Primary Internet Safety

[00:00:00] **Marcelina:** So lovely. A few people in already. We

[00:00:03] might just give people a minute or so to get to find the link and all of that. because it can be, um, yeah. Tech can be against us sometimes, as we will see in a moment have

[00:00:16] **Hayley:** faith. Yeah.

[00:00:22] **Marcelina:** So

[00:00:23] **Speaker 2:** shall we maybe do some introductions, Hayley? Most people know us, but, but yeah, just in case we've got anybody who hasn't met us before. My name is Marcelina Watkinson and I'm one of the clinical psychologists at Everlief. Some of you might have also seen me across other clinics, um, also a mum and that often pops up in these sessions because we grapple with the very same issues that everybody that comes to, to, to watch these sessions.

[00:00:50] Hopefully we might be able to spark a little bit of a dialogue or a conversation at the end as well. Because we're always very interested to hear what people do and we're sort of associations and strategies and sort of ways they've got to tackle some of these things. And we've got Hayley with us today.

[00:01:09] **Hayley:** Hello. Nice to let everybody on board this evening. Uh, yeah, I'm Haley. I'm the counselor at Everlief. I also run my own practice in Bledlow Ridge Private Practice. I see adults and young people, children from the age of sort of 12 upwards. I also do some writing for They Are The Future, which is the parenting website to know.

[00:01:30] And I'm also a mum. I have three daughters of varying age ages from 26 down to 17. So yes, past conversations about internet safety, current conversations about internet safety, it's, it's ongoing and it's, it changes with the ages of the children. So, like Marcelina said, hopefully there, there may be something that I can add from either, either perspective from professional or parenting perspective.

[00:01:57] Great,

[00:01:58] **Marcelina:** thank you.

[00:02:00] **Speaker 2:** So we'll start off the presentation and, and then we'll just see where it goes. I know the main topic for today was online safe safety or internet safety. But when I think about that topic, it really very much that there are a number of other bits that's go with it. And generally the relationship we have with technology and our kids have with technology and how we manage that more generally, not just those moments when they are online and accessing information or if they've accessed information that we then wish they hadn't or maybe they even wish that they hadn't.

[00:02:36] So today's going to be a little bit about, I'm going to share my screen and

[00:02:40] **Marcelina:** hopefully it will let me do everything it needs to be. Let's see if you should be seeing something in a moment.

[00:02:52] **Speaker 2:** Yeah. So today is going to be really about managing technology. More broadly and thinking about screen time as well as the time that young people spend online, which is of course, probably most of the time, I think few people play games.

[00:03:09] Kids do play games that are not online. But I know that is a big sort of element to many games and many ways in which children spend time on their devices. So they go together. So let's have a think about what we're going to talk about tonight. This is a huge topic. So what we're hoping to share really is thinking about this from our perspectives of, from a psychological and wellbeing perspective.

[00:03:33] There will be many elements to it that we are not experts in. No it and passwords and stuff like that. But we will be linking to relevant websites if people want to go and explore this further. So what I want to really talk about today is just thinking a little bit about the role that technology plays in our children's lives in a way that it probably never did in our childhood.

[00:03:58] It certainly didn't do in our childhood. And therefore, thinking a little bit about how that sort of interacts with the developing brain and the impact that might have on children. And teens, of course. But today we're thinking more about the sort of primary age and of course the most important bit, what we can do to think a little bit preventatively and as well as responding to situations, set limits in a way that feel okay or manageable for our children and think together with them about how they can keep themselves on, say, safe online.

[00:04:34] So I think it's just incredible how many texts a child or young person can send, or how many hours they can spend on their screens, just in many ways just like us. And of course, the question I certainly always ask myself, I'm just thinking, what are they doing? What are they actually doing when they are spending so many hours in in the online world?

[00:04:59] And of course. This list is not exhaustive in any way, but some of the things that I thought about was, of course, connecting with people and that the way that might look is just they might be sharing information, videos, photos, keeping in touch with their friends, presenting themselves in a certain way, and I suppose this might be a little bit for older kids that might have some sort of messaging app or something like that with their friends.

[00:05:27] Even if they don't have social media access, that there will be a platform where they can present themselves in a certain way. They might put a status on top of their whatever WhatsApp page, and they might share what they're doing today, just like anybody would use any of these platforms. It's of course.

[00:05:46] Linked to networking with their peers, and of course gaming, extending that ability to spend time with other people, maybe with friends you already know, or spending time with sort of people that don't live in the same country or in the same city. And, and I know for a lot of us, a lot of children, but particularly for our sort of autistic and ADHD kids, the it is the internet is a great source for learning about things that they're really passionate about and accessing information that might not, that won't be available in many other places.

[00:06:21] I think linking a little bit to what we said before about how children and young people present themselves, that might involve expressing thoughts and feelings and views about different topics or ideas. And of course we knew from the pandemic particularly that. Possible as well as therapy and, and even extracurricular tutoring and all sorts of ways in which we can educate our children or our children can access education.

[00:06:50] And that obviously continues in, in, for some young people still. Especially those for whom going into school can be really difficult. So in many ways, of course we know that technology plays a huge role, these things and many more things in our children's lives, and it's, I think it's hard for us as a generation perhaps for whom technology was seen as a sort of, certainly, I can only speak for myself, but it's a nice, it was a nice to have you, you played a game on a computer or maybe you wrote an email to a friend, whereas.

[00:07:24] We obviously know that it's taking a completely different role in our children's lives. And Haley, I'm actually thinking just like you described, your daughters are a little bit older, certainly than my kids. And what have you seen in terms of the sort of how they use and how that's changed?

[00:07:40] **Hayley:** It, it has changed.

[00:07:42] There are some different apps and, and different ways of connecting that have come and gone. Things that have lasted and things that haven't. So things like Vine, which was taken over by somebody else, I can't even remember now. But the most present thing is what all the kids seem to want to get onto the platform that the kids want to get on do.

[00:08:01] TikTok is obviously very prevalent right now. So it's keeping up, it's, it changes so quickly. It's quite a fast pace. But interestingly, I think, and we may touch on this a bit later, that that actually trying and getting very absorbed in some of these things. Actually my kids then decided whether it was consciously or subconsciously that it was or wasn't for them and they would step back from it.

[00:08:28] So they made their own assumptions, their own choices about actually this is really great, it's giving me what I need. Or actually not as great as they were making it out to be. So it's quite interesting. But yeah, the development is fast and I think that's sometimes the difficult thing to keep up with for parents, that things change really quite quickly.

[00:08:51] **Speaker 2:** Exactly. And I suppose for that reason, and we'll get to this as well in a moment. Perhaps it's not possible nor realistic for us to know exactly every single game they play and every single sort of place they visit. But it's more about having that openness and strength of relationships so that we can talk about difficult things when they arise and so that they feel safe to share with us when things have gone wrong or when they feel unsure.

[00:09:15] Yeah. But I suppose overall we know that the environment in which our children or the human brains develops shapes it. And we know that from so many different ways of research is perhaps most known in terms of the parent-child relationship. That sort of attachment that we form with our children, that we know that certain sort of ways of responding to our children shapes our children's brain to be, to feel safe and nurtured and loved.

