Autism Youth and Technology Overuse

- Context and prevalence
- Communication Strategies
- Executive Functioning. “It’s the brain, stupid!”
- Toxic corners of the internet
- Tapering Strategies (September school re-entry)
- Resources

RYTHER WHERE KIDS FIND HEALING AND HOPE
Context and Prevalence

- Pathological technology use has higher incidence in ASD community (NIH, 2017).
- But: It is school and community exclusion that drives the higher prevalence, not simply the presence of an ASD diagnosis.
- Also, “Internet Addiction” and “Internet Gaming Disorder” are imperfect descriptors (at best).

Relationship > Restrictions

- “Catch them doing good”.
- Learn the lingol Show excitement for their interest. Get ready to listen to some details.
- De-center the screen time conversation.
- Explore other rewards and motivators (have them pick out some board games). It should not just be a binary choice between video games and school.
- Regular check ins, include screen time discussion.
Communication

- "Parenting from the inside out", Dr. Daniel Siegel, 2013. Mirror Neurons!
- Your body language is important. Neutrality is important.

- "Collaborative Problem Solving", Dr. Ross Greene, 2005
- Strike some phrases from your vocabulary. "I need you to", "If you don’t get off the computer!", etc.

- "My son is like a high integrity, thoughtful, intelligent business. That happened to hire a terrible PR firm". – A parent of an autistic boy
Four areas of EF

- Emotion Regulation
- Impulse Control
- Flexibility
- Self-Awareness

...what does technology consumption provide for each EF profile? What are strategies to help?

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### Emotion Regulation

- Something to help cope

**Strategies:**
- Identify other coping mechanisms
- Allow extra time, as needed
Impulse Control

- Something to do
- Strategies:
  - Schedule
  - Alternative activities

WHERE KIDS FIND HEALING AND HOPE

Flexibility

- Something to provide predictability and rules, ("let me do just one more thing").
- Strategies:
  - Pre-determine screen time limits.
  - Avoid power struggle at all costs.

WHERE KIDS FIND HEALING AND HOPE
Self Awareness

Something to provide social opportunity.

Strategies:
- Creative ways to support peer connection.
- Structured activities (IRL or online).
Toxic Corners of the internet

- Offers youth a simple explanation for social or dating anxiety or feelings of exclusion.
- Terms to listen for:
  - Snowflake, Cuck, Bugaloo, Chad, Karen, GEOTUS, Normie.
  - Of note: “The Google Manifesto” author is a jerk, not an autistic.
- Strategies:
  - Do not engage. Get a trustworthy therapist for them. Already have a trustworthy therapist? Talk to them about your concerns.

Tapering Strategies

- September is going to be a big adjustment.
- Strategies:
  - Work with your kid or teen to identify cool alternative activities to solitary gaming.
  - Set a specific time period (4 weeks). Meet prior and discuss concerns of technology ‘withdrawal’ when school starts up. Emphasize that you want to help.
  - For younger kids: set up a weekly amount of screen time, in decreasing amounts. Create a visual schedule. Establish incentive system for following the taper plan.
  - For teens: Ask for their input. Work together to create an agreement. Identify one large incentive/goal. They must meet benchmarks through September.
One last thing…

- They have more resilience than we give them credit for.

Bibliography

- “Parenting from the inside out”, Dr. Daniel Siegel, 2013
- “Collaborative Problem Solving”, Dr. Ross Greene, 2005
- Swallowing the Red Pill: https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/apr/14/the-red-pill-reddit-modern-misogyny-manosphere-men
- https://www.washingtonian.com/2019/05/05/what-happened-after-my-13-year-old-son-joined-the-alt-right/#The-Metamorphosis
I hope I can help

- Virtual Groups, IRL Groups, IRL Camps: www.aspiringyouth.net
- Community living for young adults: www.thriveseatteliving.com
- VR for community settings practice: https://dutch768.wixsite.com/website