

**GAMBLING AWARENESS  
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**



# SETTING BOUNDARIES FOR A HEALTHY ONLINE LIFE

For many parents and teenagers, finding a healthy balance between online and offline play has long been a challenge. Recently, with everyone spending more time indoors, away from schools, workplaces and friends, the balancing act has only become harder.

## **HOW MUCH SCREEN TIME IS HEALTHY?**

In Australia, the health recommendation for children 5-17 years of age is for no more than 2 hours of sedentary recreational screen time per day. That's because research has shown that allowing your child to spend too much time in front of screens can negatively affect their health and behaviour - from headaches and trouble sleeping, to issues with anger and aggression.

## **WHAT ABOUT SCREEN TIME IN LOCKDOWN?**

Recently, with coronavirus (COVID-19) stay at home directions, screens have taken on even greater significance in many people's lives, including children. Screens and devices can be key learning tools, we can use them to connect with others, master new skills, relax and have fun. So, whilst maintaining a balance and staying physically active, it's important to remember how online life stands in for offline life under these circumstances.

# SETTING BOUNDARIES FOR A HEALTHY ONLINE LIFE

For example, in a time of physical distancing, offline friends can stay connected online. Multiplayer games allow several people to play together and engage socially through chat. This social aspect can be beneficial for mental health and can be a key reason for young people spending time online.

## FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE

Balancing the positive social and recreational aspects of online activities with the negative impacts of extended screen time is possible. Here are a few guidelines to help you find the right balance for your family:



### Set boundaries

Keep a school-like structure to the day, ensuring teenagers complete schoolwork and jobs around the house before they play games. Make mealtimes screen free.



### Make the most of the outdoors

Break up screen time with time spent outside being physically active whenever possible.



### Stay social

A lack of face-to-face social engagement can affect a child's emotional state. Help them find new ways to interact with friends online and make time for family activities like board games.



### Take a break before bed

Screen time can interfere with sleep, so set a no-screen buffer an hour before bed to help your child get a proper night's sleep. Encourage offline activities for this time, like art, puzzles, craft or reading. And keep screens out of their bedrooms.