[00:09:42] And then of course, we know from too many examples of neglect and abuse in the world who experience that regularly. Have a very different sort

of outcome in how they see themselves and the world. And of course this doesn't stop there. This goes for everything that our brains are exposed to because our brains really rely on all of our senses, um, and our experiences to form certain hypothesis about themselves, about the world.

[00:10:12] And so basically what goes in will then form beliefs and, and values that our children hold. We also know that if we think a little bit about our attentional system, what we pay attention to gets wired in the brain. So this is a little bit like you're walking, if you have a, I'm thinking about during the pandemic, I walked up and down my garden and I created a path, which my husband still is very angry about because I was walking that stretch so many times in a day.

[00:10:45] And that's. A nice sort of visual for what happens to our brain. So what our brains see and feel and experience will literally strengthen those connections in the brain. Just like we can walk a path just out of normal grass. And so for that reason, I suppose it is helpful to, to create some sort of limits or boundaries or framework around how our children use technology, particularly when we still have a little bit of influence over them in these primary years.

[00:11:16] And for that reason, of course, it, it's not so much that tech is good or bad or that screens are good or bad, it's more about the fact that it, we can be a little bit more, maybe deliberate in what we expose our children to. And again, we, it's really difficult to always know that. But so the nuances and the details of what they watch and how and when does matter.

[00:11:38] So it's not just whether they use screens for not, but we'll get to that. But I just wanted to highlight that because. Because I know we can all get lost in parenting advice, what's good, what's bad. But I think if we think back to the science that what we pay attention to, what we are exposed to does shape us.

[00:11:58] That sort of grounds it. Certainly in my brain I'm thinking, yeah, actually this is really important and, and this is something that might be worth looking into. Even though some of these conversations with our kids might be hard because maybe everybody's playing that game or maybe, maybe that sort of content that is not really age appropriate, maybe your child would be able to deal with and maybe your child wouldn't be able to deal with.

[00:12:21] So we'll look at that as well. So of course there are lots of pros and cons of technology. We know that it's entertaining, it's fun. Like we said, it involves. A platform for a self-expression, for being creative, for sharing things,

for watching things, easy access to friends, a sort of broader way of connecting with others.

[00:12:41] Particularly, I've seen this a lot in young people who have a, who have either a specific interest but also young people who, who identify in a certain way, either in a sort of from a sexuality perspective or from a sort of, or for example, if we have young people on the spectrum or young people with ADHD there, that might create, and I know that for primary years that's still probably may be a little bit, not exactly where they're at the moment, but it's certainly creates that opportunity for them to slowly but surely gravitate towards those who are like them, who share the same.

[00:13:17] And it just creates a greater pool of other children that they can connect with. Particularly, maybe school isn't that easy and friendships in real life feel difficult, but of course we know that there are a lot of. Challenges associated with both technology use and access to the internet, and we know that having your phone available or your tablet or your laptop, it creates this sort of constant sort of access to whatever it is that's happening there.

[00:13:51] Whether it is something positive like interactions and this sort of almost addictive sense of not wanting to miss out on whatever's happening with your friends or the sort of other side of things. If interactions with others online involve bullying or a lot of demand, maybe children feel like they need to take certain roles in friendships with others, maybe being the ones that listen to other people's problems or stuff like that, you don't get a break from that.

[00:14:22] The other thing I think, particularly for children in primary school is this idea of. Again, we're dealing with a brain that isn't yet developed to fully grasp abstract concepts. And there's something an awful lot of, there's so many. The content online is really quite abstract in many ways, and children can misunderstand things.

[00:14:46] Children can understand things literally when they were not meant like that. And so it's good to consider really what it is that where your child's at and what they are, whether they're ready for certain content. So we know that they will have much quicker access to information that they might not be ready for, even if it is so that whatever movie or whatever.

[00:15:12] Site is supposed to be within a certain age restriction or is not deemed to have, I dunno, sexual content or age inappropriate content. They might still in different ways access that. And that only occurred to me a few

months back when my daughter was watching. I only realized that they called them shorts and on Facebook they called them reels.

[00:15:35] But these whatever, 15, 22nd sort of little videos that sort of have, and there there was one that I had come across of course that was, there was nothing on the surface. Bad about it, but it had to do with the female reproductive cycle and stuff like that. And my 12-year-old daughter, she was like, oh, have you seen this one?

[00:15:55] I was like, yeah, I've seen this one. And we laughed about it and there was, and it just only made me realize that even though she, there was probably a lot of things that would go over her head because she's not there yet in her development, that it was really quite interesting how it only dawned on me that through YouTube kids, she has accessed the same content that I had also accessed on Facebook, which was set for my age.

[00:16:19] So I think sometimes there will be a lot of loopholes in this sort of case. There wasn't anything harmful about it. But it still felt not child appropriate content really. And so that I, if, if we came across that this must be happening all the time, even from sources that we think are set to be age appropriate,

[00:16:40] **Hayley:** we also don't know.

[00:16:41] Yeah, go on Alia. I think it's, it is relevant here. Just to add in that you mentioned children who are neurodiverse, perhaps D or ASD. I think the parent, the parent role is important across the board, but especially I think in the case of children who are neurodivergent often the EQ and the iq, there's often quite a gap.

[00:17:05] So when you're looking at age appropriate content for your child, it's that they may be intelligently able to process. What they're seeing in terms of content, but actually the emotional structure of it may be something that they're not able to grasp in the same way. Some parents need to be mindful of managing that gap and actually where it might say this is appropriate for a 10-year-old, you know your child best and you'll know whether actually emotionally is that okay for your child And actually taking a look at it ahead of what your child is seeing is doing a bit of wreck before your child actually looks at something particular, if that's possible, is something that can be quite helpful.

[00:17:49] Completely.

[00:17:50] **Marcelina:** Completely,

[00:17:51] **Speaker 2:** exactly. So I suppose, so just like we've seen lots of pros, there are lots of kind of challenges associated with access to this information in including the sort of that we don't really know whether the sources that they access information from is verified. I know that there are certain platforms that are trying to fact check information, but.

[00:18:14] That's obviously impossible to do for everything that children see and hear, particularly if it is from people that are, that are that, that they follow, that are, that they look up to, uh, or even from friends that have seen or read or heard something, and it's been kind of taken out of context. And so for that reason, in many ways it's really interesting because actually the platforms themselves aren't harmful as such.

[00:18:39] You know, whether it's WhatsApp or whether it's TikTok. The way it started out with chances or whether it's a sort of simple Snapchat where you write and it disappears or whatever. It's what we do with it as human beings, it's, it can create these sort of harmful dynamics of comparison of competition in a way that isn't helpful.

[00:18:58] Or like we said earlier, access to information too soon or. Continuous access to information when actually the brain or when all of us need a break at some point. And then we also know that of course, technology is incredibly stimulating and it's going to be really difficult to match the dopamine levels released when we're doing something online, whether it's gaming, shopping, chatting, watching something funny while actually not lifting a finger nearly.

