

The Screen Lover's Help Book

*Adult Facilitator's Guide
for Therapists,
Teachers and
Parents*

Joel Shaul

Both available for free download at
autismteachingstrategies.com

A note from the author



I care very deeply about the issue of leisure screen use in children and teens.

For that reason, I am making *The Screen Lover's Help Book* and the *Adult Facilitator's Guide* available for free distribution from my website. You have my permission to print them. When sharing these materials with others, do not host it on your own website or email them. Instead, please share the links to my website.

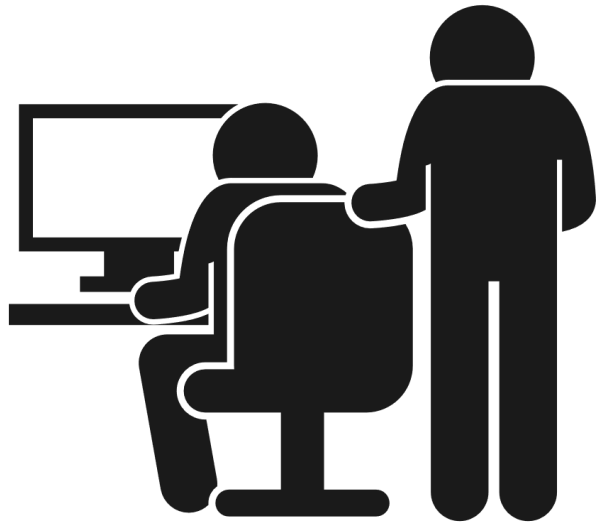
Links to download *The Screen Lover's Help Book* and *Adult Facilitator's Guide*:

[*Link to access download of the pdf of *The Screen Lover's Help Book*](#)

[*Link to access download of pdf of *The Adult Facilitator's Guide*](#)

Joel
Shaul

Introduction to the Adult Facilitator's Guide



Nearly all children and teens have a strong interest in computers, tablets, phones and video games. Many of them develop patterns of overuse ranging from dependence to addiction. Monitoring and guiding these young people in their screen activities is a vital role for parents and professionals. However, adults trying to develop rules and boundaries for electronic devices can be viewed as adversaries by youngsters who are desperate to watch the next video or reach the next game level.

No one can blame young people for wanting to fill their leisure time with entertainment and diversion. Grown-ups have always had to help young people to learn good ways to play and avoid harmful play. The screen-based entertainment currently available to our youth gives today's teachers, child professionals and parents a daunting set of challenges. Many of these games, videos, activities and apps are carefully designed to be extremely hard to put down. Once hooked, young people can almost never manage the craving on their own. We must engage our children, students and clients in efforts to regulate screen attachment.

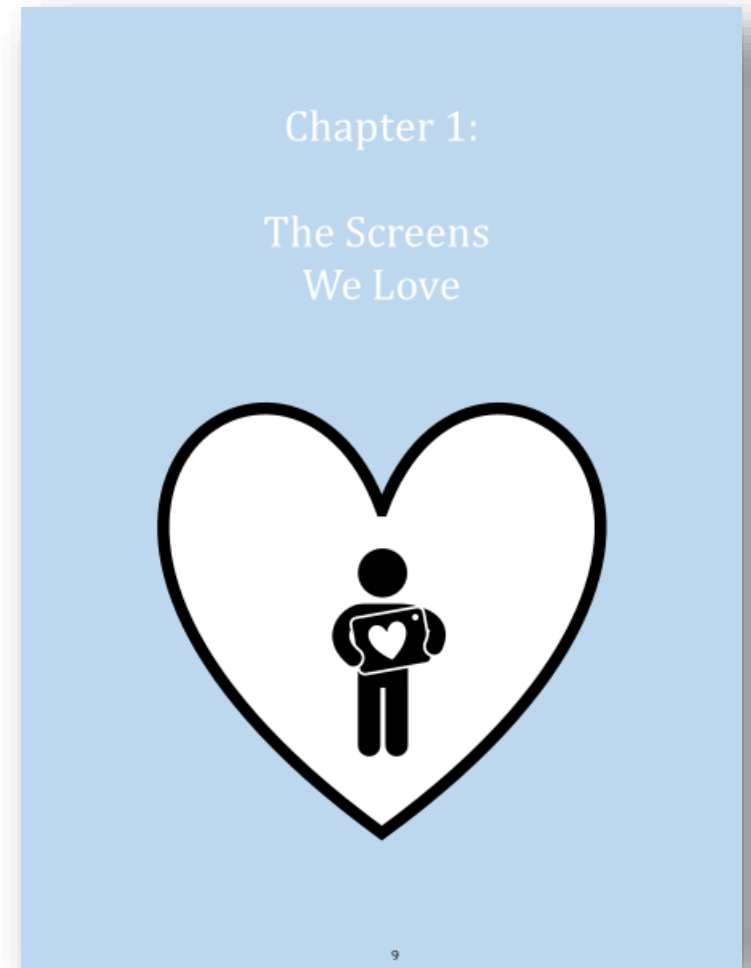
The Screen Lovers Help Book is designed to help children age 7 to 14 to work with teachers, therapists or parents to explore screen activities and their effects. Designed to be read with an adult, the book's self-assessment exercises and worksheets guide readers through an examination of problematic use of screen devices and lead them to achieve a functional balance between electronic screens and the unplugged world beyond.

Joel Shaul

About Chapter 1

Although this book explores the negative effects of excessive use of screen devices, this initial chapter is designed to get the reader to communicate openly about their passion for computers, phones and video games.

While going over this chapter, validate the reader's screen-based passions, and refrain for now from any negative scrutiny.




Suggestions for using page 12

This checklist is to encourage young people to communicate openly about screen activities. Encourage the reader to express enthusiasm.

If you are working with a group of children, have them share favorite experiences together.

You don't need to do every worksheet in this book. Choose the ones that are most helpful to the child(ren) you are working with.

