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Module 6

DIGITAL HEALTH

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About the Project

With our **HEALTHY COMMUNITIES** project, we illustrate the contribution that adult education can strengthen the health skills of all citizens (including and especially groups with fewer opportunities), counteracting marginalization, and strengthening participation and commitment. One shortcoming of current health skills development programs is that they do not reach all population groups.

The project team has chosen to focus on the local community, in particular through the connection to the living environment in the community, which has so far only been elementary developed.



Welcome to the Module 6 of the training course for health guides entitled - Digital Health

Here, in your own pace and rhythm, you will learn and reflect about how media affect our lives and what we can do to balance its negative effects. The module is designed as a self, independent study, where you as a learner decide when, what and for how long you want to learn. The module is composed of 3 parts and different themes.

1

Part I: Rules of healthy media consumption:

- Social Isolation
- Balanced Media Use
- Digital Detox

2

Part II: Mindful engagement and digital responsibility:

Mindfulness techniques and stress reduction in the media world.

3

Part III: Navigating through your phone: Travel through your phone.

Rather than prescribing rigid rules, the module offers space for experimentation, adaptation, and growth, acknowledging that restoring digital balance is an ongoing, personal process. We wish you a pleasant journey 😊



Image: Maria Sbytova/ Canva Pro

The hidden costs of excessive screen time

In today's digital age, we are spending an increasing number of hours per day in front of screens for non-work-related activities. This includes watching TV, scrolling through social media, browsing the internet, and using mobile apps. While digital tools offer convenience and entertainment, the growing dependency on them can have significant implications for our well-being.

Face-to-face human interaction remains a fundamental need

Particularly when it comes to emotional regulation, developing empathy, and maintaining mental and emotional balance. These interactions stimulate our nervous systems in ways that digital communication cannot replicate. Facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language - critical components of communication - are often lost or diminished in digital spaces.



Furthermore, digital engagement can start to replace real-life social contact.

This trend is especially noticeable among young people and adults living alone, who may begin to rely on online interactions as their primary or sole form of social connection. While online platforms can offer a sense of community, they may also contribute to feelings of loneliness, disconnection, and even anxiety when they become the main source of social interaction.

As educators, it is vital to be aware of these dynamics - not only in our own lives, but also in the lives of our learners. Recognizing the risks of screen overuse and promoting the value of real-world connection is a crucial part of supporting holistic well-being. **Learn more about the benefits and cost of online and screen activities.**

Social Isolation

How over-consumption of media can reduce face-to-face interactions and lead to emotional problems

We invite you to engage with this presentation, which explores a growing and relevant challenge in today's world: the impact of excessive media use on social isolation and emotional well-being.

This module will support you in:

- Understanding the link between digital overuse and reduced real-life connection,
- Recognizing early signs of emotional distress in learners,
- Facilitating meaningful conversations around healthy media habits,
- Introducing practical tools to restore balance and promote in-person engagement.



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Presentation: Social isolation (16 slides)



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The slide features a logo on the left with a pink heart, an orange location pin, a blue house, and a green person icon. To the right of the logo, the title 'Healthy Communities' is displayed in a large, bold, black font. Below the title, the subtitle 'Social Isolation: How Over-Consumption of Media Can Reduce Face-to-Face Interactions and Lead to Emotional Problems' is written in a smaller, bold, black font. Underneath the subtitle, the text 'Module 6 - Digital Health' and 'Author: Agnieszka Borek' is shown. At the bottom of the slide, there is a footer area containing several logos: the European Union flag, 'Co-funded by the European Union', a disclaimer about funding, logos for 'BOZ', 'Caritas & Du', 'stop', and 'eurocultura'. Below these logos, a navigation bar shows '< 1 / 16 >' and a Creative Commons license icon. To the right of the license, it states 'This publication is licensed under a Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)'. On the far right of the navigation bar, there are icons for zooming in (+), zooming out (-), and a full-screen icon (two arrows pointing outwards).



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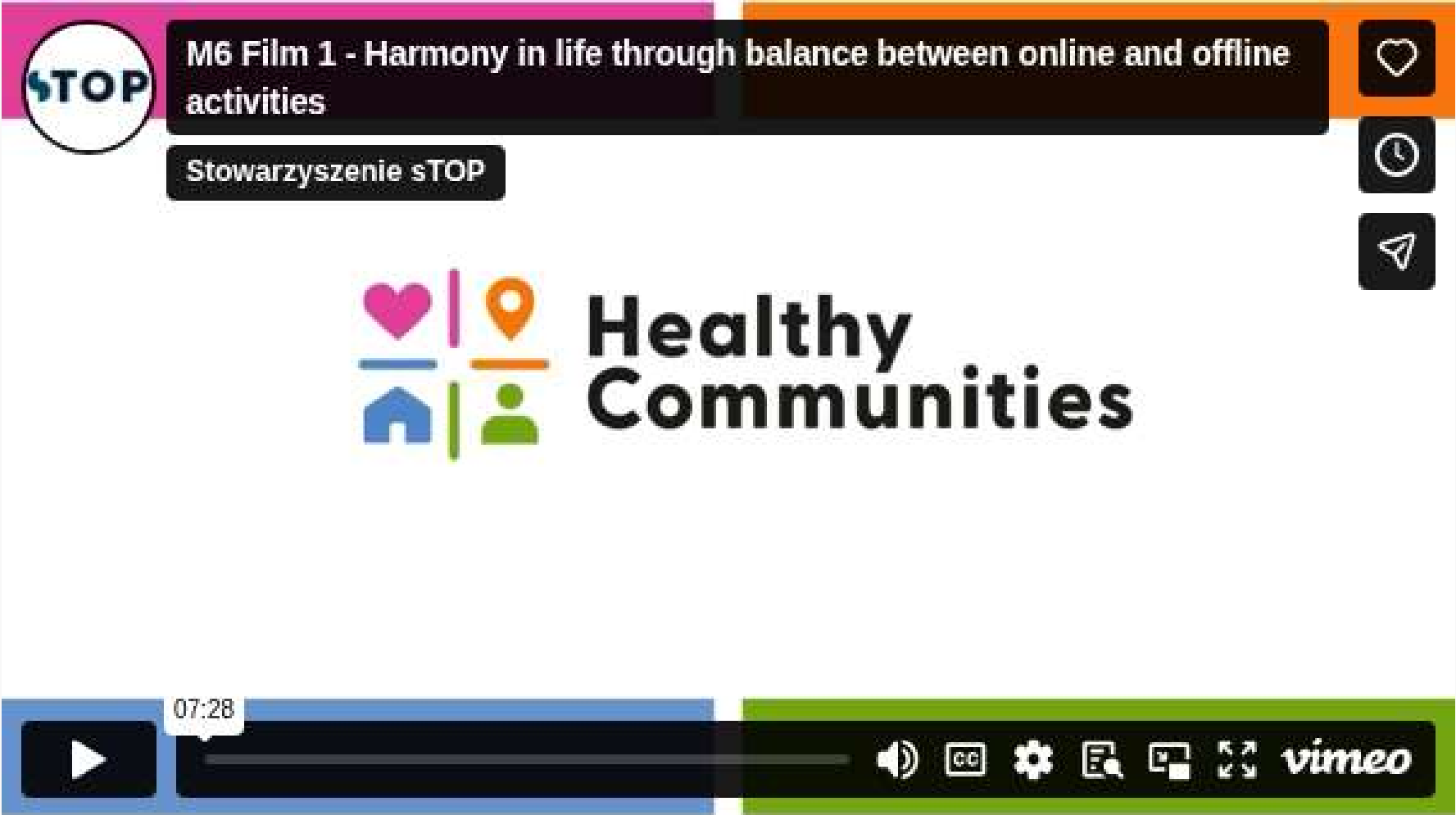
Image: mapodile/ Getty Images Signature/ Canva Pro

As educators, we are increasingly aware of how excessive or unconscious screen time can lead to emotional fatigue, anxiety, information overload, and disconnection from ourselves and others.

We invite you to **watch video that encourages us to pause and reflect on the quality of our digital lives** - not just how much time we spend online, but how we engage. It introduces the idea that we need a more mindful, balanced relationship with digital media - one that protects our well-being and allows space for rest, creativity, and real-world connection.

As educators, modelling and teaching this awareness is key to fostering healthier, more intentional digital habits in ourselves and in those we teach.

Watch the video “Harmony in life through balanced between online and offline activities” and reflect: [What role can we as educators play in promoting intentional, emotionally healthy media consumption?](#)



Click on video to
start play it



Balanced Media Use

The role of physical activity, contact with nature, and face-to-face social interaction as a counterbalance to time spent consuming media

Let's explore how we can counterbalance screen time by weaving physical activity, time in nature, and face-to-face interaction into the learning day.

Based on recent research and global health recommendations, this part of the session will help you:

- Understand the physical, cognitive, and emotional benefits of movement and outdoor time.
- Explore how nature-based experiences support mental health and attention.
- Recognize the importance of real-life social interactions for emotional literacy.
- Learn how to promote balanced daily routines that support our digital well-being.



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Image: Lordn/ Getty Images Signature/ Canva Pro

As educators, you are in a powerful position to model balanced habits, create meaningful moments of connection, and make small but impactful changes to your learning environment.

Supporting people's well-being is not about removing screens altogether - it's about restoring balance and reintroducing what they need to thrive.

We invite you to engage with this presentation that explains the impact of regular physical activity on peoples's emotional and physical health and describe the mental health benefits of time spent in nature.



Presentation: Balanced media use (7 slides)



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The slide features a logo on the left with a heart, a location pin, a house, and a person icon. The title 'Healthy Communities' is in large, bold, black text. Below the title is the subtitle 'Balanced media use - The role of physical activity, contact with nature, and face-to-face social interaction as a counterbalance to time spent consuming media'. The author's name 'Agnieszka Borek' is listed below the subtitle. The footer contains logos for the European Union, BOZ, Caritas & Du, and eurocultura, along with a license notice: 'This publication is licensed under a Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)'.



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In today's world, where digital devices and media constantly surround us, it's essential to remember the value of disconnecting — and reconnecting with what truly supports our well-being.

The video you're about to watch - **“The Benefits of Nature for Mental Health”** by WWF - follows Lewis as he shares his personal journey of discovering the healing power of nature. It highlights how spending time outdoors can reduce stress, improve mental health, and foster a deeper sense of community. As educators working in the field of digital well-being, this film is a great tool to inspire reflection and dialogue. It reminds us - and those we teach — that creating balance between screen time and time in nature is not only possible, but essential.

Take a moment to watch and reflect.



Image: Oksana Vejus/ Canva Pro

Watch the video “The Benefits of Nature for Mental Health” by WWF and reflect: **What barriers might people face when it comes to spending time outside – and how can we help them overcome these?**



Click on video to
start play it



Digital Detox

The power of media breaks

This part of the session invites you to explore the benefits of taking intentional breaks from digital devices. Through practical strategies and reflective tools, we will discover how digital detox practices can support mental clarity, emotional well-being, and deeper human connection - especially in learning environments.

By the end of this part of the session, you will be able to:

- Understand the benefits of regular media breaks for peoples' well-being and learning.
- Identify signs of digital fatigue and overstimulation.
- Introduce simple, digital detox strategies in learning environments.
- Support learners in building healthy media-use habits through reflection and structure.



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Presentation: Digital Detox (10 slides)



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Healthy Communities

Digital Detox - The Power of Media Breaks

Module 6 - Digital Health

Author: Agnieszka Borek

Co-funded by the European Union

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Image: Ketut Subiyanto/ Pexels/ Canva Pro

As educators, we are constantly navigating the digital world - not only for ourselves, but also alongside our learners. In an age where attention is a commodity, reclaiming our ability to focus has become a crucial act of self-care and empowerment.

We invite you to watch a short video about how to avoid doom-scrolling – the endless consumption of negative news and content that drains your energy and focus.

This video invites us to pause and reflect on the cost of constant connectivity. It challenges us to ask: What is the impact of the digital noise we absorb every day? And how can we protect our ability to think clearly, feel deeply, and be present in our lives and relationships?

The film directly reflects the concept of Digital Nutrition, developed by Australian psychologist Jocelyn Brewer. This idea encourages us to approach digital content the way we approach food - by making intentional, balanced, and mindful choices that support our mental and emotional health.

For educators, understanding and embracing this philosophy is essential to modelling healthy media habits and fostering students' well-being.

More about the concept can be found on Brewer's official website:

<https://jocelynbrewer.com/the-philosophy>

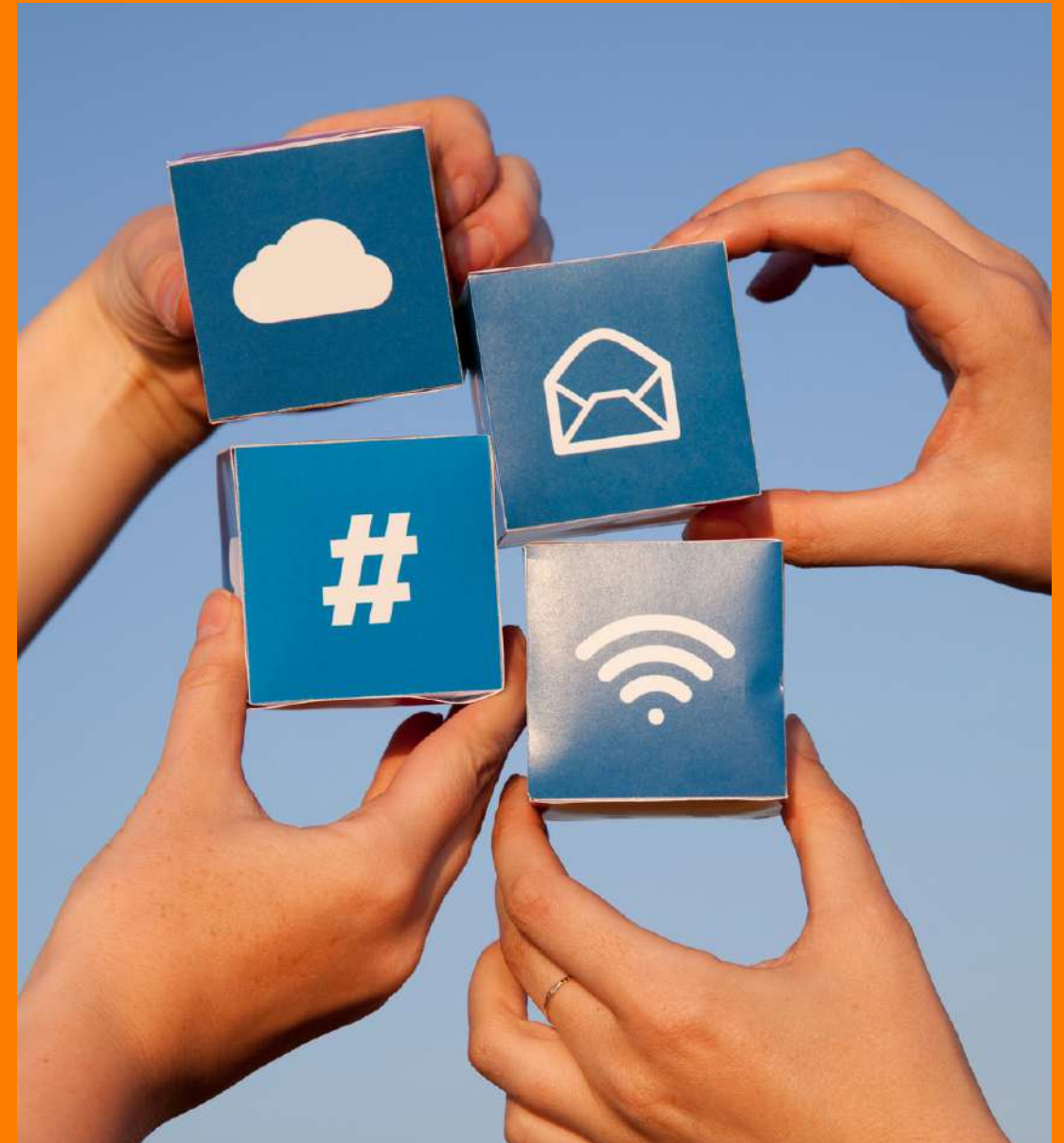


Image: mattjeacock/ Getty Images Signature/ Canva Pro

Watch the video: “Precious your time and avoid doom-scrolling” and reflect: **If attention is one of our most valuable resources, how do you want to invest it – both professionally and personally?**



Click on video to
start play it



Mindfulness techniques and stress reduction in the media world

In an age of constant scrolling, instant updates, and endless notifications, we are all at risk of becoming passive consumers of digital content. As educators, it's crucial to help ourselves and our learners recognize that not all content is equal - and that what we consume online deeply affects our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours.

Watch a short animated video that introduces the concept of intentional digital consumption, encouraging us to pause and ask: *Is this content helping me grow, or is it just noise?* It offers simple strategies for avoiding clickbait, verifying sources, and choosing uplifting, meaningful media — all of which contribute to a healthier, more focused digital life.

By integrating this awareness into our personal habits and educational practices, we can foster a culture of mindful engagement and digital responsibility.



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Watch the video: “The power of mindful media consumption” and reflect: **If digital content were food, what would a “healthy digital diet” look like for you – and what would you cut back on?**



Click on video to
start play it





Image: Superette/ corelens/ Canva Pro

Stress is a natural part of life - and it's increasingly amplified by the time we spend online. Whether it's remote work, endless digital communication, or constant entertainment, our nervous systems often stay in a heightened state of alert. **The pressure to be always connected can lead to emotional fatigue, screen-induced tension, and mental overload. But how we respond to this stress makes all the difference.**

You will watch a short and playful video that offers a simple yet powerful message: we can literally shake stress out of our system. Rooted in the idea that our bodies store tension from constant digital engagement, the film invites us to move, breathe, and reconnect with our physical selves - releasing the pressure we accumulate through screen time and online demands.

These moments of movement don't have to be complex - a little shaking, bouncing, or dancing can re-activate the nervous system and restore calm, clarity, and energy.

With minimal narration and gentle visuals, the video also highlights **one of the most accessible tools we have for balance: our breath**. Conscious breathing helps calm the nervous system, bring us back to the present moment, and shift us out of reactive, overstimulated states — whether in a meeting, at our desks, or in a classroom.

As educators, integrating short movement and breath-based resets into our routines - and encouraging them in others - can become a powerful form of digital detox, supporting emotional regulation, renewed energy, and more intentional online presence.



Image: Jordi Calvera/ Imágenes de Jordi Calvera Solé/ Canva Pro

Watch the video: “Shake Off Stress! Breathing & Body Awareness for Digital Well-Being” and reflect:
How can practicing digital nutrition help learners improve their overall well-being?



Click on video to
start play it



Travel through your phone

This part is focusing on practical skills concerning using your phone (its settings, options and tools) in a more efficient, sustainable and safe way.

There are different settings and apps that can help you to use your phone.
We will explain how:

- to assess your phone usage and reflect on it - *What do I need my phone and its features for? Is it sustainable? Is it safe? Is it healthy? Is it helping me to connect to my friends and loved ones?*
- to configure the phone (apps and general phone settings) to be less bothered by the notifications all the time
- how to use pre-configured setups that help focus
- how to find and setup settings that will help you stay more safe

You will go through a presentation showing features and options available on your phone. There are two separate navigations: for Android and for iPhone.



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Presentation: Travel through your Android phone (17 slides)



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Healthy Communities

Travel through your Android phone

Module 6 - Digital Health

Author: Dorota Bregin

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Presentation: Travel through your iPhone (20 slides)



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Healthy Communities

Travel through your iPhone

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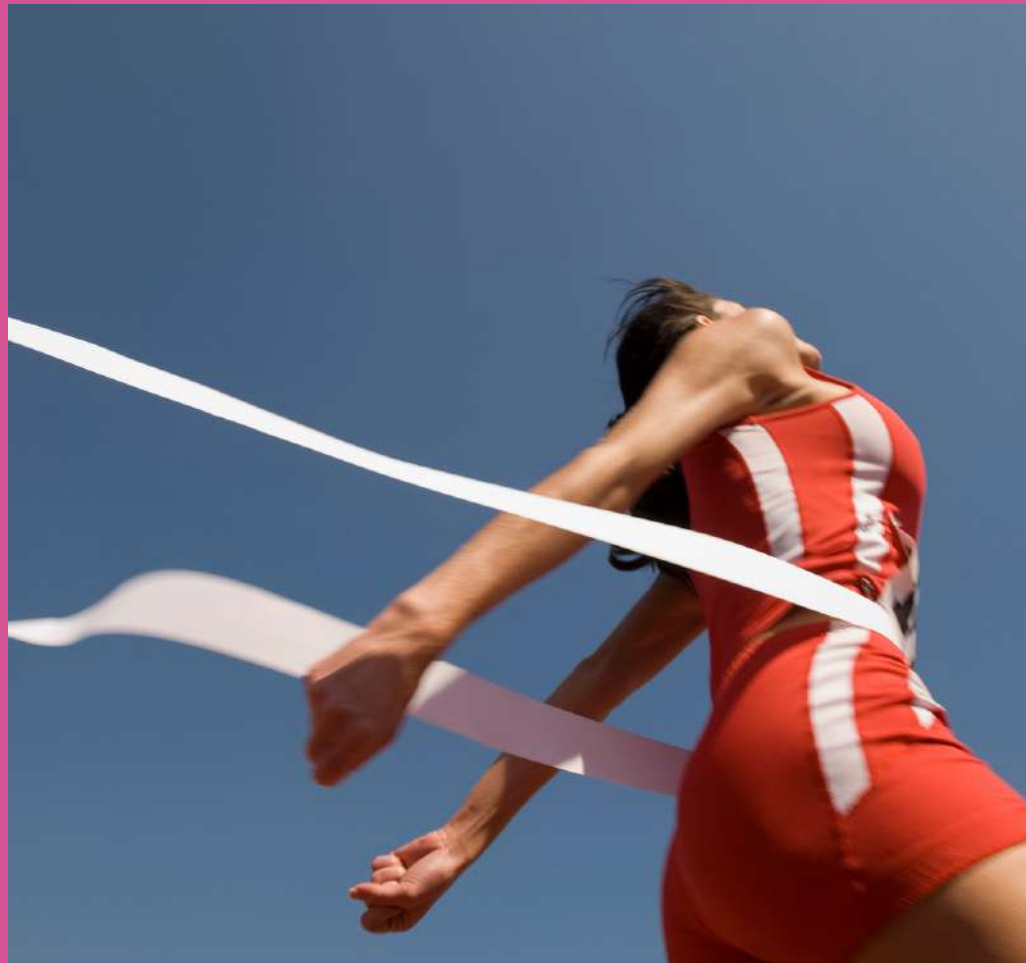


Image: DAPA Images/ Canva Pro

You've reached the end of module 6

Thank you for being here — fully, thoughtfully, and with care.

In this module, you've explored the deeper layers of digital well-being:

- how screen habits impact our emotional and social health,
- why real-world connection still matters deeply,
- how simple practices — like time in nature, movement, breath, and mindful media use — can help us find balance.

You've reflected on your digital habits, learned tools to support others, and considered your role as an educator in shaping healthier, more connected online and offline environments.

Before you go, we invite you to take a deep breath and hold onto a tiny insight or practice from this module you'd like to carry forward.

It doesn't need to be big - just something that helps you, or your learners, feel more grounded, more aware, and more connected.



Final reflection prompt:

What's one intentional change you can make - or support in others - to restore balance in a world of constant connectivity?

Your presence in this learning journey matters. Your work to care for yourself and others in digital spaces is powerful. Thank you for showing up and making space for well-being in your educational practice. See you in the next module - or wherever balance, presence, and connection take you next.

Module “Digital health” is a part of the project “Healthy Communities” course for health education guides.



