

Navigating the digital world with our children

We have just concluded the series of April group sessions for parents, focusing on the use of the internet, digital devices and cyberbullying. This month, a total of 83 parents joined us and the number of fathers doubled from last month! There are 7 timeslots to choose from, so if you are keen to join us, please do sign up at <http://tinyurl.com/SJII-mothers> or <http://tinyurl.com/SJII-fathers>. The topic in May will be “supporting your child in his/her friendships, social issues and bullying”.

During our sessions, I shared about the importance of establishing boundaries for the use of the internet and digital devices. It is important for parents to be firm and consistent in their approach, and work within the principles of developing skills and personal responsibility to navigate the digital world. Parents are urged to find out more about what teenagers do online, how they interact with others online and why they like to go online. We often attach negative connotations to using the internet but there are many advantages, positives and opportunities if we use it well. In order to manage screen time, our children need to have a range of hobbies and activities, which they can engage in to enjoy themselves and cope with stress. We have to remember that our goal should not be to control our teenagers and keep track of everything they do online, but to build a good relationship so that we can have open communication with each other and be able to have conversations about difficult issues when they arise.

Here are some resources, which you may wish to check out:

A book by Gary Chapman & Arlene Pellicane entitled “Growing Up Social: Raising Relational Kids in a Screen-Driven World”

A TED talk by Sherry Turkle on “Connected, but alone?” (<https://tinyurl.com/parents-internet1>)

A TEDx talk by me on “Serenading Technology” (<https://tinyurl.com/parents-internet2>)

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