Here are some examples of great experiences people might have with their phone, tablet, computer, TV or video games. Have you had experiences like these? Check the boxes for the ones you can relate to.



| | |
|---|--|
| Using a new game or game system was one of my life's great experiences. <input type="checkbox"/> | In my home or school, I share my special knowledge about computers, games or electronics. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| With a friend, I had such a great time playing a game that I will never forget it. <input type="checkbox"/> | With my school computer or tablet, I am able to learn in special ways. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I learned how to make or do something amazing by learning about it online. <input type="checkbox"/> | On a holiday or special occasion, I had a wonderful time with a screen device. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I often use my phone or social media to talk about or plan face to face activities <input type="checkbox"/> | I became much closer to a parent or other relative through the good times we had gaming together. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| There are certain movies and videos that are not just fun, but also deeply meaningful to me. <input type="checkbox"/> | When I got my first phone, it was one of the best things that I can remember. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Online, I learned useful information to help solve a personal problem. <input type="checkbox"/> | I got a screen device or a game as a present and it was the best present ever. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Online, I helped other people learn important and interesting things about me. <input type="checkbox"/> | My VR headset has opened up new worlds to me. I feel like my life will never be the same. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| One of my earliest and sweetest memories is about using a screen device. <input type="checkbox"/> | There is someone I met online who I have made a very special connection with. <input type="checkbox"/> |

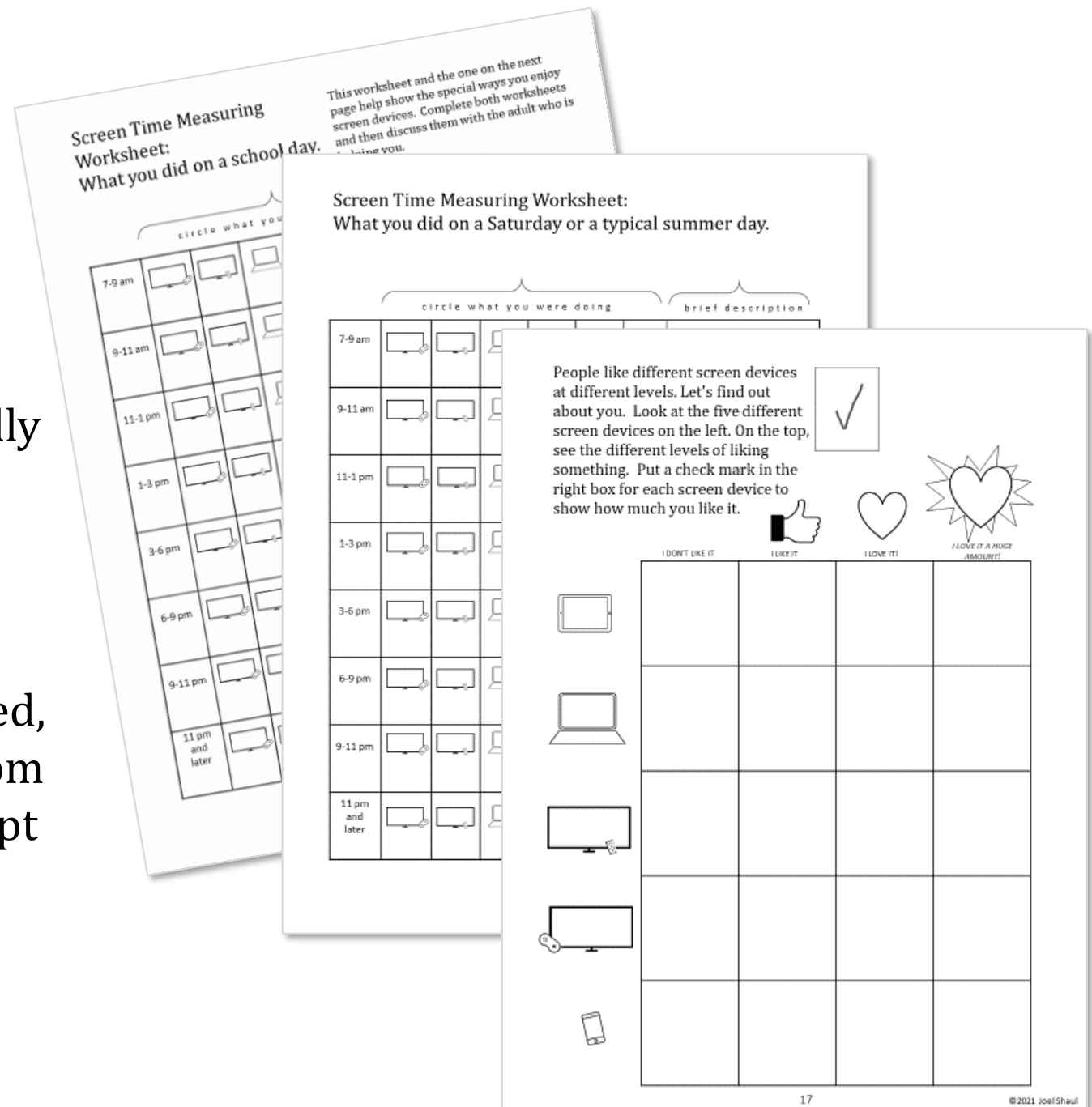
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Suggestions for using pages 15, 16, 17

Complete the Screen Time Measurement Worksheets carefully as they are very important at this point and will also be used again later in the book.

Be sure that everything is recorded, including: a TV on in their bedroom while sleeping; a phone that is kept on at bedside to check or answer messages at night; TV or videos playing in the background during meals, or other activities.

Again, now is not the time for the adult to convey judgment regarding the activities described by the reader.

