

Occupational Balance for a Better Mood: Occupational Therapy’s Role in Treating Excessive Technology Use in Youth

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PICO: In children with excessive screen time, what interventions within the scope of occupational therapy practice improve mental health?

Methods:

- Databases: PubMed, CINAHL, and Scopus
- Limits: Publication year: 2010-2021; English language; peer-reviewed; humans; full-text
- Sample search terms:
 - **P**: Screen time; Internet use; Computers; Video Games; Television; Social Media; Cell Phone Use; Internet Addiction; Mobile Devices
 - **I**: Occupational therapy; Group psychotherapy; Cognitive behavioral therapy
 - **O**: Mental health; Depression; Anxiety; Personal Satisfaction; Quality of life; Mental hygiene; Mental illness; Mental disorders; Psychological well-being
- Prisma Flow Diagram: Initial search (n=1435); after title, abstract, and full text screen (n=5)
- Articles were critically appraised for level of evidence and study qualities
- Thematic analysis was conducted to identify themes across all articles

Theme	Description of Interventions	Strength of Evidence	Articles
Self-awareness/ Education	Self-reflection activities/lessons to bring awareness to youth's personal use of technology and the consequences that can occur with excessive screen use.	Strong	Bonnaire et al., 2019 Du et al., 2010 Kugel et al., 2016 Niedermoser et al., 2021 Verduyn et al., 2021
Mindfulness Training	Guided meditations to achieve a calm, focused mental state (i.e. deep breathing, emotional recognition, and focusing on “the now”) in which the present moment is nonjudgmentally observed.	Strong	Bonnaire et al., 2019 Du et al., 2010 Niedermoser et al., 2021 Verduyn et al., 2021
Family Involvement in Treatment	Treatments that involve family members of the child and targets family routines in the home environment (i.e. family training, and increased family time).	Moderate	Du et al., 2010 Kugel et al., 2016

Summary of Results:

- Strong evidence supports the use of self-awareness and education to help clients understand the negative impact of over-using technology.
- Strong evidence supporting mindfulness training to help clients understand their behavior choices.
- Moderate evidence supports family involvement in interventions to help modify family routines to decrease technology overuse and improve mental health outcomes.

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Note: Bolded references indicate articles included in the synthesis