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Healthy Communities

Social Isolation: How Over-Consumption of Media Can Reduce Face-to-Face Interactions and Lead to Emotional Problems

Module 6 - Digital Health

Author: Agnieszka Borek



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Learning Objectives

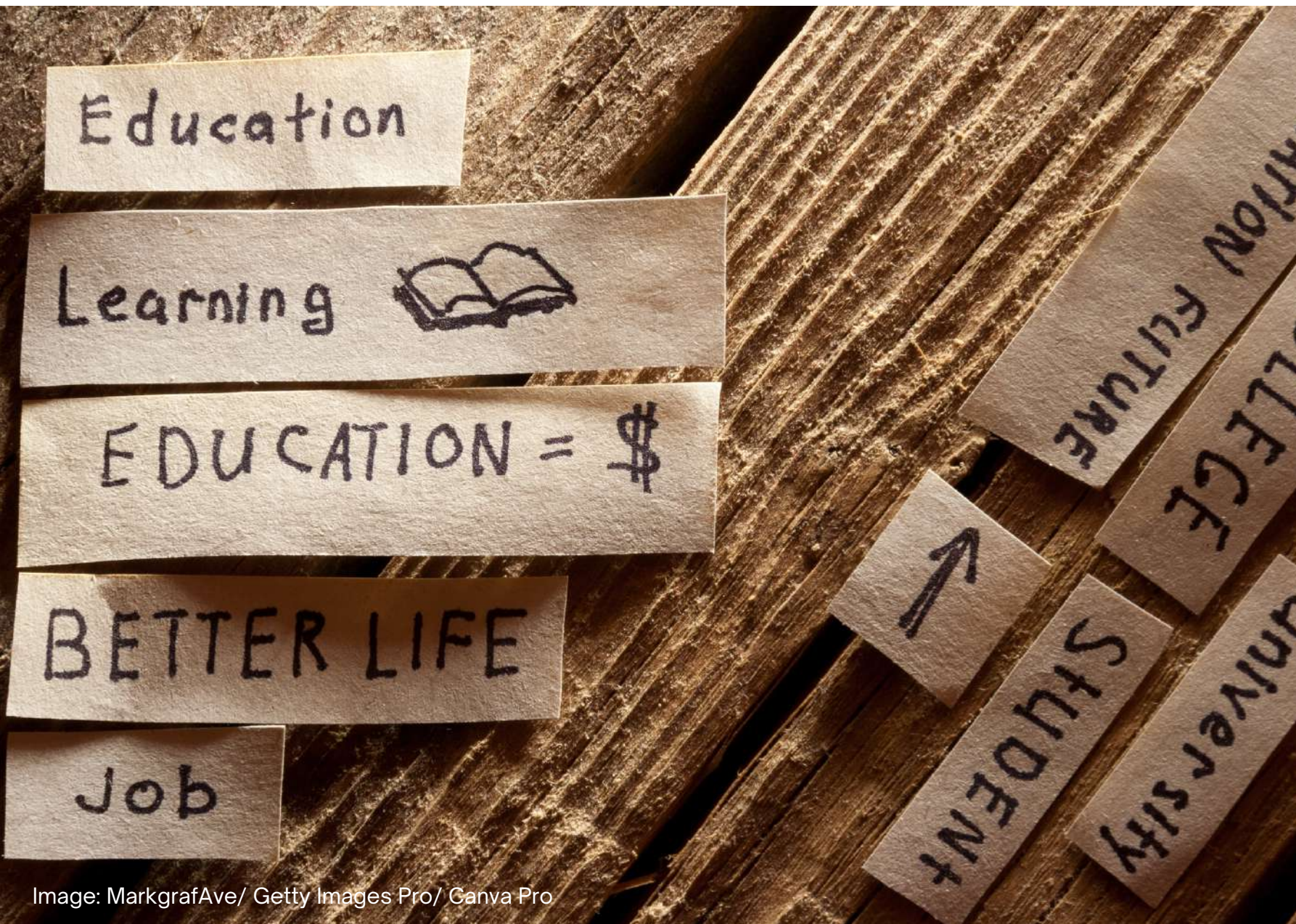


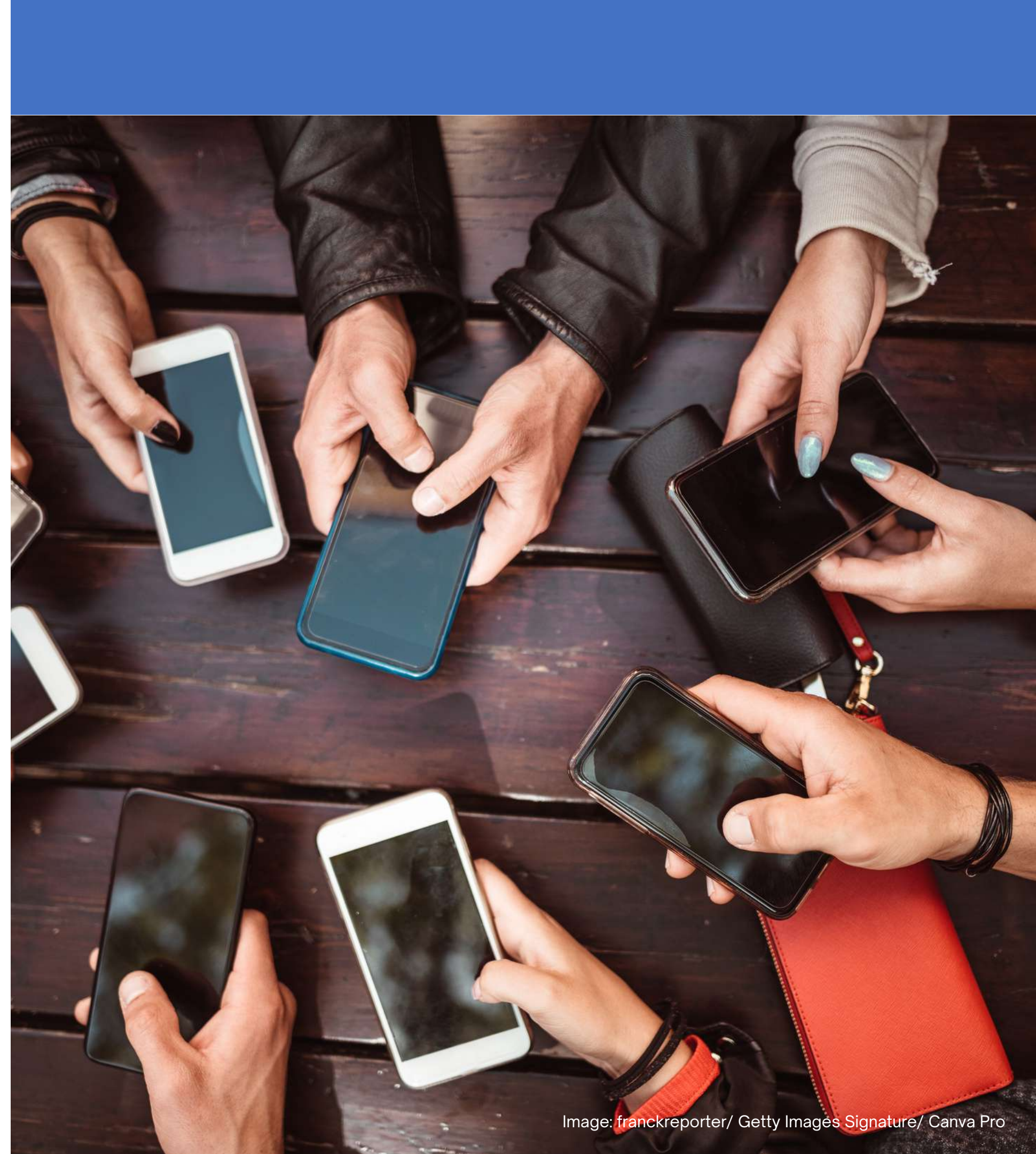
Image: MarkgrafAve/ Getty Images Pro/ Canva Pro

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- **Understand** the connection between excessive media use and social isolation
- **Recognize** the signs of emotional distress caused by reduced face-to-face interaction
- **Facilitate** discussions with learners about healthy media consumption habits
- **Explore** strategies to promote real-life social engagement and emotional well-being

The connection between excessive media use and social isolation

Over-consumption of media refers to spending excessive time engaging with digital content - such as scrolling through social media, watching online videos, or consuming news - often at the expense of in-person activities.



Key facts and data



Adults spend an average of 7+ hours per day on screens (outside of work-related use).



Digital engagement can become a substitute for real-life social contact, especially in youth and adults living alone.



Face-to-face interactions are essential for emotional regulation, empathy, and mental well-being.



50% increase in screen time among adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic (WHO, 2022)



1 in 3 teens feel anxious or depressed after heavy social media use (Common Sense Media, 2023)



60% of teens say screen use cuts into family and friend time (Pew Research Center, 2022)



Platforms like Instagram and Snapchat linked to higher anxiety and poor body image (RSPH, #StatusOfMind)



Students using screens 6+ hours/day report lower life satisfaction and more loneliness (OECD PISA, 2018)

Are screens replacing real-life connection?

Spot the signs:

- Avoiding in-person interactions
- Preferring online over offline conversations
- Feeling more connected online but lonelier offline
- Struggling to cope with boredom or emotions without screens



Image: studioroman/ Canva Pro

**Digital connection is easy.
Real connection is essential.**

Five signals of the need for support or intervention

We should be aware of subtle yet significant behavioural and emotional indicators that may suggest a person is experiencing isolation due to excessive media consumption. These signs may not always be obvious, but when observed consistently. Common signs include:

1

Withdrawal from friends and family - the individual may start avoiding in-person interactions or prefer spending time alone, especially with their devices. They might seem disinterested in social gatherings or communicate less with those around them.

2

Declining participation in group activities - a noticeable decrease in engagement with team-based tasks, school projects, or extracurricular activities may occur. The person may seem disengaged or distracted, often opting out of shared experiences which can further deepen their sense of isolation and reduce opportunities for meaningful social connection.

3

Mood swings, irritability, or sadness after screen use - intense emotional reactions such as frustration, low mood, or anxiety might follow extended screen time. These emotions can stem from overstimulation, negative online interactions, or feelings of comparison and inadequacy.

4

Difficulty maintaining meaningful conversations - the person might struggle to focus during real-time conversations, frequently check their phone, or offer short, disengaged responses. They may also show limited interest in deeper, emotionally rich exchanges.

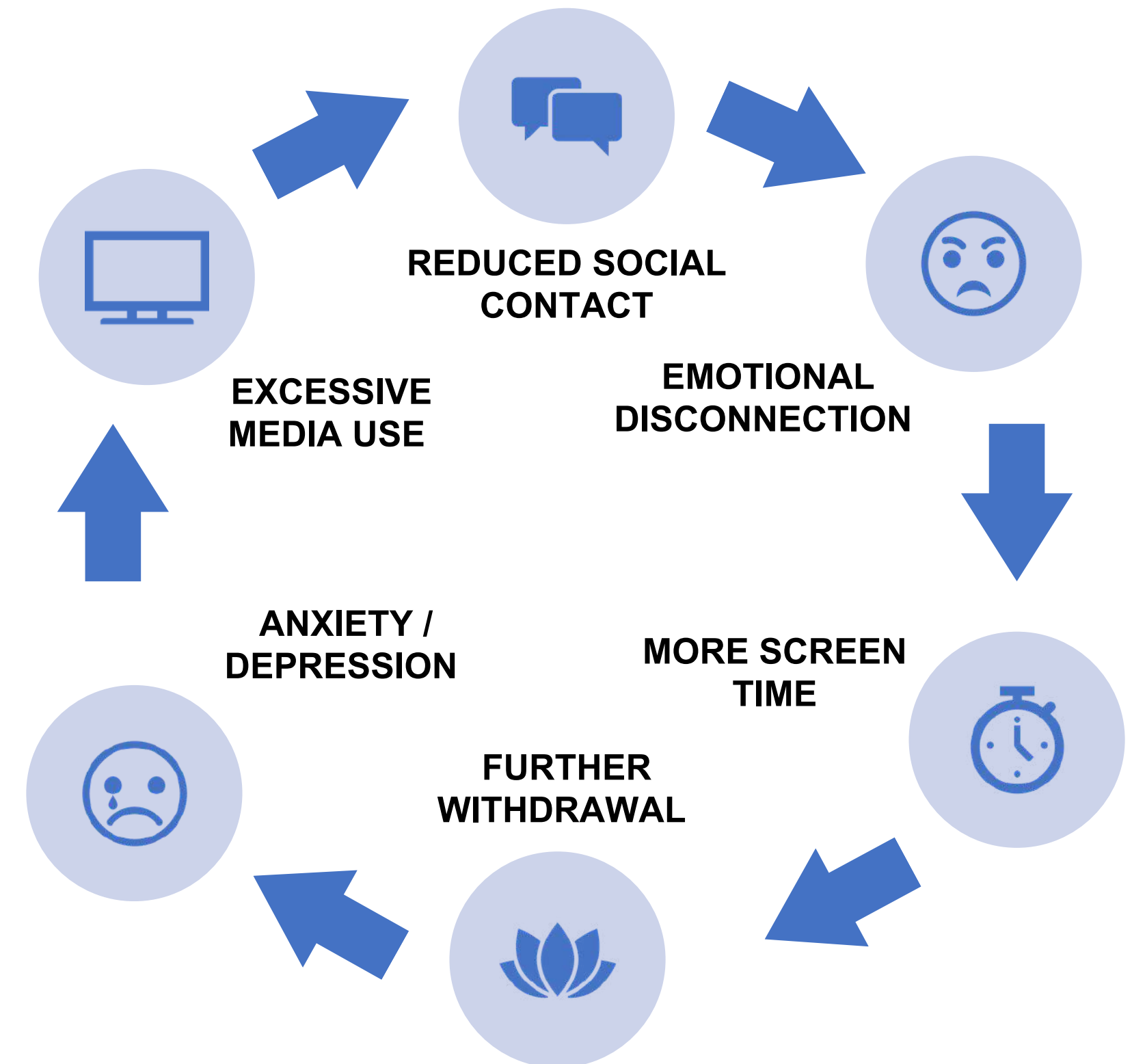
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Constant need for stimulation - an inability to tolerate silence or stillness may lead to compulsive behaviours like scrolling through social media during meals, breaks, or even while talking to others. This can be a sign of discomfort with being present or emotionally available.

The circle of isolation

This cycle can silently develop over time, especially when individuals begin to:

- Avoid social gatherings.
- Prefer online interaction over real-life communication.
- Feel more "connected" online but lonelier offline.



Screen overuse and emotional disconnection

Emotional connection thrives offline.

Helping people recognize and interrupt this cycle can improve their mental health and overall well-being.



What can you do as an educator?

SUPPORT EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

As an educator, you play a crucial role in creating emotionally safe learning environments. You can support learners' mental and emotional health in small but meaningful ways. Here's how:

- 1 **Normalize talking about loneliness and emotional fatigue** - open up space for honest conversations. Acknowledge that feeling overwhelmed, isolated, or emotionally drained is okay, especially in our hyperconnected world. Model vulnerability and let learners know they're not alone in their experiences.

- 2 **Share simple self-care tools:**
Introduce easy, everyday practices that help regulate emotions and restore balance. These could include:
 - *Mindfulness exercises* (e.g., breathing techniques, short meditations) – watch the video
 - *Nature breaks* (e.g., stepping outside, noticing the environment)
 - *Gratitude journaling* (e.g., writing down 3 things they're grateful for each day)You don't need to be a therapist to help others practice emotional hygiene.
- 3 **Collaborate with mental health professionals when needed** - know your limits. If a learner needs more support than you can offer, connect them with counsellors, psychologists, or mental health organizations. Build bridges rather than carry the burden alone.

What can you do as an educator?



INVITE TO REFLECTION ON THE SCREEN TIME REALITY

Instruction:

Take a few quiet minutes to reflect on your current habits around screen use and real-life interactions. Answer the following questions honestly in your handout, journal, share one of your insights with a partner or a friend.

Questions

1. On average, how many hours per day do you spend on screens (outside of work)?
2. When was the last time you had a deep, face-to-face conversation with a friend or loved one?
3. Have you ever found yourself turning to your phone or computer when you felt lonely or bored? What was the effect?
4. How do you feel emotionally after spending a long time online?
5. What is one small change you could make this week to prioritize in-person connection?

What can you do as an educator?



INTRODUCE THE CONCEPT OF DIGITAL NUTRITION

Digital Nutrition is a metaphor that compares our digital content consumption to our dietary habits. Just as we aim to eat foods that nourish our bodies, we can also choose to engage with digital media in ways that nourish our minds and emotional well-being.

READ MORE



<https://jocelynbrewer.com/the-philosophy/>



This concept invites to:

Reflect on the quality of the digital content they consume, not just the quantity.



Differentiate between "nutritious" content (e.g., inspiring, educational, connecting) and "junk" content (e.g., overly stimulating, fear-inducing, or doom-scrolling).

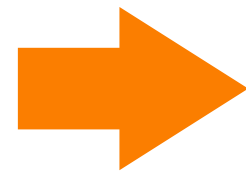


Consume intentionally, setting boundaries for time, purpose, and emotional impact.



Build healthy digital habits, much like we do with food—balancing variety, moderation, and mindful choices.

What can you do as an educator?



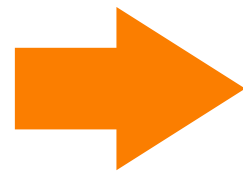
PROMOTE BALANCE

Use simple frameworks like the **3-2-1 rule**:

- 3 hours offline with others daily,
- 2 hours of mindful screen use,
- 1 media-free hour before bedtime



What can you do as an educator?



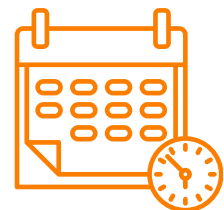
CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTION



Design learning activities that require collaboration and live interaction.



Host media-free group sessions (e.g., walks, team challenges, creative workshops).



Encourage learners to schedule “offline time” with friends or family.



What can you do as an educator?



HELP TO BUILD AWARENESS

You can try the “Digital Mirror” exercise.



- Step 1.** Ask learners to spend 5 minutes mapping out their daily media use.
- How much of it is active vs. passive?
 - How often do you substitute media for human interaction?
 - What emotions do you associate with different types of media use?

Step 2. Then invite them to create a *personal intention* for how they want to manage their social and digital life more mindfully.

Key takeaways



Media is not inherently harmful - it's how we use it that matters.

Digital tools can connect, inform, and empower. But when used passively, excessively, or to escape from real emotions, they can also create disconnection. The key is *intentional use*.



Social isolation is a growing concern linked to screen overuse.

When screen time replaces real human interaction, loneliness often follows. This isn't about eliminating media—it's about recognizing when it replaces something vital.



Small changes in habits can lead to significant improvements in emotional well-being.

Even tiny shifts—like taking media-free walks, setting screen limits, or talking face-to-face—can rewire emotional patterns and increase overall life satisfaction.



Educators play a key role in promoting digital awareness and real-world connection.

You are not just teaching content—you're modeling habits. By encouraging open conversations, balance, and connection, you help learners build healthy digital lives.

Key sources and reports:

1. **Screen Time and Wellbeing: What We Know and What We Need to Know** – OECD, 2020, <https://www.oecd.org/education/screen-time-and-wellbeing-2020.pdf> (accessed: March 5, 2025)
2. **The Importance of Human Connection** – Harvard University's Center for the Developing Child, 2022, <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/the-importance-of-human-connection> (accessed: March 5, 2025)
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4. **Loneliness and Technology: The Digital Paradox** – Campaign to End Loneliness, 2021, <https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/blog/loneliness-and-technology-the-digital-paradox> (accessed: March 5, 2025)
5. **The Digital Nutrition Philosophy: A Guilt-Free Approach to Screen Time** – Jocelyn Brewer, <https://jocelynbrewer.com/the-philosophy/> (accessed: March 5, 2025)



Healthy Communities

Balanced media use - The role of physical activity, contact with nature, and face-to-face social interaction as a counterbalance to time spent consuming media

Module 6 - Digital Health
Author: Agnieszka Borek



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Learning Objectives

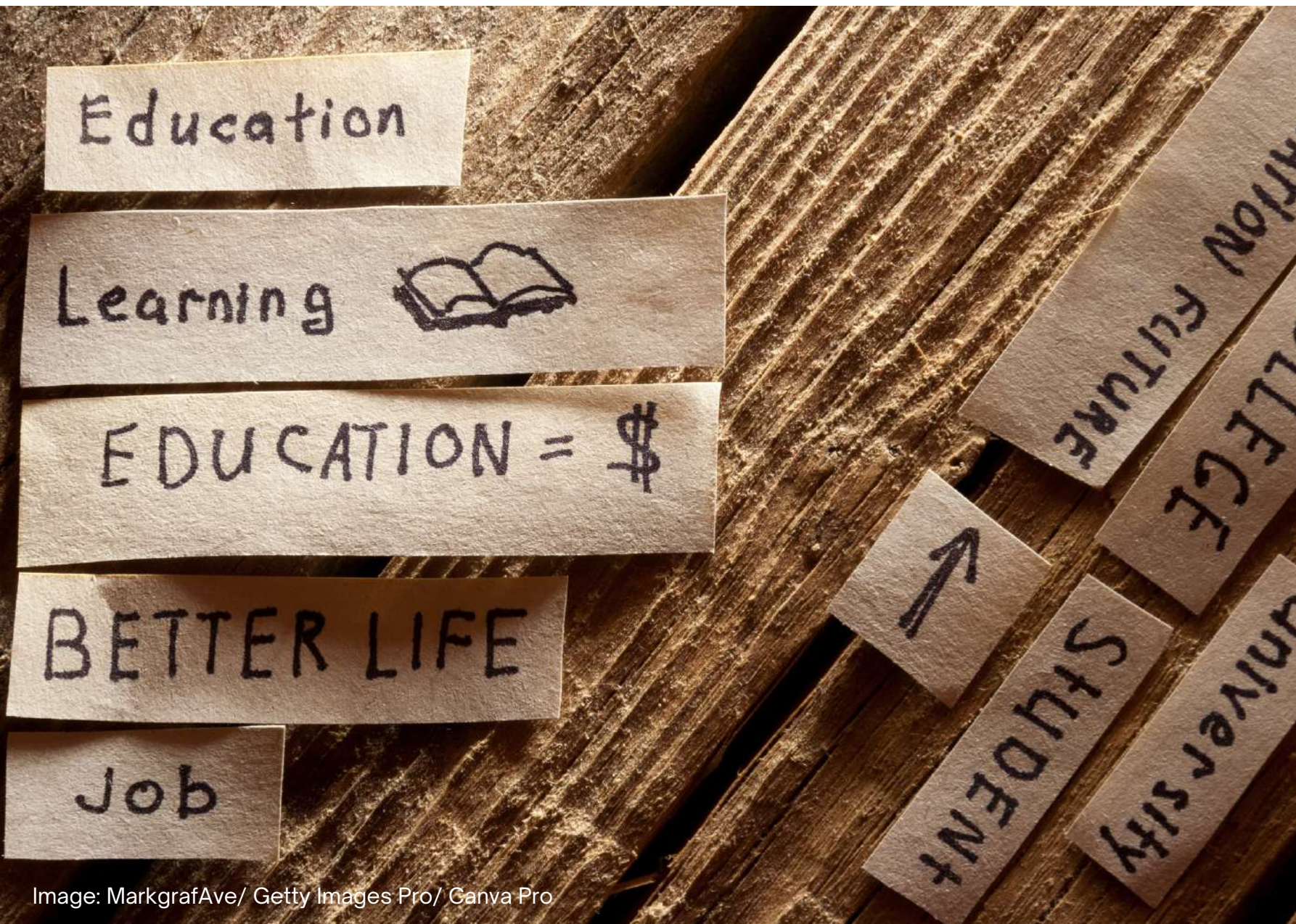


Image: MarkgrafAve/ Getty Images Pro/ Canva Pro

By the end of this session, educators will be able to:

- **Explain** the impact of regular physical activity on peoples's emotional and physical health
- **Describe** the mental health benefits of time spent in nature and recognize how even small "green doses" can reduce stress and improve focus.
- **Compare** the emotional and social benefits of face-to-face interaction with those of digital communication.
- **Reflect** on their own habits and role-modelling in promoting physical activity, emotional well-being, and healthy digital balance.

Physical activity as a counterbalance

KEY INSIGHT

Movement is a powerful antidote to screen-related fatigue:

- Physical activity helps reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression.
- Children and adults who are physically active have better cognitive outcomes and reduced fatigue (*Guidelines on Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour*, WHO, 2020)

Why it matters:

- Physical activity boosts mood, energy, concentration, and resilience.
- It supports brain function and emotional regulation, especially after long screen sessions.



Emotional well-being and time in nature

KEY INSIGHT

Research shows that spending at least **120 minutes per week in nature** is strongly linked to improved mental health (Scientific Reports volume 9, 2019). Even small, regular doses of green space matter.

Why it matters:

- Time outdoors helps reduce stress, anxiety, and symptoms of depression.
- Nature fosters mindfulness and presence—qualities diminished by multitasking screen use.



Face-to-face interaction vs. digital communication

KEY INSIGHT

While digital platforms allow for quick communication, they cannot fully replace in-person connection. Face-to-face interactions build empathy, trust, and deeper emotional literacy (Scientific Reports volume 13, 2023).

Why it matters:

- Overuse of digital communication can lead to shallow relationships and feelings of isolation.
- In-person contact enhances the ability to read nonverbal cues and practice emotional regulation.



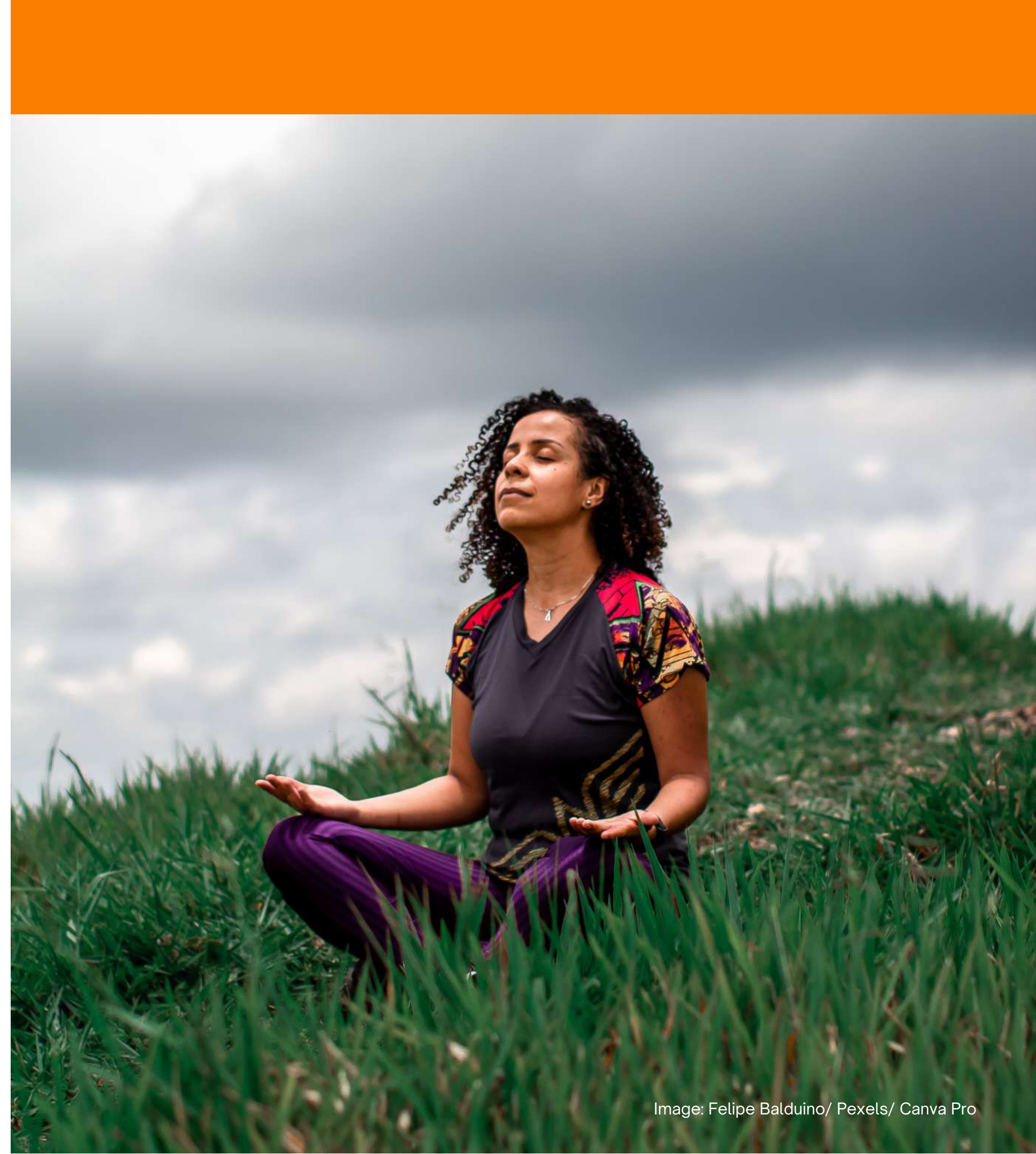
Balanced Daily Routine

KEY INSIGHT

Well-being is shaped by rhythm, not restriction. A daily routine that includes movement, rest, mindful media use, and real-life connection promotes emotional stability and cognitive health (American Psychologist, 2011).

Why it matters:

- Screens are not inherently harmful—it's about how and when we use them.
- Balance leads to better sleep, attention, learning outcomes, and emotional well-being.