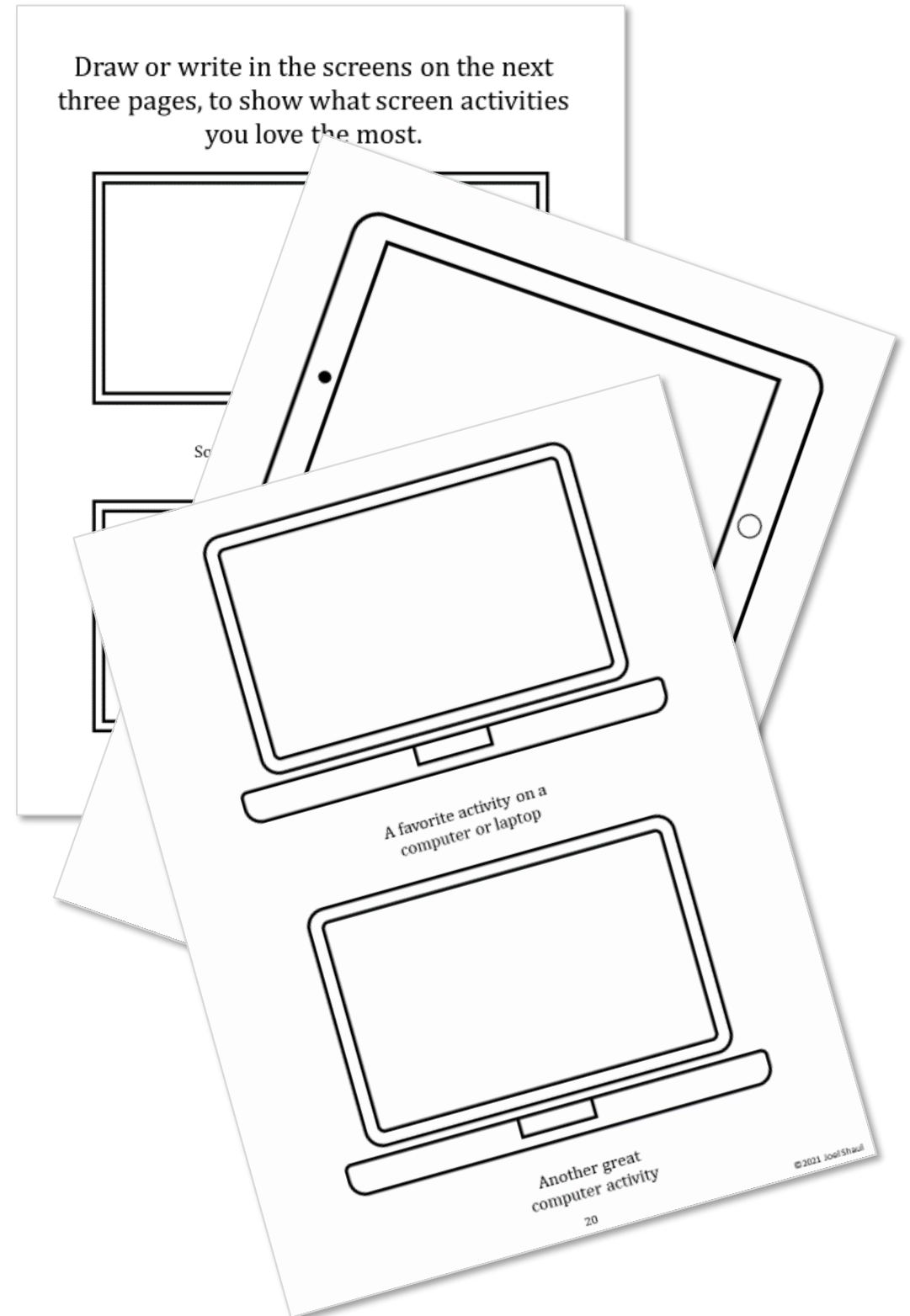


Page 17 is the first worksheet to deal with intensity of attraction to screen activities. Don't bring up addiction at this point – keep your tone light and positive.

Suggestions for using pages 18, 19, 20

Drawing is a powerful way for many children and teens to explore their thoughts and feelings.

For readers who don't want to draw, there is the option of having them write down word descriptions instead.



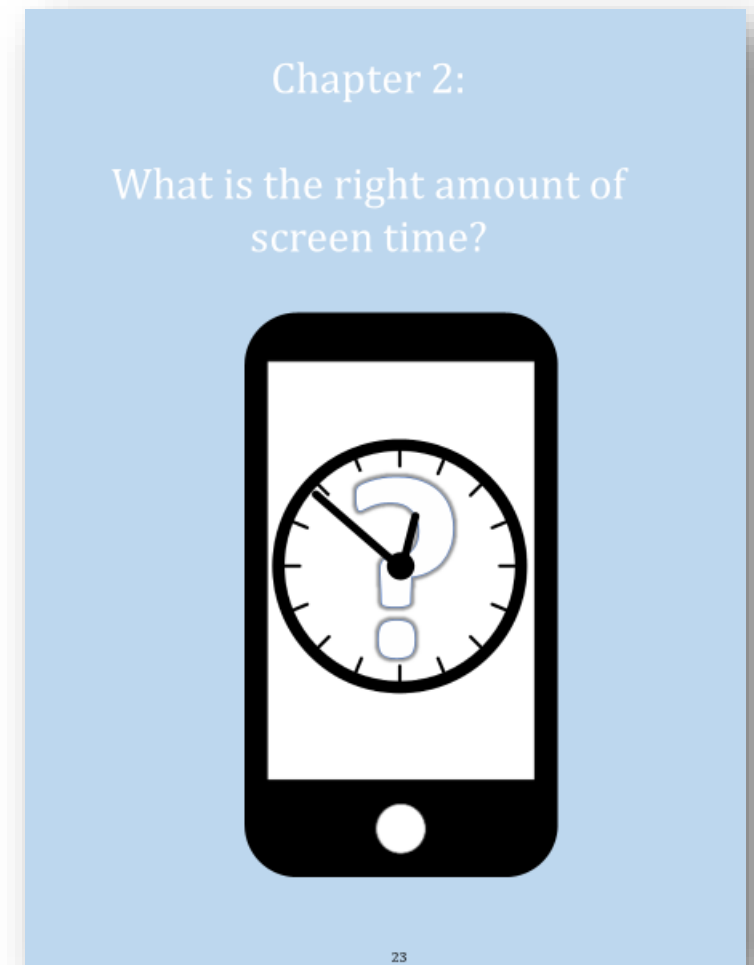
About Chapter 2

This chapter is designed to help the reader begin to understand their own screen activity problems.

First, we see how lots of people of all ages are affected by screen activity enthrallment, in a great many ways.

