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### Is Sleep Really for the Weak?

Throughout my years in grade school, the amount of sleep I got always varied and was never enough hours. During high school, on school nights I always had to be in the house by 9 or 10 o'clock at night and in bed at a decent hour. But, what I did after my door closed and my parents went to bed was never fully controlled by my parents. My parents expected me to turn off the tv and put my phone down and go to bed, but that did not always happen. Looking back at those nights that I stayed up for hours, I am disappointed that I never realized all of the negative effects that staying up to watch tv, play on my phone, or even play video games could have on my teenage self, and many other teenagers suffering from technology's grip on them. Being in college now, I have realized that getting a good night's rest is far more essential for teens than staying up till the morning hours to talk to their friends in a group chat or tweet about school. I believe that technology has a huge effect on teenagers sleep cycles and the best solutions to prevent this are regulating phone use at night, making sure game consoles are not in a teenagers room at night and are being monitored, or simply letting them learn from their own mistakes.

Unlimited texting and wifi has made it much easier for teenagers to stay up all night. During my middle school years, there were no smartphones or tablets. All we had were flip phones that were hard to text on and had no internet. Another thing we had to deal with back then that kids today don't have to live with is limited texting. That's right, limited texting. Parents set a certain amount of number of texts you could send and if you went over you either had to pay for them, or they would not send. One

researcher's client who is a parent "...discovered her 17-year-old daughter was sending over 3000 text messages per month(97 a day), many in the wee hours"(Burrell). 3,000 texts per month is outrageous, but the phone companies do parents a favor by providing this information which, in turn, they can use to restrict their child's phone use. There are many different types of solutions to this problem like the parent removing the phone from a teenager's room to charge outside or keeping it in their own room. But, the solution I wish my parents did for me is, "Have them(children) go one week doing what they're doing; then have them try getting some phone-free, undisturbed sleep for a week"(Burrell). For me, this solution would have been the best way to find out for myself that texting throughout the night highly affects my sleep rather than putting it down and getting a good night's sleep.

Computer gaming and gaming consoles also cause sleep deprivation in teens. Playing video and computer games are slightly different compared to late night texting, but it still causes the same type of sleep deprivation. "The computer screen tends to stimulate sunlight, so even at night you can delay your sleep phase"(Too Much Computer Gaming). I believe some ways to prevent this from happening is to remove the console from their room or use the parental settings on the TV or computer. In high school I had a friend with a little brother who loved to play Xbox, but he loved it too much. Whenever his parents would shut off the tv or make him go to bed, he would throw a fit. I'm sure that when he gets older, he will realize that they only did that for his own well being, not to upset him. Another downside to online gaming is "because of different times zones,it's possible to play computer games around the clock. 'You can be playing games 24/7 with different people from different countries'"(Too Much Computer Gaming). Parents that are concerned with their children playing games into the hours should turn on the parental controls to be sure that their gaming is being limited to only a few hours a day and not at night.

If neither of these solutions work for a child or do not apply, I believe the next best thing to do is to let them find the own solution to their sleep deprivation. For me, my parents never did anything to help me sleep more because they believed I need to learn from my own bad decisions. Eventually, I learned that

getting good sleep is more important to me than staying up to text or play games. Though it did take a while, I'm glad I came up with a nightly routine to get to sleep. Although this solution worked for me, these will not apply to a child with a sleep disorder. If a child is having trouble falling asleep, it should be looked at. I think that Steven Reinberg of HealthDay said it perfectly with his quote, "Pediatricians should ask about sleep during every well-child visit. Children who snore, have problems falling asleep, are difficult to wake in the morning, or who fall asleep in school should be further evaluated for sleep disorders"(Too Much Computer Gaming).

Technology is affecting teenagers sleep cycles and causing them to lose massive amounts of sleep. But I believe that restricting phone use at night, removing game consoles while also monitoring the use, or simply letting them learn on their own are the best solutions to solving their sleep deprivation due to technology. I trust that one of these solutions will prove successful for any teenager who is willing to sacrifice technology for a good night's rest.