Key sources and reports:

1. World Health Organization (2020) – *Guidelines on Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour*, <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240015128> (accessed: March 10, 2025)
2. White, M.P., Alcock, I., Grellier, J. et al. Spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature is associated with good health and wellbeing. *Scientific Reports* volume 9, 7730 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-019-44097-3> (accessed: March 10, 2025)
3. Stieger, S., Lewetz, D. & Willinger, D. Face-to-face more important than digital communication for mental health during the pandemic. *Scientific Reports* 13, 8022 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-34957-4> (accessed: March 10, 2025)
4. Walsh, R. (2011). Lifestyle and mental health. *American Psychologist*, 66(7), 579–592. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021769> (accessed: March 10, 2025)
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2023), Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report for Dietary, Physical Activity, and Sleep Behaviors: 2013–2023, <https://www.cdc.gov/yrebs/dstr/dietary-physical-sleep-behaviors.html> (accessed: March 10, 2025)



Healthy Communities

Digital Detox - The Power of Media Breaks

Module 6 - Digital Health

Author: Agnieszka Borek



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Learning Objectives

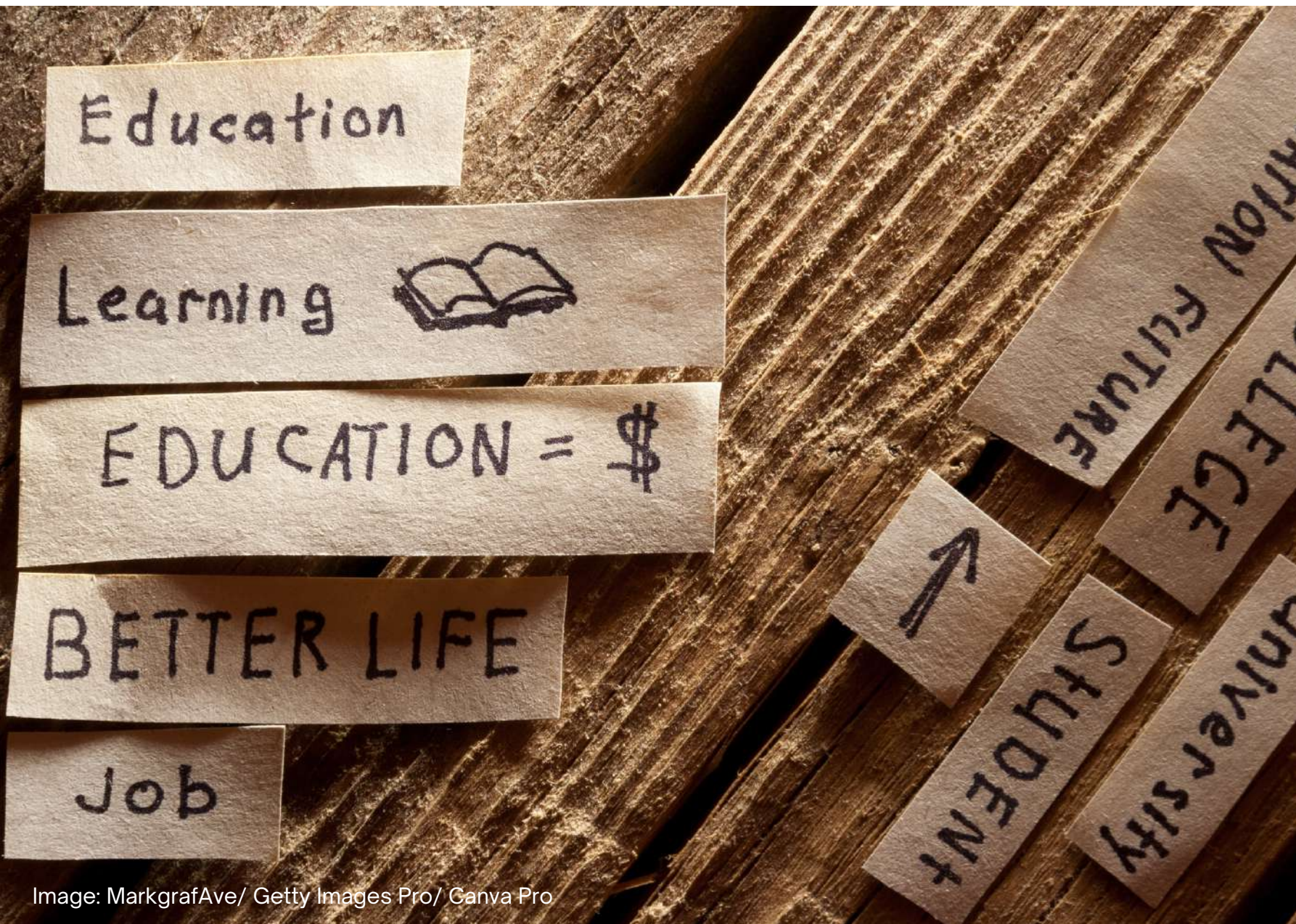


Image: MarkgrafAve/ Getty Images Pro/ Canva Pro

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- **Understand** the benefits of regular media breaks for peoples' well-being.
- **Identify** signs of digital fatigue and overstimulation.
- **Introduce** simple, appropriate digital detox strategies in learning environments.
- **Support** learners in building healthy media-use habits through reflection and structure.



What is a digital detox?

A digital detox is when a person voluntarily avoids using digital devices—phones, tablets, laptops—for their well-being. It can last minutes, hours, or even days. It's not about restriction but *intentional disconnection*.

A digital detox is NOT about going without—it IS about going *within*.

Benefits from media breaks



Boosting focus and attention span

Constant notifications and multitasking often fragment our attention, making it harder to focus intensely. Taking a break from screens allows the mind to reset and engage more fully in tasks, leading to better productivity and mental clarity.

Reducing stress and emotional overload

Continuous exposure to digital content, especially social media or work emails, can increase anxiety, stress, and emotional fatigue. Stepping away from screens creates space for relaxation and self-reflection, supporting emotional regulation and mental balance.

Improving sleep and reduces eye strain

Screens emit blue light, which can disrupt the natural sleep cycle and contribute to insomnia. Reducing screen exposure—especially before bedtime—helps the body produce melatonin, leading to better-quality sleep. It also prevents digital eye strain, reducing dryness, headaches, and blurred vision.

Benefits from media breaks



Increasing face-to-face engagement and presence

We become more available for genuine, in-person interactions when we put down our devices. This strengthens relationships, enhances empathy, and improves communication skills, fostering a more profound sense of connection and belonging.

Encouraging creativity and boredom-based learning

Unstructured time without screens allows the brain to wander, imagine, and innovate. Boredom, rather than being a negative state, often sparks curiosity and leads to self-directed learning, exploration, and creative thinking—especially important for children and young people.

Warning signs of digital fatigue

- Restlessness or irritability when offline
- Trouble focusing or sitting still
- Screen dependency during free time or meals
- Avoidance of offline activities (sports, reading, talking)

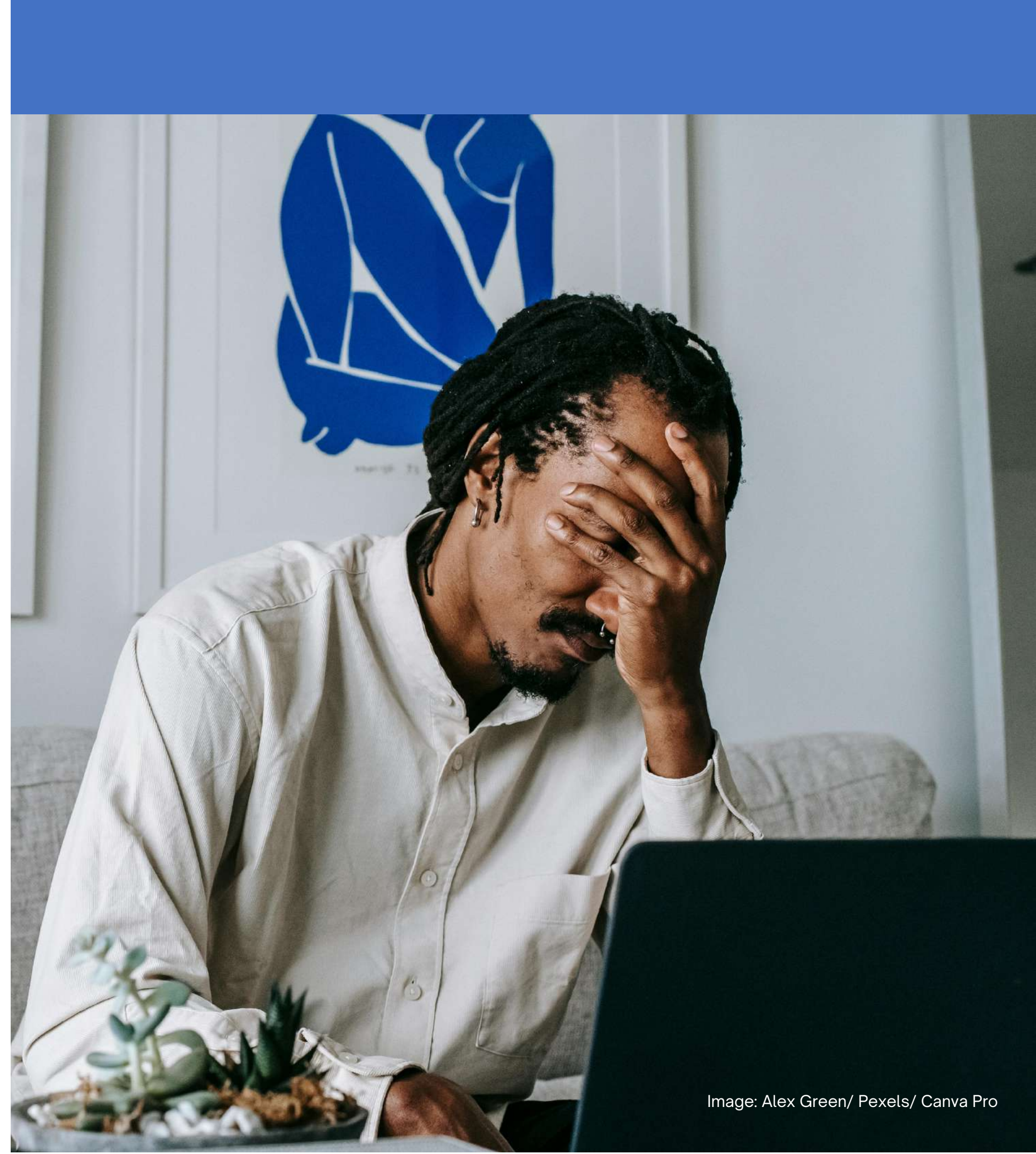




Image: davidrabone0/ pixabay/ Canva Pro



Simple digital detox practices



Media-free mornings:
start the day without
screens for the first
30–60 minutes.



Offline lunch: no
phones during lunch
breaks, encourage
social eating.



1-Hour daily screen
break: schedule one
media-free hour per
day for physical
activity, hobbies, or
rest.



“Silent Mode” time: no
notifications or pop-
ups during learning
and creative working.



Weekly mini detox:
one weekend morning
or afternoon with all
screens off.

What can you do as an educator?

Model mindful tech use by:

- Putting away devices during face-to-face interaction
- Talking openly about their own screen challenges and strategies
- Creating "phone-free zones" or rituals in class (e.g., opening circles)



What can you do as an educator?

Help to build awareness by reflective questions:

- “How do you feel after spending a full day on screens?”
- “When was the last time you were completely offline? What did you do?”
- “What’s one time of day you could go screen-free?”



Self
Awareness

Key sources and reports

1. Screen Time and Wellbeing: What We Know and What We Need to Know – OECD, 2020, <https://www.oecd.org/education/screen-time-and-wellbeing-2020.pdf> (accessed: March 10, 2025)
2. The Importance of Human Connection – Harvard University's Center for the Developing Child, 2022, <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/the-importance-of-human-connection> (accessed: March 10, 2025)
3. Digital Media and Mental Health – Royal Society for Public Health (UK), 2017, <https://www.rsph.org.uk/our-work/policy/digital-media-and-mental-health.html> (accessed: March 10, 2025)
4. Loneliness and Technology: The Digital Paradox – Campaign to End Loneliness, 2021, <https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/blog/loneliness-and-technology-the-digital-paradox> (accessed: March 10, 2025)



Healthy Communities

Travel through your iPhone

Module 6 - Digital Health

Author: Dorota Bregin



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Reflection



FOR IPHONE USERS



Image: yuriz/ Getty Images/ Canva Pro

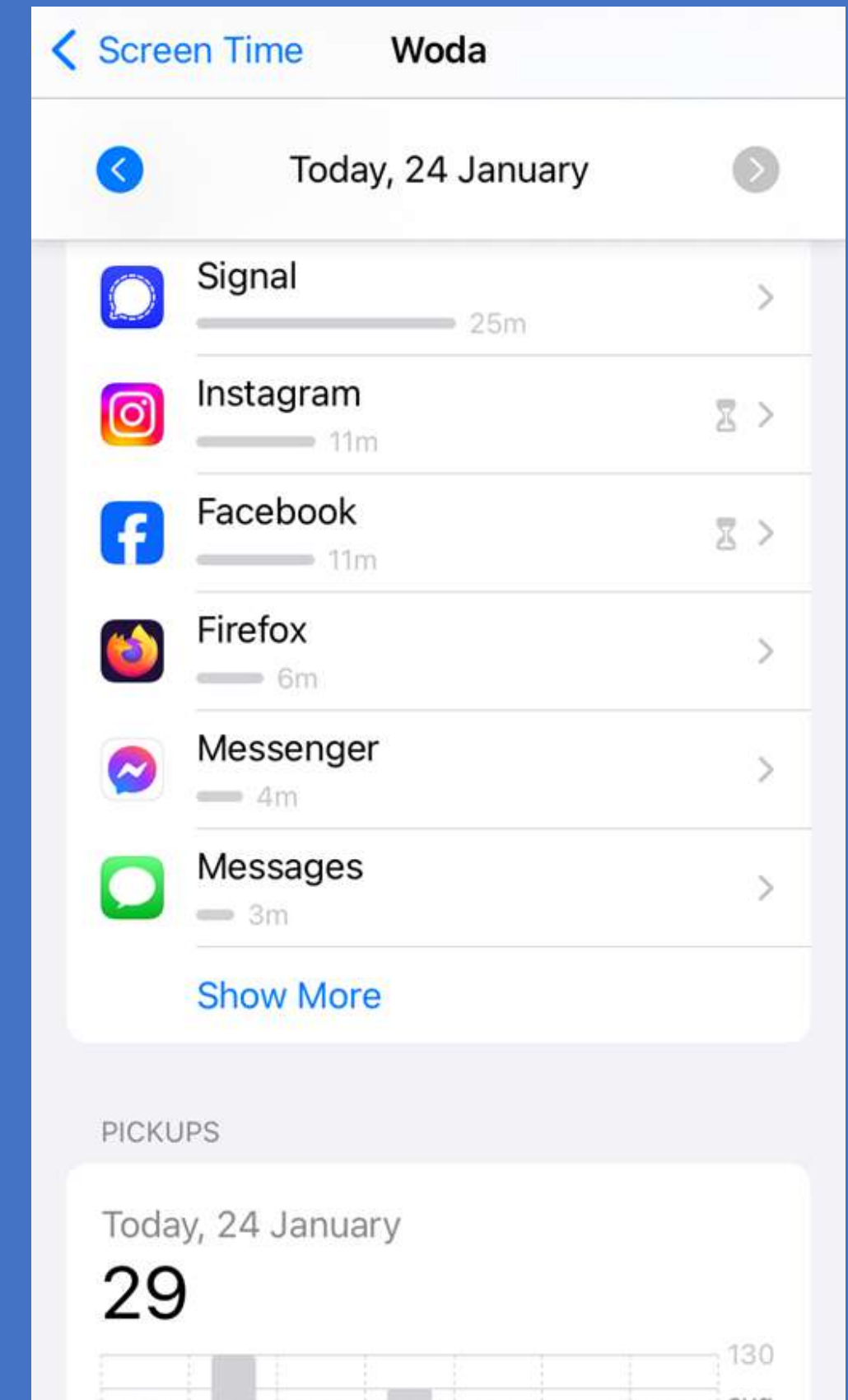
Start with self-reflecting and journaling:

- What do I need my phone and its features for?
- How much time do I spent on my device?
(your phone is sending you weekly report on that)
- Is it sustainable?
- Is it safe?
- Is it healthy?
- Is it helping me to connect to my friends and loved ones?

Go to the usage report settings in your phone - Screen time

Compare your reflection from previous slide with data stored in your device.

What does it tell you about the way of using the device?



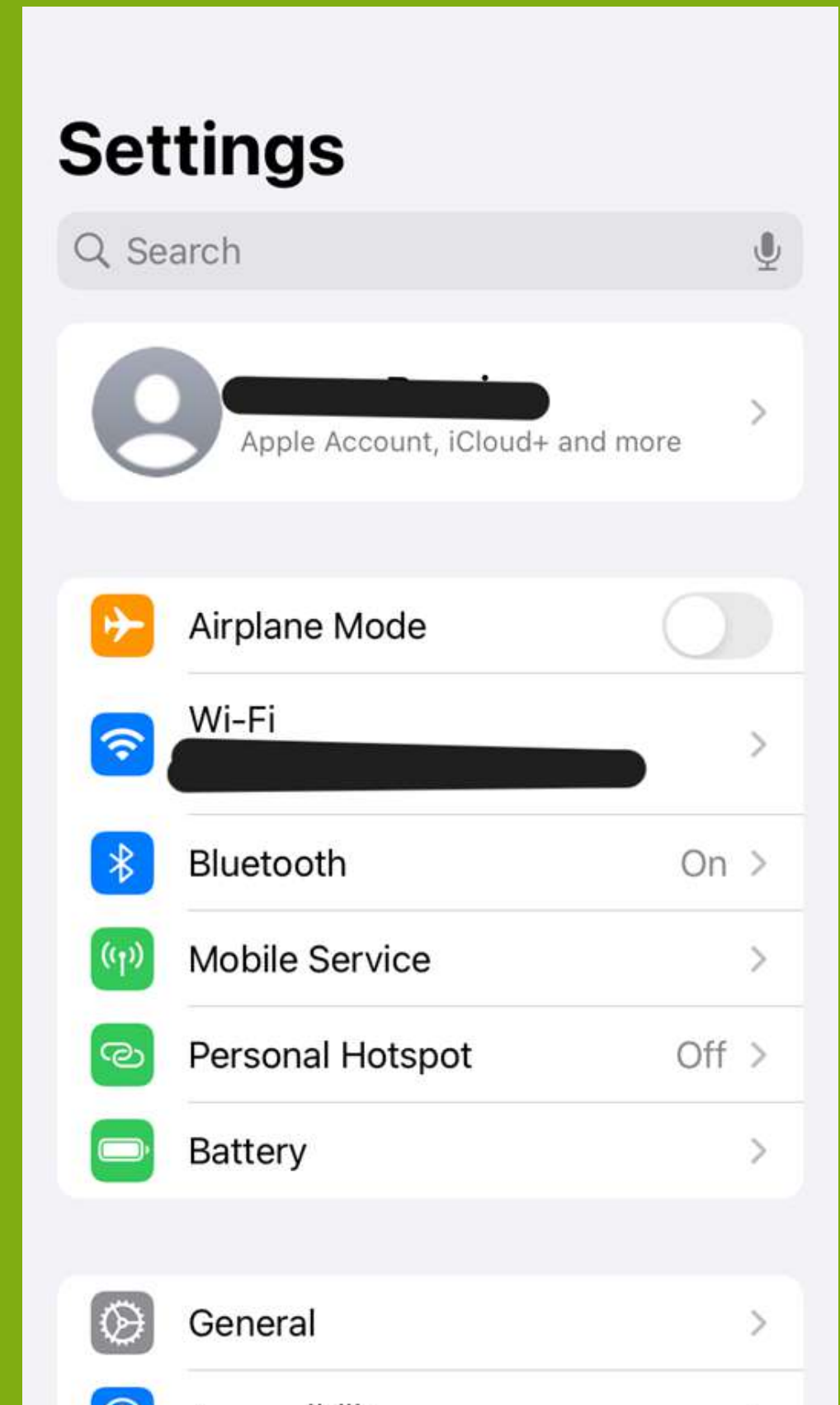
Settings

Currently, our phones let us stay constantly online. If you go to the settings, you can see that there are different options to use to rest from constant availability



Aeroplane mode lets you disconnect from all networks (mobile service, Wi-Fi, etc).

If you struggle to find any setting mentioned in this presentation, simply goto the **Search bar** and type the name of it.



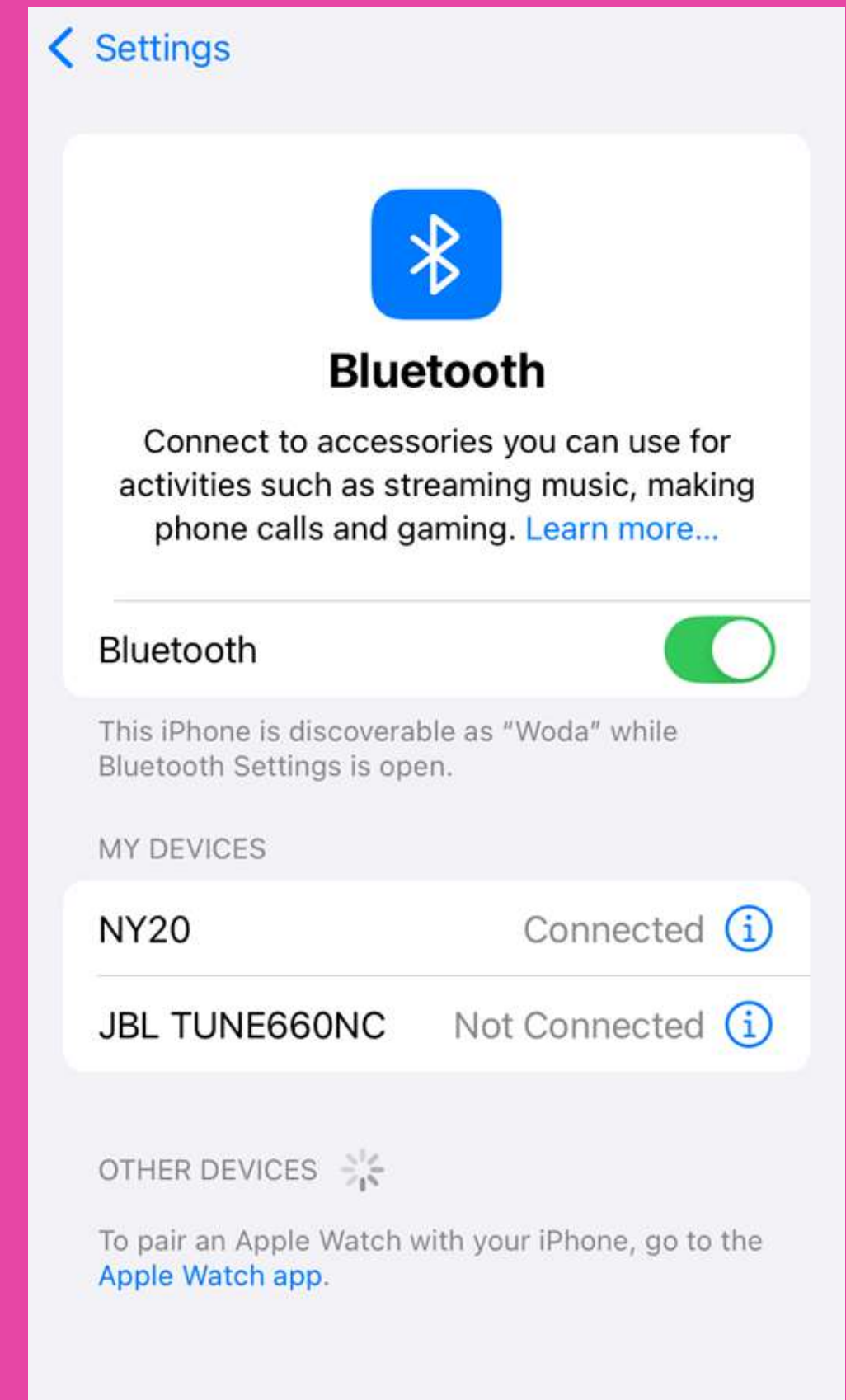
Bluetooth



Bluetooth can be useful tool but also the gate to our phone from any device. It also drains battery. If you are not using it – keep it off.

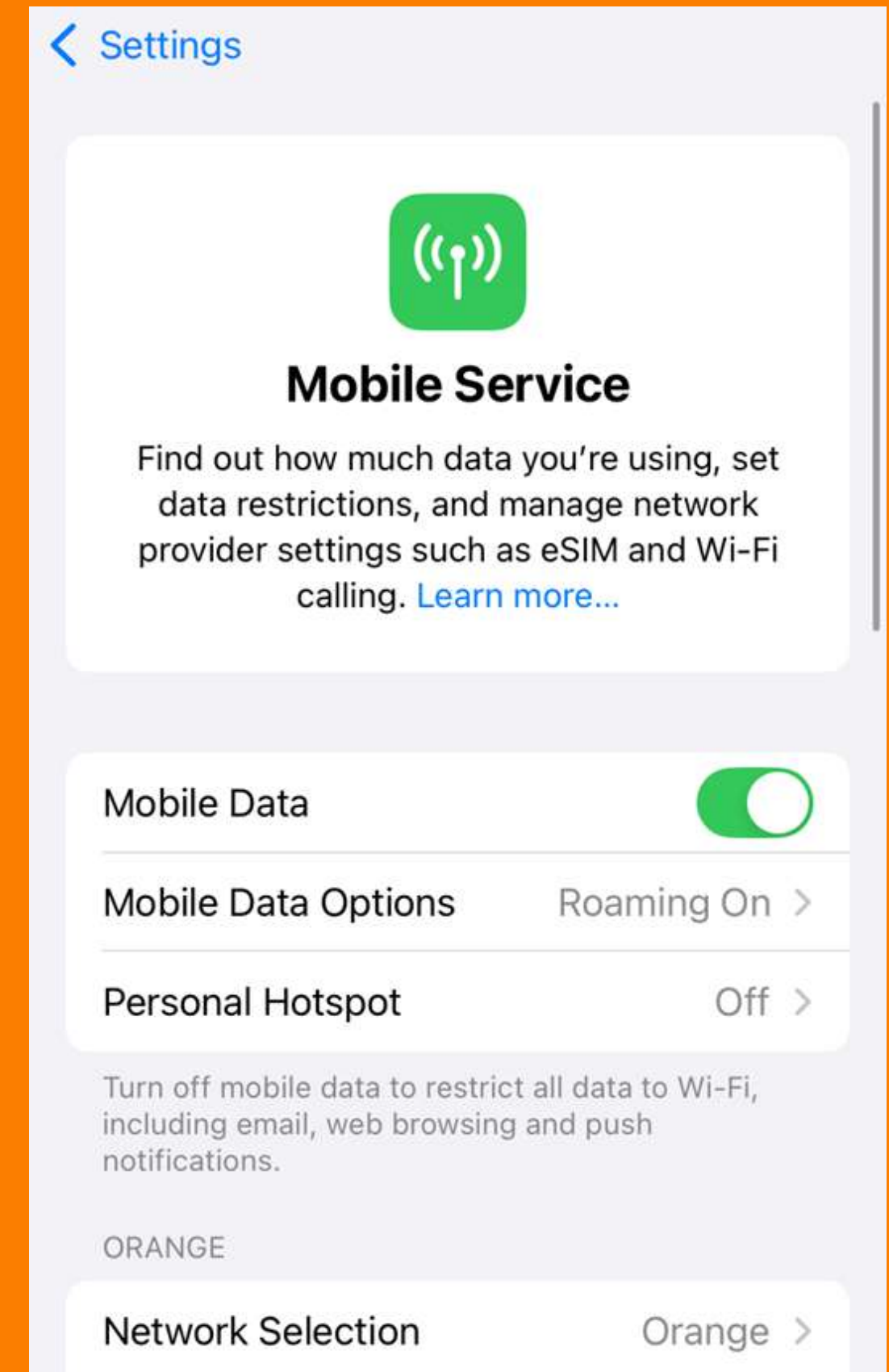
Use it wisely, decide what devices you want to be able to connect and pair.

Devices like arm bands etc. might track your activities even when you are not conscious of it (and might not want it), TV or car screen might display some content you did not want to show to your co-watchers or other passengers.



