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Is your child addicted to their device?

The Kokoda Youth Foundation is offering a free 9-day Digital Detox youth program to help kids aged 12-14 years ease their addictions to technology.

To battle the ongoing mental health crisis in young people, the Kokoda Youth Foundation is introducing a fully funded Digital Detox pilot program for kids aged 12-14 years old, during the 2022 January school holidays. This 9-day camp will take place in the great outdoors at the Kokoda Park Outdoor Education facility located at Laidley. It will involve working with a counsellor to learn mindfulness techniques, as well as embarking on wilderness adventures that aim to push kids out of their comfort zone.

Over 9-days, kids will enjoy a complete disconnect from their devices; no phones, no social media, no gaming. During this time, they will learn about unhealthy attachment and reliance on technology, and to be conscious of the impact this has on their mental state. They will learn not to eradicate use of technology completely, but instead to create a healthier relationship with their devices, in order to consume purposefully rather than unconsciously.

The program also involves a parent or guardian taking part in the final two days of camp to allow families to have a united approach to encouraging healthier habits at home, and to avoid relapse. These two days will also encourage parents to live in the moment more with their developing teen, perhaps also helping them realise their own digital dependence.

Youth workers at the Kokoda Youth Foundation have seen the impact technology has played on the wellbeing of young people firsthand. They have been delivering youth programs since 2004, well before iPhones were introduced in 2007. They have borne witness to how the rise in screen time has impacted mental health in kids; "There's no doubt that technology, video games and social media are having an enormous impact on the wellbeing of young people" says Youth Services Manager, Stacey Ogilvie.

"The program will be free-of-charge in order to make it more accessible to all children aged 12-14 years old" says Stacey. "However, we do have limited capacity, so we encourage parents or teens to register their interest straight away." The number of children that the Kokoda Youth Foundation can enrol depends on the amount of donations they receive given they are a registered charity that do not receive any government funding whatsoever.

"I'm sure this program will resonate with a lot of parents who have growing concerns about what their kids are consuming and how much time they spend in front of a screen" says Chief Executive Officer Johllene Elson. "We're encouraging donations from the community so that we are able to facilitate the large number of applications that we are anticipating for this program."

You can donate to the program or apply for your child to participate in the program by visiting kokodachallenge.com.