[00:19:29] And so if we think a little bit about the body gets maximum stimulation and with minimal effort, and it can be difficult therefore to find other things fun and exciting. So in some ways, it's not so much that technology in itself is bad, it's more about that sometimes it can take away children from doing things.

[00:19:50] That they might actually also really enjoy and need. But anyway, I don't want to be really negative about the sort of cons or the use of technology. because I realized that my pros section was much shorter than the cons. But let's have a think then. Excuse me, what we can do. So for me, certainly thinking preventatively really goes across all the topics that I talk about and really all of the topics that I kind of work through with families.

[00:20:23] And it is this sort of idea that if we can keep that relationship between us and our kids strong, then we will have much more influence in a positive way. So that might mean that at least a little bit we can get curious or interested in what they're actually doing online and, and I think the reason is because if we're not in the know, then.

[00:20:46] That is. Then first of all, we make up our own sort of fears about what they are or aren't doing or how it's impacting on them, but also if we are disapproving of what they're doing, because maybe they're playing with a certain game, a certain friend online or they're playing a certain game or they're watching certain content that maybe we feel is not, you know, we don't think it's a good way of using their time or whatever.

[00:21:10] That can actually create a distance between us and them, and the more distance there is between us and them, the less likely that they will actually come to us when something has gone wrong or when, or, or even actually that they will be open to our influence about how else to spend their time. But again, we'll come to that because some, in some families there is set screen time and in other families there is, there's more openness around that.

[00:21:36] But also when we're anxious about what they're doing, because maybe we don't know what they're doing or we don't approve or what they're doing because maybe we feel it's. Not shaping them in the right way, or we feel like it's a waste of time because maybe when we were kids, that would absolutely not be our sort of suitable way of using our time.

[00:21:54] Or maybe we're really strict and judgmental with ourselves about how we want to spend our time. Our sort of anxiety can come out and us controlling and being a little bit too hover, a little bit too helicoptery. And of course we know that when children feel controlled, they take some of that control back and they might resist and they might push back.

[00:22:14] So I think it's important that we set clear expectations in our own heads first about screen use. And I wanted to come back to this sort of question actually and just throw it out there.

[00:22:28] **Speaker 4:** Anything that, if

[00:22:29] **Speaker 2:** people feel that they want to think about this together, because I think if we think about how we feel about screen time and when we think about screen time, what does it evoke in us?

[00:22:40] When our kids ask for iPad or when, when they're on it. I don't know if people have any sort of particular sort of associations or thoughts with that

[00:22:54] **Hayley:** you prefer not to speak that We've got the chat chat box at the bottom as well. Yeah,

[00:22:58] **Marcelina:** no, that's perfect.

[00:23:02] **Speaker 5:** I'm happy to answer. That's okay. So dread if I'm honest, because for, so my son is very nearly 11, so actually we'll be moving off the primary school group soon.

[00:23:12] But he's ASD and he loves screens, particularly gaming. But any screen time. And the challenge we have is that whenever it's time for it to turn off, it induces a meltdown virtually every time. So our natural instinct is to think, not to offer the screen time, but that feels really unkind and really unfair and that we're holding him back for both of us and my husband and I, I think it, it just, it's genuinely like a massive fear of when he says, please can have screen time.

[00:23:44] But it's like almost as soon as one activity's finished, it's straight on to when can I watch telly, when can I do gaming, when can I do? So it really matters to him, but it brings a lot of challenge for the rest of us. Mm-hmm.

[00:23:55] **Speaker 2:** Thank you for sharing Anna. That's a really good sort of description and I suppose that dread, fear, anxiety, I think probably is quite common.

[00:24:04] I can relate to that in terms of the content and what it means. If they, I dunno, watch that thing. Is that then going to, yeah, how's that going to shape everything? I think I certainly can go into a bit of running too quickly into the future about what that means, but also the sort of coming off, which I think probably has been challenging in all families at different points to the, to varying degree, of course.

[00:24:30] What about you, Hayley? Are you, I'm thinking with your sort of older girls who probably are much more independent with what they are. More independent with everything. WW do you find that you're more relaxed about it or. Definitely

[00:24:43] **Hayley:** if we, I have got older children, so the two older ones are adults, so essentially they have complete jurisdiction.

[00:24:51] But the youngest one that we have some rules and boundaries. It is much more, she's much more, what's the word in charge of her own decisions, but just to identify with Anna's point there that your son, Anna is, is ASD. And so having those common, you've had experience of what happens when you know the, the possible outcome could be a meltdown.

[00:25:17] And that's really tough because you're trying to manage. The situation as best you can for your child's safety and to make sure that they're having a healthy relationship with their device, their games, et cetera. And yet you are going from that completely, uh, that relationship where they're completely reliant on you to letting the open strings go a bit and letting 'em have a little bit of jurisdiction.

[00:25:41] And it's really hard to manage. I, I can really, I can really relate to that, knowing when to let go a little bit more, when to let go a little bit more if it's the right thing, the fears that come with that, and also having those in the room conversations and trying to keep the peace, keep the equilibrium.

[00:26:00] It's, there's a lot of things to manage and I. Picking battles. Picking battles is always, it's a good reference to go back to it apply to so many things in parenting, but actually I do concentrate on the big things. If there's a boundary or a rule that needs to, that's really important for the wellbeing of your child ultimately, but the wider family, the environment that you are in, maybe it's out outside and you are at a restaurant or something like that.

[00:26:29] Boundaries can change and rules can change, but just consistency and trying to have that conversation bit by bit. Not trying to do it all in one fell swoop. because a lot of, especially with ASD kids as well, that overwhelm is a lot. But actually when you say something to them about a boundary, you know it, they will hear it.

[00:26:51] They may not act on it immediately. That drip, drip, that, that bit by bit conversation building layer by layer sounds simple, doesn't it? I know it's not. There are some good strategies that, that, you know, you can try.

[00:27:05] **Speaker 2:** Completely. And we will actually get in a little while to some of those things, Anna, as well around actually what, how can we manage that specifically the coming off and how we sort of, the other sort of limits we have around technology, but we can't get away.

[00:27:18] All of the things you said, Hayley are so important. Absolutely. With giving them a bit of navigating the give and take and, but we also all will have

certain perhaps ideas of what sort of parent we want to be or what sort of expectations may be were placed on us when we grew up or what would, what sort of narratives we have in our minds about whether sort of technology use is good or bad.

[00:27:43] And as you can hear, I'm not one of those pairs that's super relaxed about it. It might be coming out in this, in this sort of presentation. And I think that will of course reflect what sort of, what we imagine our kids. How we rate the different activities that they do, how we, somewhere internally or even externally, judge that screen time is bad, but running in the forest is brilliant because it's meets their sort of outdoor needs and meet their physical needs.

[00:28:11] All, all of those things. So I think it's, I think what's important is about us having awareness of the answers to these two questions. Really what does it bring up in us when we think about our kids having kind of screen time and how do we feel about it? Because that will then. You'll, the more awareness we have of those internal feelings that we have, the better we will be able to navigate those moments when they ask for it or when for whatever reason they happen to have it.

