

'Disconnect to reconnect'

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Sechelt, B.C. -- Parents of children who struggle with technology addictions have witnessed the Brandon Crisp tragedy unfold ('This Is Not The Ending We Wanted' - Nov. 6). As a pediatric occupational therapist with expertise in child technology addictions, I've worked with families trying to unplug their children.

Elementary-school children use an average 6.5 hours per day of technology (TV, video games, Internet), excluding school use. This excess has resulted in physical, mental and behavioural problems that health and education systems are just beginning to detect, much less understand.

Developmental delay, conflict disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, autism, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, sleep impairment, and learning disability are but a few of the common diagnoses assigned to the 21st-century child. Prescription of psychotropic medication for children is on the rise.

Rapidly advancing technology has hit families like a bomb, leaving in its wake children like Brandon Crisp.

Parents need to "disconnect" to "reconnect" with partners and children. Dust off board games, pull out the cards, have a family cooking night, turn off the TV during meals and ask your kids what was one good and one bad thing that happened during their day. Let's honour Brandon by helping our own families and children "unplug" for a week.

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