



DigiAddiction

Digital advises for youth.
How to deal with digital addictions.

Methodological Guide

LenoWorks



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DIGIADDICTIONS – METHODOLOGICAL GUIDE

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Methodological Guide

This guide serves as the practical component of the DigiAddictions Kit, designed for youth workers to help young people recognize, manage, and prevent digital addictions. It provides interactive activities, real-life scenarios, and intervention strategies to create an engaging learning experience.

1.2 How to use this Guide

- Activities are designed to be interactive, adaptable, and applicable in various settings (schools, youth centers, workshops).
- Youth workers are encouraged to facilitate discussions based on real-life examples and personal experiences.

1.3 Key Learning outcomes

By using this guide, youth workers will:

- Help young people recognize signs of excessive technology use.
- Teach strategies for maintaining a healthy digital balance.
- Facilitate practical activities that promote digital well-being.
- Support youth in managing and preventing digital addictions.

2. MODULE 1: RECOGNIZING DIGITAL ADDICTIONS

2.1. Understanding behavioral patterns

Youth workers start by helping young people recognize their digital habits. The following questions can facilitate discussions:

- How many hours per day do you spend on your smartphone, social media, or gaming?
- How does your screen time impact your daily activities (studies, sleep, relationships)?
- Do you feel anxious when you are away from your device?

2.2 Identifying different types of digital addictions

Introduce the different types of digital addictions covered in the DigiAddictions Informative Manual:

- **Social Media Addiction:** excessive use of social media platforms, leading to compulsive checking of notifications, posting, and scrolling, often affecting mental well-being and real-life interactions.
- **Smartphone Dependency:** a strong reliance on mobile devices for entertainment, communication, and everyday tasks, causing distress when the phone is unavailable.

- **Video Game Addiction:** compulsive gaming that interferes with daily responsibilities, social life, and physical health, often leading to sleep deprivation and decreased academic performance.
- **Online Shopping Addiction:** uncontrolled and impulsive online purchases driven by promotions, sales, or emotional triggers, potentially leading to financial problems.
- **Online Gambling Addiction:** excessive betting on online platforms, including casinos, sports betting, and loot boxes in games, often leading to financial loss and addiction-related stress.
- **Streaming and Entertainment Addiction:** excessive consumption of digital content (TV series, movies, videos, music), leading to a sedentary lifestyle, procrastination, and reduced productivity.

Emerging Addictions

- **Pubbing:** the habit of constantly using a phone in public places, even when socializing.
- **Pumping:** addiction to sharing workout data and fitness stats on social media.
- **Phubbing:** ignoring people in real-life interactions due to phone usage.
- **Nomophobia:** fear of being without a mobile phone or unable to access the internet.

For a more detailed analysis, please refer to the DigiAddictions Informative Manual.

2.3 Self-Assessment Tool

Use a self-assessment questionnaire to help participants evaluate their technology use. This self-assessment questionnaire is designed to help participants reflect on their technology usage and identify patterns that may indicate healthy use, overuse, or potential dependency. Participants should respond to each statement on a scale from 1 to 10, where:

- 1 = Not at all true for me
- 10 = Completely true for me

Section 1: General technology use

1. I check my phone immediately after waking up.
2. I often lose track of time while using my phone or other digital devices.
3. I feel restless or anxious when I am away from my phone or unable to use it.
4. I use my phone during meals, even when I am with other people.
5. I rely heavily on my phone to remember tasks, appointments, or important dates.

Section 2: Social Media

6. I feel the need to check my social media accounts multiple times a day.

7. I compare my life to others based on what I see on social media.
8. I feel disappointed or upset if my posts don't get enough likes or comments.
9. I often use social media to avoid boredom or stress.
10. I spend more time on social media than I originally planned.

Section 3: Gaming and entertainment

11. I play video games or stream content (movies, series, videos) for hours without breaks.
12. I prioritize gaming or streaming over other responsibilities, like studying or working.
13. I often sacrifice sleep to continue gaming or watching content.
14. I feel irritated or upset when I am interrupted while gaming or streaming.
15. I use gaming or streaming as a way to escape from real-life problems.

Section 4: Communication and dependency

16. I feel the need to respond to messages or notifications immediately.
17. I prefer texting or messaging over speaking to people face-to-face.
18. I frequently check my phone, even during social interactions or meetings.
19. I feel stressed when I don't receive an immediate response to my messages.
20. I keep my phone nearby at all times, even during activities like exercising or studying.

Section 5: Impact on daily life

21. My phone use interferes with my ability to focus on tasks or studies.
22. I have noticed physical discomfort, like neck pain or eye strain, from prolonged device use.
23. My relationships with friends or family have been affected by my device use.
24. I feel guilty or regretful about the amount of time I spend on my phone.
25. I often use my phone or digital devices late at night, which affects my sleep quality.

