



“Technology is not the problem. It is how we use it!”

Online Wellbeing

I can't believe another academic year is coming to an end it seems to have gone by in the blink of an eye. We are still busy delivering sessions and taking lots of bookings for next academic year.

A few weeks ago I was delivering to year 8's (concerns also around year 5 and 6's online wellbeing to), I am as always concerned about the impact of gaming and social media on mental health. **We would be naïve to blame the internet alone on the rising rates of anxiety and depression amongst young people.**

According to research by Young Minds this academic year 1 in 6 young people will suffer with anxiety at some point in their lives. We must not lose sight of how much pressure there is on young people in 2018. Pressure to be in a relationship, pressure to fit in, peer pressure, exams and body image. Whilst working with year 8 I was asking some key questions to really look at their online wellbeing:

- On average how many likes do you want on Instagram?
- How long do you spend online, especially online gaming and social media?
- How would you cope with no internet, x box, Play Station, social media, YouTube etc for a week?
- Do girls behave differently online to boys? If so how?
- How would you feel if no one liked your photo online?

Teenage girl: "I would really struggle without the internet due to my Snapchat streaks".

Teenage boy: "If we don't get any likes we will delete the photo tag our friends into another photo, that way we get likes".

Teenage boy: "My average time spent online playing games is 6-7 hours each evening".

Teenage boy: I made sure I got 100's of followers so I would always get likes on my photos.

Teenage girl: "On average I like to get 40-60 likes per photo".

Teenage lad: "Lads use Instagram to look hard, girls use it to look pretty".

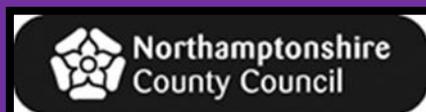
Tackling the issue....

The above comments are obviously just a snap shot and lots of young people told me about the vast array of benefits there are to social media. However one teenage lad missed heard me and thought I said "how would you cope without the internet for two weeks" his response was very worrying and really highlighted the addictiveness of the internet. Moving forward encourage young people to have a gadget free hour, encourage the importance of time limits to parents and young people, building and developing a child's resilience is key as they really are putting a huge emphasis on the amount of likes they get online, comparing your lives to what you see online is very un-realistic as people only put the best parts of their lives online, photos are often manipulated on social media from abs to hair. **Finally don't lose sight of how wonderful the internet is!** Have a wonderful digital free (from to time) summer break.

Worth considering with Fortnite being so popular - The average gamer age is 35 and more than 75% of gamers are adults.



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