



“Digital space has the extraordinary ability to create vast superficial social networks, but is ill-suited for generating intimate and meaningful human connection.” – Shane Hipps

Tech-savvy Parenting

We had another enriching series of group sessions for parents in March, focusing on “Tech-savvy Parenting”. We started off the session with a mini-quiz on some Internet slangs/acronyms/abbreviations and social media sites which teenagers use. We recognise that the list is not exhaustive and the information keeps changing and updating with time, and it is impossible for parents to keep up and be completely in the know. Hence, what's more important is for parents to be aware of what our children are exposed to and work towards building the relational skills required for our children in this screen-driven world.

Firstly, we explored how teens get drawn to the instantaneous online *affection they may get from social media, which tends to be based on appearance or shock value. Unfortunately, such interactions are conditional and superficial, and we cannot form deep connections and lasting friendships in this manner. If we are about to form healthy relationships in real life through showing affection within the family and among friends, teens will not feel the need to seek affection online.* Secondly, we discussed how parents can be more mindful not to overindulge their children and to delay gratification. This will help teens reduce the sense of entitlement and be more appreciative of their privilege.

Next, we addressed the need to learn to deal with difficult emotions in real life instead of using social media and the Internet to express our sadness, hurt and anger. Parents can facilitate difficult face-to-face conversations so teens develop the ability to regulate their emotions and have the courage to face challenges instead of dealing with them behind a screen. Finally, we examined the how too much screen time affects the productivity and attention span. It is important for teens to engage in a range of activities which do not involve digital media such as exercise or sports, being in nature, spending time with family and friends *in real life.*

Before we ended the session, we took a look at how parents and teens can collaborate in drafting a family contract for the use of digital devices. The contract should include realistic rules and expectations, which are age-appropriate and should be reviewed periodically, addressing period or duration of use, disclosure of personal information or images, consequences of misuse and so on.

I will focus on “No drama discipline” for our sessions in May and you can choose to attend any of the sessions which will be held on: 2 May (Tues) 07:45 – 09:00 & 4 May (Thurs) 07:45 – 09:00; 8 May (Mon) 12:00 – 13:30; 13 May (Sat) 08:30 – 10:00, 10:00 – 11:30. If you have not already signed up, do sign-up online and we will see you next month! <http://tinyurl.com/SJII-parents>

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