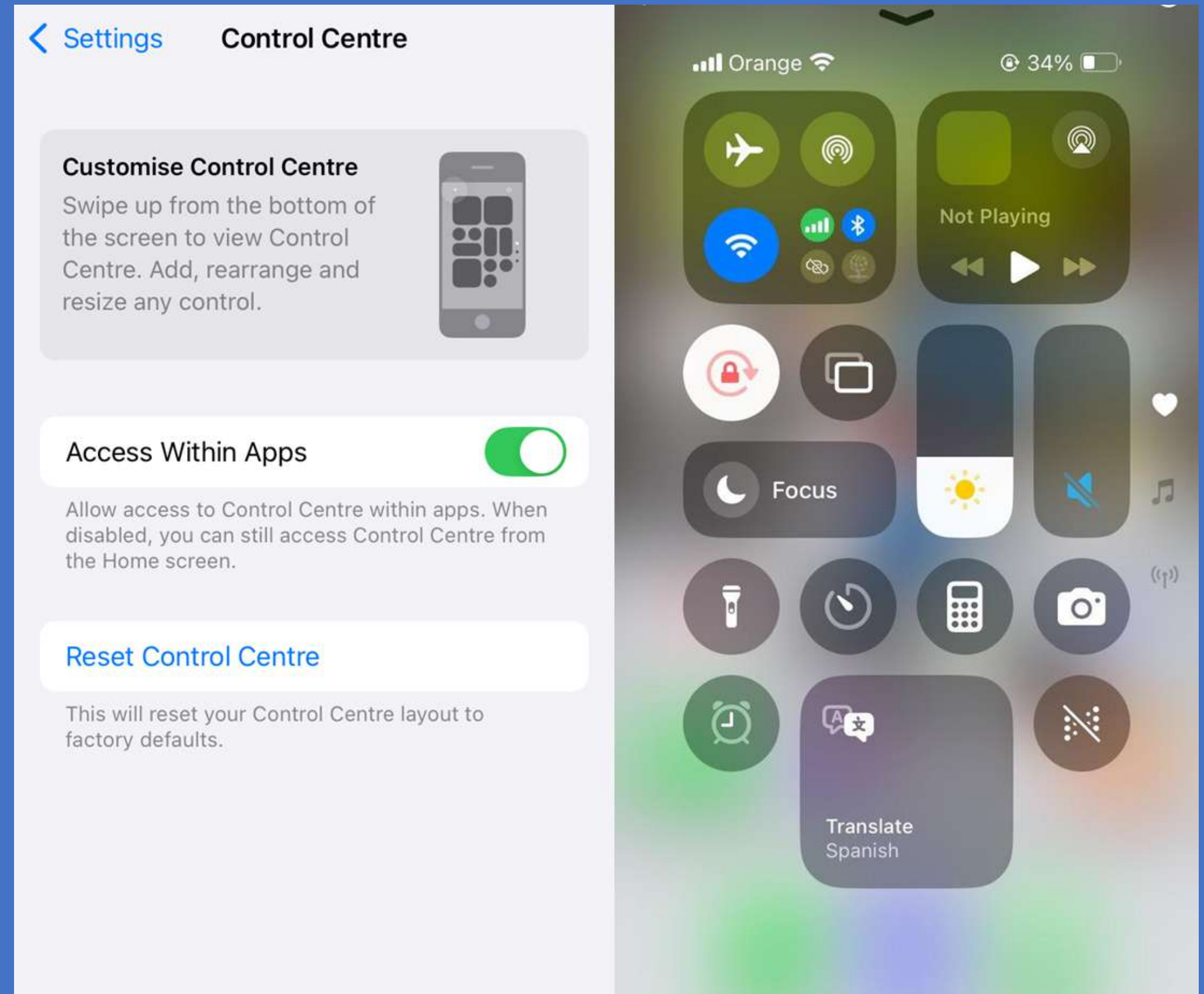
Mobile service

Sometimes you might want to use your phone only as a device for phone calls – here you can unmark **Mobile Data** so your phone will not connect to the internet.



Control Centre

When you get familiar with **Control Centre** you can faster and easier reach switch on & off options like Plane mode, Wi-Fi, mobile data, Bluetooth, hotspot etc.



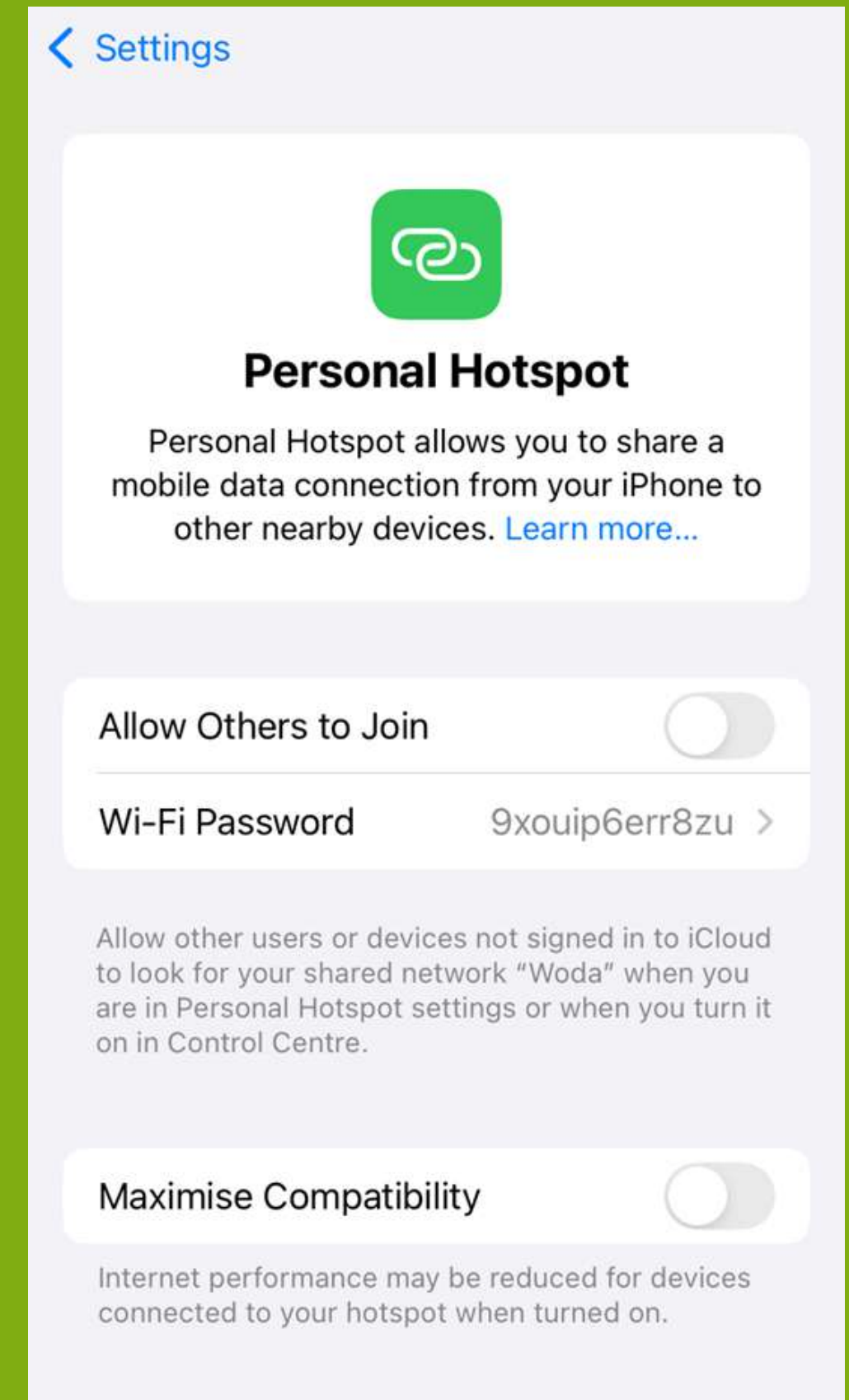
Personal Hotspot



Be mindful about letting others use your network via Personal Hotspot.

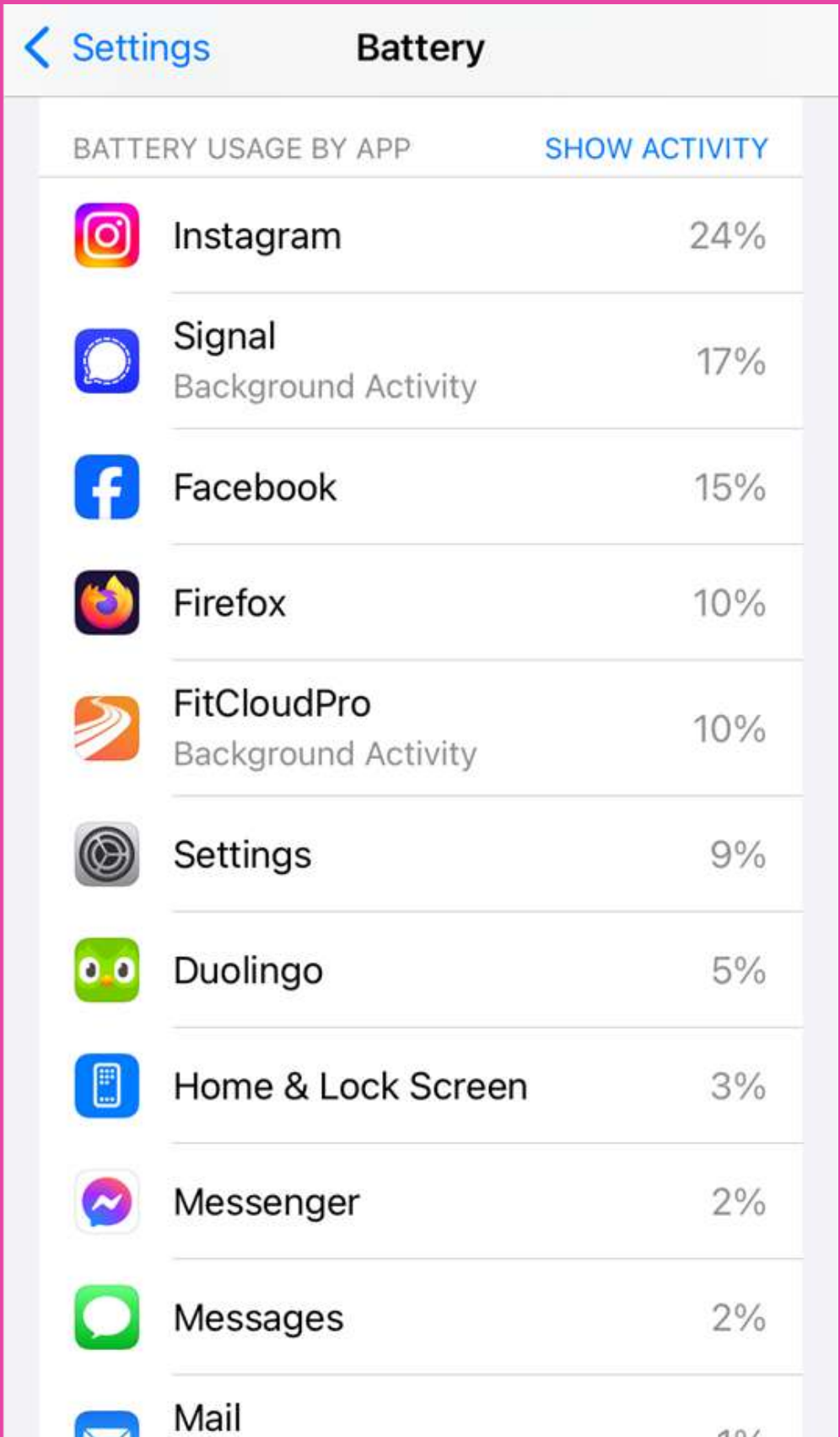
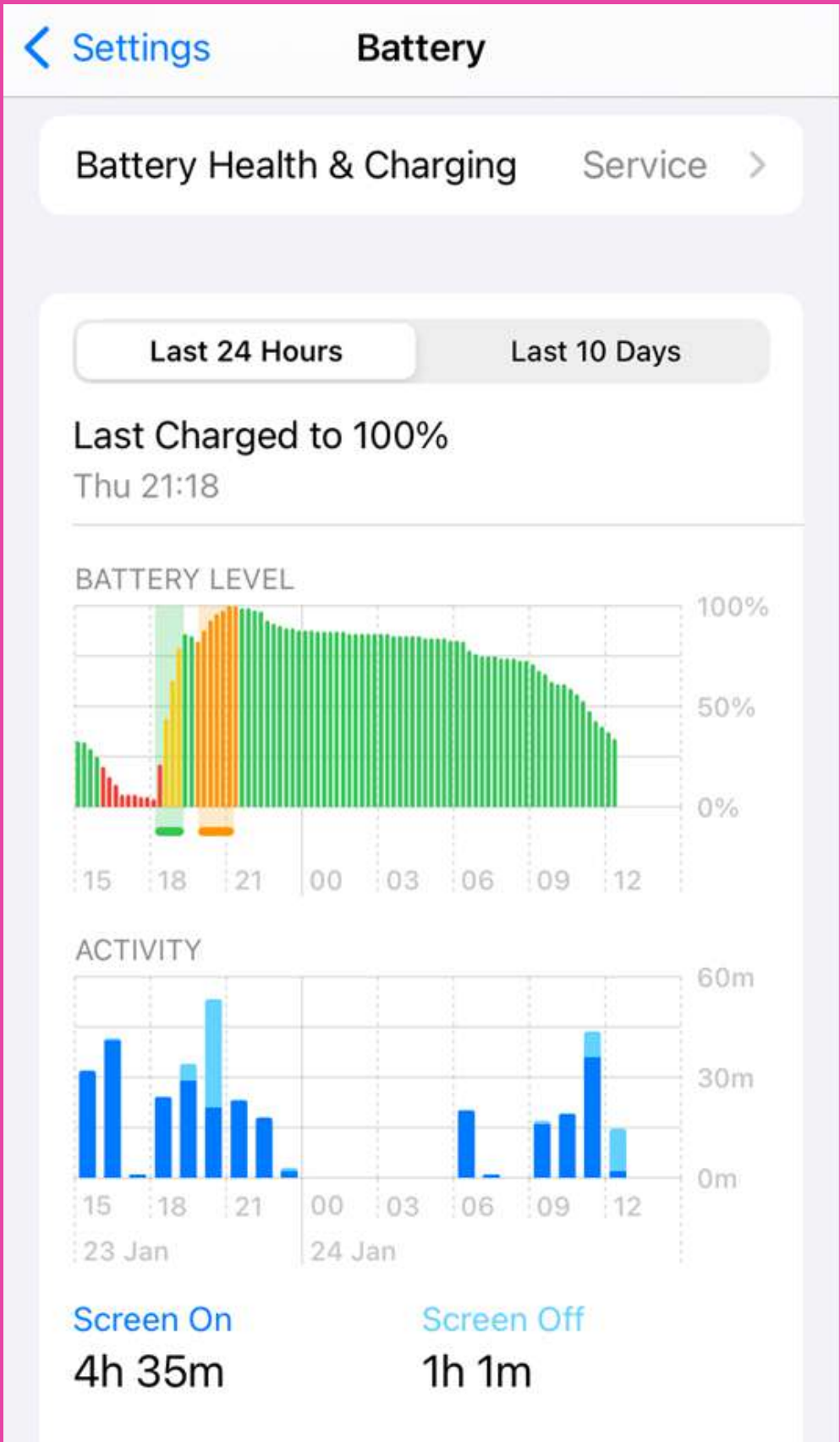
Use at least 10-characters password to secure it.

Use this option to connect your other devices to internet instead of public/hotel Wi-Fi as you don't know if these networks are secure, therefore you could be exposing yourself to a digital attack and data theft.



Battery

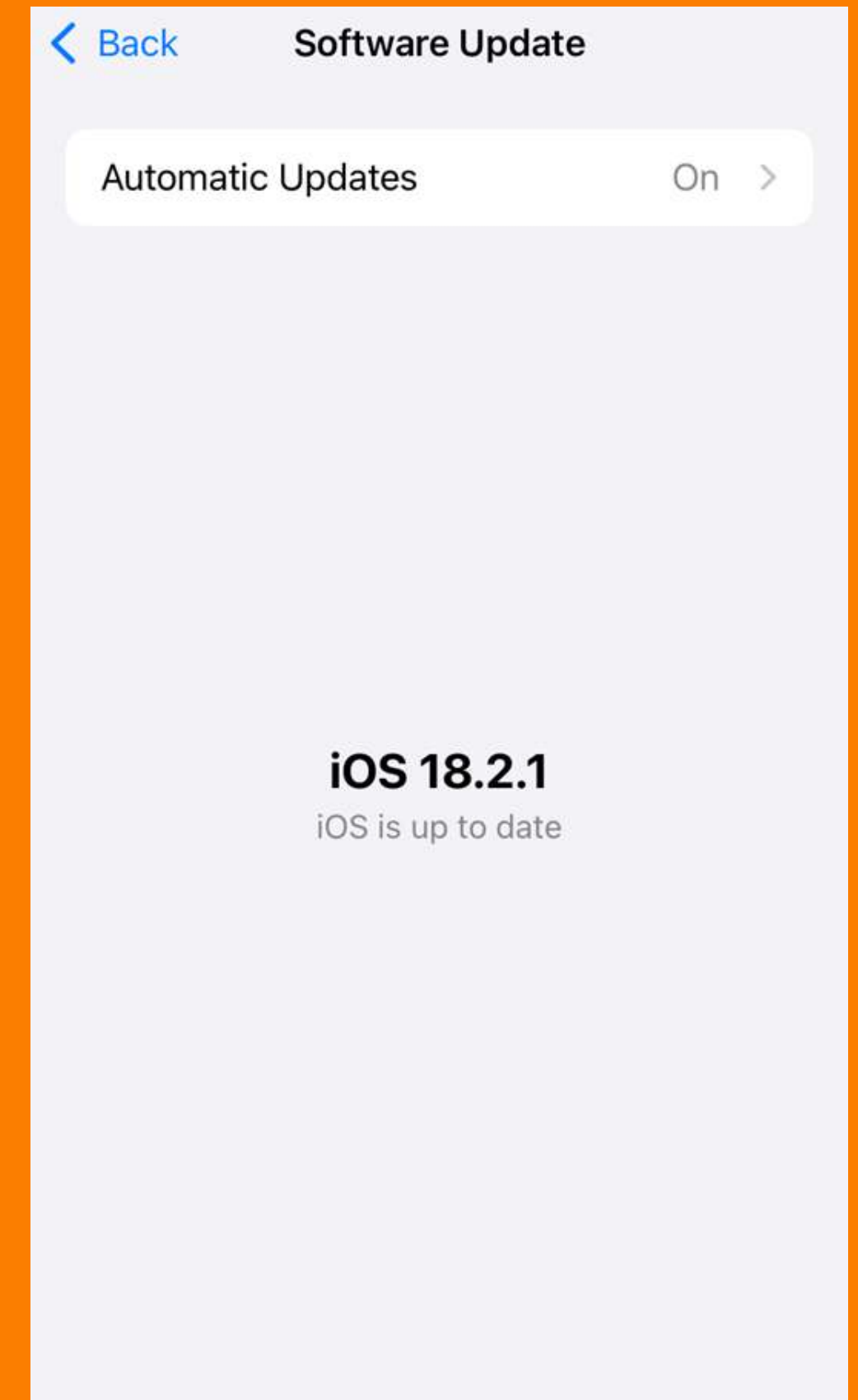
Phones track how you use them. In **Battery** section in Settings, you can check what drainsy our battery most.



Software Update

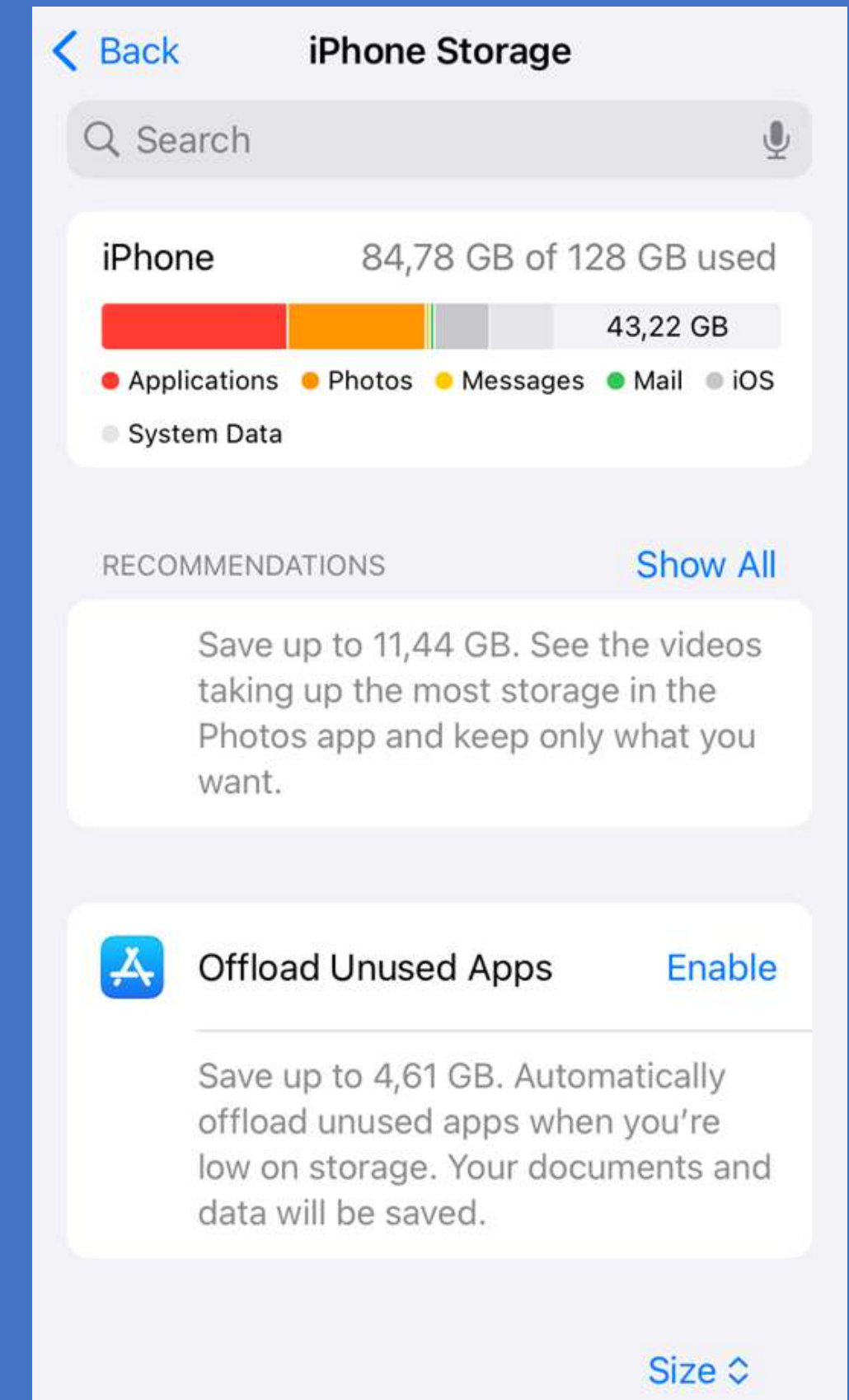
Remember to allow system & all apps to automatically update. This option lets your phone install immediately all necessary updates, fix bugs etc.

It helps your device to be safer.



iPhone Storage

iPhone Storage helps us track how much data we keep on the device. Here you can also let unused apps to be offloaded.

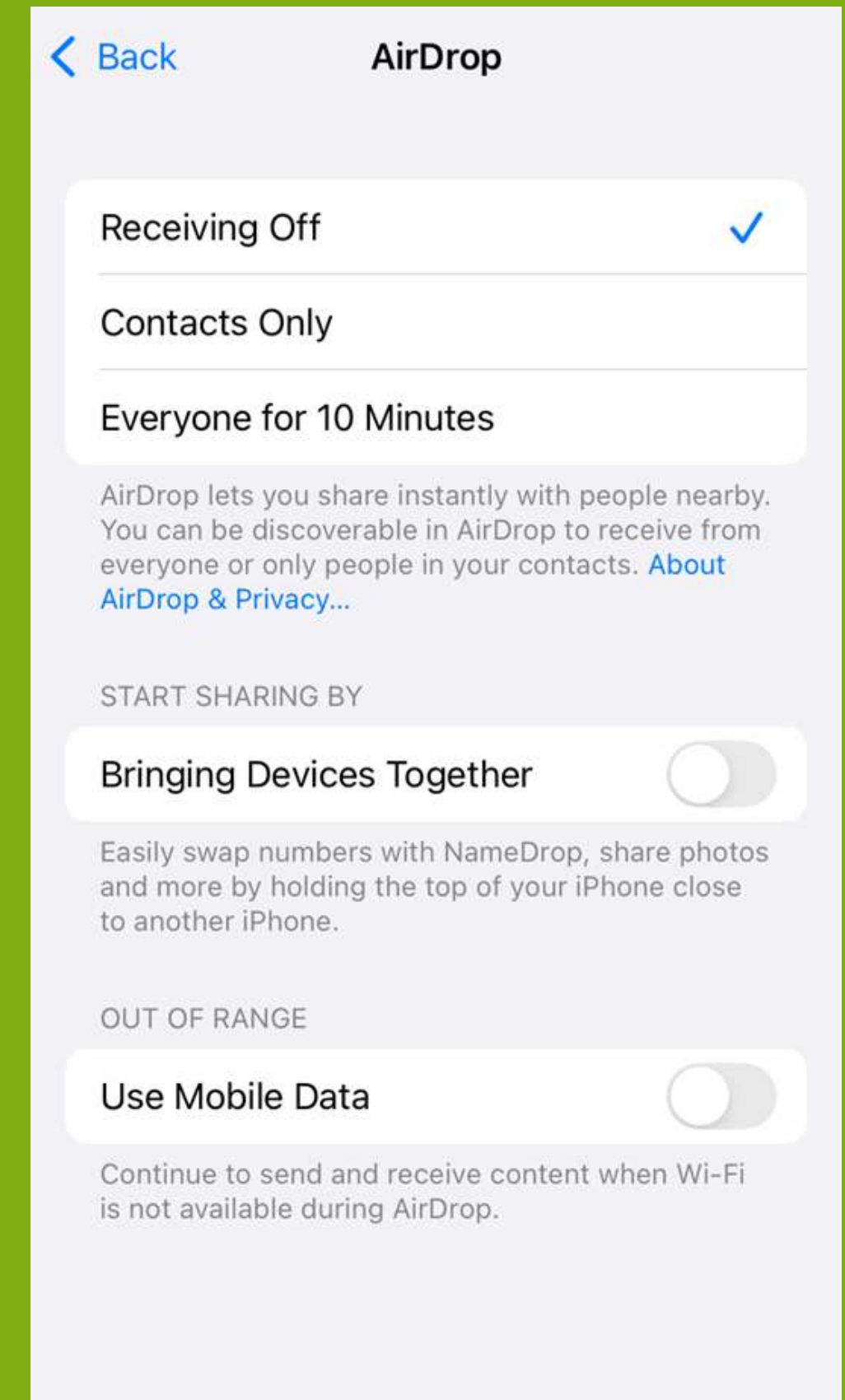


AirDrop

AirDrop lets you share instantly with people nearby. You can be discoverable in AirDrop to receive from everyone or only people in your contacts.