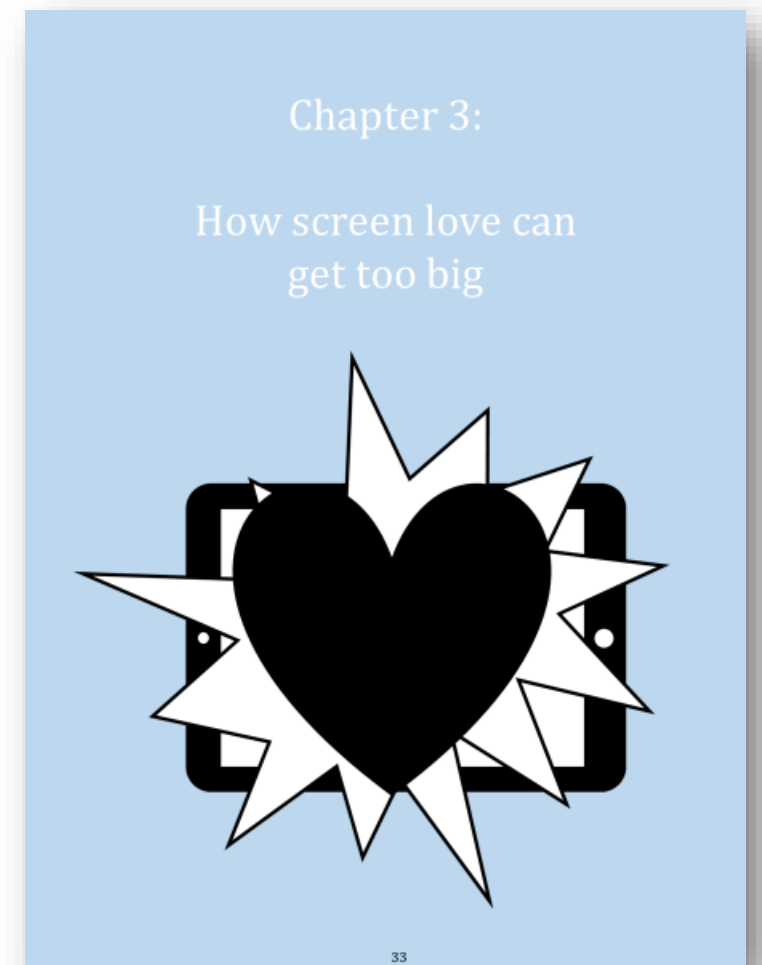
Second, the reader is asked to consider the possibility that they also might be using their phones, video games and computers in ways that have become harmful.

There are no worksheets in this chapter. Pause as needed for discussion.



About Chapter 3

Chapter 3 continues exploration regarding possible overuse and dependence regarding screen activities.




Suggestions for using pages 39


This checklist is provided to help the reader summarize some of their learning from the last two chapters.

If the reader does actually have a problem with excessive screen activity, it is hoped that at this point they are now able to admit it by checking one or more of the boxes on the page.

So, people learn about problems by noticing these problems on their own and by having other people help them to notice them. What issues have *you* begun to notice about *your own* use of screen devices? What concerns have other people noticed?

Below, put a check next to the problems that you might possibly have.





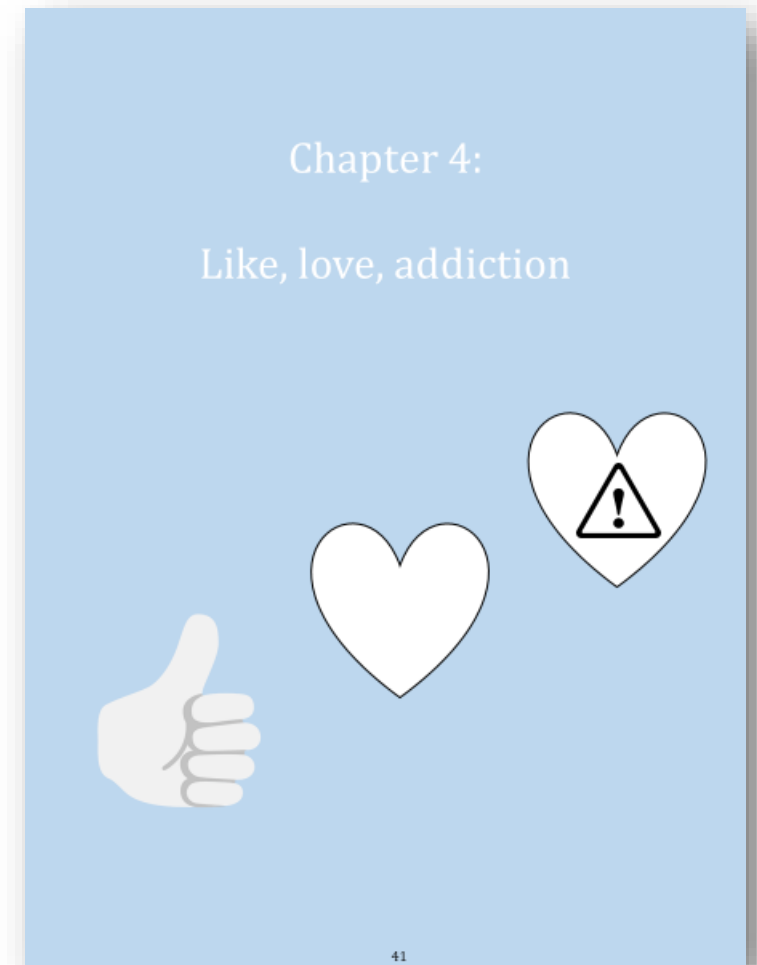
| | |
|---|---|
| I feel bored and lonely sometimes when using my computer, tablet, phone or video games. <input type="checkbox"/> | Someone told me that I don't do schoolwork well because I am on my screen devices too much. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| When I try to cut down on screen time sometimes, it is really, really hard. <input type="checkbox"/> | Someone told me I get lazy, rude or grouchy because I am gaming and on the computer so much. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I miss some of the things I used to do before I was using the screens so much. <input type="checkbox"/> | Someone told me I lose sleep from using screen devices too late at night. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I might be getting out of shape or unhealthy from sitting down so much with my screen devices. <input type="checkbox"/> | Someone told me I talk about my favorite game, show, video or website too much. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| When I think about my favorite experiences in recent months, they mostly involve screen devices. <input type="checkbox"/> | Someone told me I was neglecting people in my family because of my screen devices. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I got in some trouble because of something that I wrote or shared on social media. <input type="checkbox"/> | Someone told me I talk impolitely and say bad words like some people do in online videos. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I feel very tempted sometimes to use computers at my school to do things that are not allowed. <input type="checkbox"/> | Someone told me I am neglecting other people's needs by being so devoted to my screen devices. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A loss or disappointment in a video game can affect me even more than something in real life. <input type="checkbox"/> | Anything else? <input type="checkbox"/> |

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About Chapter 4

Continuing to explore how loving an activity too much can cause problems, Chapter 4 provides a simple explanation of addiction.

