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Safety Part 3:

Staying Connected

Session Outline:

1. Introduction
2. Communication
3. What is the internet? How does it work?
4. Using technology to stay connected – the many devices
5. Social Media

Section 1 – Introduction:

Welcome everyone. I’d like to start off by saying that you should not fear using your devices, be bold, explore the features of your devices, and ask lots of questions. Your network of family, friends and neighbours may know how to do something you don’t, and why not learn from them too. In no time you’ll be confident in how to do things all on your own.

This topic is an important one for everyone of all ages. We’re going to be talking about the many ways we are often unsafe or vulnerable online and how we can protect ourselves. Our goal here today, is for you to explore some safer ways of using your devices and implement those tips into your routine use of technology.

Section 2 - Communication:

As we all know, people talk to each other for numerous reasons: sharing information can make our lives easier and gives us a sense of togetherness, talking helps us to grow social bonds with others, and being able to choose what we talk about is important to what it means to be ‘us’. Sometimes we talk to others to help others and be helpful. Making connections with other people has a tremendous impact on our happiness!

Section 3 – What is the internet? How does it work?:

The internet is a network that allows digital devices to talk to one another. It allows digital information to travel around the world. Let’s just say that this part can get really complicated, but it doesn’t have to be. Around the world there are networks of cables that run underground and that lay along sea floors, in the deep sea that carry data at the speed of light from country to country, so on and so forth. It’s this infrastructure that let’s us do the many things we enjoy doing online, like chatting with our friends and family, and learning new things online.

Section 4 – Using technology to stay connected / Devices:

In this section we will present to participants the many general ways we use technology to stay connected; keeping it brief and particularly simple. As the slides progress, we will go into more detail.

Speaking points – most people have mobile phones these days, and many people still have landlines, for their own reasons. For those of us who still have land lines it might be because we have poor cellular signal in our homes, because we don’t want a mobile phone because its expensive, or just maybe even a combination of the two! Some of us have computers, new and old. Some of us prefer tablets that have touch screens like iPad’s and Androids. In most cases, all of these devices [with the exception of a landline] are all smart devices and can do so much. Whatever devices you choose to have and use, remember, no device is the wrong device, it’s how you use it!

Schedule Virtual Visits

Being separated from family and friends can be very stressful; after all, we are naturally social creatures. Scheduling virtual visits with family and friends can help implement a routine and some predictability to your daily lives. Helping you to see and hear someone whose company you value, can go a long way to keeping yourself socially connected. Depending on what’s available to you and your network, a phone call might be a simpler solution.

Schedule Virtual Dinner Parties

You can also schedule virtual lunches, coffee and tea time, or other creative reasons to virtually connect with someone. It could be really neat way to keep in touch with someone. If you’re already doing this, then you probably already know how nice it is!

Emails versus Mail

Using email is for more than just sending documents and work related stuff. Consider using your email to write mail to people you’d like to stay in contact with. Just like having a pen pal, email is pretty much the same thing, but digital, and a lot faster too! Don’t worry about replying to people right away; there are no rules that say you have to treat it like a text. So be realistic with your expectations when it comes to emailing friends and family. If you don’t know how to use email, but you have internet and devices that use internet, why not take up learning how to use it! Ask someone to help you set it up.

Join in Online

Considering joining in on online discussions or a book club. Many books can be loaned for free at the Toronto Public Library (digitally). The library also offers several different book clubs you can join online. Not to mention several other free programs and services.

Live Virtual Concerts

There are many live virtual concerts that are available for free. You can sign up for free and attend using Zoom. Provide link to participants for Waveland, a Canadian non-profit that organizes free concert events for seniors.

Bedtime Stories

Grandparents, Aunts & Uncles can arrange to read bedtime stories to their grandkids, nieces and nephews. Using video would be nice, but a phone with speakerphone is all that is truly needed.

Spiritual Activities

Praying, meditation and attending congregational events are more ways that you can keep connected.

Section 5 – Social Media:

Here we will talk about social media best practices and the various types.

What is it? Social media is a program / application of sorts, that uses a device, which connects to the internet and let’s you socialize and stay connected with friends and family. Sometimes, it isn’t even staying connected with family and friends, it’s about following the latest news. Be careful with that one though, surrounding ourselves with a lot of bad news can add unnecessary stress to our lives. Some examples of these applications to name a few are:

* WhatsApp
* Facebook
* Instagram
* YouTube
* WeChat

Each of those have a different audience and are used for different reasons. Some are more for posting pictures, others for watching videos, and some for both! Usually when people think about social media, they think about staying in touch / connected with their family and friends, staying up-to-date. Whichever social media you choose to have, try not to have too many. It can be super overwhelming trying to manage all of these at the same time. Try and pick one to three to help minimize the amount of information that could cause screen fatigue. Try turning off notifications, or limiting them, by exploring the notification settings, and then simply checking the application when YOU WANT TO.

Words of Encouragement to Participants

Tell family you are trying new ways to connect and don’t be afraid to ask for help. Think about and plan who you want to talk to each week, and set it up. Use video calling options like zoom, FaceTime, or WhatsApp to make your interactions more personal. Set time limits on social media, it can be distracting at times. Encourage your friends to try out these news ways to communicate with you.

Final Word

We are naturally social creatures that depend on relationships and our networks for support and friendship. It’s important find creative ways to keep up with that. Hopefully today’s presentation gave you a few ideas on how to change things up, or get into a routine.

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| The Guardian – What is the Internet? | <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/oct/22/what-is-the-internet-13-key-questions-answered> |
| Seniors: Connect With Your Community | <https://www.ontario.ca/page/seniors-connect-your-community> |
| Seniors Recreation & Employment | <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/children-parenting/seniors-services/seniors-recreation-and-employment/> |
| Toronto Public Library Book Clubs | <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/programs-and-classes/categories/book-clubs-writers-groups.jsp> |
| Live Virtual Concerts | <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/songs-for-seniors-virtual-concert-tickets-132285480433> |
| Live Virtual Concerts | <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/songs-for-seniors-virtual-concert-tickets-132285480433> |
| 50 Activities for the Elderly in Lockdown and Isolation | <https://www.goldencarers.com/50-activities-for-the-elderly-in-lockdown-and-isolation/6265/> |