

REFRAME PSYCHOLOGY CLINIC

VIRTUAL LEARNING AND TECHNOLOGY DURING THE PANDEMIC



VIRTUAL LEARNING AT HOME



HOW MUCH TIME ARE YOU SPENDING ON YOUR DEVICES?

Virtual Learning

WWW.REFRAMEPSYCHOLOGY.CA

We had all been hoping for a “normal” return to school after all of the disruptions to learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic last spring. Unfortunately, we still find ourselves a long way off from that as many students continue to be educated through virtual learning platforms this academic year. Even for families who have opted for “in-person” learning, students still have to adjust to a very different learning environment. No lockers to aid in organization, no papers passed back and forth, and everything being posted online.

This unique virtual learning situation puts students’ *executive functions* – which are processes such as planning, time management, task initiation, and self-control – to the test! This can be quite challenging for many students as the area of the brain primarily responsible for executive functioning (i.e., the prefrontal cortex) is not fully developed until approximately 25 years of age. Knowing this, it is not surprising that many parents are struggling to help their children get their work done. See the quick tips for families to help keep kids on track.

TECHNOLOGY & VIRTUAL LEARNING...

SURVIVING VIRTUAL LEARNING DURING COVID

QUICK TIPS:

- Set up a quiet, clutter-free work space.
- Put away devices that compete for kids’ attention and add to distraction – wandering eyes is distracting to others & they feel disrespected by your lack of attention.
- Help your kids to set up and keep a school schedule (e.g., sleep/wake schedule, class time, break time, family time, electronics time).
- Post a daily checklist of tasks to be accomplished.
- Provide lots of encouragement and positive feedback/incentives for effort and completion of tasks.
- Get dressed every day; rolling out of bed & over to the computer seems appealing but, it makes separating home & school more difficult. Getting dressed & ready each day helps mentally prepare for school.
- Encourage them to ask questions.
- Build physical activity into the schedule. Exercise helps problem-solving, memory and attention & reduces stress.



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GAMING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Today’s youth have grown up in a digital age. Most teens play video games and use some form of social media; many visit these sites every day, especially now with so many staying at home as a result of COVID-19. While social media can foster creativity, self-expression, help youth stay connected with their friends, family, and educators, many risks are associated with excessive gaming and social media use. These include: sleep problems, inattention, academic struggles, emotional difficulties, and relationships problems.

QUICK TIPS:

- Educate kids about the impact of excessive screen time use & teach internet safety.
- Limit screen time and gaming that is allowed (e.g., no more than 2 hours per day).
- Set clear rules about screen use (e.g., no devices in the bedroom after bedtime, or at the dinner table).
- Consider making a “social media agreement/contract” together.
- Use privacy settings & activate parental control features.
- Emphasize other options for having fun (e.g. cooking together, reading, board games, arts, crafts, dancing, exercising).
- Modeling and setting a good example through your own screen time use goes a long way!

We offer comprehensive psychological assessment & treatment services for youth, young adults, & families in the greater Toronto area.

IN THIS ISSUE

VIRTUAL LEARNING & TECHNOLOGY

NEED OUR EXPERTISE & HELP?

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