reflect who you are?"

Student: I think I showed empathy. It also took a bit of courage.

The teacher fills out the Reflection Card as an example, and each student fills out their own card in the same format.

Reflection Card

Action That Shines the Mirror: Including your friend in the group.

Skills Used: Empathy, Courage, Leadership.

Reflection of Reality: Reflecting that I am a good person who thinks of others.

MODULE 2: FINDING THE WAY OUT OF THE EMOTION FOREST

1.Step: Discuss the MirrorReflection Map and Reflection Cards Ask students and discuss as a group:

- When a reflection disappears from the virtual mirror, does it change your character or who you are?
- Can the reflection of "a good friend" or "courage" in your realitymirror disappear unless you want it to?
- Which mirror's reflection gives you more lasting, more real power and confidence? Why?

2.Step: Closing and Assignment

Ask the students:

The Virtual Mirror shines with light from outside and can easily fade. But the light that makes your Reality Mirror shine comes from within. You can always make it brighter with your actions and values. This mirror belongs to you and is your most reliable, true reflection.

What kinds of actions can you consciously take this week to make your RealityMirror shine?



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