[00:28:40] And we're finding ourselves having, I dunno, a judgy moment. And we're thinking that's not a good use of your time and I wish actually that you did this and this is how it reflects to me as a parent that you're sitting on the screen or that's all you want to do. So I think having awareness and for us to have a little bit of courage for ourselves to have these conversations with our sort of, with our support network can be really helpful.

[00:29:02] So setting clear expectations as well for ourselves. What do we think is reasonable for our kid to have? And that might be a wider value for being healthy and looking after yourselves. And I very much advocate for this in sort of all areas where we need to set limits. I think. It's hard for kids, it's hard for parents to set limits and hard for kids to accept them if they feel taken away from a wider context that makes sense to them.

[00:29:33] For example, if the value in the family is to be active a lot or to make mindful choices or to be healthy or whatever it might be, it's helpful to bake your limits into to some of those things. Again, there will be children that are much more sway able and they're quite happy to think, actually, you know what?

[00:29:52] I want to go out on my bike and I don't want to sit on my screen because I want to be healthy and I want to be strong. There will be other kids

that absolutely will not go for that, but it's about thinking about what's the sort of wider value system that you have as a family that you can draw on when you're setting limits with technology.

[00:30:07] And I suppose in many ways when kids are young like this. We can still probably set up their day so that we can balance screen time and other time. And that might be certain sort of loose rules or expectations or routines that you have in place that, for example, I don't know there was an expectation that homework is done before screen time or if your child happens to be helping out around the house and you have an agreement around that, that might happen before or, or that they're out of home activities, which then create, I suppose, physically less time for them to be drawn to the screens if that's.

[00:30:48] All that's available. And on some days in some families that's all that's available because as parents we're busy. Maybe there aren't any activities. Maybe there are financial reasons why there aren't any activities available. Maybe there are a number of other reasons why other activities aren't available, but thinking a little bit more about how are we setting up our child's day or weak so that there is that balance, that there is space for technology in between other pursuits as well.

[00:31:18] And when we think a little bit about setting agreements with our kids, I think obviously there are lots of parental controls out there. And I think, again, this differs massively between families. There are families where parents are very, so much, very much on it, they're very knowledgeable, they can't set.

[00:31:34] Parental controls limits. And then there are families where parents are less sort of tech savvy and that's okay. And then there are kids that are very good at self-policing and then there are kids that are not. And so I think it all depends on what a sort of combination you've got. So I somehow happen to have sort of one of each sort of kids.

[00:31:55] When my daughter had got her iPad, I remember not really putting any limits in terms of it being in her room, so she could have it in her room, but she knew she could only have one hour on of screen time a day, and then maybe whatever message her friend. And once I went into her room and I thought, okay, let's see what she's actually done.

[00:32:14] And I looked at screen time and I was actually really positively surprised that it was the hour and then maybe 20 minutes or so of, I dunno, researching something for school or chatting to a friend on an app or whatever. And I couldn't believe that she had actually self-police like that. Whereas with

my son, I am convinced that if I left him with a screen all day with a sort of bowl of snacks, he would not need anything or anyone.

[00:32:43] And I don't even know if he would realize how many times, you know, how many hours had gone by. So I think all kids falls on some sort of spectrum between that. And you will have your own feelings for whether you and your family really need to use some of the stricter parental controls because you want to take that stress away from your child.

[00:33:02] You don't want to give them. Too much freedom to to so that they're not successful. Because in those situations, of course we need to set the limits so that they don't have to, and of course these parental controls have to do with certain, it could have to do with age restrictions, it could have to do with the amount of time or certain times when, when technology is available or when the internet is on.

[00:33:26] But what I think is really important with these controls, they still have to be introduced within a framework of a strong relationship. And like I said, an overall kind of set of values. Go on, Anna. Go on.

[00:33:42] **Speaker 5:** I was just wondering if you'd mind sharing how you manage it. Maybe not now, but yeah, that's absolutely how you manage it with your son because.

[00:33:49] That sounds very familiar to where we are and so I'd really love to know. It doesn't need to be at this moment, but yeah, no, I'm happy to, don't mind sharing. If you feel happy to do that, that would be great. No,

[00:34:00] **Speaker 2:** I'm happy to. It's pretty, pretty basic and I'm quite controlling, but yes. But yeah, absolutely.

[00:34:05] Very happy to. Exactly. So it might be certain sort of times of the day that are available. And actually that might be actually a good moment, Anna, to answer that because certainly in our house it's always been, they have their hour in on the, on a weekday and then they get to on a weekend and they get to choose how they wish to do that.

[00:34:22] But typically they choose to have it after tea and. They are very competitive in who ma who has how much left. So one of them will not start if the other one hasn't started. So in that sense it's quite easy because I know they both start at the same time and they keep tabs on one having had a few minutes longer than the other or whatever.

[00:34:43] So in that sense it's, it has been pretty simple, but it does also require that when that time is up, I'm there and I'm not always, because sometimes I'm thinking, oh, I've got 10 more minutes to write something, or Oh, I could just tidy up the kitchen or whatever. So of course, and this is the sort of difficult bit because we want them to stick to the limit, but actually we need to enforce the limit.

[00:35:05] And I'll talk about that a little bit in a moment too. But whatever limits. Have to be still in that sense of that actually our kids feel that we're working with them because otherwise it's, we can take an iPad out of a five-year-old's hands, but it's not that easy when they're 8, 10, 15. You can't, and I think, I suppose you could, but I think really at the cost of our kids feeling that we're not really on their side and that this use of technology is something bad and dirty and something that we disapprove of something that causes anxiety in us, something that causes conflict and really, ideally, that isn't at all what we want this to be about.

[00:35:46] So I suppose thinking a little bit more broadly about, so for example, some families decide that they want to check their young person's devices, and again, it's about being constructive. It's not about being punitive or shaming or this is, I hope this is obvious to a lot of people, but I think we can inadvertently.

[00:36:05] Out of our own anxieties, say and do things in these situations that we're now proud of. And I think, again, if we think about setting out agreements and setting up the environment for our kids to be successful with this, there might be have to be of an idea of, okay, so where does TE technology happen to tech time happen or screen time happen?

[00:36:25] Maybe you agree that it's somewhere where your child can be seen where they are in the room with you, maybe in the sort of family room or in the kitchen. Some families have a sort of, no-no policy for devices in bedrooms for other people that feels more comfortable. So I think, again, you know where your limits are and how, how much supervision you feel your child needs.

[00:36:48] And it might also be so that certain activities are better suited for certain times or certain orders. So I find for example, if my son is playing a game that doesn't have an end. Having that at the end of his screen time is very difficult because it's just, but I just, and mommy, can I show you and look?

[00:37:07] And of course then he keeps playing and he keeps building, whether it's Minecraft or whatever it is. Whereas, for example, if they're watching something and I can see, how long do you have left? Five minutes. Okay, in five

minutes when this video is over, we're going to turn off the screens. And that that creates perhaps a more natural ending and their brains get a sort of closure because they finished an episode of something or whatever it is that they're doing versus having to turn off a game.