Scoring and results

- **Healthy Use (25-74 points):**
Your technology use seems balanced. Keep maintaining healthy habits and remain mindful of your screen time.
- **Moderate Concern (75-124 points):**
You may be showing signs of overuse. Consider implementing strategies to reduce screen time and balance your activities.
- **High Risk (125-175 points):**
Your responses suggest potential dependency or overuse. It's important to take steps to manage your technology use, such as setting boundaries, taking breaks, or seeking support if needed.

Next Steps for participants

1. Reflect on your results and identify specific areas where you might want to make changes.
2. Explore resources and strategies for managing your technology use (refer to the DigiAddictions Informative Manual or practical activities).
3. If needed, discuss your results with a youth worker or trusted individual to create an action plan for improvement.

This self-assessment provides a comprehensive overview of technology habits, helping participants take the first step toward healthier digital behavior.

3. MODULE 2: DIGITAL WELL-BEING AND HEALTHY TECHNOLOGY USE

3.1 Building awareness of screen time

Activity: **Tech Time Tracker**

- Participants **track their daily screen time** for one week using their phone's built-in tracker.
- Compare actual usage vs. estimated usage.
- Group discussion on how screen time affects **sleep, mood, and productivity**.

3.2 Strategies for balanced technology use

- **Tech-Free Zones:** encouraging youth to set phone-free areas (e.g., bedroom, dining table).
- **Scheduled breaks:** teaching them to set breaks between screen time (e.g., 20-minute rule).
- **Mindfulness and alternative activities:** promoting reading, sports, and social gatherings.

3.3 Setting digital boundaries

- How to use app restrictions and time management tools.
- Family & peer support in reducing screen dependency.

4. MODULE 3: PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH WORKERS

Activity 1 – "A Day Without Technology"

Objective:

Increase awareness of smartphone dependency by simulating everyday tasks without digital devices.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into small groups of 3-4 people.
2. Provide each group with a **scenario card** outlining a real-life situation they must solve without using smartphones or digital tools. Examples of scenarios:
 - Navigating to a specific location without GPS.
 - Organizing a meeting with friends without instant messaging.
 - Researching a topic for a school project without the internet.
 - Planning a trip without travel apps.
3. Give the groups **10 minutes** to discuss their solutions.
4. Each group presents their solutions to the larger group in a **2-minute presentation**.

Debrief:

- Discuss the challenges participants faced and the creative solutions they proposed.
- Ask: "How did it feel to be disconnected?" and "What skills or resources did you use to solve the problem?"

Materials Needed:

- Scenario cards, flip charts, or notepads for brainstorming.

Time Allocation:

- Group Work: 10 minutes
- Presentations: 10 minutes
- Discussion: 10 minutes

Activity 2 – "The River of Technology"

Objective:

Visually reflect on personal technology use and foster awareness about individual habits.

Instructions:

1. Mark two lines on the floor to represent the **"technology use spectrum"**:
 - One side for **excessive use**.
 - The other side for **moderate or balanced use**.

2. Read a series of **prompts or questions** aloud, such as:
 - "How often do you check social media each day?"
 - "Do you feel anxious when you're away from your phone?"
 - "How many hours a day do you spend gaming or streaming?"
3. Participants move to the position on the spectrum that reflects their behavior.
4. After each question, invite a few participants to explain why they chose their position.

Discussion:

- How can we shift toward the "balanced use" side?
- What small steps could we take to improve our habits?

Materials Needed:

- Tape or markers to create the spectrum on the floor.

Time Allocation:

- Activity: 15 minutes
- Group Discussion: 10 minutes

Activity 3 – "Social Media Detox Challenge"**Objective:**

Understand emotional and behavioral responses to social media use through temporary disconnection.

Instructions:

1. Challenge participants to take a **48-hour break** from all social media platforms.
2. Provide them with a **reflection journal template** where they can record:
 - How they feel without social media (e.g., anxious, relieved, bored, free).
 - What they did instead during their usual social media time.
 - Any changes they noticed in their mood or productivity.
3. After the 48 hours, bring the group together to discuss:
 - "What was the most challenging part of the detox?"
 - "Did you notice any positive changes during the break?"
 - "Would you consider taking regular breaks in the future?"

Materials Needed:

- Reflection journals or a digital template.

Time Allocation:

- Initial Briefing: 10 minutes

- Group Discussion (after detox): 20 minutes

Activity 4 – "Tech Time Tracker"

Objective:

Self-monitor screen time and analyze patterns to improve time management.

Instructions:

1. Participants use their phone's **screen time tracker** or download a tracking app to monitor their daily usage for **one week**.
2. Ask them to categorize their usage into:
 - Social media
 - Messaging
 - Entertainment (gaming, streaming)
 - Productive activities (work, study)
3. After one week, participants calculate:
 - Total screen time per day.
 - Percentage of time spent on each category.
4. During the follow-up session, lead a group discussion:
 - "Does your screen time align with your priorities?"
 - "What changes could you make to better balance your time?"