Well, you might want or not want that. Just be mindful what you let others do with your device, as you cannot have control over devices that you are connected to and which are not in your hand. Therefore, it might be mindful to switch off those options and use them only when you are close to the devices you are connected with – this will allow you to control who is watching and what is exactly shown on both connected devices.

Technology can be tricky – sometimes, the screen might show data that you do not want to share (e.g. embarrassing or simply private pictures, movies, messages, personal data, passwords that you note on your phone with no encryption etc.) and if you do not see it – you cannot react.

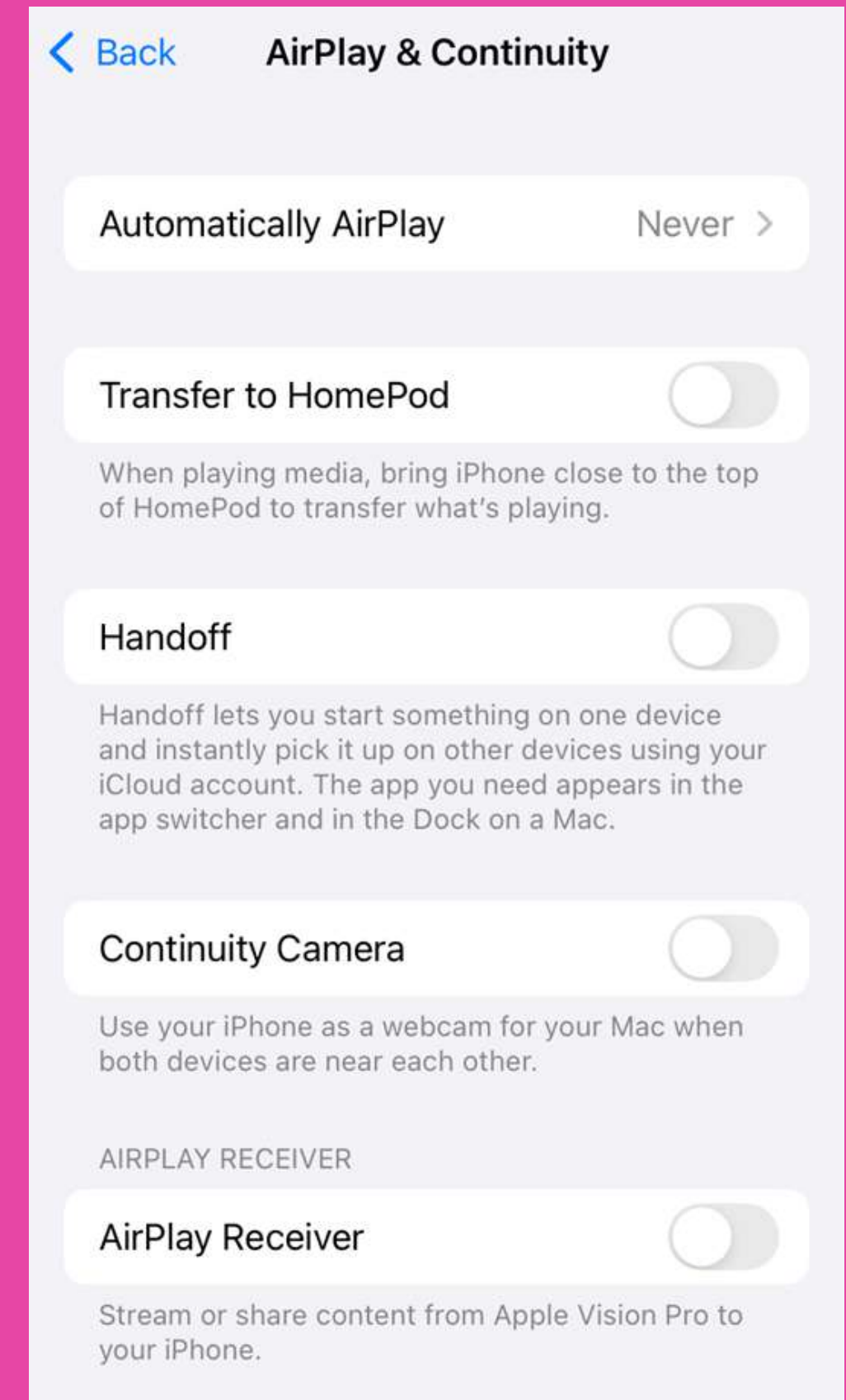


AirPlay & Continuity

If you let all your Apple devices to connect to each other – it might be very helpful and convenient. But it also means, that you constantly have access to your data and all notifications.

This, although useful sometimes, might mean that you might not be able to rest and forget about stuff. E-mails, reminders, notifications etc. constantly are coming and are displayed all the time.

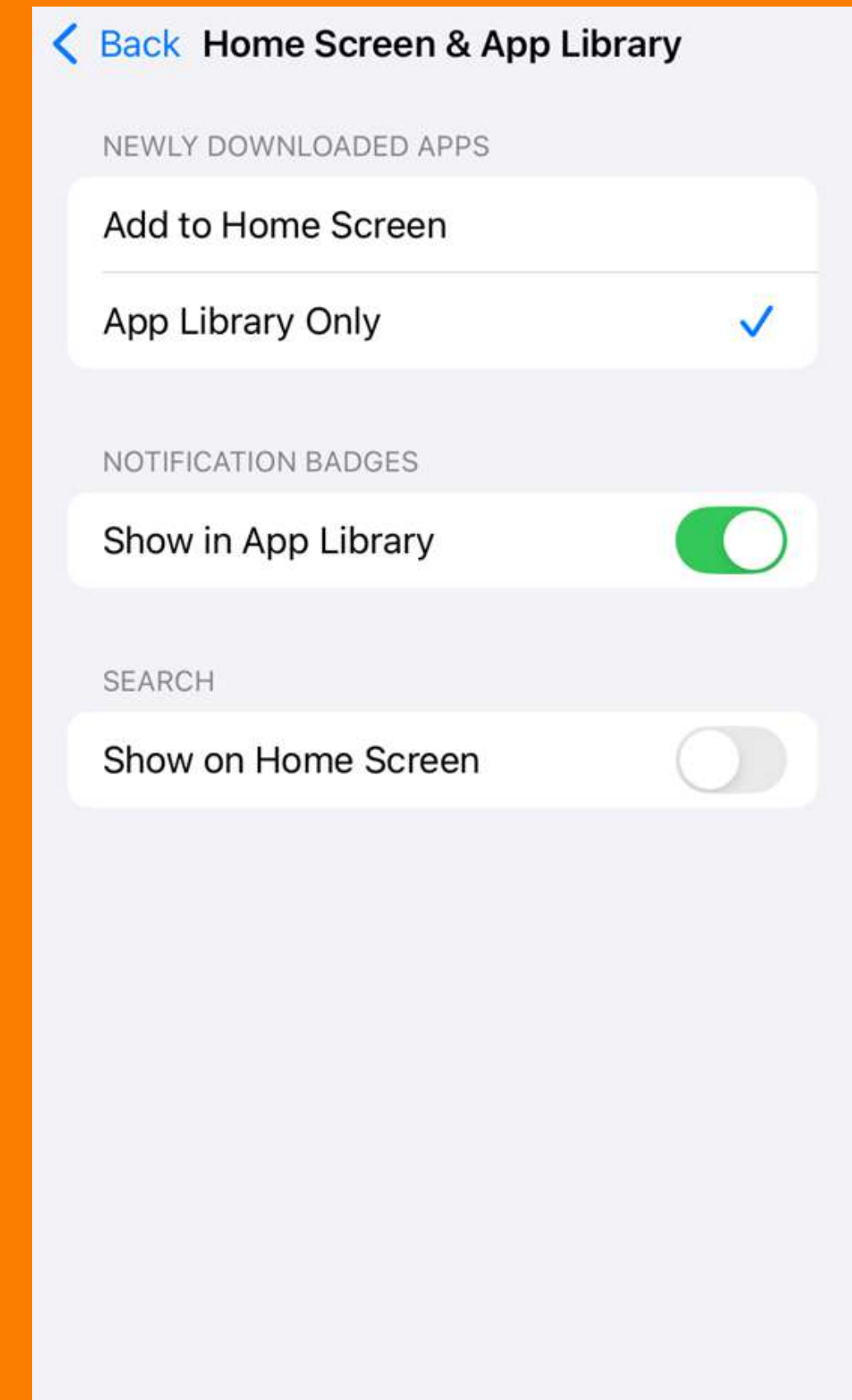
Also, if you choose a digital detox, it is much easier to skip the temptation if you simply do not have access to data and devices.



Home Screen & App Library

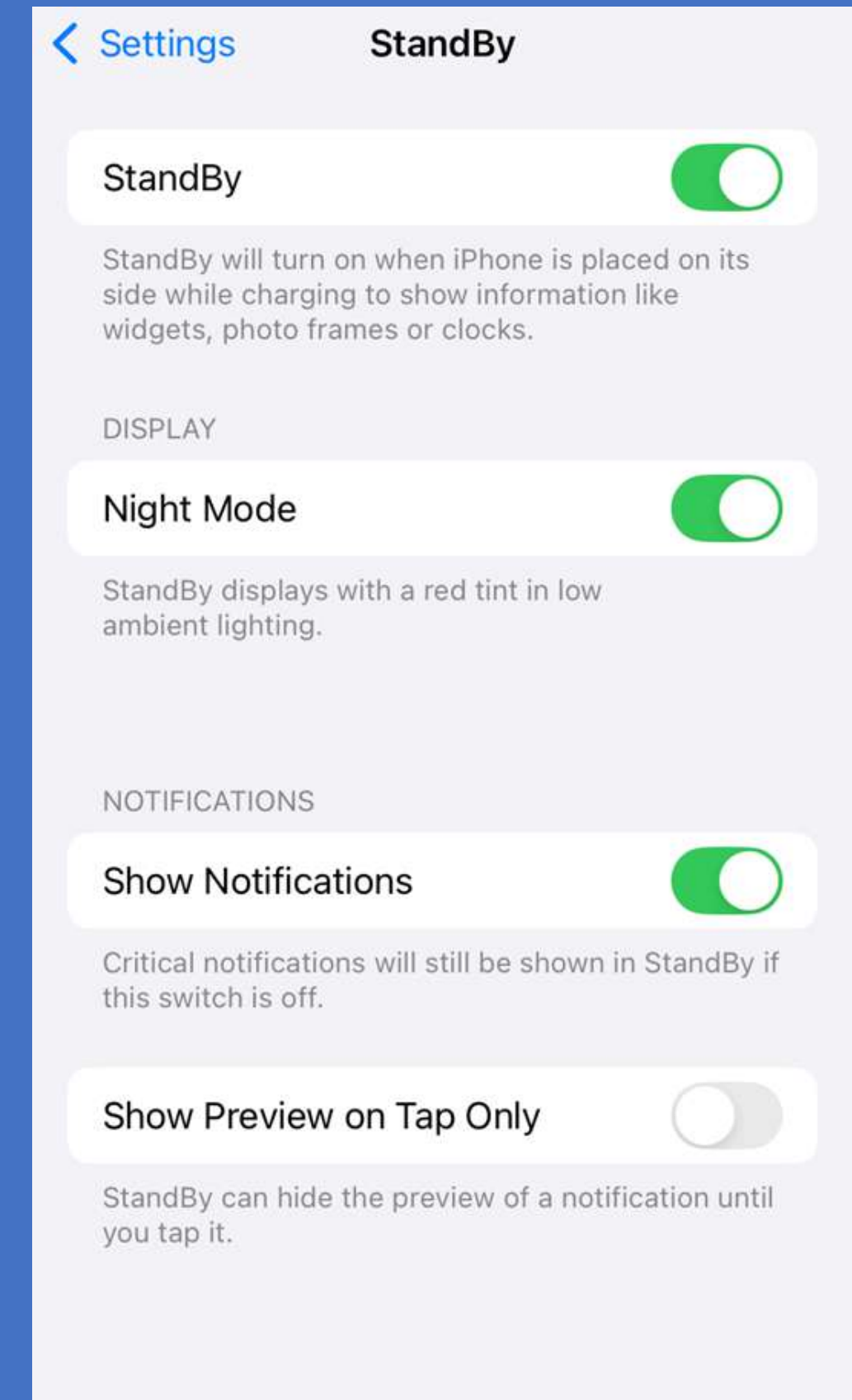
Sometimes we want to keep some apps on our phone, but we get tempted just by seeing their icons, or our muscle memory lead us to open the app without us thinking specifically about it.

This option helps to hide icons, but the app still functions the very same way.



StandBy

Here are even more options to adjust your phone, so you may want to use it as **a night clock** or **a photoframe** and here you can switch that options on.



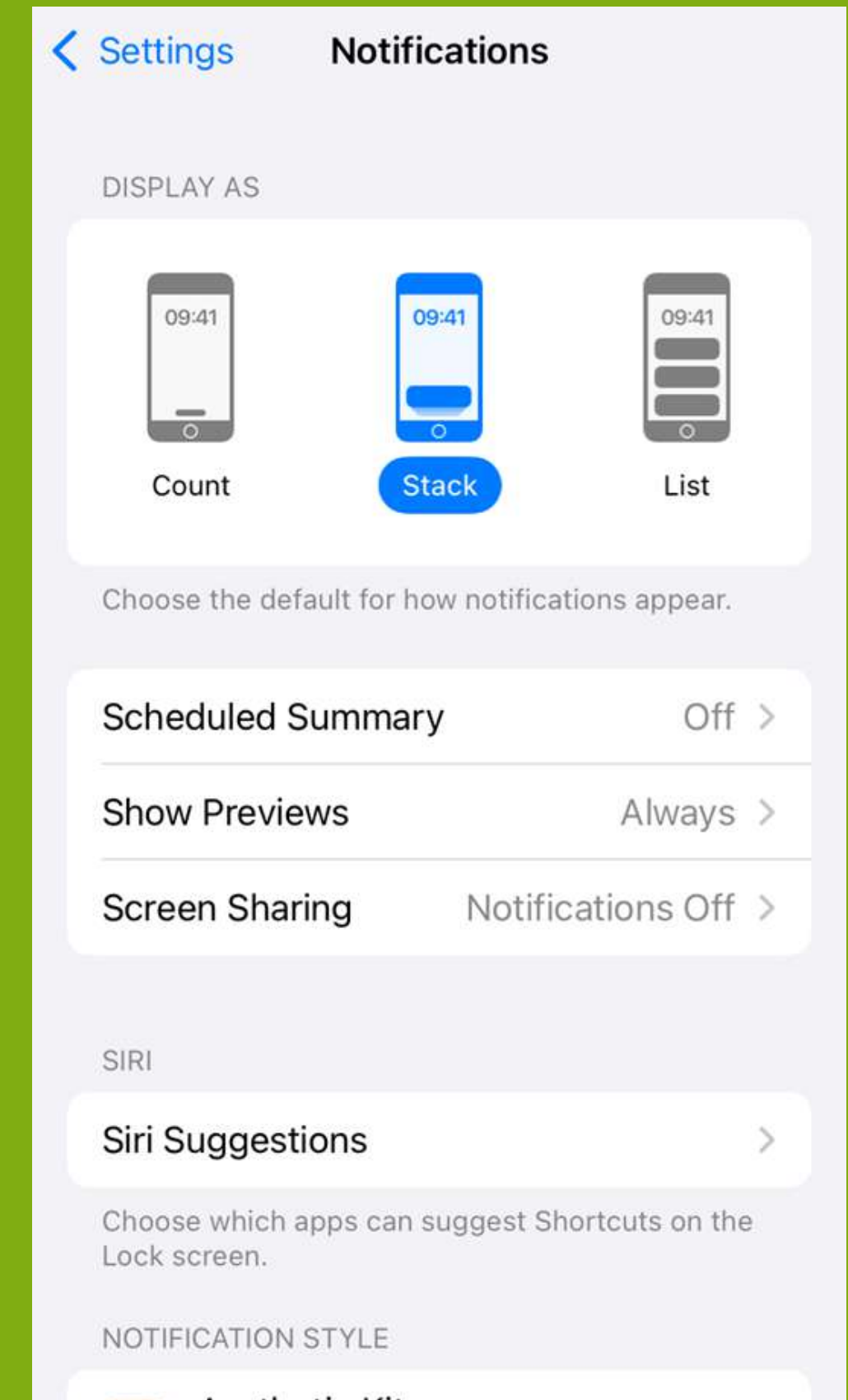
Notifications

Adjusting notifications display might be one of the most crucial factor for you to use your phone less and prevent attaching to it too much.

It is very helpful for your focus to switch off as many notifications as possible, so they don't pop up all the time and bother you. Then you can choose when to go to the app you want to use and see what is going on there.

You might also choose to schedule summary of notifications, e.g. after work or in the morning.

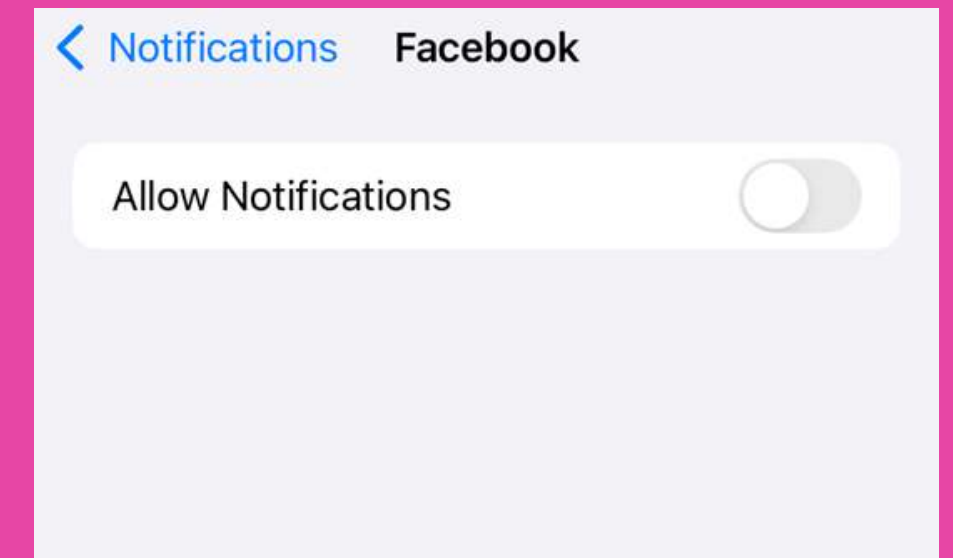
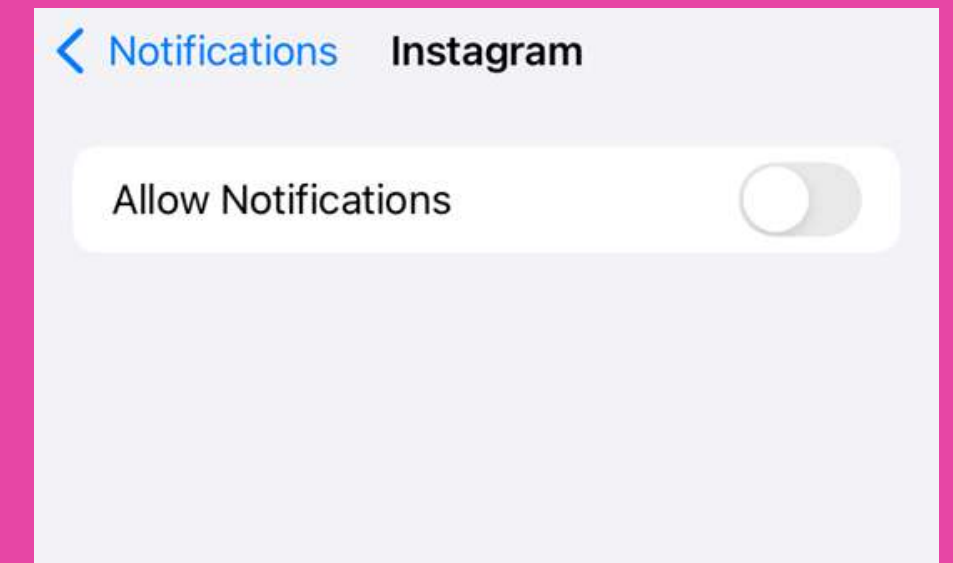
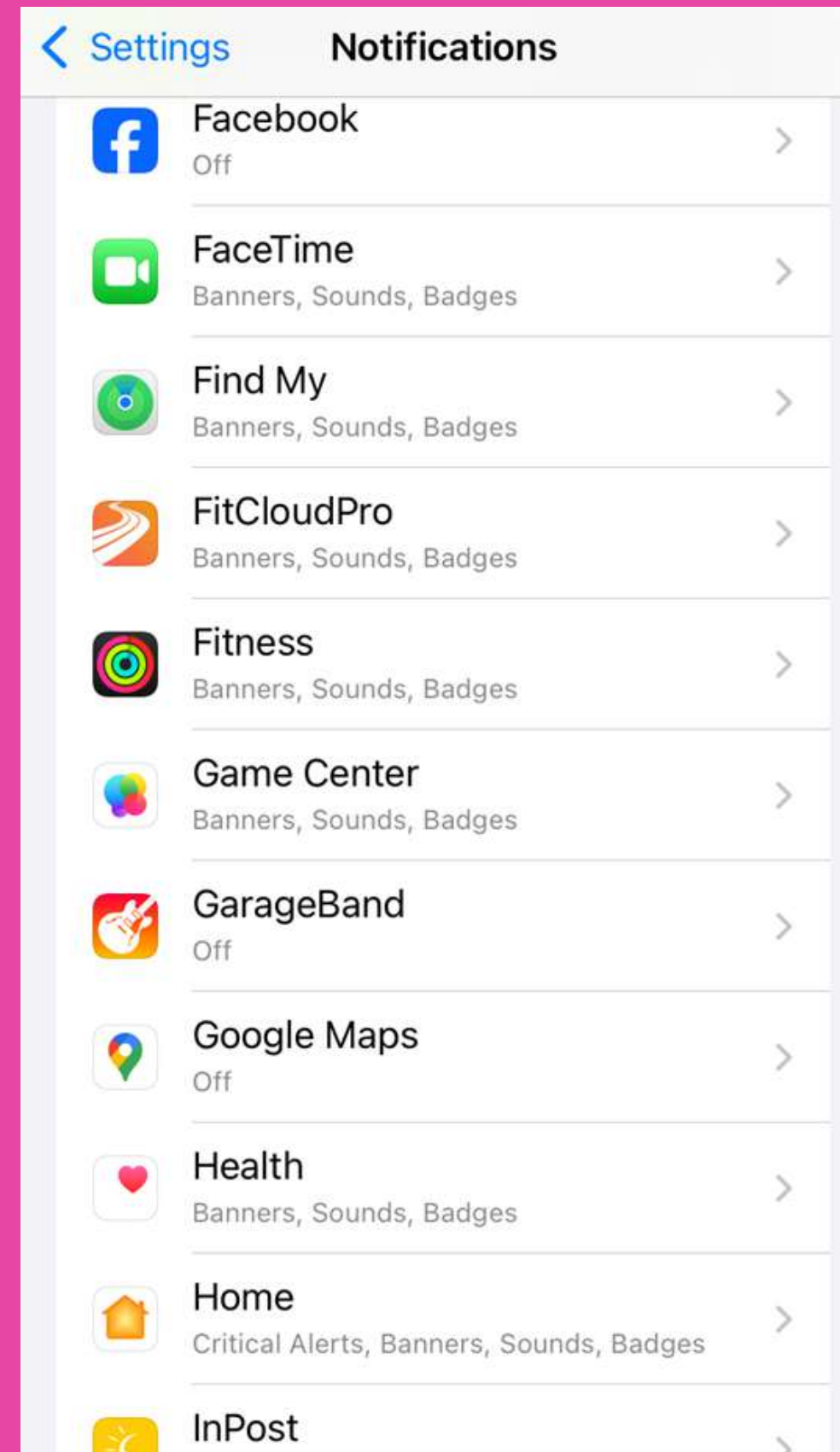
Do not hesitate to play with those options and see what best suits you.



Notifications – social media

It is strongly recommended to switch off notifications from Facebook, Instagram etc.