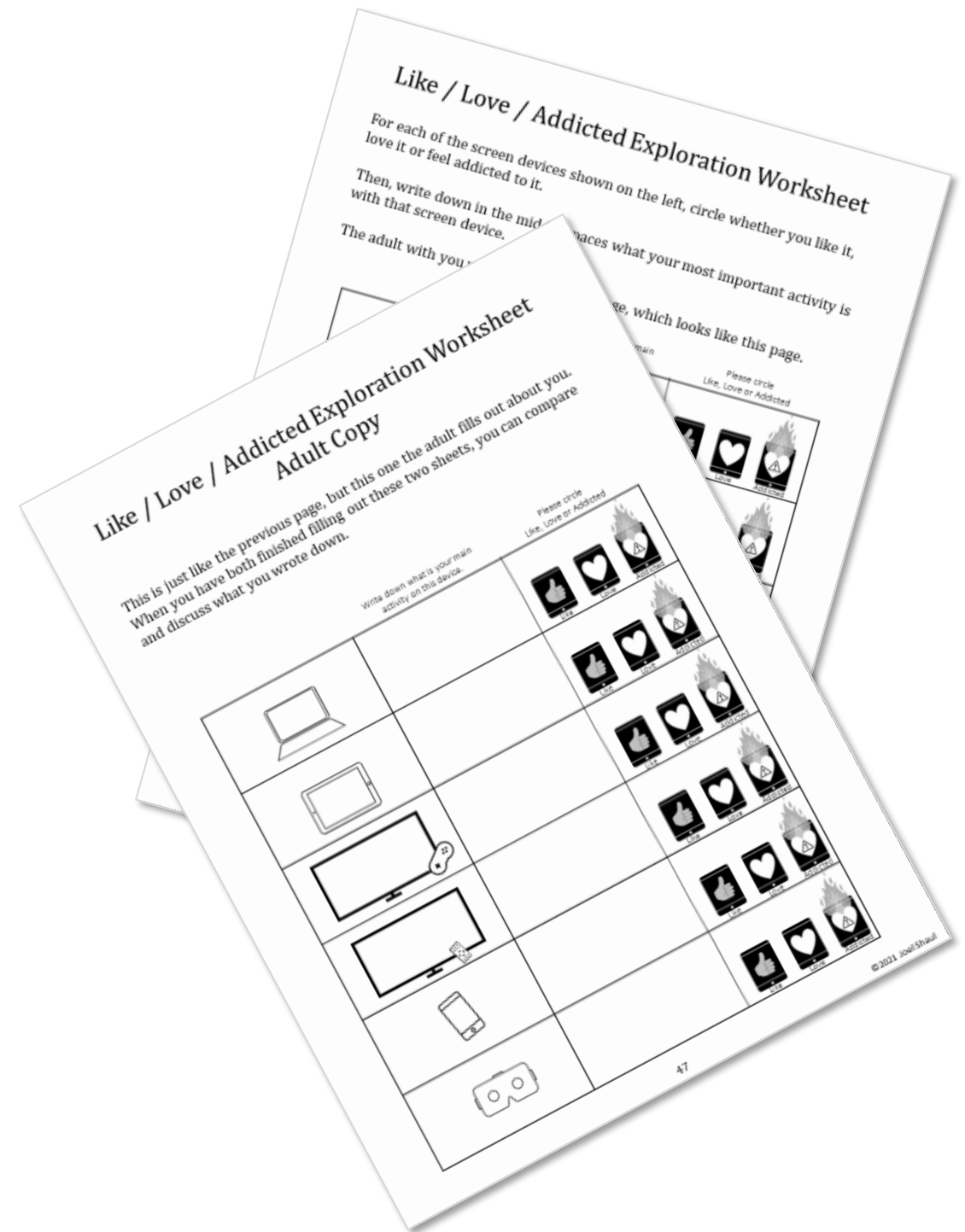
The concept of addiction is then used to shed light on the reader's own screen-related issues.



Suggestions for using pages 46 & 47

The Like / Love / Addicted Exploration Worksheets are to help the reader strengthen insight regarding screen-related problems.

It is important for the adult to fill out the matching worksheet. If you are the parent, you have a clear understanding of the child's screen use. If you are a therapist or other professional, you may be able to infer the level of the child's involvement with their preferred screen activities based on your knowledge about the child, reports from their parents or the way they completed earlier worksheets in this book.