[00:37:34] Particularly those horrible games that you can't save. And then you have to start over. So again, it's you guys, again coming back to this idea, if we know roughly what our kids are doing online or how they're using technology, then we can also help them make, manage that time in a way that makes it easier for everyone when it's time to say, to say the screen time is over.

[00:37:55] And I think it's really important because sometimes we feel a bit like, I think we all fall into different camps. Again, some people are very much, oh, it's just tech. Or when other people feel very upset, they really feel like they really want to be boundaried about it. And some people may be even too boundaried about it.

[00:38:12] But I think if we think a little bit about this, if it was any other limit that we would set that we knew was not helpful for them in in, in excess, whether it was sweets or unhealthy foods or any other sort of pursuits that we would be like, okay, that's okay in moderation, but it's not okay all the time, then I think we can have a little think about it.

[00:38:33] Well, we would do then when it was a clearer limit. I don't know about how. Your children treat each other or how they treat others or what's expected of them in terms of, I don't know, helping around the house or doing their homework or whatever other sort of situations you've got in your house where you're, you feel like you've got a clear idea of, of what sort of limit you want to set or why.

[00:38:55] And I think it can be helpful to draw on some of those if it feels like the technology limit is a little bit ambiguous because in some ways, because there was such a broad sort of spectrum of choices that families make around screen time. So for example, my husband, he grew up with the TV being on all the time, whereas we had the TV on to watch a specific program.

[00:39:19] So again, it's just also thinking about what sort of what, where do we come from and what do we carry with us? Because that will then influence whether we do set a limit or not. And I think sometimes it can be good to ask ourselves in this particular situation around screen use. When we feel like we are wavering and we don't really want to set a limit, maybe we don't want to set

a time for when they have to come off the the screen or we don't want to set any agreements.

[00:39:49] What's going on there for us? Is it, I'm guessing here that it might be based in fear. Maybe we're worried about setting a limit in our child having a meltdown about it. We're maybe worried or a little bit anxious about having to set an agreement, which we then have to police and we have to constantly check in with our kids and find the time to maybe learn about those parental controls and maybe, and have those difficult conversations and, and get to know and get involved in what they're doing.

[00:40:17] Whereas actually perhaps like for me, certainly, but maybe for many families, when kids are on screens, these are our opportunities to catch up with a lot of other things. So in many ways it's valuable time for us too. So there might be a lot of reasons why we might not feel like we can set a limit around screen time.

[00:40:35] And those times when you do set limits around screen time, what is that about? What is driving us when we do set limits? And again, for us to look a little bit around that, what sort of values drive the fact that, okay, I could let them have another hour, but actually it's more important to me. For example, I don't know that we spend time together or that I hear about their day or that they get to bed in time, or that we have a family or dinner, whatever it is in everybody's sort of family that that might win in that moment.

[00:41:04] And of course there will be days when it's more one and more the other, but again, the more awareness we have around why we do what we do, the clearer we will be when we do set those limits eventually. And of course there will be times when or if kind of circumstances where maybe there haven't been any limits at all.

[00:41:24] And of course it's difficult to ask children, particularly children rely on technology for a number of sort of reasons. Or we know that children on the spectrum and we know children with ADHD find the sort of stimulation of the screens even more attractive. And so I think going from no limits to strict limits isn't realistic either.

[00:41:49] So I think it's really thinking a little bit about gradually shifting things slowly for children. Just a bit, like you said, Haley actually just gradually considering shifting things if it is so that. We would like to make those changes. And maybe for another family it might be like, actually I'm okay with my kids

being on the screen for a longer period of time in a day, and it doesn't bother them.

[00:42:12] So again, it just, it depends on where you're at.

[00:42:15] **Hayley:** I think also with that as well, it's to, if you are setting lymphoma from zero, potentially check in as you go. Ask the questions, do we feel that, is it that this is working? Do we need to tweak it? Do we need to do something slightly differently? You may have a very fixed plan and a, it's good to have an end in mind, but there may need to be some adaptation along the way because there are lots of external influences that, that maybe need to be considered as you go

[00:42:46] **Marcelina:** lately.

[00:42:47] Totally. And and

[00:42:50] **Speaker 2:** also when we do set those limits, like I said in many other of my sort of talks, setting limits is one side of things and. Being able to tolerate their feelings about it is the other side of it, and they have to go together. So when we set a limit, particularly if it is a new limit or a limit that has been tweaked recently, I would expect big feelings about it.

[00:43:14] And children will show their big feelings in very different ways. So we have to expect and accept that there will be a pushback, there will be a resistance because our kids are doing their jobs. We are doing our jobs by setting the limit, and they are doing their job by pushing against it and exploring it and checking if I scream a bit louder or if I am a little bit more aggressive, or even if I swear at you, will you budge?

[00:43:40] Is this solid? Are you really doing what you said you were going to do? I, I chose this picture because I think this is probably what it looks like in many families. Certainly, I think this can look like this in, in, in my family, because maybe I've shouted guys it's 20 minutes or it's 10 minutes or whatever, and of course they haven't heard me or they've heard me and they've blocked it out.

[00:44:03] And then I come in and I'm all flustered and in disbelief that they're still on their screen and that they haven't had this sort of discipline to come off. But actually, let's think about that because I think many of us perhaps. Certainly I have quite high expectations of what sort of coming off screen time should really look like and actually versus what it really looks like.

[00:44:28] So I know in many families, people call up the stairs, so like I said, there, there is a sort of remote way of trying to get them to come off screens. And of course even going in and saying 10 minutes left, often you get the sort of Yeah, but the yeah, isn't necessarily, I'm agreeing with you and I am going to come off in 10 minutes is yeah.

[00:44:46] Because I know if I say, yeah, you're going to leave and leave me alone. So that's highly

[00:44:52] **Hayley:** relatable.

[00:44:53] **Speaker 2:** Yes. I'm glad to hear that. And actually if we think a little bit about how addictive screens are, and I hate this word really, I dunno why I used it, but I suppose there is really such a surge of dopamine that is being created by our brains when we are in technology and, and this is really, we are.

[00:45:12] The first generation of parents that's really having to navigate this. And there's probably nothing that we can think back in our childhoods that was equally had an equal pull to what our children are experiencing when they're on their devices. And for that reason, we need to ask ourselves, are we being realistic?

[00:45:30] That we're sometimes in the expectations that we have, that we're pulling them away from something that is just so incredibly rewarding for their brains And for that reason, it can be really good to check in about whether we are following the same rules and expectations that that we are setting for them.

[00:45:46] I think in a lot of families, adults use their phones an awful lot because our phones are used for everything. It is work, it's entertainment, it's news, it's shopping, it's, I don't know, cooking recipes. It's booking the car in for mots, everything obviously. And so it's good to check in what are our kids seeing us when as we're using technology?

[00:46:11] Also when we've set the limit and we've asked our children to come off who is there with them. Because often if we think about it, we ask them to give up something that their brains are just having at the time of their lives probably to do something that isn't that exciting. Maybe they have to do homework or maybe it's time to go to bed, or maybe it's time to have a bath, or maybe they might be bored.