There is just too much going on all the time and the constant stream of notifications might glue you to the device

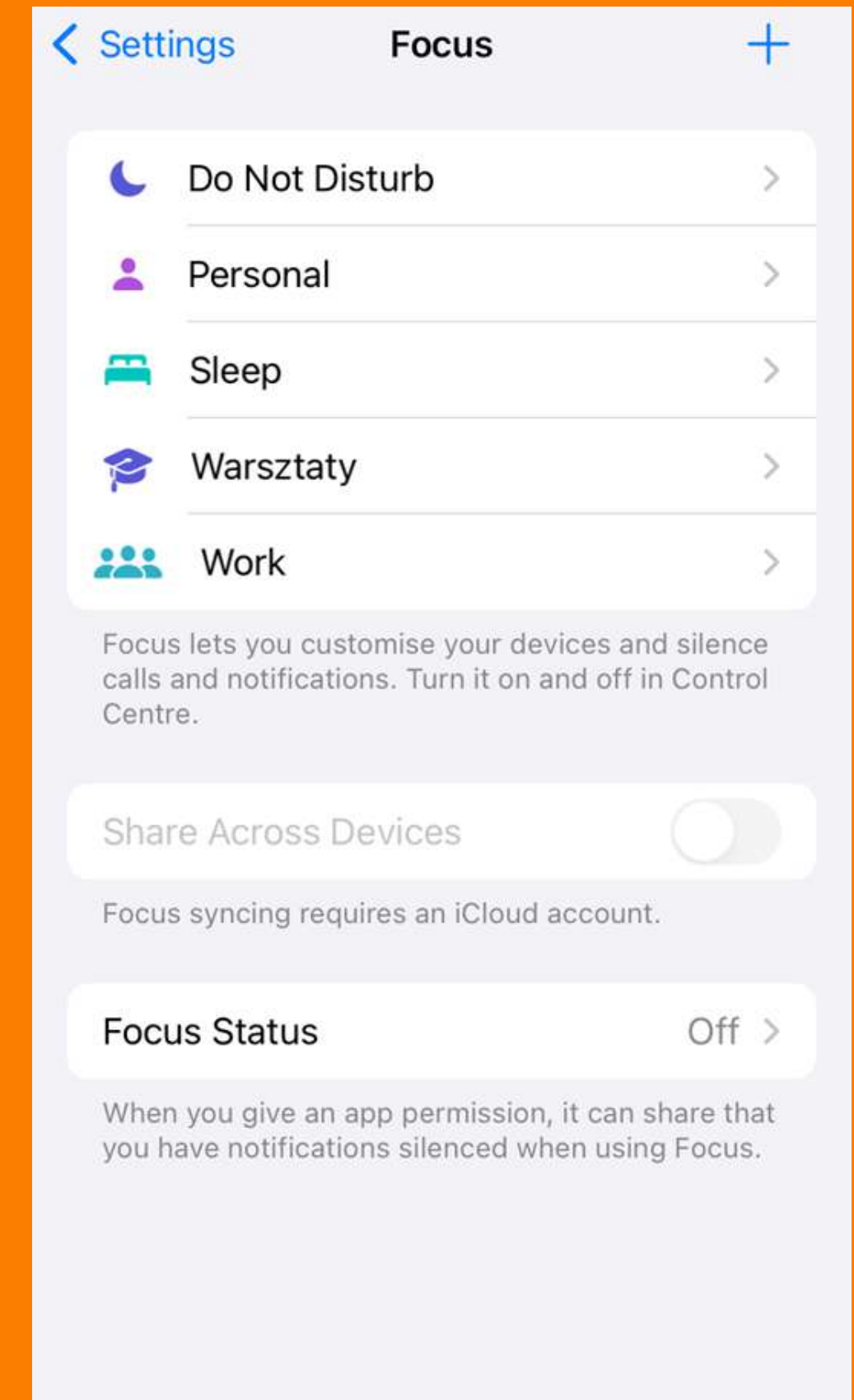


Focus

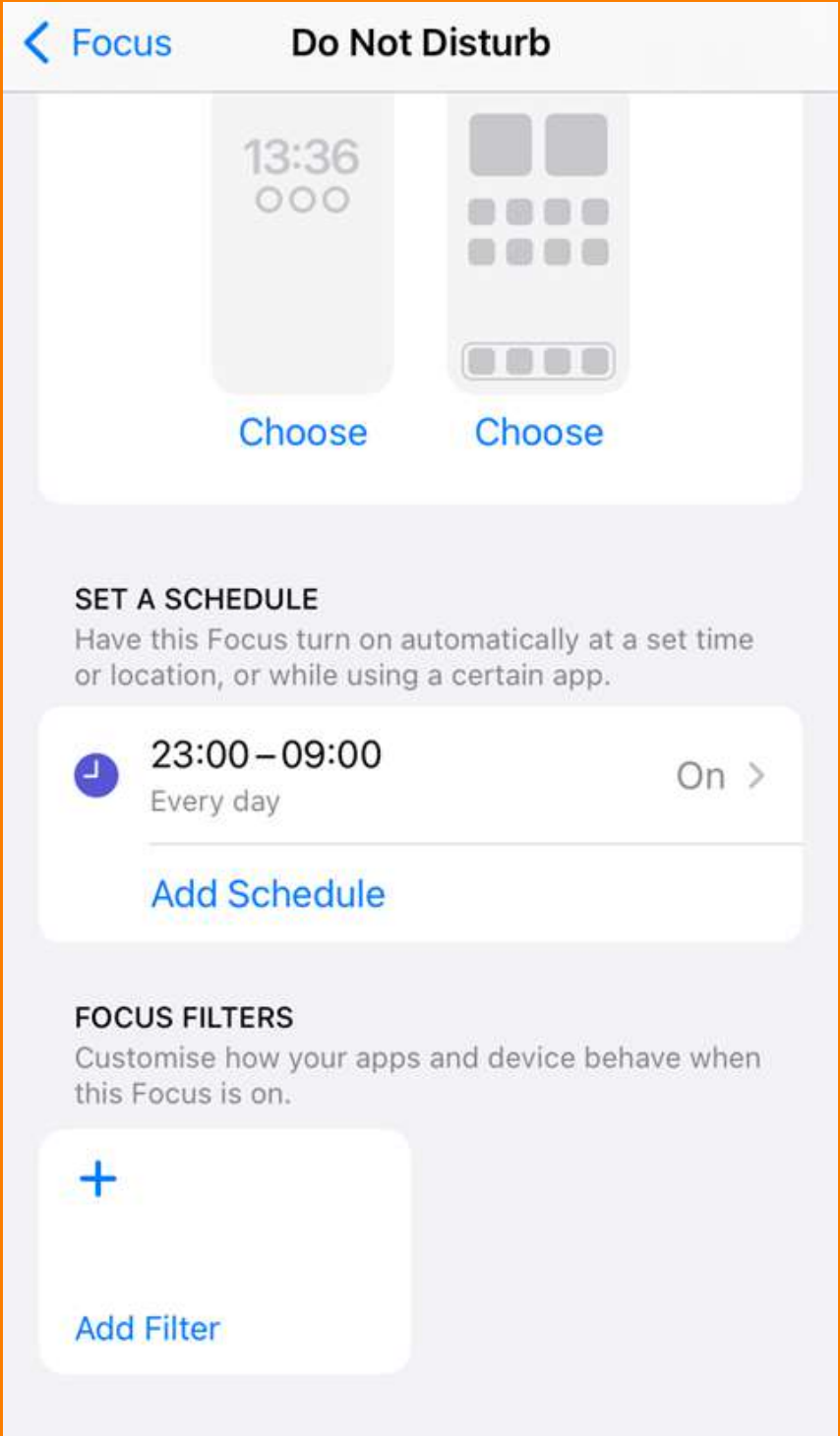
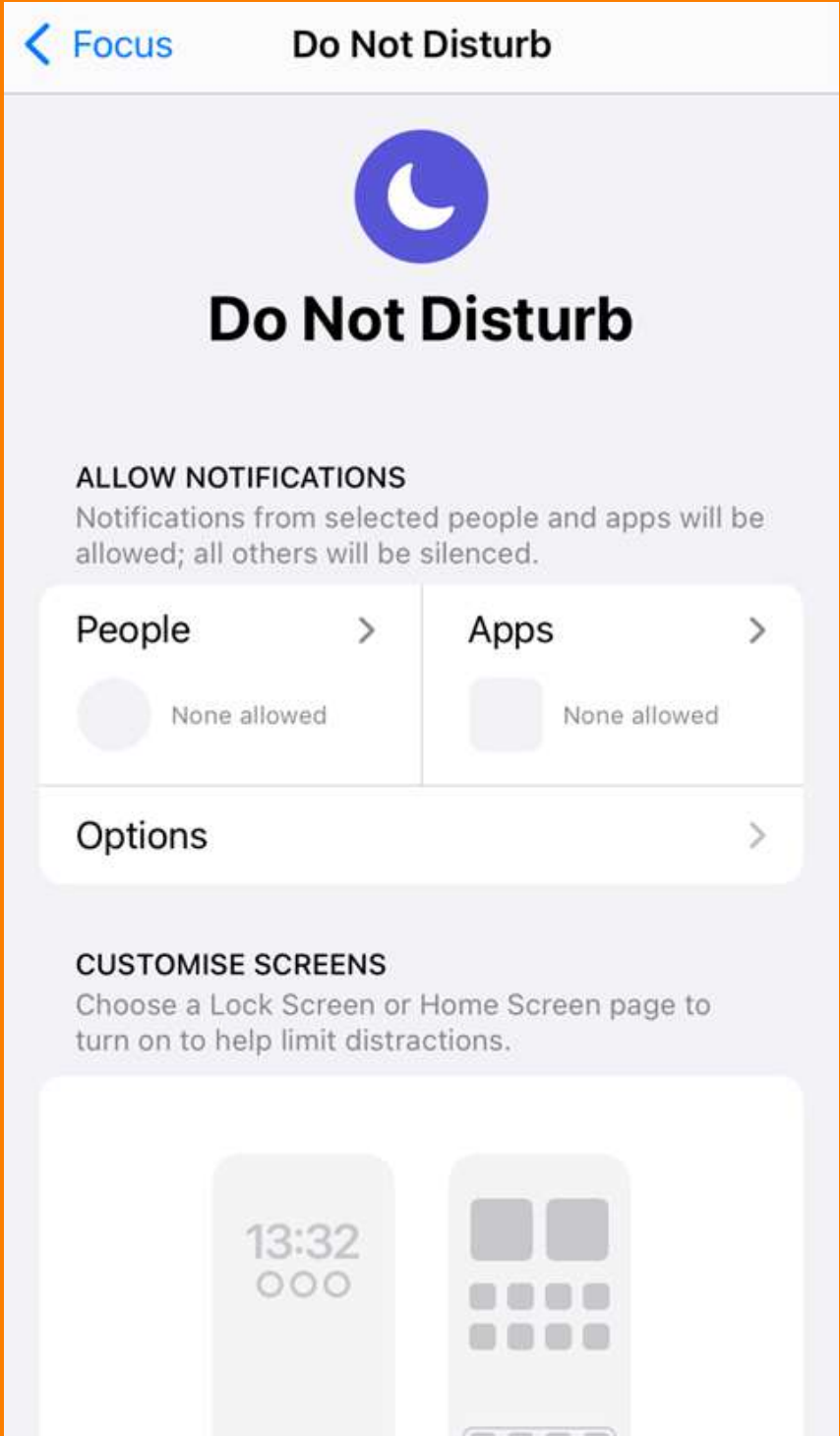
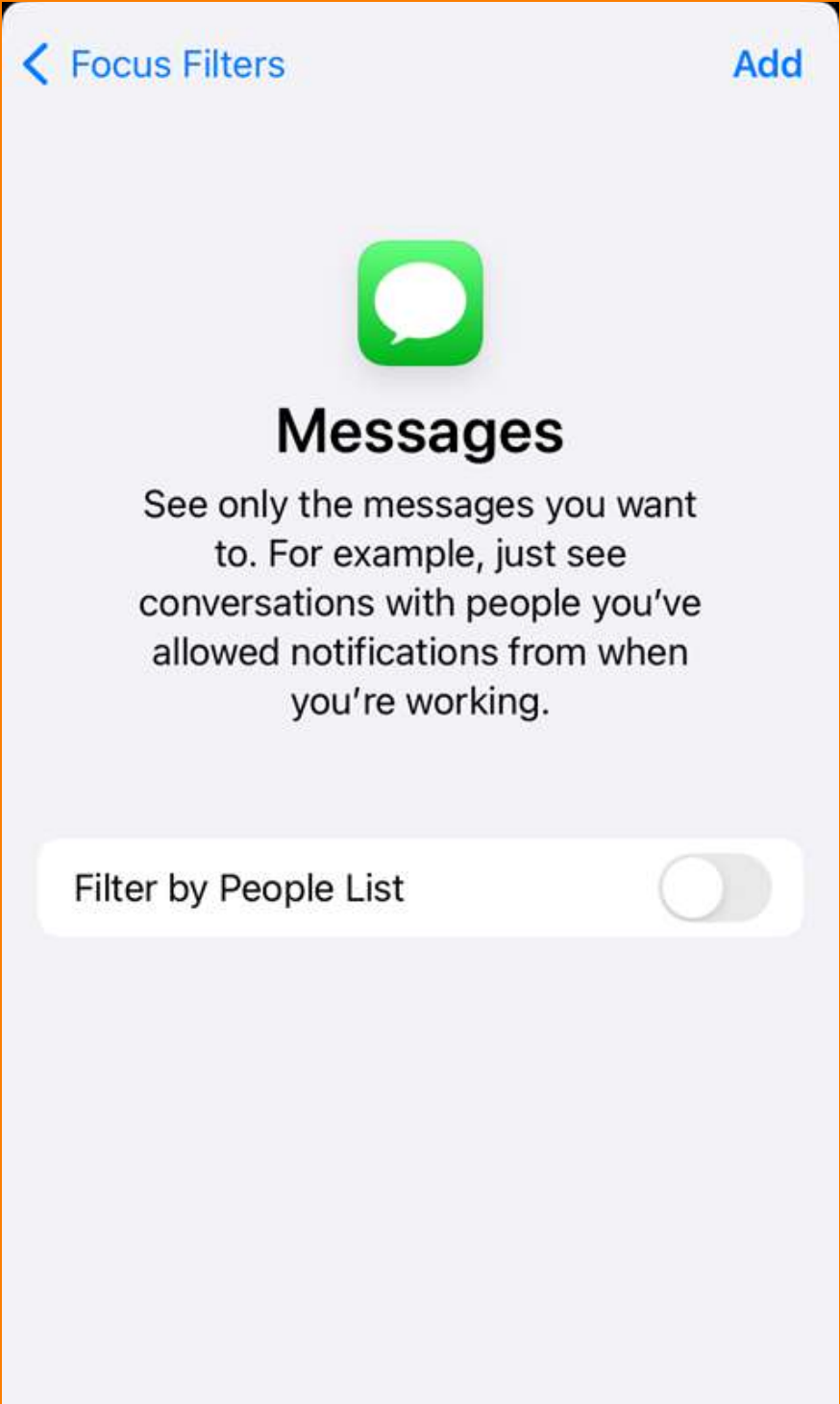
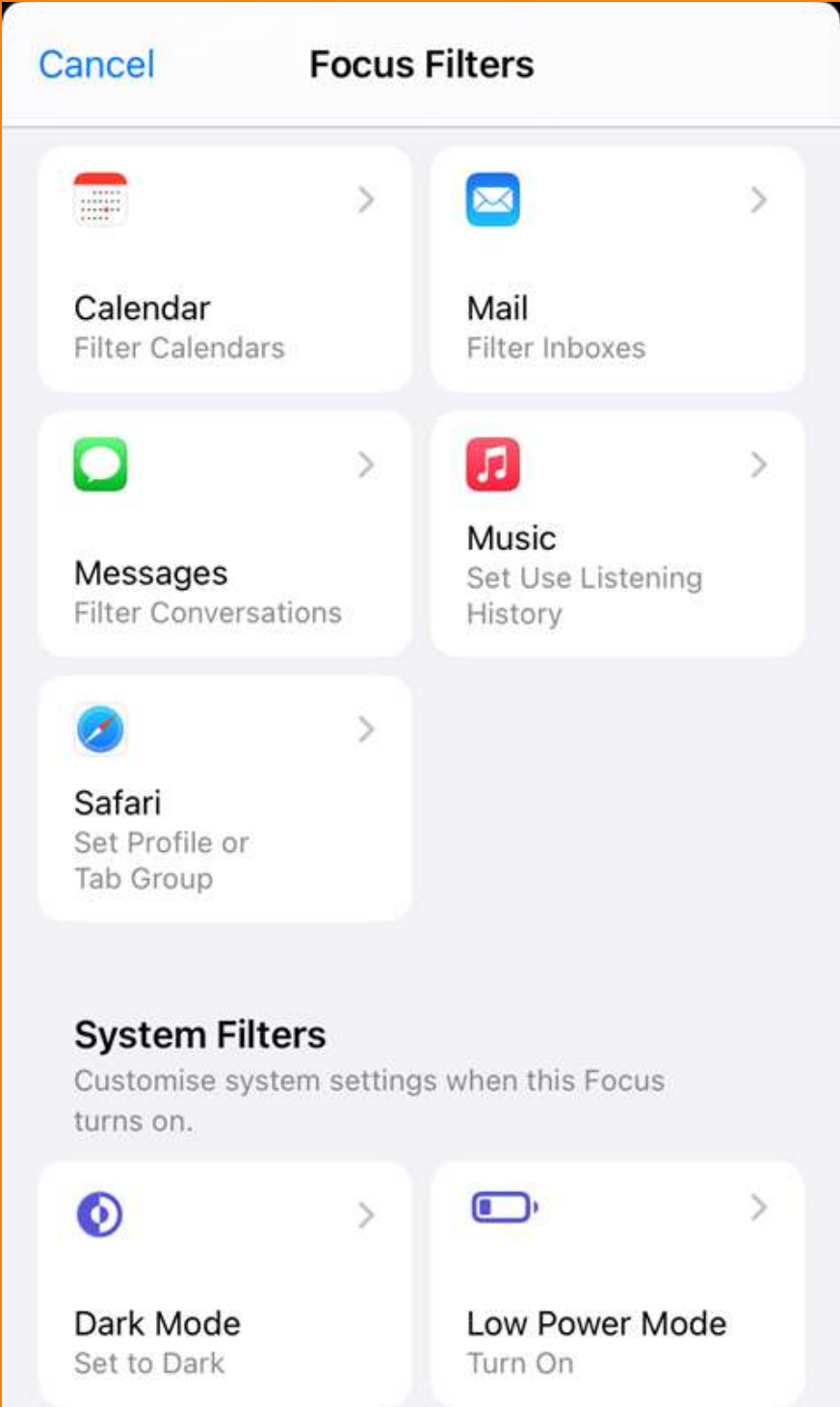
Your phone offers you different **presets of modes** that you might want to use, that will help you to focus.

Check what options are offered, e.g. adding people who might call you anyway, preset schedule for different modes, messages being blocked from viewing etc.

If you want to keep some set of settings – it will be useful to preset it here – for example – if you want only your kid to be able to reach you while working or exercise – you can add their contact to the chosen Mode and activate it while working/exercising. Other people contacting you will not show on your screen and in notifications.



Focus (continued)



Sounds & Haptics

Last but not least: good old ringtones... Just remember you can change them as you wish to fewer (or more if needed) melodies 😊

Enjoy!





Healthy Communities

Travel through your Android phone

Module 6 - Digital Health

Author: Dorota Bregin



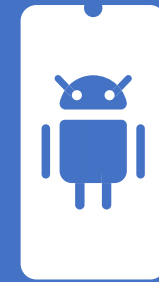
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Reflection



FOR ANDROID PHONE USERS



Image: yuriz/ Getty Images/ Canva Pro

Start with self-reflecting and journaling:

- What do I need my phone and its features for?
- How much time do I spent on my device?
(your phone is sending you weekly report on that)
- Is it sustainable?
- Is it safe?
- Is it healthy?
- Is it helping me to connect to my friends and loved ones?

Go to the usage report settings in your phone - Battery activity

Compare your reflection from previous slide with data stored in your device.

What does it tell you about the way of using the device?



Connections

Currently, our phones let us stay constantly online. If you go to the settings, you can see that there are different options to use to rest from constant availability

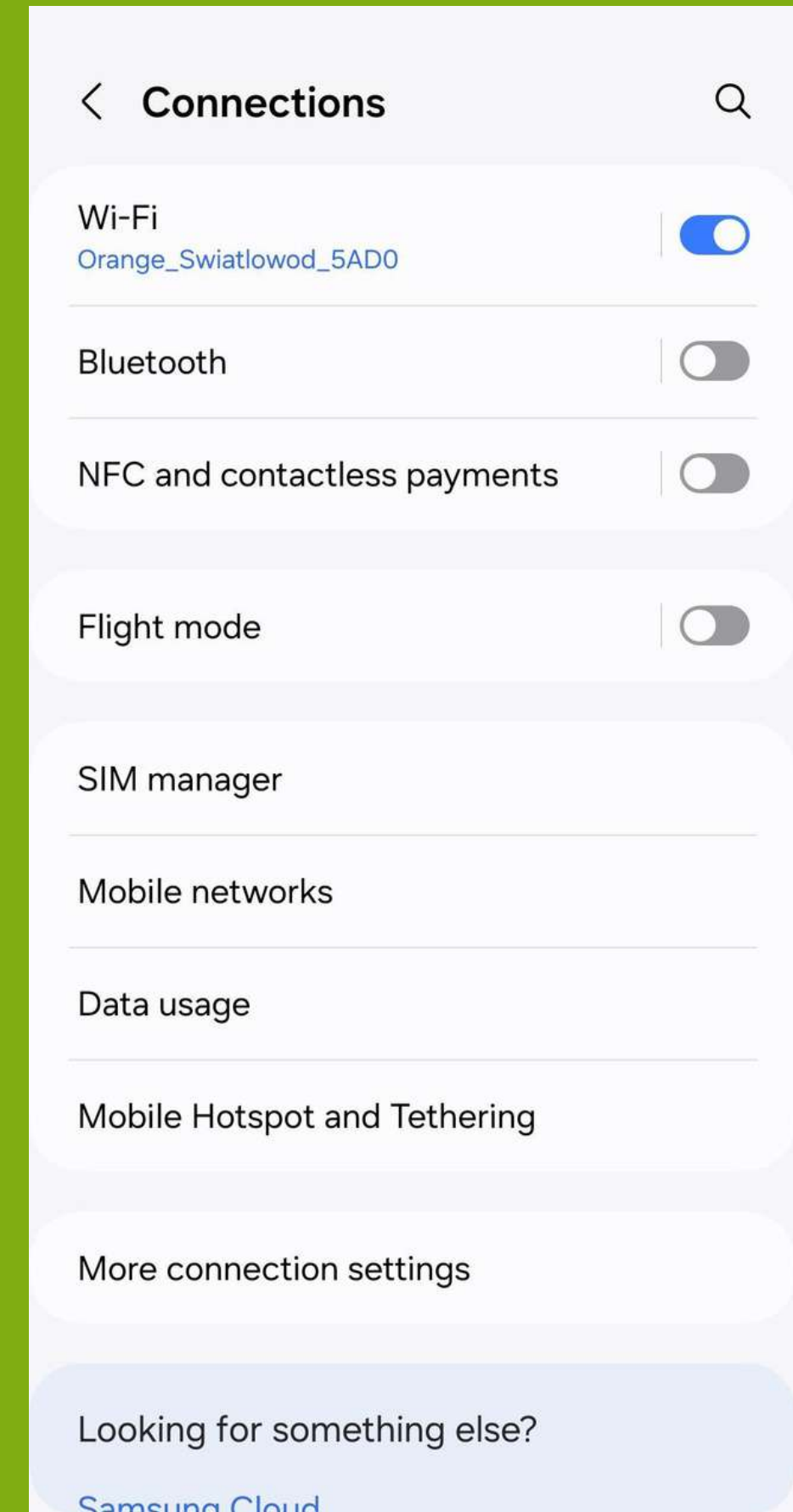


Flight mode lets you disconnect from all networks (mobile service, Wi-Fi, etc).



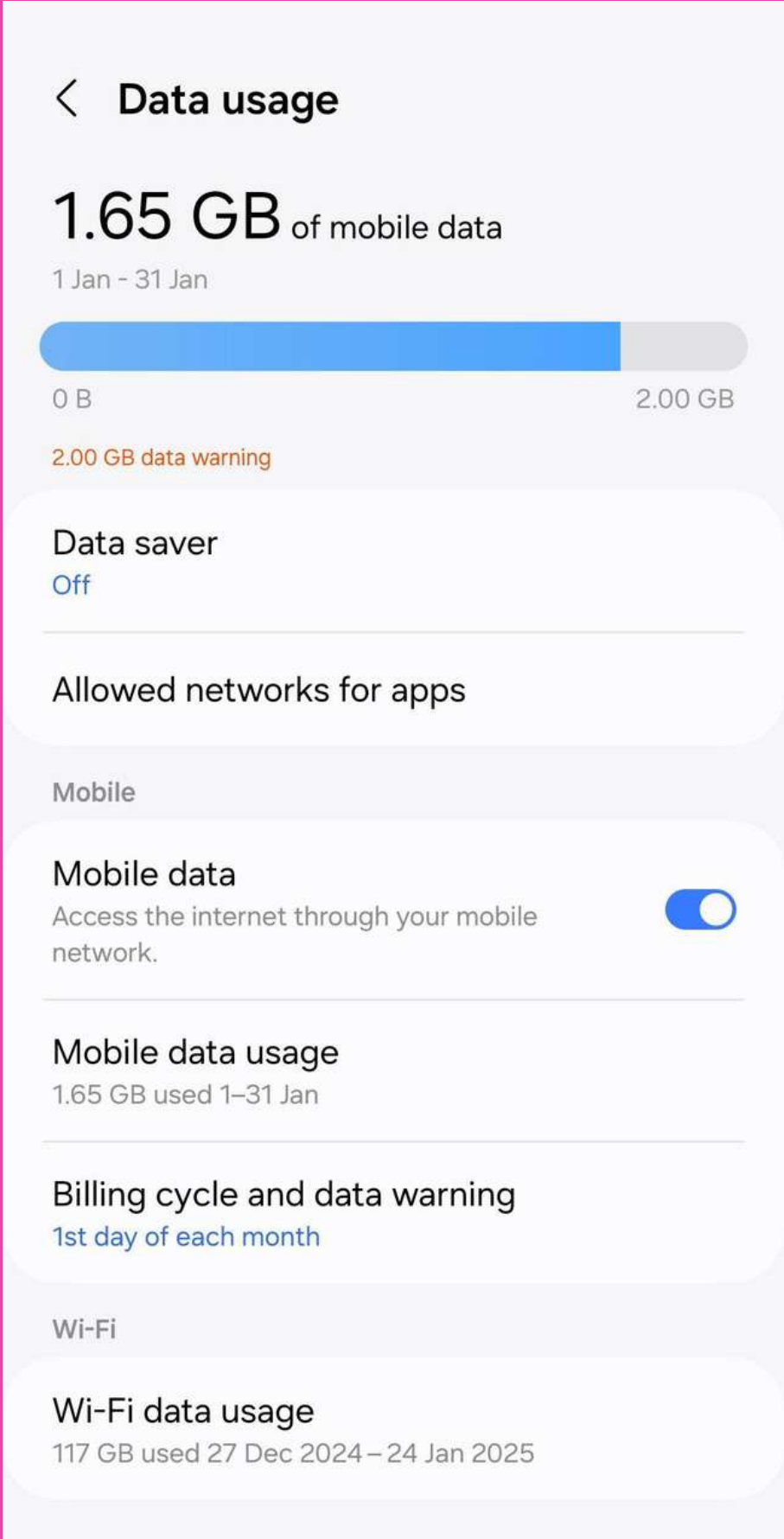
Bluetooth can be a useful tool, but it is also a gate to our phone from any device. It also drains battery. If you are not using it – keep it off.

Use it wisely, decide what devices you want to be able to connect and pair with. Devices like arm bands etc. might track your activities even when you are not conscious of it (and might not want it), TV or car screen might display some content you did not want to show to the other passengers.



Data usage

Data usage helps us track how much data we do download and keep on the device.



