



9-12 Mental Health & Digital Well-Being — Weekly Lesson Plan

GRADE LEVEL

9-12

SUBJECT

Mental Health & Digital ...

WEEK OF

Unit Overview

A five-session unit grounded in current APA / Surgeon General guidance on adolescent screen use. Students study how algorithmic feeds work, run a 48-hour personal use audit, study the science of sleep + screens, and design a personal digital-wellbeing protocol they actually intend to keep — not the teacher's protocol, theirs. Ends with a parent/caregiver one-pager.

Standards Alignment

National Health Education Standards 7.12.2; CASEL Self-Management; APA youth-screen-use guidelines

Global Standards Mapping

United States:

National Health Education Standards 7.12.2; CASEL Self-Management; APA youth-screen-use guidelines

United Kingdom:

Key Stage 4–5 (Years 10–13, GCSE / A-Level)

Australia / NZ:

Years 9–12 (AC v9.0) · NCEA Levels 1–3

IB Programme:

MYP Years 4–5 + DP / Career-Related Programme

Canada (Ontario):

Ontario Senior Division (Grades 9–12)

Singapore / India:

MOE Secondary 3–5 / JC · CBSE Classes 9–12

EU/EEA note: EU/EEA: GDPR-compliant — no student PII collected; teacher use only

Companion Student Handout — ready to photocopy

Each lesson plan ships with a separate "Student Edition" PDF — daily I-can goals, vocabulary blanks, work space, and exit-ticket boxes. No teacher prep. Print and hand out.

Session 1

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Learning Objective

Students will be able to explain how an algorithmic feed selects content and identify two ways that selection shapes mood.

Standards Alignment

NHES 7.12.2; APA Adolescent Screen-Use Guidance 2023

Materials Needed

- Wired or NYT explainer video (3 min) on recommendation algorithms
- Notebook

Lesson Flow

Opening / Hook (5-10 min):

"Open your most-used app. Look at the first 5 things in your feed. Are these in time order? If not — who decided?"

Direct Instruction (15-20 min):

Recommendation algorithms optimize for engagement (time + reactions), not happiness. Walk through the loop: `signal ! prediction ! serve ! measure .`

Guided Practice (10-15 min):

Pairs map their own most-used app's loop on a half-page diagram.

Independent Practice (10-15 min):

One paragraph: "The kind of content my feed serves more of when I am tired/sad/angry is ____."

Closing / Exit Ticket (5 min):

Sentence stem: "My feed is designed to ____, not to ____."

Differentiation

For struggling learners:

Provide a partially-completed organizer with the first row modeled and 2-3 sentence stems specific to digital wellbeing.

For advanced learners:

Add a transfer prompt: apply today's idea to a context outside digital wellbeing and defend the move in 3 sentences.

For ELL students:

Pre-teach 4 key terms with a visual glossary; offer the sentence frame "I notice that ____, which suggests ____ because ____."

For IEP students:

Reduce the response set by half; offer choice between a written, oral (recorded on Flip), or sketch response — same rubric.

Session 2

9-12 Mental Health & Digital Well-Being — Weekly Lesson Plan

Learning Objective

Students will be able to audit their own 48-hour app use and surface one pattern that surprises them.

Standards Alignment

CASEL Self-Awareness; NHES 5.12.1

Materials Needed

- Built-in screen-time / digital-wellbeing dashboard on student device
- Audit template

Lesson Flow

Opening / Hook (5-10 min):

Anonymized prediction: write your guess for total screen time yesterday. Fold and pass to teacher.

Direct Instruction (15-20 min):

Walk through how to find the 24-hour and 7-day breakdown by app on iOS Screen Time / Android Digital Wellbeing.

Guided Practice (10-15 min):

Pairs run the audit on yesterday + day before; record top 3 apps + total minutes + first-pickup time.

Independent Practice (10-15 min):

Reveal teacher's tally of the prediction-vs-actual gap. Each student writes one sentence about the gap.

Closing / Exit Ticket (5 min):

Sticky note (anonymous) of one surprise. Cluster on the board.

Differentiation

For struggling learners:

Provide a partially-completed organizer with the first row modeled and 2-3 sentence stems specific to digital wellbeing.

For advanced learners:

Add a transfer prompt: apply today's idea to a context outside digital wellbeing and defend the move in 3 sentences.

For ELL students:

Pre-teach 4 key terms with a visual glossary; offer the sentence frame "I notice that ____, which suggests ____ because ____."

For IEP students:

Reduce the response set by half; offer choice between a written, oral (recorded on Flip), or sketch response — same rubric.

Homework (optional)

Run the same audit tonight; bring tomorrow.