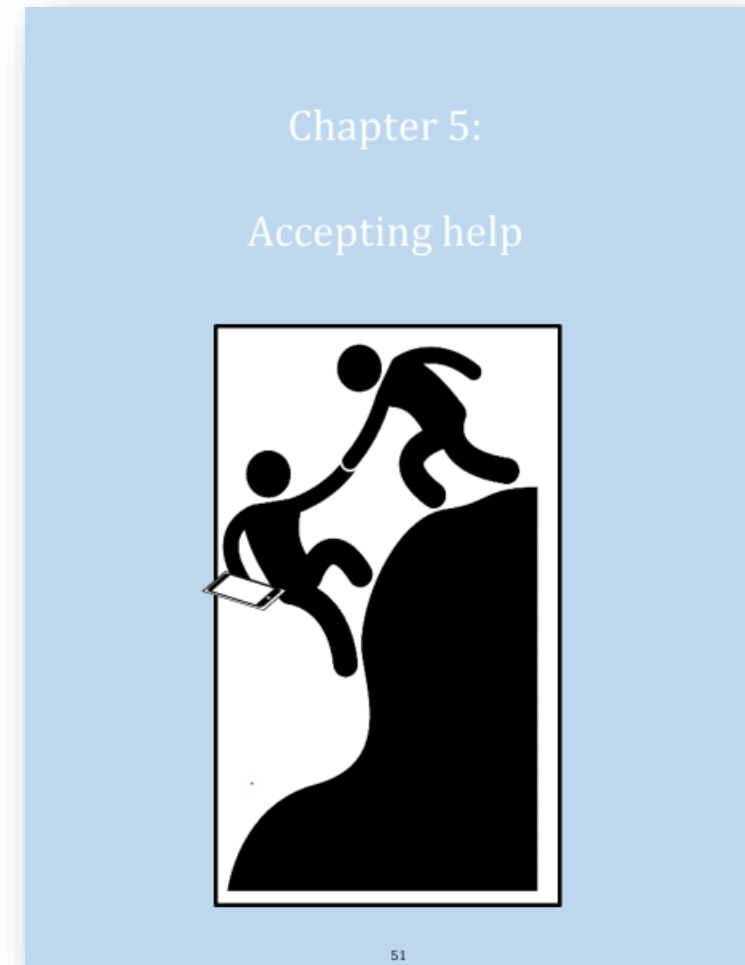


About Chapter 5

Chapter 5 explains how people getting over screen addiction need to help themselves and accept help from others.

Self-defeating thoughts are introduced; there is more discussion of these in Chapter 7.

A foundation is established for a productive relationship with the people who are helping the child with screen activity problems.







Suggestions for using page 55

Altering patterns of screen use is difficult, and children working on this can feel overwhelmed.

This worksheet is to help the child and the adult facilitator to work together to identify good sources of help and support.

People who might help, in different ways

Look over the different kinds of helpers and the ways they might help.
Write down the names of some people in each category who might help.
Put check marks in different boxes to show what ways each kind of helper might be useful.

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
|  Parent / guardian |  Counselor / teacher / therapist |  Family / relatives |  Friends |
| Names: _____ _____ | Names: _____ _____ | Names: _____ _____ | Names: _____ _____ |

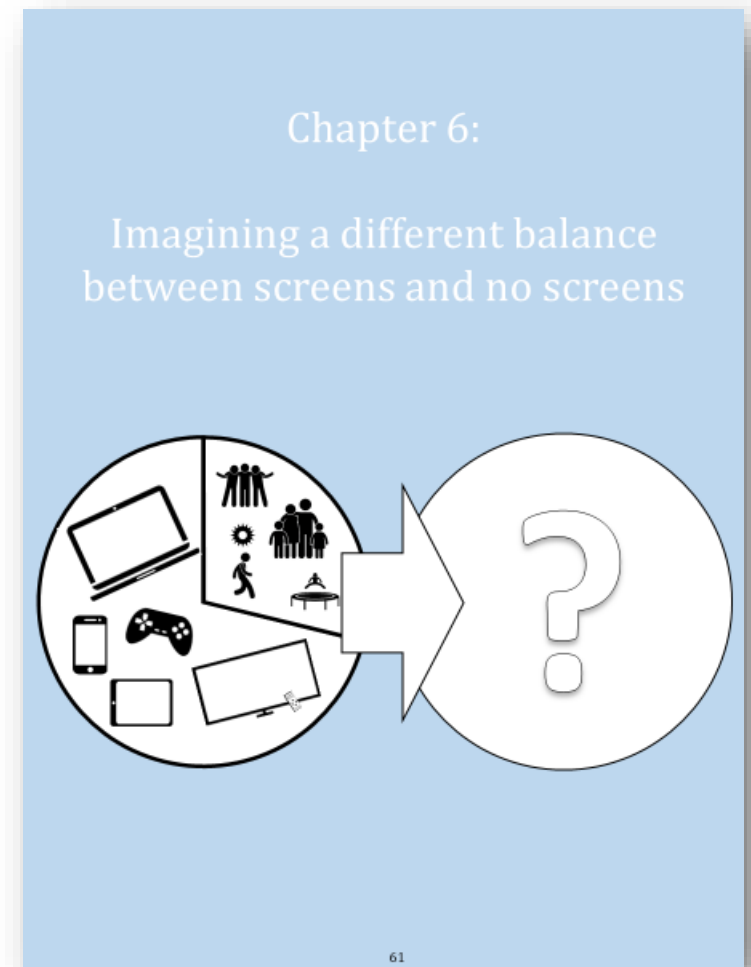
| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Give advice about my problem | | | |
| Set important rules and help me follow them | | | |
| Help me with upsetting feelings | | | |
| Help keep me away from screen activities I need to decrease or stop | | | |
| Help me have fun when I need it | | | |

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About Chapter 6

In Chapter 6, pie charts are used to display the disproportion of screen use in the reader's life.

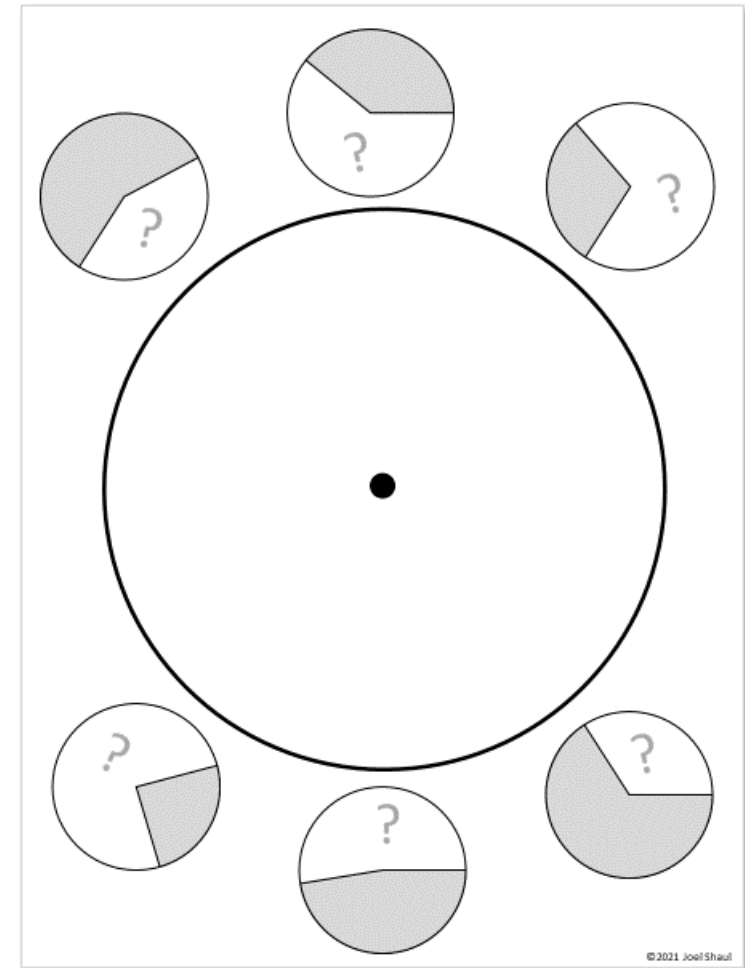
The Time Circle Sheet, a pie chart to graphically display the proportion of time devoted to screen activities, is introduced.