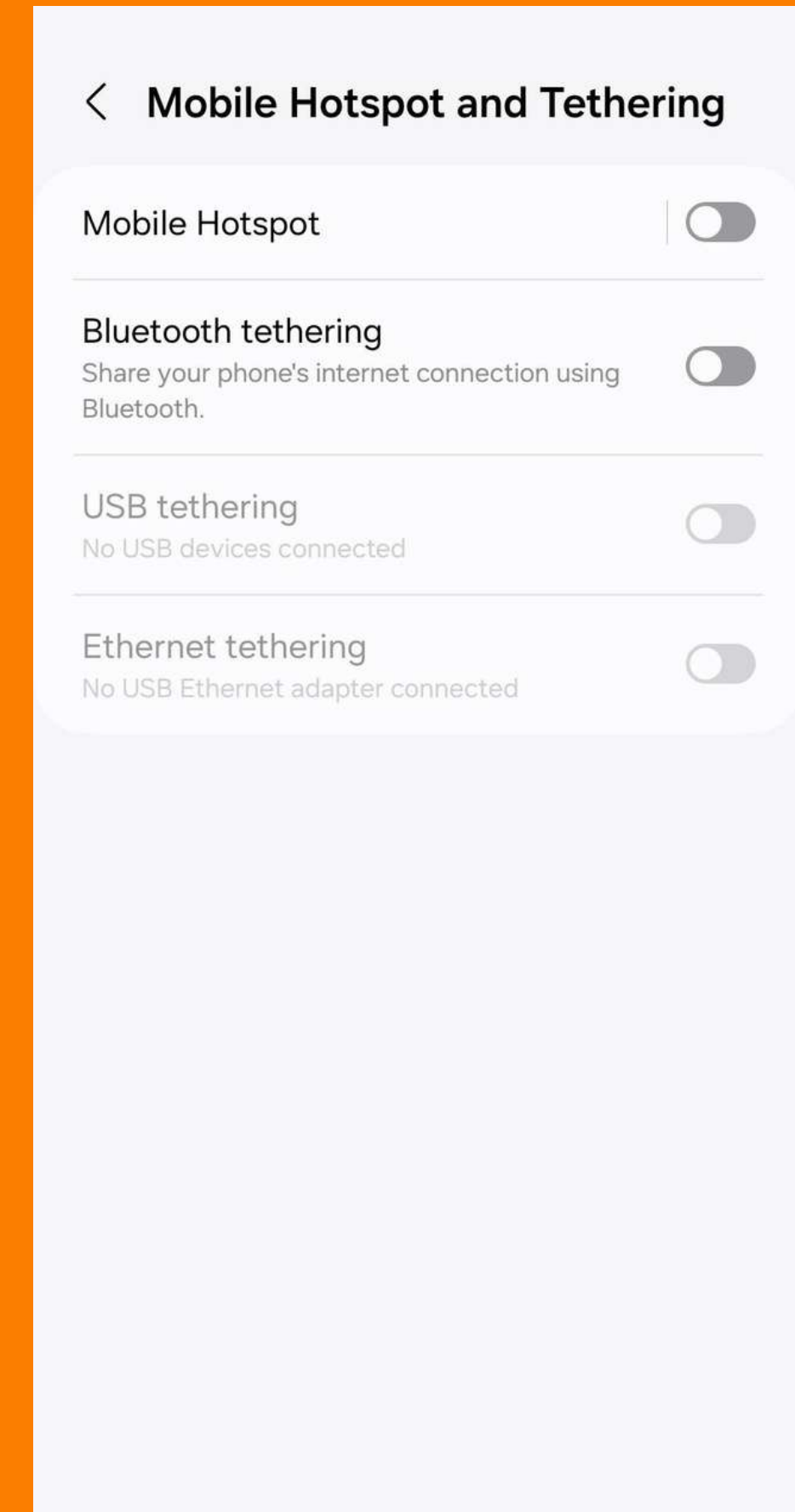
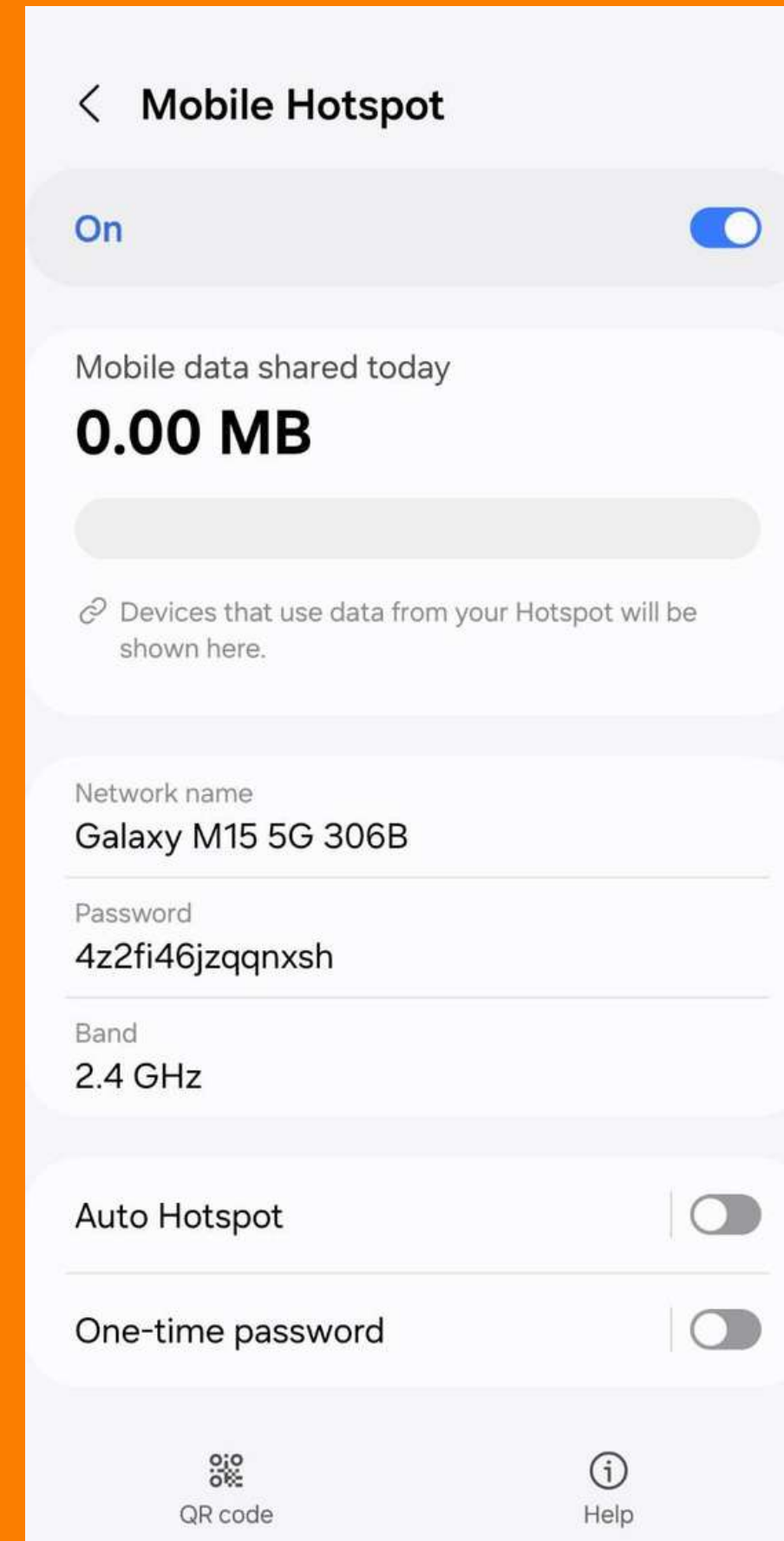
Mobile Hotspot and Tethering



Be mindful about letting others use your network via Mobile Hotspot.

Use at least 10-characters password to secure it.

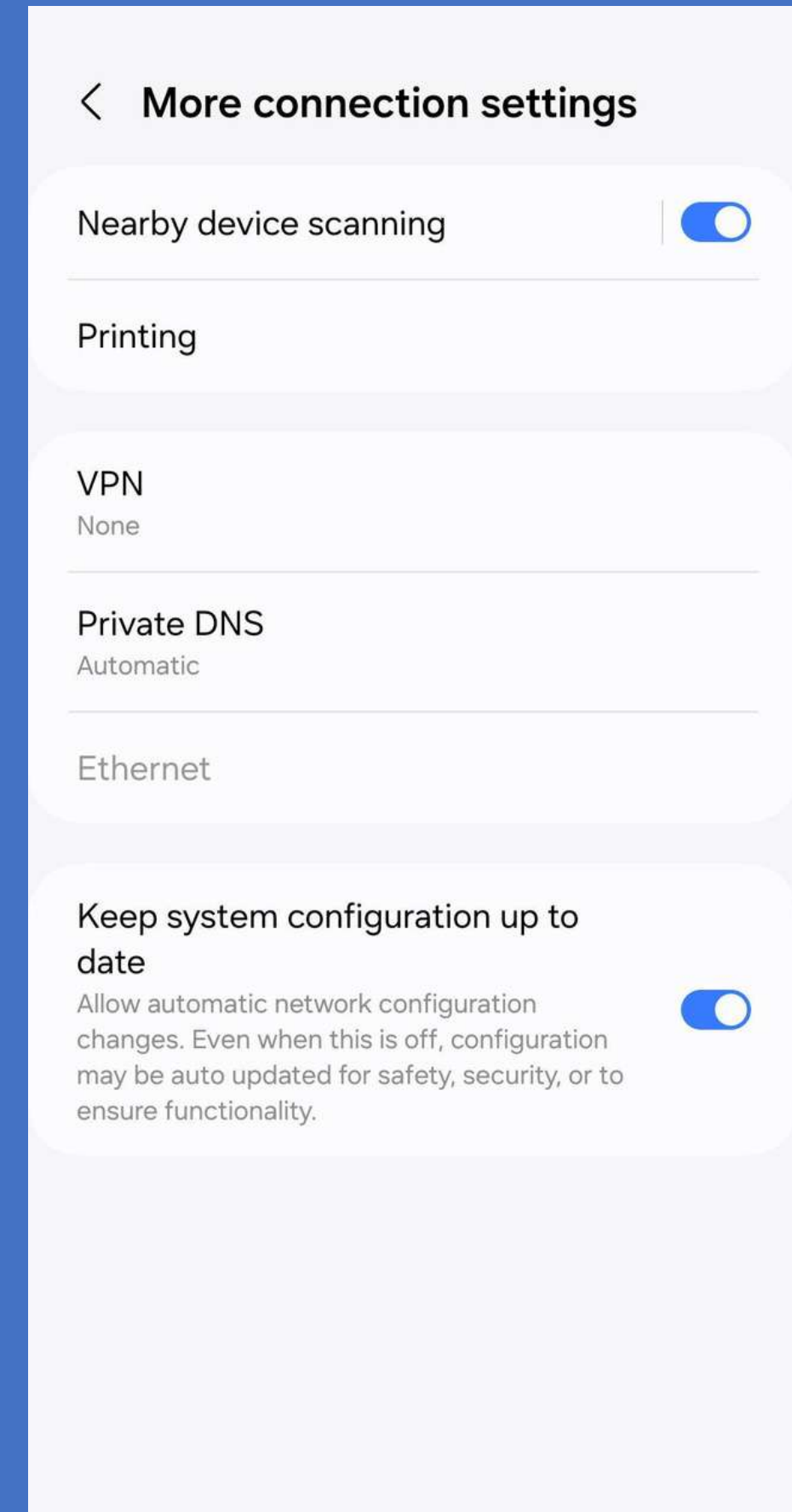
Use this option to connect your other devices to internet instead of public/hotel Wi-Fi as you don't know if these networks are secure, therefore you could be exposing yourself to a digital attack and data theft.



Software update

Remember to allow system & all apps to automatically update. This option lets your phone install immediately all necessary updates, fix bugs etc.

It helps your device to be safer.

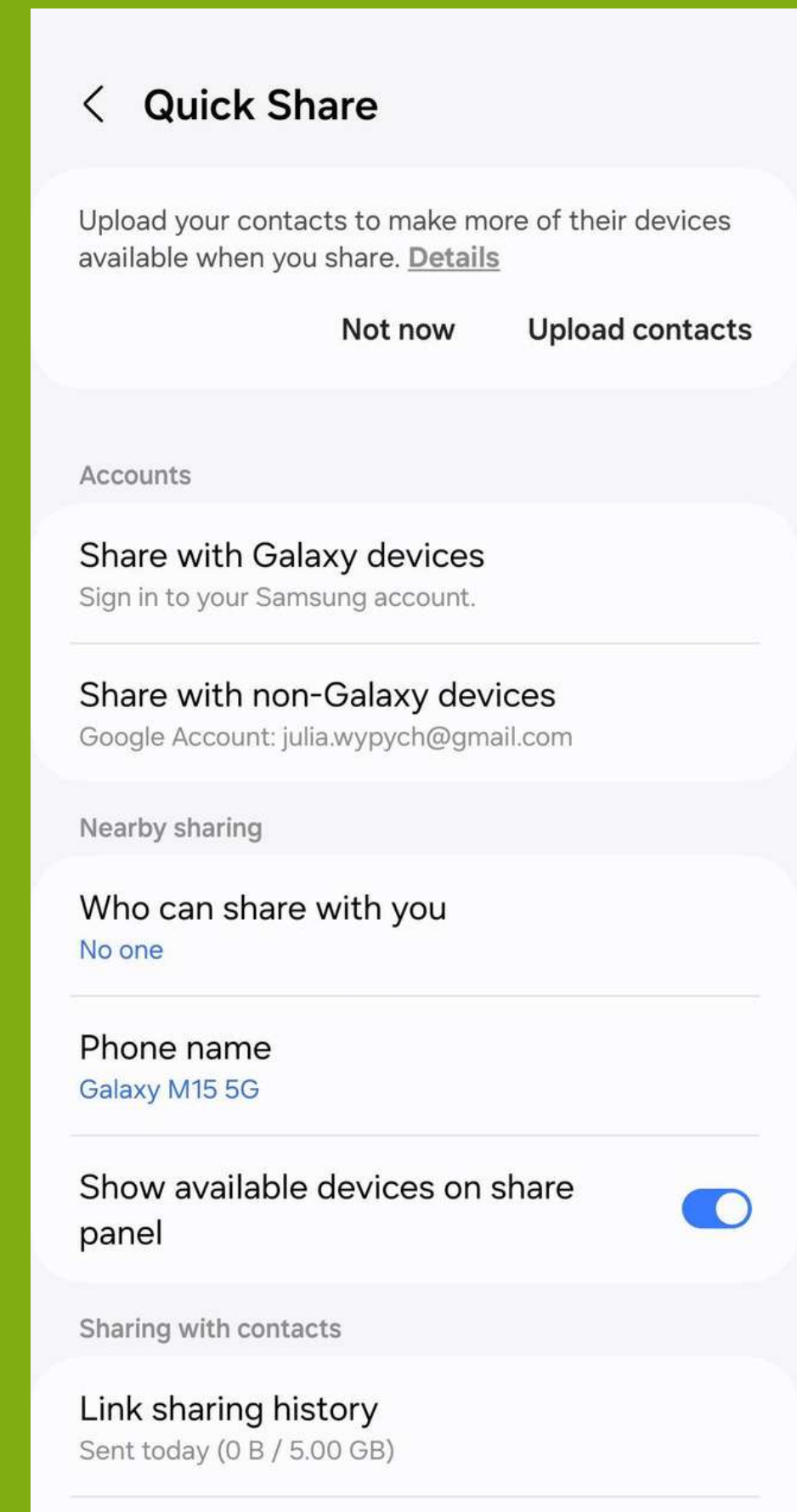
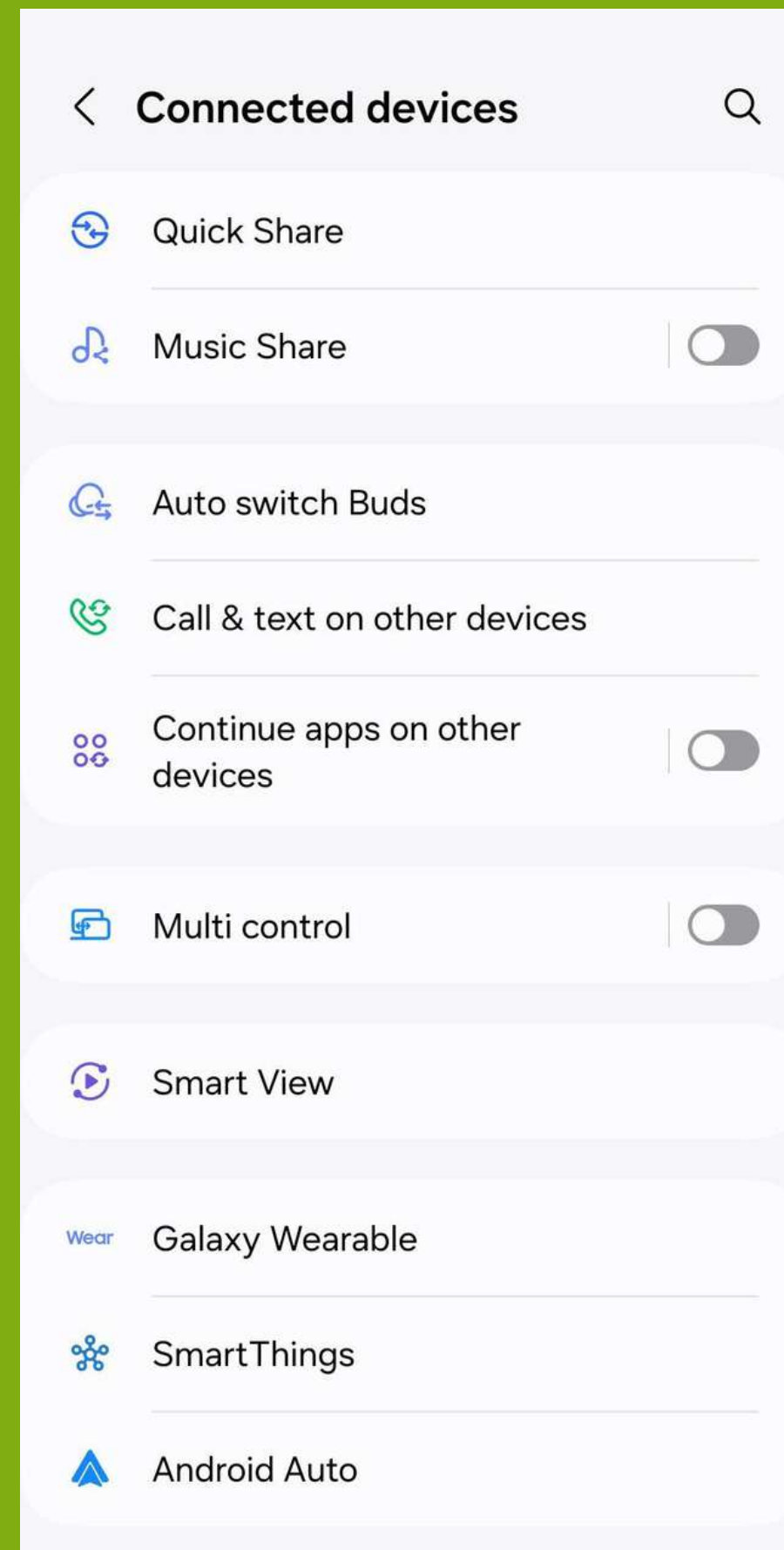


Connected devices

You have several options to stay connected and share your data (you might want or not want that).

Just be mindful what you let others do with your device, as you cannot have control over devices that you are connected to and which are not in your hand. Therefore, it might be mindful **to switch off those options and use them only when you are close to the devices you are connected with** – this will allow you to control who is watching and what is exactly shown on both connected devices.

Technology can be tricky – sometimes, the screen might show data that you do not want to share (e.g. embarrassing or simply private pictures, movies, messages, personal data, passwords that you note on your phone with no encryption etc.) and if you do not see it – you cannot react.



SmartThings

If you let all your devices to connect to each other – it might be very helpful and convenient. But it also means, that you constantly have access to your data and all notifications.

This, although useful sometimes, might mean that you might not be able to rest and forget about stuff. E-mails, reminders, notifications etc. Come constantly and are displayed all the time.

Also, if you choose a digital detox, it is much easier to skip the temptation if you simply do not have access to data and devices.

SmartThings

Control your devices

Monitor and control smart TVs, light bulbs, appliances, and other devices.

Automate your devices

Make devices respond to conditions, like turning on the lights when a door opens.

Make your life smarter

Add services to do even more with your devices.

Continue

Smart View

Show your phone on a TV

View your phone's screen or play videos on a nearby TV.

Watch TV on your phone

Watch content from a nearby TV on your phone even without turning on the TV.

High quality playback

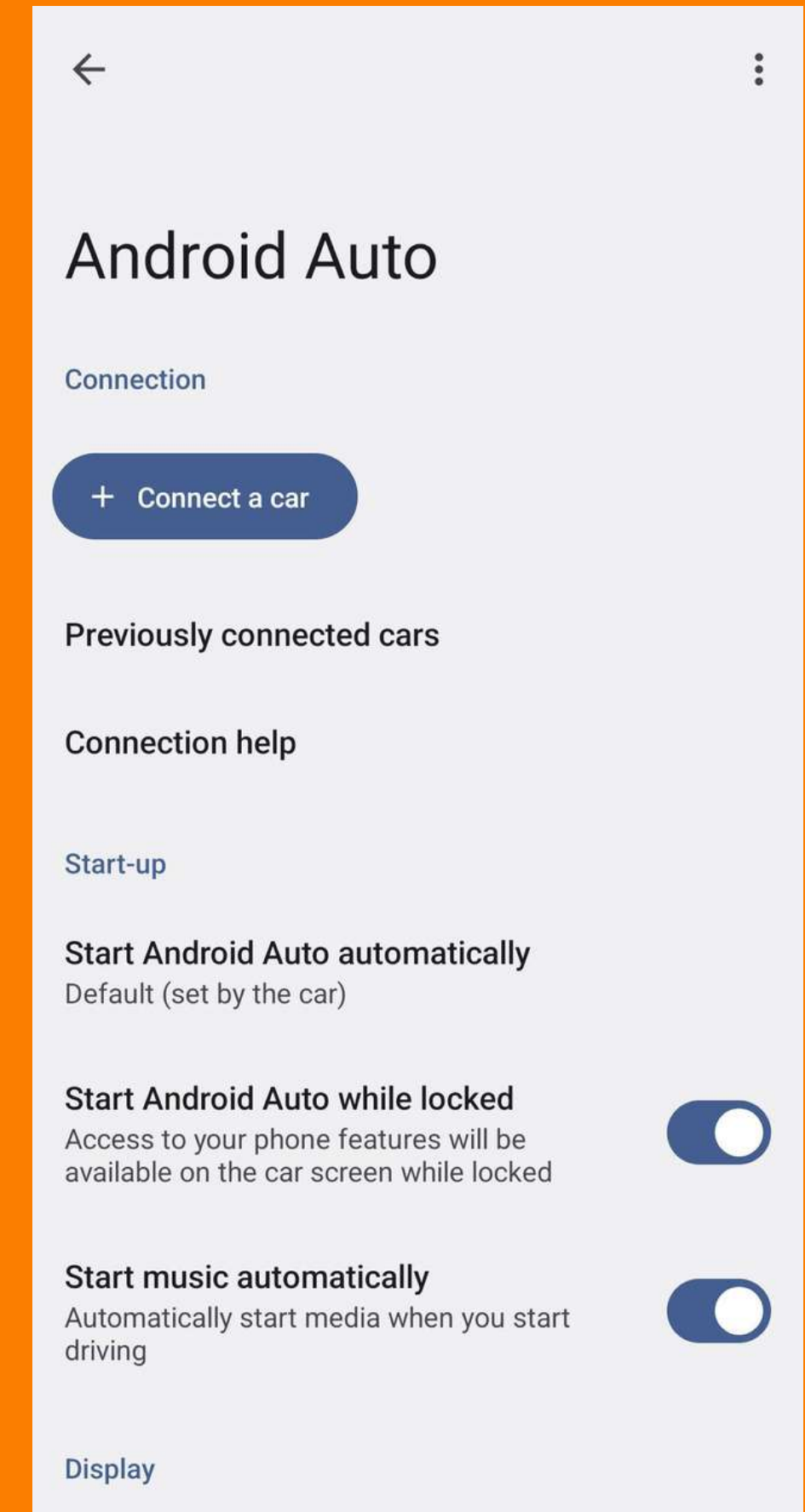
View videos and photos from Gallery on your TV in their original quality.

Continue

Android Auto

Please, please, please, be very conscious about connecting to car devices!

It can seriously affect your focus on the road and lead to serious accident.

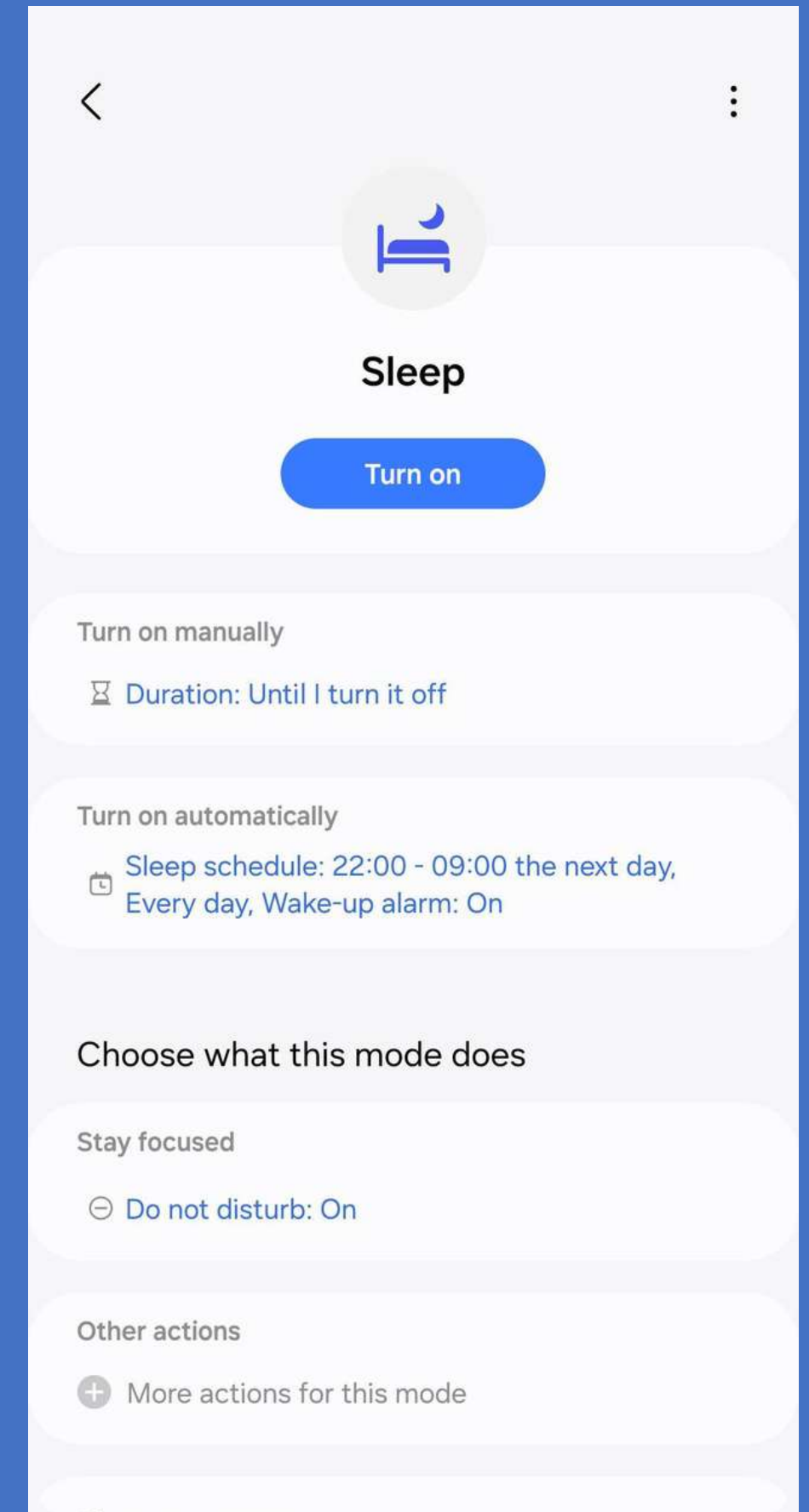
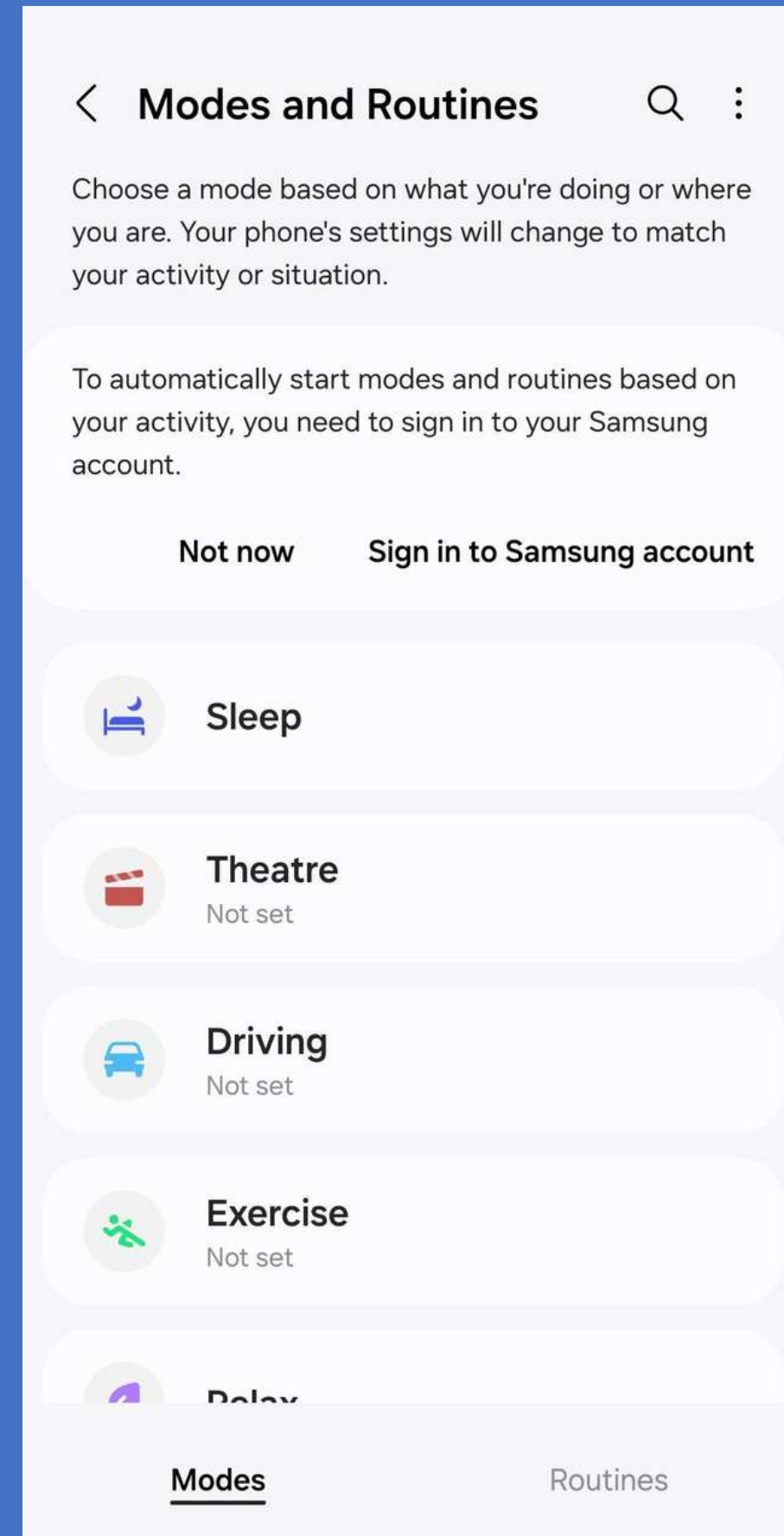


Modes and Routines

Your phone offers you different **presets of modes** that you might want to use, that will help you to focus.