Reflection Questions:

- What category consumed the most time?
- How could you reduce time spent on non-productive activities?

Materials Needed:

- Screen time tracking apps, worksheets for analysis.

Time Allocation:

- Week-long tracking
- Follow-up Discussion: 20 minutes

Activity 5 – "Scenario-Based Problem Solving"

Objective:

Teach decision-making in real-life digital situations by proposing practical solutions.

Instructions:

1. Present participants with scenarios related to problematic tech use. Examples:
 - **Scenario 1:** A friend constantly checks their phone during social gatherings, making others feel ignored.

- **Scenario 2:** Someone spends excessive money on online shopping, creating financial strain.
- **Scenario 3:** A gamer is neglecting schoolwork to spend hours playing.
- 2. Divide participants into small groups of 3-4 people. Assign one scenario per group.
- 3. Groups brainstorm **solutions** to address the issue. Encourage them to consider:
 - Communication strategies (e.g., discussing the problem with the person).
 - Practical interventions (e.g., setting limits, creating reminders).
 - Long-term strategies to prevent recurrence.
- 4. Groups present their solutions to the larger group in a **3-minute presentation**.

Discussion:

- Which solutions are the most realistic?
- How can we apply these solutions in our own lives or social circles?

Materials Needed:

- Printed scenario cards, flip charts for brainstorming.

Time Allocation:

- Group Brainstorming: 15 minutes
- Presentations: 15 minutes
- Group Discussion: 10 minutes

5. MODULE 4: PREVENTING DIGITAL ADDICTIONS

5.1 Educating youth about risks

- Organizing **awareness workshops** on digital well-being, on topics such as managing screen time, setting digital boundaries, and understanding the impact of excessive smartphone use on mental and physical health. The goal is to provide practical strategies for fostering a healthier and more intentional use of technology in daily life.
- Teaching **critical thinking** about algorithmic manipulation in social media. This involves helping young people understand how social media algorithms are designed to capture their attention and influence their behavior, such as promoting addictive scrolling or personalized content. By teaching critical thinking skills, participants learn to recognize manipulation tactics, make informed decisions about their online interactions, and regain control over their digital consumption.

5.2 Creating healthy digital routines

- Implementing **tech-free hours** (e.g., before bedtime).
- Practicing **time-blocking for social media**.

5.3 Encouraging offline activities

- Promoting **sports, volunteering, arts, and face-to-face interactions**.

6. MODULE 5: INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH WORKERS

As a youth worker, you play a vital role in helping young people recognize and manage digital addictions. This module equips you with strategies to identify warning signs, provide support, and take appropriate action when professional intervention is necessary. By using these tools, you can foster healthier relationships with technology among the youth you work with.

6.1 Identifying warning signs of addiction

Your first step is to be observant and recognize early signs of digital addiction. These signs often fall into three categories:

- **Behavioral Signs:**
 - Young people spending excessive time on devices, neglecting responsibilities like schoolwork or chores.
 - Difficulty stopping or reducing their device use, even when they recognize it's negatively impacting their lives.
 - Prioritizing online activities over real-life interactions with family and friends.
- **Physical signs:**
 - Complaints of headaches, eye strain, or neck and back pain caused by extended screen time.
 - Noticeable sleep disturbances, like staying up late to use devices.
 - A lack of physical activity, leading to sedentary behavior.
- **Emotional Signs:**
 - Increased irritability or anxiety when they can't access their device.
 - Using devices to escape feelings of stress, loneliness, or boredom.
 - Withdrawal from offline relationships in favor of online connections or activities.

What you can do:

- Look for these signs during your interactions with young people.
- Use casual conversations to understand their habits and any potential challenges they may face regarding technology use.
- Encourage them to talk openly about their experiences without fear of judgment.

Practice Activity: Recognizing Warning Signs

Activity Title: "Spot the Signs" Role-Playing Exercise

Objective:

Help youth workers develop their observational and diagnostic skills by identifying behavioral, physical, and emotional signs of digital addiction in realistic scenarios.

Instructions:

1. **Divide participants into groups of 3-4.** Assign one person to play the "youth" experiencing potential digital addiction, while the others play "youth workers."
2. **Provide scenario cards** to each group. Examples of scenarios:
 - A student who stays up late gaming and struggles to concentrate in class.
 - A young person who avoids family meals to scroll through social media.
 - Someone complaining of headaches and fatigue after excessive screen time.
3. The "youth" acts out the behaviors described on the card, while the "youth workers" observe and ask questions to identify the warning signs.
4. After 5-7 minutes, groups discuss:
 - What warning signs they observed.
 - How they would approach the young person in real life.