Suggestions for using page 67

The directions for completing this Time Circle Worksheet are provided on page 66, and examples of how completed worksheets might appear are shown on page 68.

Save the completed worksheet. It will be used for before-and-after comparison with the worksheet on page 84.

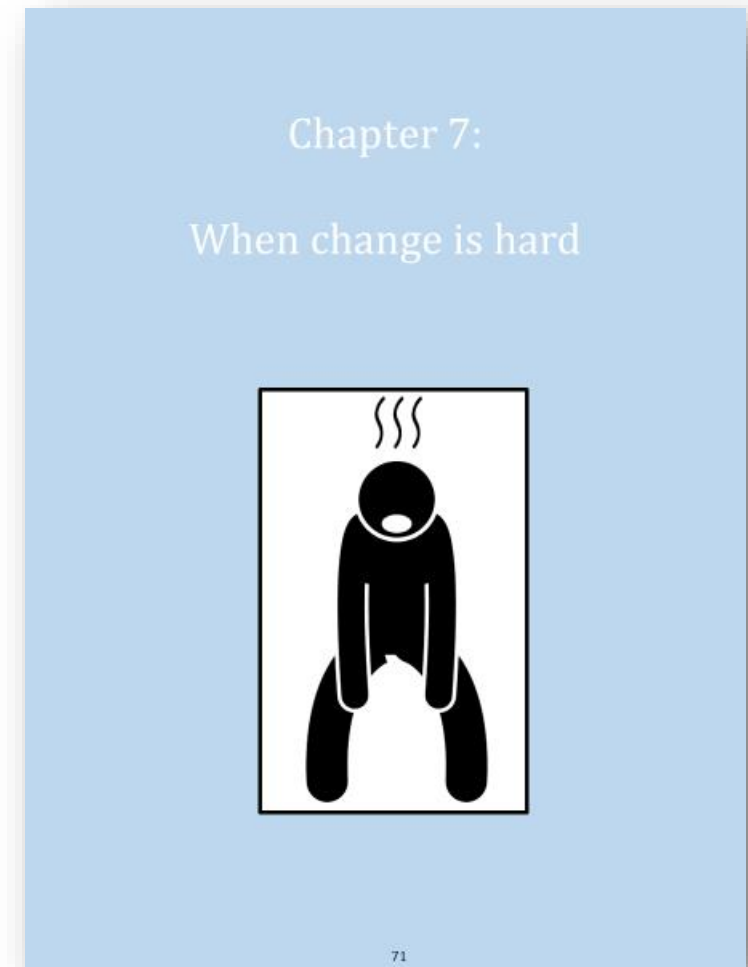


About Chapter 7

Many people who are addicted to screen activities are unfamiliar with how to occupy their time and experience fulfillment without massive use of video games, TV, computers and phones.

First, this chapter explores common self-defeating thoughts associated with screen dependence.

Next, brainstorming activities are provided to help envision a fun and positive future in which screen use is less prevalent.

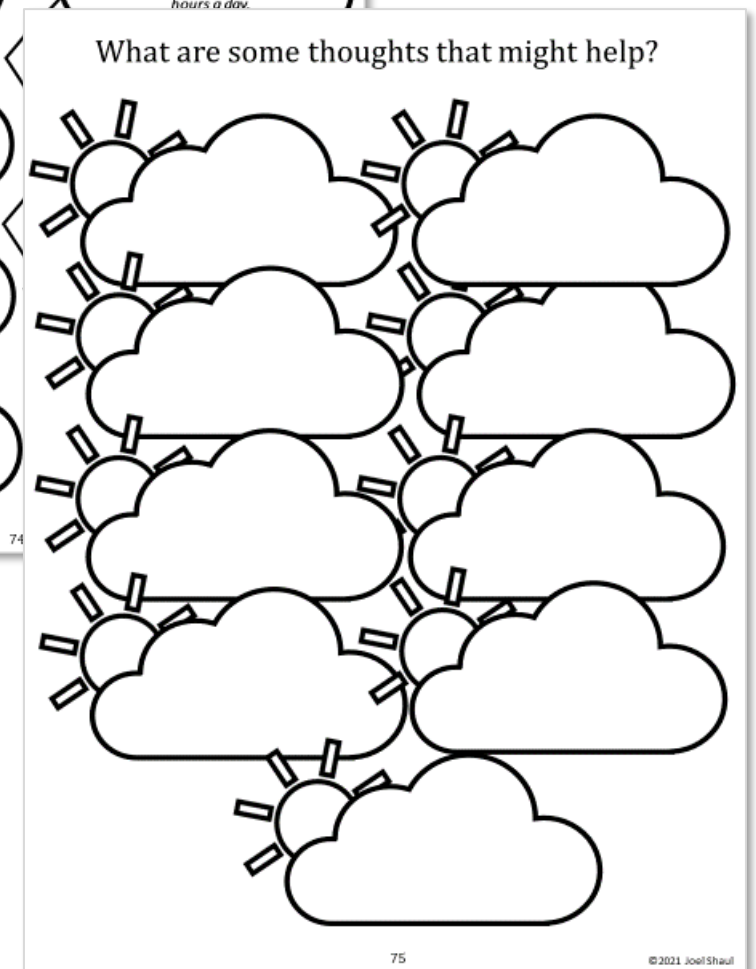


Suggestions for using pages 74 & 75

Page 74 has a number of common thoughts and beliefs experienced by young people who are being asked to alter their patterns of screen use.