[00:46:38] I laughed today actually. I picked up my son. He's got ADHD, so seeks constant stimulation all the time and loves listening to audiobooks. And the drive home from school is 10 minutes. And he said, mom, can I listen to an audiobook? Can I listen to an audiobook? And I had my phone away so I couldn't easily reach it.

[00:46:55] And it was hot. And I said, Hey sweetie, can we just come home? He said, what if I'm bored? He just made me laugh so much, but it just, I just thought, he just described so incredibly well what I think a lot of kids are feeling in those moments where we're taking away something that's going to be really stimulating.

[00:47:14] And then there is a void. And in this case he, we filled the void and we talked and listened to music on the way home. Oh, actually there was as well. It was thunder at the same time. So we were looking at that as well. But it's asking ourselves actually, as we're asking our child to get off the screen, what is there for them?

[00:47:30] Who is there with them? Is there a way in which you can make that. At least a little bit appealing. I don't know, there was maybe a snack available afterwards or there was time with you or so, thinking a little bit about that. Yeah, we've talked about that a little bit already. I wanted to talk a little bit about keeping children safe online as well, because obviously this is part of the talk and I'm aware we've, we've, I've talked for a long time.

[00:47:54] But I want to just cover a couple of topics and we will link to, to the N-S-P-C-C website, which has brilliant sort of step-by-step explanations for specific issues that you might find that you have with your child, whether they've accessed something difficult online or whether it is other things you want to learn or understand better.

[00:48:13] But I was thinking a little bit about sort of things that they might access specifically online when they are, and this is perhaps more geared towards older children, although I think even on, when I'm thinking about my son watching YouTube kid, YouTube kids, there will be an awful lot of content that is still very, very stimulating and very, and can still ha has this sort of potential to influence them an awful lot.

[00:48:38] And some of these things are specifically influencers and. And I think what's really important about this, because of course children see the products, they see a really cool gamer, they see somebody who's talking in a

certain way about certain things. I think it is helpful to, to help our kids be critical and transparent in, in.

[00:49:00] The wider context around why there are so many people that are making videos and talking about things and that often there are other things attached to it other than simply sharing a message. And it's not to, to put our kids off or to, if they are following a certain, I dunno, gamer, and they really think they're really cool, it's not about dismissing their choice of role model or anything like that, but it's about teaching them to be critical of the content that they see and understand that actually this guy or this girl isn't doing this just for fun.

[00:49:33] They're actually getting something out of it and they're most likely making a living out of it as well. I think the other thing that is helpful for kids to know, particularly as they grow older, is to understand that all of their use is being tracked all the time by algorithms that then invite certain patterns of use and often are again, linked to certain products that we might want to see or have.

[00:49:56] And so for that reason. Again, it's not a balanced stream of information that they get. They don't get an objective cut through of what the world looks like or what's available out there. And again, the more awareness they are armed with, the more conscious they can go into their teenage years and make those decisions for themselves.

[00:50:18] Just like in, in your case, Haley, when your girls are obviously much in into their adulthood and are now having to make that those decisions for themselves. And I suppose in that same sort of line. It's about challenging all the information that is out there and really helping them, particularly if information feels particularly compelling or particularly sensationalized to, to help them pause and check in where, where did they hear that from?

[00:50:45] Who said it? And how likely is it that it is true? And what might be the potential impact if they pass this information on? And it's not true. So having some of those sort of moments of reflection as well with your older children can be really helpful. And also finally, reminding them that our online conduct actually impacts real people and real relationships.

[00:51:09] Uh, in fact, we had a situation a year back or so when my son, I think perhaps in a moment of perhaps annoyance and a little bit of irritation accidentally or on purpose, we just still don't know the story. because it changed

all the time, every time it was told, but blocked a friend and then didn't realize that it actually had.

[00:51:30] A real life impact as in it just, the link wasn't fully there. And so there became a huge sort of shock and huge remorse and upset around this sort of situations. So really unpicking some of these things that are, again, coming back to the abs abstract sort of nature of some of these things. So you click a button and your friend is blocked from your game.

[00:51:54] That that is very abstract compared to, I dunno, telling your friend to their face that you don't want to play with them anymore or that the friendship is over. Which I think many kids would feel like, oh, I wouldn't do that because it would hurt their feelings. But if I press block on on the game, then that's.

[00:52:10] And that's different.

[00:52:12] **Hayley:** I think that's a really helpful conversation to have when you're talking to your kids about their screen use is to keep bringing it back to the real world. That actually what you say, how you say it, what you're posting will be seen and heard by real people, real friends, real people.

[00:52:31] And how would you conduct yourself in the playground? How would you conduct yourself at a party? Just having those, bringing them back to coming outta that, that platform, that world, which is, has lots of great things, as we've said before, but bringing it back to how would that look in in face-to-face reality?

[00:52:50] Are you happy with how you talk to your friend there? Yeah. Are you happy with what you did?

[00:52:58] **Marcelina:** Yeah. Ly no, I love that. Absolutely.

[00:53:01] **Speaker 2:** And of course there will be situations where things go wrong and children see things by mistake or they've been shown something and we also. That there might be situations where, for example, children that our children are with have older siblings and they might have had access to information that was appropriate for that older sibling, but the younger sibling saw it or passed it on or whatever happened.

[00:53:27] It happens easily. It happens in all sorts of families. And, uh, and so to have that awareness that at some point our children will and access things that they weren't ready for or that just really was not meant for them on many

levels, or they might have acted like I gave that example in a way that might hurt other people.

[00:53:48] They might have been influenced and taken on views from different sort of sources that advocate for different sort of philosophies or beliefs that we might feel do not fit with our values and might not fit with society's values as a whole. And so. These things will happen and they will,

[00:54:13] **Hayley:** you just froze.

[00:54:14] Require us

[00:54:14] **Speaker 2:** to have Go on. Haley,

[00:54:16] **Hayley:** you just froze for a moment. Think I, oh gosh, we missed that last sentence. Yeah, no. So basically things will happen

[00:54:23] **Speaker 2:** when it's not ideal when our children have access something or seen something or, or, or have taken on certain views. And it's really helpful in those sort of situations to, to check in with ourselves because in those moments we can feel very anxious and we might jump in because we want to correct them, we want to educate them, we want to make sure it doesn't happen again.

[00:54:41] Oh yeah. Am I freezing again? You're back now. Oh no. Gosh, that's really annoying. I'm so sorry about that. So is thinking a little bit about, again, like with all of my sort of talks and stuff like that, thinking back to how is this impacting on us? Because if we are regulated then we will be in a much better place to, to guide our children through some of these things, even.

[00:55:05] If it is stuff that feels very alien to us or we feel very anxious about it. So it's about essentially sharing concerns in a sort of gentle, non-confrontational way. And it might mean that we have to access our children's corporation on a number of occasions before they're ready to talk about this very difficult thing that happened or maybe something shameful that they did or maybe some sort of content that they accidentally saw that they feel really embarrassed about.

[00:55:37] **Marcelina:** And

[00:55:38] **Speaker 2:** I think, uh, overall, I think just thinking a little bit about, I think one of the things that's really important is really to help them, like we

said earlier, have a bit of a self to over time, develop a little bit of a self policing strategy for themselves and for them to be self independent in their kind of.