Debrief:

- Facilitate a group discussion about the key takeaways from the scenarios.
- Discuss which behaviors were easy or difficult to identify and how they would handle similar situations.

Time Allocation:

- Role-Playing: 10 minutes
- Group Discussion: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Scenario cards with detailed descriptions of youth behavior.

6.2 Supporting young people in managing their tech use

Once you've identified a young person struggling with digital overuse, your role is to guide them toward healthier habits. Here's how:

- **Start a conversation:**

Approach the young person in a supportive and non-judgmental way. Ask open-ended questions like:

- "How do you feel about the amount of time you spend on your phone?"
- "Do you think your device use affects your sleep, schoolwork, or friendships?"
- **Encourage self-awareness:**
Suggest tools like screen time tracking apps or built-in phone features to help them monitor their usage. Review the data together to identify patterns.
- **Introduce tech-free alternatives:**
Offer ideas for offline activities, such as sports, art projects, volunteering, or spending time outdoors. Help them rediscover hobbies that don't involve screens.
- **Set realistic goals:**
Help the young person establish small, achievable goals, such as:
 - Reducing social media use by 15 minutes a day.
 - Creating "tech-free zones" during meals or before bedtime.
 - Replacing 30 minutes of screen time with an offline activity.
- **Provide Accountability:**
Encourage peer or family support. Suggest group challenges, like organizing a "tech-free evening" where everyone disconnects together.

Practice Activity: Creating Action Plans

Activity Title: "Build a Balanced Tech Plan" Workshop

Objective:

Train youth workers to guide young people in creating realistic action plans to manage their technology use.

Instructions:

1. **Introduce a case study:** Present a profile of a young person with moderate tech overuse. For example:
 - "Alex, 16 years old, spends 6 hours daily on gaming, often neglecting schoolwork and skipping meals."
2. **Break participants into small groups** and ask them to:
 - Identify Alex's key challenges.
 - Brainstorm achievable goals for reducing Alex's screen time.
 - Suggest alternative activities to replace excessive gaming.
3. Groups create a **detailed action plan** for Alex, including:
 - Specific goals (e.g., reduce gaming to 2 hours/day within a month).
 - Steps to achieve these goals (e.g., set app limits, schedule homework before gaming).
 - Strategies for accountability (e.g., involve family or peers in monitoring progress).
4. Each group presents their plan in a **5-minute presentation**.

Debrief:

- Discuss which strategies were most practical and why.
- Reflect on how to adapt action plans for different types of digital overuse.

Time Allocation:

- Group Work: 15 minutes
- Presentations: 10 minutes
- Discussion: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Case study descriptions.
- Worksheets for action plans

6.3 When and how to seek professional help

Sometimes, you may encounter cases where digital addiction has a severe impact on a young person's mental health, academics, or relationships. In these situations, knowing when and how to involve professionals is essential.

- **Signs that indicate professional help is needed:**
 - Severe anxiety, depression, or mood swings linked to technology use.
 - Major disruptions in daily life, such as skipping school or failing to meet important responsibilities.
 - Social isolation or withdrawal from family and friends.
- **Steps you can take:**
 - **Speak with Guardians:** Involve the young person's parents or guardians to share your observations and discuss the need for professional support.
 - **Provide Resources:** Share contact information for counselors, therapists, or support groups specializing in digital addiction and mental health.
 - **Follow Up:** Continue checking in with the young person to ensure they feel supported and are receiving the help they need.
- **How to approach the conversation:**
 - Use empathetic language. For example:
 - "I've noticed you've been struggling with [specific behavior]. I want to help you get support to feel better and manage this more easily."
 - "There are professionals who specialize in helping people with challenges like this. Would you be open to exploring that option?"

Practice Activity: Escalating to Professional Help

Activity Title: "The Referral Role-Play"

Objective:

Practice having difficult conversations with young people and their guardians about seeking professional help for severe digital addiction.

Instructions:

1. **Introduce a scenario:** A young person exhibits severe signs of digital addiction, such as failing school due to gaming or showing anxiety when away from their phone.
Example: "Sophie, 17 years old, spends 12 hours daily on social media, skips school, and has stopped seeing friends in person."
2. **Divide participants into pairs.** One plays the "youth worker," and the other plays "Sophie's parent."
3. **Role-play the conversation:** The youth worker explains their concerns to the parent and suggests professional help. Key aspects to practice:
 - Expressing empathy and understanding.
 - Clearly explaining the observed behaviors and their impact.
 - Recommending professional resources in a supportive way.
4. After 5-7 minutes, switch roles so both participants practice being the youth worker.

Debrief:

- Discuss the challenges participants faced during the conversation.
- Share strategies for maintaining empathy while addressing concerns.

Time Allocation:

- Role-Playing: 15 minutes (7 minutes per round)
- Group Discussion: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Scenario cards with detailed descriptions of the situation.

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