CTA Positive Tech Use

What is Positive Tech Use?

Positive Use of Technology refers to using the internet and technology for learning and practicing skills that can enhance your well-being.

Positive Tech Use is also about:
- Setting healthy boundaries with tech if you find yourself using it excessively or in a problematic manner.
- Finding resources that can help improve your physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Why is Positive Tech Use important?

One survey by McAfee security found that 83% of Indian kids (10-14-year-olds) were using mobile phones early on in their childhood, and 22% were vulnerable to cyberbullying. Both the figures are higher than their international averages. Meanwhile, 90% of Indian parents were concerned about their children's tech use.

Reports from the OECD have also suggested that children who use the internet and tech excessively may experience depression and anxiety, lose the sense of time, and report lower life satisfaction. Their sleep quality may worsen and they become less mindful of how much food they are consuming. Studies have also linked social media use (exposure to attractive figures) to body image issues.

In light of emerging evidence, we now realize that our increasing reliance on tech may not always be beneficial for us. It is important to have a conversation on how we can set boundaries with problematic tech use, reduce its negative impact, and look for resources online that can help us maximize our well-being.

How to use tech positively?

Recognize the warning signs
If you are
- Unable to stop using tech repeatedly
- Hurt by people's actions towards you or others on the internet.
- Anxious and/or depressed
- Tired and/or sleep deprived
- Very much concerned about how you appear to others.

You can take a break from tech use. Reach out to a mental health professional (psychiatrist or a psychologist) if these feelings disrupt your day-to-day functioning.

Set healthy boundaries
Research has found that moderate use of the internet and technology is more beneficial to us than little or excessive use. Hence, you do not have to give up on tech entirely. Instead, you can:
- Avoid using tech right after waking or before going to bed.

- Reduce tech use during weekends or when you have a lot of free time
- Try to go on a digital detox after extended periods of tech use.
- Avoid accessing content that makes you feel uncomfortable, triggered, or hurt.
- Take a break if your sleep or eating is being impacted by tech use.
- Determine your no go zones on the internet.

Setting healthy boundaries also involves prioritizing activities other than tech use. Those could be your hobbies, and spending time with friends and family members.

Using tech for your well being
Identifying resources such as apps or websites that can help you enhance your physical, mental, and spiritual health. You can consider doing the following:
- Join a virtual community: Listening circles and support groups. These are some of the spaces where you can talk about your feelings and feel supported. Different support groups can cater to different audiences depending on their age and the mental health-related condition experienced. You can also join groups where you get to meet people having similar interests such as health and fitness, writing, adventure travel, and so on. Being part of a virtual community can give you more opportunities of socializing with people with whom you will feel connected.
- Find an accountability partner: An accountability partner is someone who encourages you to achieve your goals. The word accountability means that you have to inform them about your progress at regular intervals. Accountability partners can be in a non-intrusive and supportive relationship wherein they share knowledge, advice, and tools that are best for each others' productivity.
- Track your internet usage daily: Being mindful of your screen time and what you are consuming online is very important. You can use apps such as Digital Wellbeing (available on Android Phones) or Action Dash that can monitor your usage and help you understand whether your tech use is excessive or not. From there on, small attempts can be made to cut down on screen time by not using certain apps for a while or going on a digital detox.
- Focus on your health: You can access resources that can help you manage and minimize the negative impact of tech use on your physical and mental health. For starters, you can learn about meditation and mindfulness by downloading apps such as Mindspace or Calm. Meditation is a powerful practice that has proven to be beneficial for reducing the symptoms of anxiety and depression. It helps you feel grounded and centered. You may also keep a track of your food consumption or daily exercise with the help of smartphone apps such as Healthify Me or Fittr. These can help you ensure that your nutritional intake is balanced and you are sufficiently active. Finally, you can learn more about health and well-being by accessing relevant information on websites such as Mayo Hospital and Healthline.

Point to Remember
Avoid providing your health-related information to a website or an app unless you have looked through their privacy policy. If the platform that hosts your data has a policy of sharing it with other parties then you may want to practice caution.