## Info sheet

**What is technostress in general?**

Technostress is the negative impact of technology on an individual's well-being. It is a situation in which the use of technology, particularly digital devices and communication technologies, leads to excessive stress. Technostress can take various forms, including.

* Information overload: Too much information, constant accessibility, and dealing with a flood of digital data can be overwhelming.
* Multitasking pressure: The need to multi-task via digital devices can cause stress.
* Technological uncertainty: Rapid technological changes and the pressure to keep up with new technologies can cause tension and stress.
* Social isolation: Although technology facilitates communication, excessive use can lead to social isolation and a lack of personal contact.
* Technostress in the workplace: In the professional environment, technostress can be caused by high workloads, constant availability, and complex technologies.
* Digital interruptions: Constant notifications, emails, and constant accessibility can lead to interruptions that cause stress.
* Addictive behavior: Dependence on technology and constant use, especially in the form of social media or online gaming, can lead to addictive behavior and, therefore, stress.

Technostress can hurt physical and mental health, affect work performance, and strain interpersonal relationships. Therefore, raising awareness of technostress and developing coping strategies are essential aspects of dealing with the challenges of modern technology use.

Why do students experience technostress?

Students can experience technostress for several reasons:

1. overuse of technology: excessive use of digital devices, especially smartphones, tablets, and computers, can lead to overload and stress.

2. pressure from online learning: The increased use of online learning platforms and digital teaching methods can put additional pressure on students as they have to adapt to new technologies and master the subject matter online

3. Constant accessibility: Constant accessibility via social media and messaging can create a sense of uninterruptedness, which can cause stress.

4. digital distractions: Distractions from social media, online gaming, and other digital entertainment can affect concentration and lead to restlessness and stress.

5. pressure from online assessments: Posting academic performance online and possibly being graded by classmates can create additional social pressure.

6. technological uncertainty: rapid technological changes and the pressure to be technologically competent can cause uncertainty and stress.

7. online socialization and social isolation: although technology can facilitate social networking, excessive use can lead to social isolation, which can cause loneliness and stress.

8. online reviews and comparisons: The ability to constantly compare yourself to others, whether in terms of academic performance or others' supposedly perfect lives, can lead to feelings of inadequacy and stress.

9. uncertainty about future technology use: Uncertainty about how technology will be used in the future and the impact this will have on education can cause uncertainty and stress for students.

What technostress symptoms do students experience?

Technostress refers to stress caused by the use of technology and digital devices. Students may experience various symptoms that indicate technostress. Here are some possible signs:

1. excessive use of technology: if students are constantly using their digital devices, even outside of class or in social situations, this may indicate technostress.

2. concentration problems: The constant distraction of technology can lead to concentration problems. Students may have difficulty focusing on their tasks or organizing their thoughts.

3. fatigue and sleep disturbances: Excessive use of technology, especially before bedtime, can lead to sleep disturbances. The constant availability of digital devices can also cause students to have difficulty resting and switching off.

4. social withdrawal: Technostress can cause students to avoid social interactions as they prefer to spend time on their digital devices. This can lead to social withdrawal and isolation.

5. anxiety and stress: constant accessibility, pressure to be active on social media, and constant information overload can lead to anxiety and stress.

6. multitasking difficulties: Students constantly switching between digital tasks may have difficulty multitasking effectively. This can lead to a feeling of overload.

7. Physical ailments: Technostress can also cause physical symptoms such as headaches, eye discomfort, neck pain, and back pain, especially when students spend long hours in front of screens.

**How do you avoid or reduce technostress in pupils at school?**

Reducing or avoiding technostress in students requires a holistic approach that can be done on both a school and individual level. Here are some strategies:

1. Introduce digital breaks: Incorporate regular breaks during class to allow students to stretch, relax, and rest their eyes. This also encourages social interactions and reduces constant screen time.

2. create awareness: Educate students about the effects of technostress and encourage them to develop healthy digital habits. Awareness of the potential risks can help students self-reflect and self-regulate their use.

3. promote digital skills: Schools should develop programs that strengthen students' digital skills. This includes the safe use of technology and the effective use of resources to reduce stress.

4. teacher training: Provide teachers with training on technology use and integration in the classroom. This will help them create more effective learning environments and teach students how to use technology responsibly.

5. involve parents: Also, make parents aware of the effects of technostress and encourage them to monitor their children's screen time. Joint efforts between schools and parents can help promote a balanced approach to technology.

6. Use various learning methods: Don't rely solely on digital learning tools. Incorporate multiple learning methods, such as group work, discussions, and hands-on activities, to promote variety in the classroom.

7. flexibility in technology: Allow students to use their own digital devices when appropriate. This encourages ownership and gives students control over their technology use.

8. develop stress management skills: Implement programs or activities that help students reduce stress. These include relaxation exercises, mindfulness practices, and time management techniques.

As a parent, how can I protect my child from technostress?

As a parent, there are several steps you can take to protect your child from technostress and promote a healthy balance with technology. Here are some tips:

1. Set clear rules for screen time: set clear guidelines for digital device use. Determine how much time per day or week is allowed for screen time and set appropriate times for use.

2. encourage offline activities: Encourage your child to spend time offline. Support outdoor activities, creative hobbies, sports, or family activities together that are not dominated by screens.

3. create technology-free spaces: designate areas in the home where technology is not allowed. For example, the bedroom could be a tech-free space to promote healthy sleep.

4. model healthy technology behavior: Children learn a lot through observation. Demonstrate a balanced relationship with technology use yourself by consciously taking breaks, not constantly looking at your smartphone, and enjoying offline activities.

5. encourage communication: Talk to your child about the importance of a balanced use of technology and the possible effects of excessive use. Provide an open space for conversation so your child can share concerns or problems.

6. plan joint activities: Plan regular everyday activities that do not involve technology. This can include outings, game nights, or other shared interests.

7. enable digital time-outs: Encourage your child to take regular breaks from digital devices. This could mean, for example, keeping the smartphone switched off during homework time or scheduling a digital time-out before bedtime.

8. promote quality content: Ensure your child uses quality, age-appropriate digital content. Limit access to content that is not age-appropriate and encourage educational and creative applications.

9. set limits on social media: If your child uses social media, set clear limits on how long they can use it and monitor their online activities. Also, talk about the impact of social media on self-esteem and mental health.

10. Find solutions together: Work together if your child shows signs of technostress. This could mean limiting certain technologies or apps or working together to develop strategies to manage stress.