

Stay Connected:

BY DISCONNECTING FROM TECHNOLOGY

It is easy to lose track of time scrolling through posts and watching videos. Though social media and other apps on our cell phones can be useful, keep us connected to loved ones near and far and sometimes even help with stress relief, it can become a problem when we start neglecting responsibilities or noticing changes in our sleep. Cell phones are not fundamentally good or bad but spending too much time on your device can have a negative impact on your relationships, sleep and attention span.

Studies show that cell phone screens have an impact on our brain's ability to produce the melatonin needed for sleep. This can negatively influence our sleep cycle. And a quick check of an email before bed can easily lead to unintended minutes lost going through social media or apps which can keep you up later than you intended. Cell phone use can get in the way of our relationships with those around us as well. You might find it hard to make it through a family function, even just a dinner, without checking your phone. Sometimes we begin to neglect the relationships around us because of our inability to disconnect from our phones. Do you find your concentration and attention span becoming shorter? We might be quickly entertained by multiple short videos on social media, but this can impact our ability to handle mentally taxing tasks in real life. We may become more easily irritated and frustrated with projects taking too long or requiring more mental effort.

Here are some practical tips to help you cut down on cell phone use:

- **Make your phone less accessible by keeping it in another room** - especially when sleeping
- **Put a password on your phone** - making it less convenient to just open and scroll
- **Keep social media apps off your home screen** - making them less accessible
- **Take social media apps off your phone completely** - only access them when using your computer
- **Disable notifications** - so you're not being constantly notified of messages, email, new videos, etc.
- **Set a timer** - allow only a certain amount of time to spend on your phone
- **Take a break** - disconnect from social media for an extended amount of time (a week or even a month)
- **Encourage family and friends to join you** - do something together in person
- **Engage in activities that don't pair well with phone use** - going for a bike ride, seeing a movie, etc.
- **Make your screen color black-and-white** - it is less visually stimulating

If you find it difficult to disconnect from your phone or notice increasing issues with sleep, attention, or focus, it may be time to seek help. Reach out to your EAP.