Identifying these problem thoughts, and devising new ways of thinking, will be hard for some readers of this book to do on their own. You may try to help by saying, “Here is a different way of thinking. Is it at all useful for you?”

If the reader appears to be bogged down by this worksheet, just skip it and move on to the next part of the chapter and its worksheets.



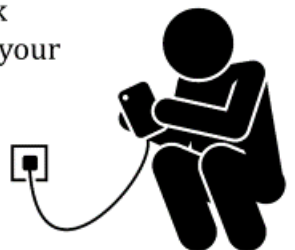
Suggestions for using page 77

This worksheet employs the metaphor of “recharging” in order to resonate with readers who are constantly recharging their various screen devices.

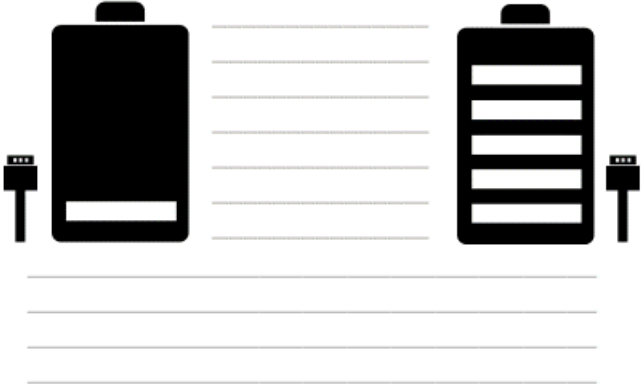
Many readers will be able to think of a few things to write down on the lines provided on the lower half of this worksheet.

It really helps to think about other ways for your brain to “recharge.”

People who are very used to using screen activities to feel good often forget about other ways to feel happy and relaxed.



Maybe you have already started to get some ideas about how you can recharge yourself and feel good, even without so much screen time. What are a few things you have begun to consider? Write these ideas down on the lines below.



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Suggestions for using pages 78 & 79

This pair of checklists is to continue the process of brainstorming begun on page 77.

When you start to really think about it, there are dozens – hundreds – of things to do that have little to do with screens.

On this page and the next, put checks in the boxes for activities that you could imagine yourself doing more.

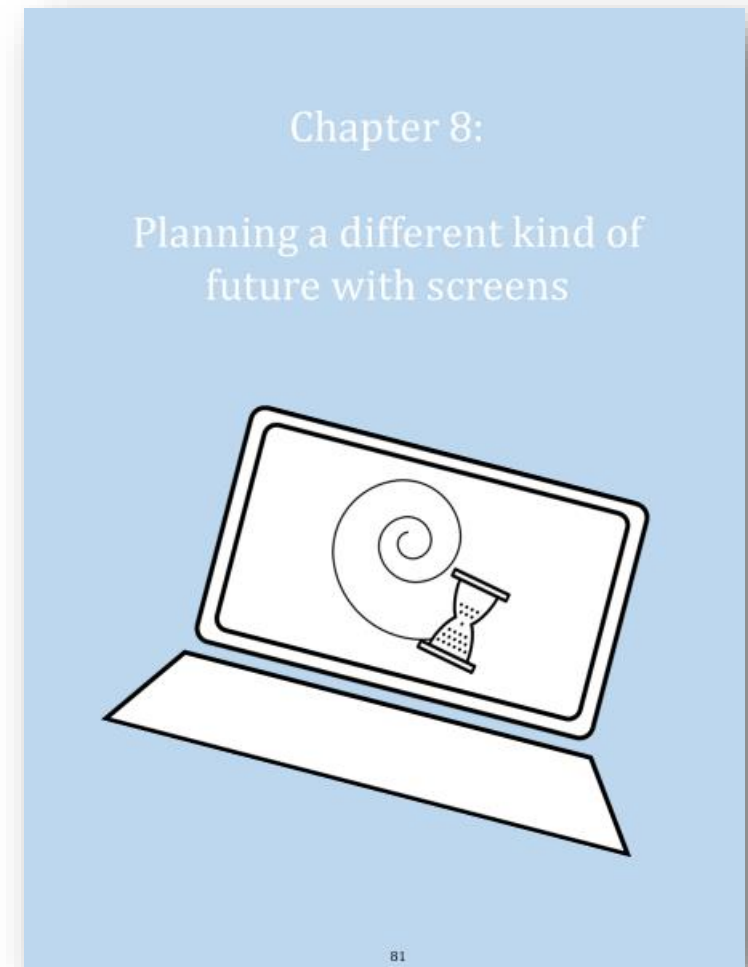
| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| TALK TO AN ADULT  | TALK TO A BROTHER OR SISTER  | BUILD SOMETHING  | READ  |
| DO ART  | PUZZLE OR GAME  | | |
| SING  | DANCE  | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| DO NOTHING AND JUST THINK  | PLAY WITH A PET  | MAKE PLANS WITH SOMEONE  | BOARD GAME  |
| CARD GAME  | COOK  | ACTION FIGURES  | PRETEND  |
| TOYS  | FIX SOMETHING  | COLLECT SOMETHING  | WRITE A STORY OR A JOURNAL  |
| WALK  | RUN  | BICYCLE  | SWIM  |
| BALL SPORT  | OTHER SPORT  | YOUTH CLUB  | WHAT ELSE?  |

About Chapter 8

Chapter 8 helps readers to feel good about the prospect of a less screen-intensive future.

Worksheets are geared towards envisioning this future in detail and carrying out more specific activity planning.



Suggestions for using pages 82, 83, 87, 88

These worksheets use fanciful imagination activities to engage as many readers as possible in the process of envisioning the future.

It may not be necessary to do all of these worksheets. Find out which ones are most appealing to the child(ren) you are helping, and then use those.