Session 3

9-12 Mental Health & Digital Well-Being — Weekly Lesson Plan

Learning Objective

Students will be able to summarize the documented relationship between late-night screen use and sleep quality.

Standards Alignment

NHES 1.12.5; APA 2023

Materials Needed

- Excerpt from CDC / APA youth sleep guidance (1-page)
- Sleep-cycle infographic

Lesson Flow

Opening / Hook (5-10 min):

Two-question survey: hours slept last night, time of last screen use. Anonymous tally on board.

Direct Instruction (15-20 min):

Three mechanisms: blue light delays melatonin; arousing content delays sleep onset; variable-reward apps disrupt sleep architecture. Walk through each with a citation.

Guided Practice (10-15 min):

Triads match 6 statements to one of the three mechanisms.

Independent Practice (10-15 min):

Half-page: "For me personally, the strongest of the three mechanisms is probably ___ because ___."

Closing / Exit Ticket (5 min):

Sentence stem: "If I changed one thing about my pre-sleep screen use, the smallest realistic change would be ___."

Differentiation

For struggling learners:

Provide a partially-completed organizer with the first row modeled and 2-3 sentence stems specific to digital wellbeing.

For advanced learners:

Add a transfer prompt: apply today's idea to a context outside digital wellbeing and defend the move in 3 sentences.

For ELL students:

Pre-teach 4 key terms with a visual glossary; offer the sentence frame "I notice that ___, which suggests ___ because ___."

For IEP students:

Reduce the response set by half; offer choice between a written, oral (recorded on Flip), or sketch response — same rubric.

Session 4

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Learning Objective

Students will be able to draft a personal 7-day digital-wellbeing protocol with three rules and one trigger plan for each.

Standards Alignment

CASEL Self-Management; NHES 6.12.1

Materials Needed

- Protocol template (3 rules x 3 columns: rule, trigger plan, fallback)
- Sample protocols from athletes / writers / students

Lesson Flow

Opening / Hook (5-10 min):

Read aloud a real public protocol from a known athlete or writer (15 seconds). "What makes this work?"

Direct Instruction (15-20 min):

Three-column logic: rule + trigger plan (what I do when the urge hits) + fallback (what I do when the trigger plan fails). Without trigger + fallback, rules collapse.

Guided Practice (10-15 min):

Pairs draft v1; peer-critique using two tests: 'Is each rule small enough to keep for 7 days?' and 'Is the trigger plan something you've already done in the past?'

Independent Practice (10-15 min):

Final v1 — signed and dated.

Closing / Exit Ticket (5 min):

Two volunteers share one rule + trigger plan. Class names what makes it realistic.

Differentiation

For struggling learners:

Provide a partially-completed organizer with the first row modeled and 2-3 sentence stems specific to digital wellbeing.

For advanced learners:

Add a transfer prompt: apply today's idea to a context outside digital wellbeing and defend the move in 3 sentences.

For ELL students:

Pre-teach 4 key terms with a visual glossary; offer the sentence frame "I notice that ____, which suggests ____ because ____."

For IEP students:

Reduce the response set by half; offer choice between a written, oral (recorded on Flip), or sketch response — same rubric.

Session 5

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Learning Objective

Students will be able to write a one-page caregiver letter explaining their protocol and one specific support request.

Standards Alignment

CCSS W.9-10.4; NHES 8.12.1

Materials Needed

- Caregiver-letter template
- Sample teacher-written letter

Lesson Flow

Opening / Hook (5-10 min):

"You're going to ask the people who pay the wifi bill for support. What goes in the ask?"

Direct Instruction (15-20 min):

Letter structure: what I learned, my protocol, why it matters to me, the one specific support I'm asking for (e.g., 'Please don't ask me about screen time at dinner; ask me Friday').

Guided Practice (10-15 min):

Pairs draft; peer-critique using one rule: 'Is your ask specific enough that they'd know whether they did it?'

Independent Practice (10-15 min):

Final letter, ready to take home.

Closing / Exit Ticket (5 min):

Whip-around: one student names what they're proudest of in their letter.

Differentiation

For struggling learners:

Provide a partially-completed organizer with the first row modeled and 2-3 sentence stems specific to digital wellbeing.

For advanced learners:

Add a transfer prompt: apply today's idea to a context outside digital wellbeing and defend the move in 3 sentences.

For ELL students:

Pre-teach 4 key terms with a visual glossary; offer the sentence frame "I notice that ____, which suggests ____ because ____."

For IEP students:

Reduce the response set by half; offer choice between a written, oral (recorded on Flip), or sketch response — same rubric.

Homework (optional)

Deliver the letter at home this weekend. One follow-up reflection paragraph due Monday.



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