[00:56:01] Their own sort of evaluation of what they see and what they want to see. And this might be perhaps with an older child that we encourage reflection and think together with them, or even with our younger child, to be honest. If they've played a certain game and we've noticed that when they play that particular game, they are often upset afterwards or it's hard to come off, or maybe it makes them anxious or it makes them very competitive in a way that doesn't feel good for them.

[00:56:26] And it's helping them reflect and think about actually the content of this game or the content of this page that I've just been on. How does it feel? Is it fun? Is it inspiring? Am I feeling energized and entertained when I leave the screen? Or does it actually just make me feel low and upset about myself?

[00:56:47] Or maybe I just feel. Angry because I lost the game or I feel annoyed because I wasted all that time and I, and the game was just loading or I had to wait for other players, whatever reason it is, but help them make that judgment call for themselves. You help them do that now and over time they will be able to do that for themselves.

[00:57:08] And that might mean that they will, with your help, perhaps choose not to follow certain people or not to access certain videos or not play certain games. And they might in, in reverse play more of those games than those sort of, and access the content that makes them feel happy and fulfilled and energized and entertained, which is really what use of technology is supposed to be about.

[00:57:35] Gosh, that was a long presentation. Thank you for, for bearing with me. We have arrived at our q and a time. We sometimes have questions obviously sent through beforehand, but I'm not sure we have received any today. You haven't received anything since.

[00:57:51] **Hayley:** I haven't received anything though by email. But, um, maybe if anybody has a question that they did send through or would like to add after listening to your presentation.

[00:58:03] Thank you, Marlina.

[00:58:04] **Marcelina:** Oh, you're welcome.

[00:58:05] **Speaker 2:** I know Anna, you were asking earlier a little bit about managing when a child is particularly persistent and really loves their screen and really wants to be on it. And I hope that some of the things I've already talked about and has suppose, which I suppose some in some ways also reflects what we do in our house, but that doesn't mean that everybody has to do it the same.

[00:58:25] But I think it's really being quite clear in our minds what we want and. Then setting that up with the kids that they know that they've got that hour or however many hours feel appropriate in in, in everybody else's household. I've certainly found that it's really helpful to sandwich it in between certain, so I don't know, a harder task before screen time, for example, or screen time being at a certain time.

[00:58:52] That's a known time. My son will sometimes ask very early, can I have tea now? Because screen time is after tea. But I throw it back and I say, Hey sweetie, you can have food now and you can have your screen time earlier. It's just that then when your sister's having hers, I think you're probably going to really want to have yours.

[00:59:11] And that is usually in our house enough to create a little bit of a, of an ability to wait. And I think some children can make use of boredom and be creative and other kids can't. So everybody knows. So for example, in your case, Anna. You know, best, you know where your children are at. And thinking a little bit about, okay, so if I leave my child to be bored, will they actually eventually develop something that they can do?

[00:59:40] because a lot of kids can, while other kids might actually just be drowning in that feeling of boredom because they just simply don't know how to get themselves out of that. So again, this is a little bit about reading your child and where they're at and what they can tolerate, but setting things up in a sort of routine, having an agreed time, and then being there when that time is over.

[01:00:04] And that might mean sitting down maybe for a couple of minutes and saying, Hey sweetie, what are you playing? Oh, that looks really cool. We're going to be finishing off. And again, depending on your child's age and the sort of relationship you have with them, there might be situations where you have to take the screen out of their hands, but not angrily, not with frustration, but recognizing that this is really hard for them.

[01:00:27] And that might look something like your gently opening their hands and saying, Hey sweetie, I know it's really hard to let go, so I'm going to take it. Because again, it's taking away the pressure for them to have to do that sort of. Executive functioning sort of process of, oh God, I have to now stop this really fun thing that I'm doing.

[01:00:48] I have to hand over the iPad. I have to tolerate the feelings that evokes in me because I really wanted to finish the game and I'm now scared I'm going to be bored because the game is over and I don't know when next time I'm going to have screen time and maybe this task that mom asks me to do is really boring now, and oh, life is awful, terrible.

[01:01:09] So I think as well to think a little bit about, are there ways in which we can actually help them do that more easily? Gently, but confidently,

[01:01:17] **Hayley:** but how does that fit, fit you, Anna? I know obviously Marlina was saying there that you know your child or your children the best, so you'll be in tune with what definitely works and what definitely doesn't.

[01:01:28] But what, what's that like for you with that, that experience? Are you able to identify with any of those things that might help?

[01:01:36] **Speaker 5:** Yeah, I think I particularly the sort of ending ideas around the ending, because I think. That's the bit that's particularly hard and I think I, I don't engage with, I think so some of it's definitely around our own anxieties about it, as in we know what can happen at the end of the game and so we worry about that.

[01:01:55] Therefore we resist it going on. And I think we were just talking in the background saying actually maybe we need to be a bit li like a little bit more like when he asks it, always say yes, not as in have extra time, but like on a Saturday he knows he's allowed X amount of time and we, and, but we sometimes he'll say, can I have it?

[01:02:10] And we'll be like, hold on, we just need to do this and we just need to do that. And, and then it drags on and on and actually maybe we just need to say yes and let him have half an hour, whatever it may be at that time. But the ending, I think that kind of making sure there's something really fun to look forward to.

[01:02:25] The difficulty is that. Then there brings other anxieties around timekeeping and, and all those things that run in with ASD. A bit nervous about

it, but I think that's something that I'll certainly try and make sure there's something nice to do after I think the board ask him

[01:02:41] **Hayley:** what he would like to do.

[01:02:42] So

[01:02:43] **Speaker 5:** we do try and get, ask him a lot about how he'd like things to be and he does struggle to articulate, um, what his thoughts are. But around screens we have talked a lot and actually we have to hide his, his switch. That's his choice because, and it feels awful to do that, but that was his choice because he was, he just can't resist it.

[01:03:04] If it's just sat at the side, he can't resist it. And he knows, but that's not really okay. And so that makes him really uncomfortable. So we hide it, which feels awful, but it's, but it was his choice. So, because I think, like you, Marcel, if it was available, he would literally be on it without, he would just starve himself because he would just be, I think, I mean, we've never actually tried that, but it's, it is just genuinely so hard for him to let go and we have had to move it from his hands and happily admit that sometimes it isn't as kindly as I'd like it to be because it is just so hard for everybody.

[01:03:36] But yeah, we do try really hard to ask him how he would like it to be and what clearly this matters to you, like, how would you like us to end it? And sometimes he comes up with brilliant ideas, but, um, and the board said, go, sorry.

[01:03:47] **Speaker 4:** We tried ending it the way you had advised us, which was not necessarily, it's going to stop at this stage, but if there's a natural way that this game is going to end, let it play and let it end within the next five minutes, for example.

[01:04:00] Except we tried that and then it kept going and we then said the Nintendo Switch has a automatic kind of ability to switch off at 30 minutes. So that's. 30 minutes, that's up now. And then at the end of that we then say, is there, do you want, so, or he often asks, can there be some extra time? We often say yes, but it's very hard then, isn't it?

[01:04:19] It's that lack of kind of definite, finite finishing that he then struggles in. Because

[01:04:26] **Speaker 5:** particularly like you're saying with the games that don't have an end point that like Minecraft, he loves, but it's awful. It's actually really harmful for him. Mm-hmm. Whereas television screen that as a television it's okay.

[01:04:38] because if it's an episode that's going to end in 20 minutes, then actually he's, he coached so much better with that.

[01:04:44] **Speaker 4:** But also the points where there's elements of potential confusion, like So a end of a football match.

[01:04:49] **Speaker 5:** Oh yeah. Extra time penalties. And then, you know, we thought 90 minutes is

[01:04:53] **Speaker 4:** end of time, but no, there's a draw, so therefore it's extra time and then there's going to be penalties.

[01:04:57] And if you'd let that happen, then it's an hour on the game and you think, oh, blindly, now what?

[01:05:02] **Speaker 2:** Yeah. And

[01:05:02] **Speaker 4:** that's led and

[01:05:04] **Speaker 2:** yes. And actually, and I know this feels really stressful and sometimes when our kids are through going through these phases that are really intense and sort of impact on the whole family, it feels like, gosh, is this going to be like this forever?

[01:05:16] I think in addition to this great idea that you had Hayley about asking him, which you clearly had already thought about inviting him to show you what he would, he's more like stick to, isn't he? So

[01:05:28] **Marcelina:** I

[01:05:28] **Speaker 5:** think there was also something about, sorry, go. No, no, sorry. I don't want to interrupt.

[01:05:33] **Speaker 4:** I just said, we let him decide when does he want to play the switch.

[01:05:36] Yeah.

[01:05:36] **Speaker 5:** At which days he wants to do it. And that was following one of your

[01:05:39] **Speaker 4:** things you suggested, why don't you suggest to them what they want to do? And he came up with his own timetable about when he wants to play the switch

[01:05:46] **Speaker 5:** and how long

[01:05:46] **Speaker 4:** for and how long for. And we thought that's a great idea.

[01:05:47] **Speaker 5:** So we have stuck with that and that was his idea.

[01:05:50] And he prefers that it's just turns, it's just describing interesting. I dunno if he prefers it, but it definitely is easier for the rest of us. So my husband and I and the two siblings, it's taken out of your

[01:06:01] **Speaker 2:** hands.

[01:06:02] **Speaker 5:** It means we don't have to be the person that asks. And so he might be a bit frustrated, but he deals with that in his own way, in that moment.

[01:06:08] And actually, but normally he isn't. He just puts it down. It's amazing. It feels so cruel that it's just ended, but that works for him.

[01:06:16] **Speaker 2:** It's clear there was a clarity there and it, and if you think a little bit about, we often try to insert ourselves and I usually would advocate for that to insert ourselves and that our children.

[01:06:27] Come off screens or whatever is because of the relationship we have with them. Yeah. But we know that the autistic brain works in a, a much more, there is a benefit of things that are clear and the binary off or on is so much easier potentially for him to process than when we add in another layer of human interaction, which can already be so incredibly ambiguous because we say one thing and we mean another.

[01:06:51] Yeah, exactly that. Yeah. Like the

[01:06:53] **Speaker 7:** word maybe.

[01:06:55] **Speaker 2:** Yes, exactly. Maybe

[01:06:57] **Speaker 7:** or, we'll see, that's another bad word, isn't it?

[01:06:59] **Speaker 2:** Yes. Exactly. No, exactly, because it doesn't, it is so vast the, our children don't really know what to do with it if they have a brain that it functions in a sort of more sort of binary way. But I think there's also, and this is perhaps not what you.

[01:07:16] It might, maybe this is not your first strategy to go to, but there might be situations, just like you said, Anna, where you've, and we've all been there. We've, we've used a little bit more force than we wanted to. We've raised our voice when we wanted to just firm it up. You know what, whatever we, we all show our frustrations in moments when we're stressed with kids and limits in different situations.

[01:07:36] And sometimes after one of those sort of perhaps bigger maybe arguments or when you can see that it's also impacted on him, you can maybe sit down, I dunno, on the sofa or when he's going to bed, and you can say, Hey sweetie, you know what, earlier today, gosh, that was just so stressful for all of us. And I could see you were stressed and we were stressed and we were shouting and you were upset, or whatever happened.

[01:07:57] And, and I wonder, gosh, we need to change this. So I think sometimes actually on the back of a situation that has been uncomfortable for him, he might be able to be like, actually, you know what? I actually don't want this anymore either and, and put the ball back in his court. But I don't know how motivated he would be in that sort of situation to Oh

[01:08:15] **Speaker 5:** yeah, no.

[01:08:16] In the moment he wouldn't. But we have not probably over screens, but over other things. Definitely that reflection together at a different time. He normally, that's probably when he came up with things like the, like he wants to do it on a Wednesday and Saturday and a Sunday sort of thing. That with relation to screens that it is in those moments when he comes up with his own plans.

[01:08:34] **Hayley:** Yeah.

[01:08:34] **Speaker 5:** So I do think that's a brilliant strategy. Absolutely. I think Marina, that's

[01:08:38] **Hayley:** really interesting that what you described there, actually, I think it's really powerful because what it tells the child is that you've both looked at your wounds and you've calmed down and you've sat, and so whatever you're doing, but it tells the child that actually you noticed that actually that wasn't pleasant.

[01:08:55] That wasn't great. None of us enjoyed it. But you've really noticed and heard and seen and in those calmer moments. That's obviously when to have those conversations, but that, that's really key. It's really important that you've noticed and that you've seen that that cause distress and that you understand and actually you are willing to understand more.

[01:09:16] Let's talk about it. What ideas can we come up with? Thank you.

[01:09:19] **Marcelina:** Yeah, that's helpful. Thank you. No, you're welcome.

[01:09:23] **Speaker 2:** And if any sort of other questions pop up and for anyone really about today's content or any other content, um, that we talk about or things that are happening in your homes, we've got the q and a sessions where you can ask us anything.

[01:09:37] Just wanted to highlight that. That's, those are still ongoing. We record them separately and then of course answers are available for people to walk so that that's another sort of opportunity to send in questions that sort of where maybe you'd like another sort of pair of eyes on the situation.

[01:09:58] **Marcelina:** But yeah, so I think unless we've got any other sort of.

[01:10:03] Questions or comments or anything like that we might be wrapping up for tonight? We're all good. Yeah. Great. Thank you so much for joining us today. And

[01:10:16] **Speaker 2:** Anna, thank you so much for being so open about your situation. because it's hard, it really is. But I think what's happening in your home happens in many homes, including our homes.

[01:10:27] So I think it's, it, it's hopefully, you know what we've talked about on the back of your situation and Will will help other families as well.

[01:10:38] **Marcelina:** So in

[01:10:39] **Speaker 2:** that case, we'll say goodbye and the next session we've got is actually going to be prerecorded. And so that will be available on On Demand, but there will, there's still always the opportunity to ask questions, send in questions so that we can answer them, and so that you can still get that sort of direct support from us.

[01:11:02] Okay.