Check what options are offered, e.g. adding people who might call you anyway, messages being blocked from viewing etc.

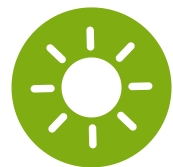
If you want to keep some set of settings – it will be useful to preset it here – for example – if you want only your kid to be able to reach you while working or exercise – you can add their contact to the chosen Mode and activate it while working/exercising. Other people contacting you will not show on your screen and in notifications.



Other actions

Devices from our time let us adjust in many different ways to be more useful and comfortable to use. Do not hesitate to play with options and see what best suits you (see also the next slide).

You might want to use:



Eye comfort shield for your vision protection.



Dark mode to read screen in more comfortable way in the evening or just keep colours on your screen less vibrant, so there are fewer stimuli when using your device.

Other actions

Choose what to do in this mode.

No actions

Suggested actions

Greyscale



Dark mode



Eye comfort shield



Sound mode and volume



Power saving

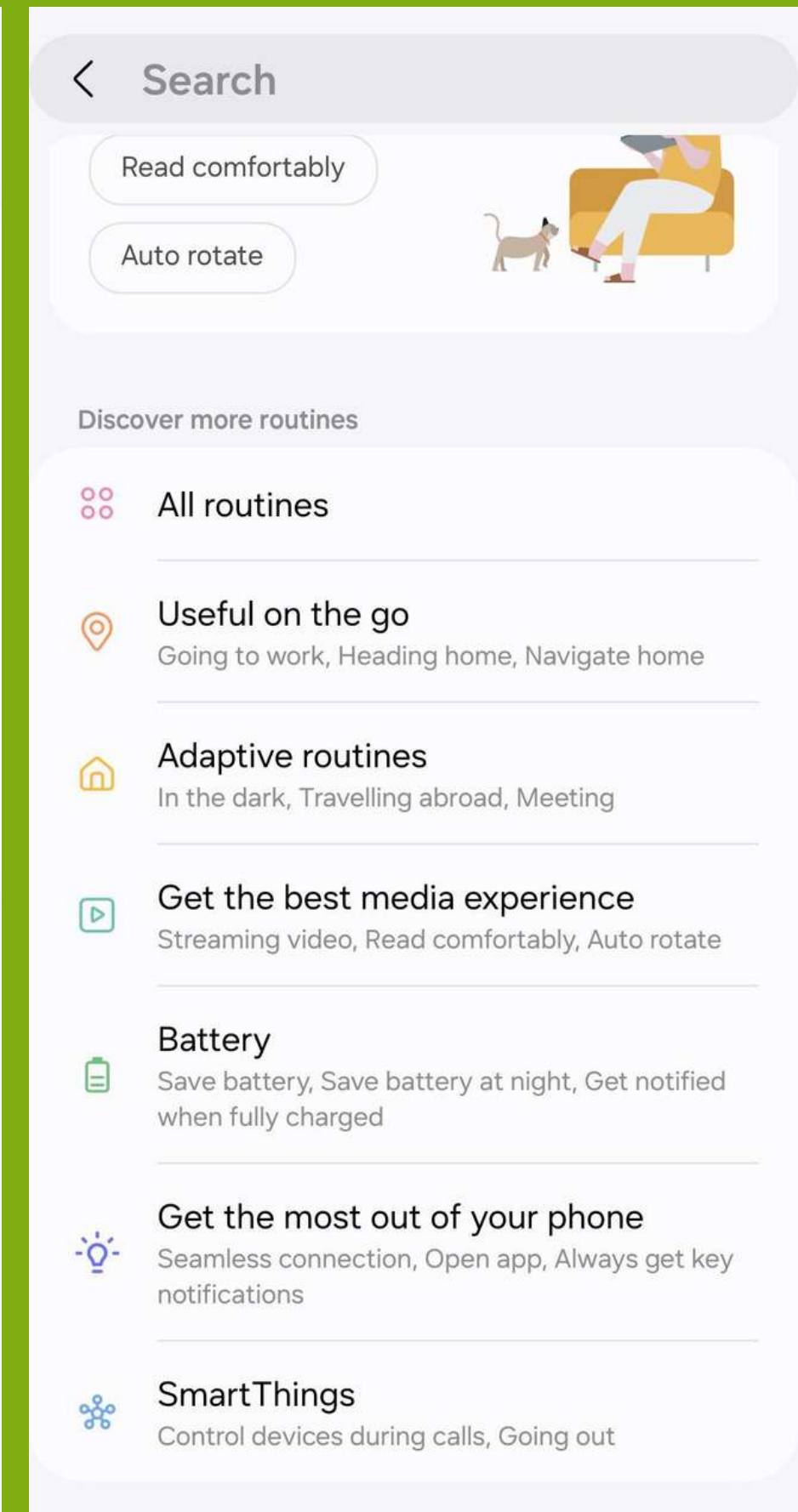
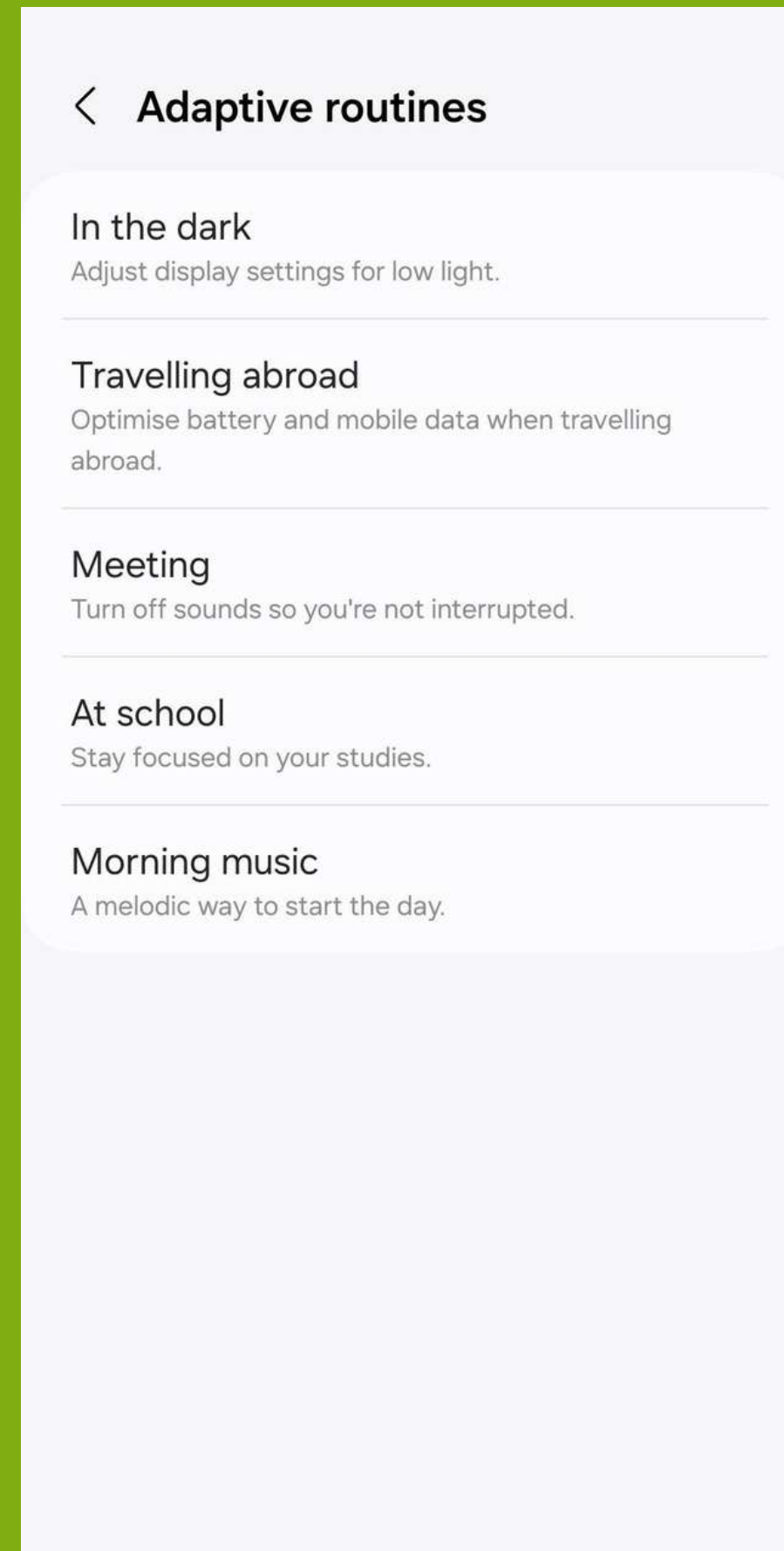
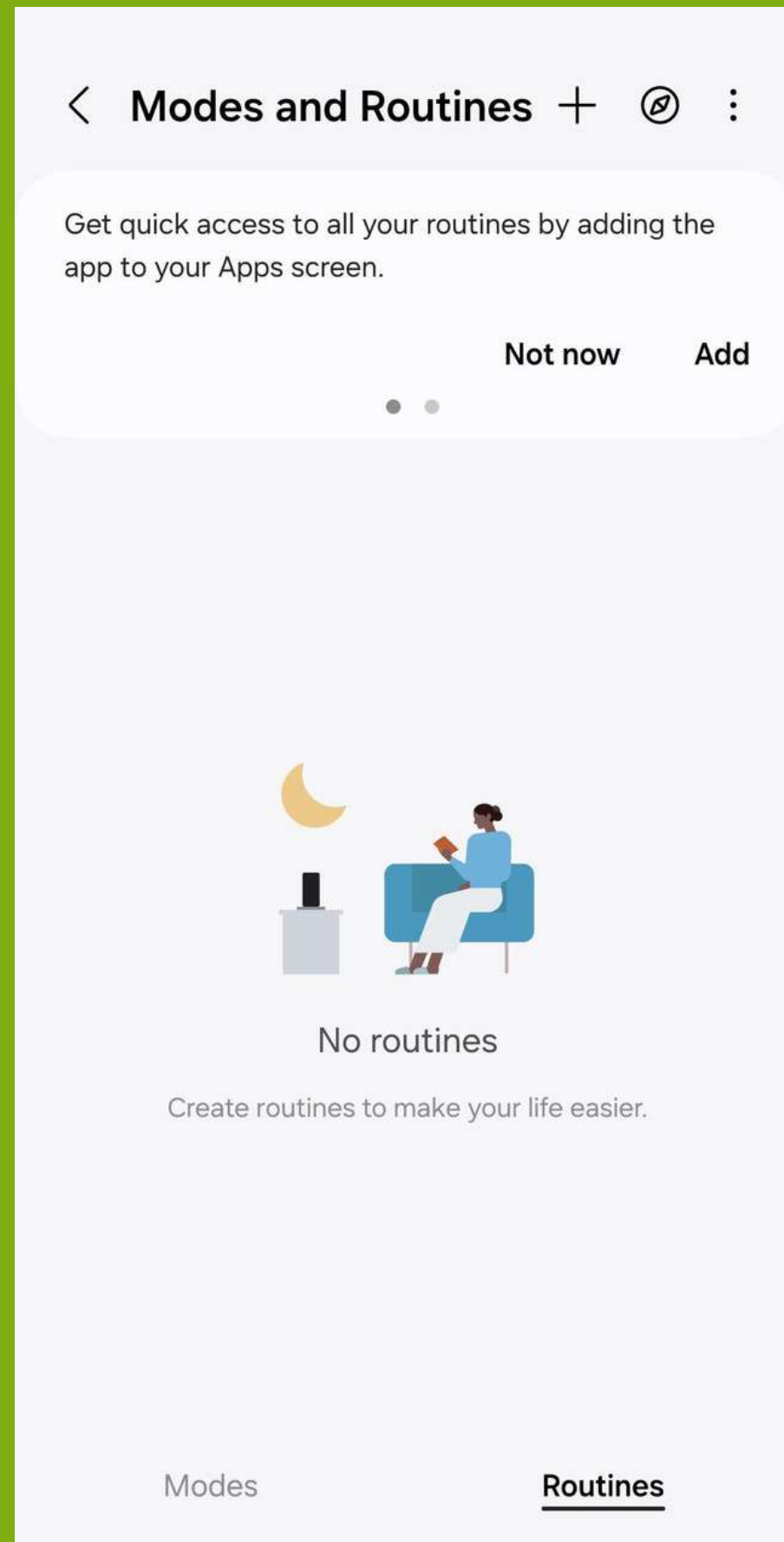


Add action

Cancel

Done

Other actions (continued)



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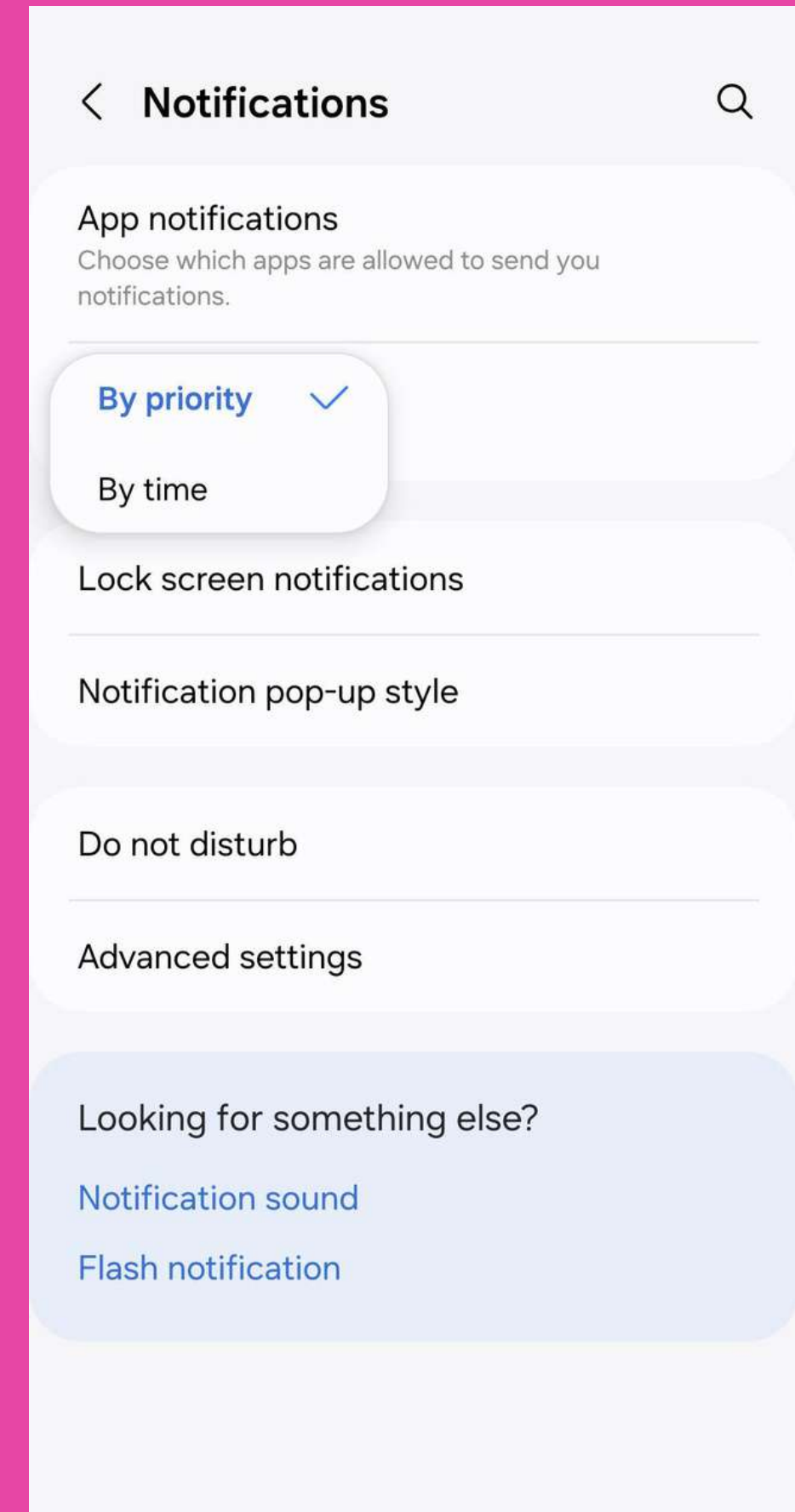


Notifications

Adjusting notifications display might be one of the most crucial factor for you to use your phone less and prevent attaching to it too much.

It is very helpful for your focus to switch off as many notifications as possible, so they don't pop up all the time and bother you. Then you can choose when to go to the app you want to use and see what is going on there.

Do not hesitate to play with those options and see what suits your focus and wellbeing best.

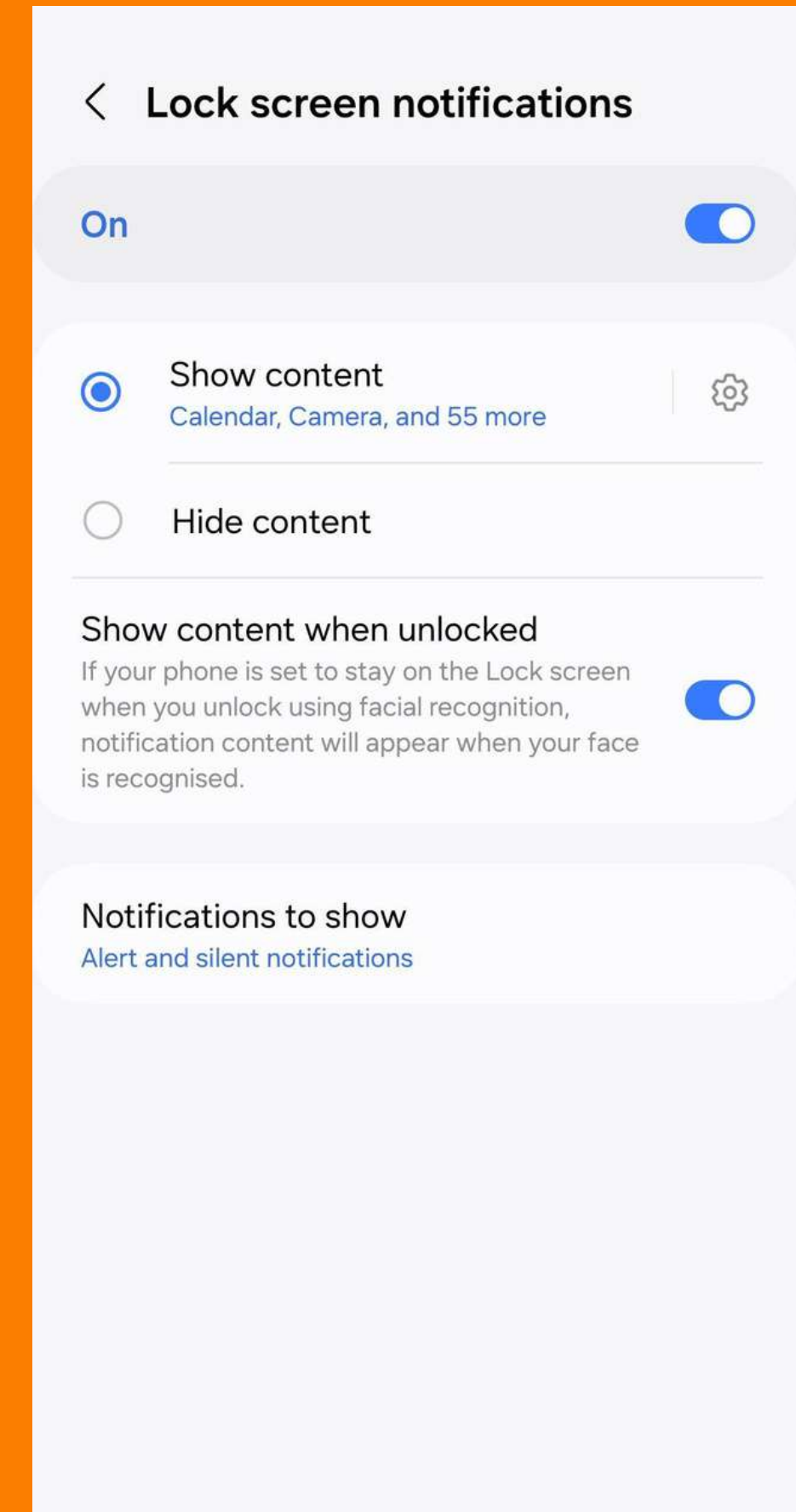


Lock screen notifications

It might be smart to control your screen notifications. Here, you can allow or block your phone to show content on the locked screen.

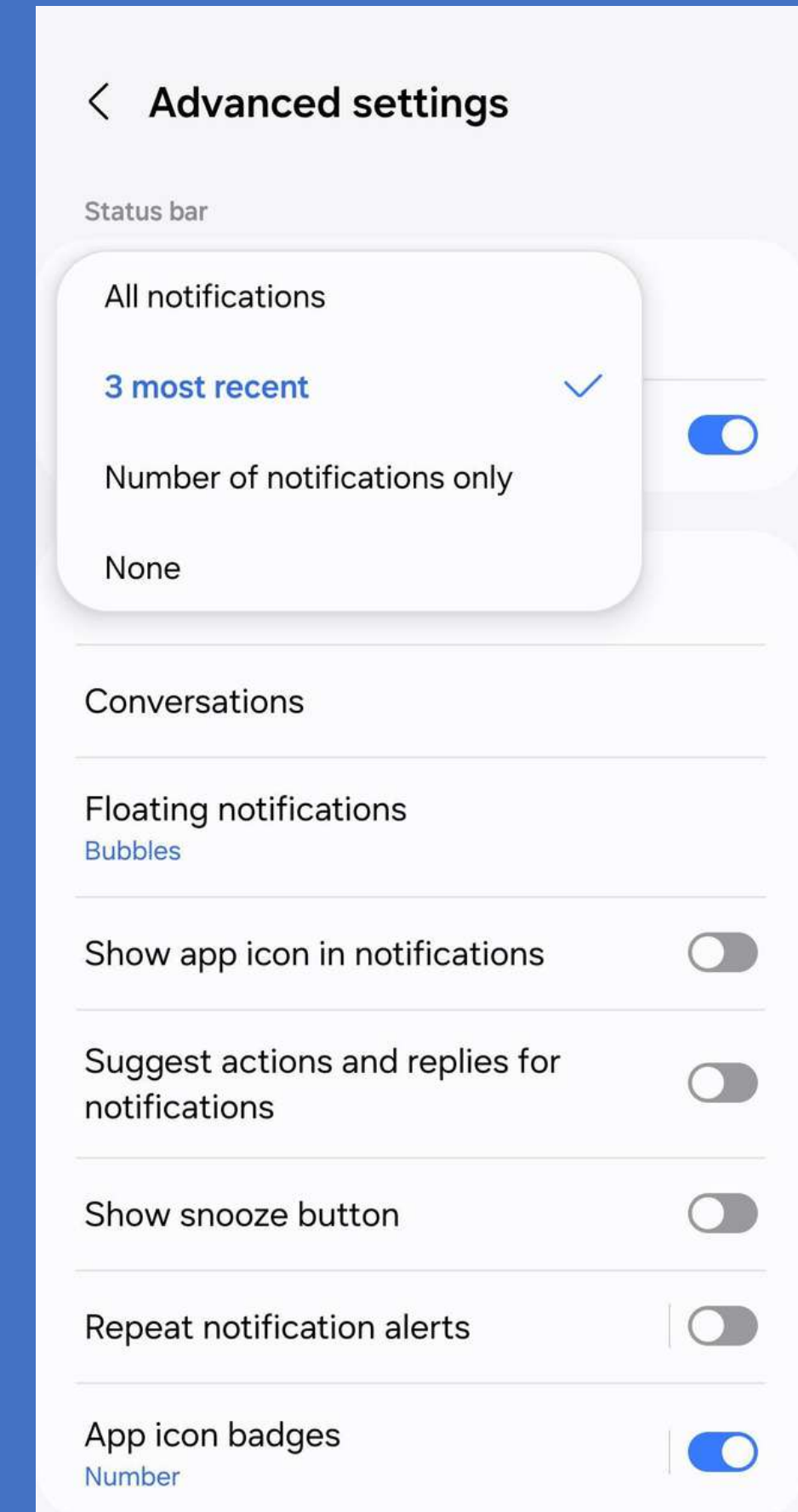
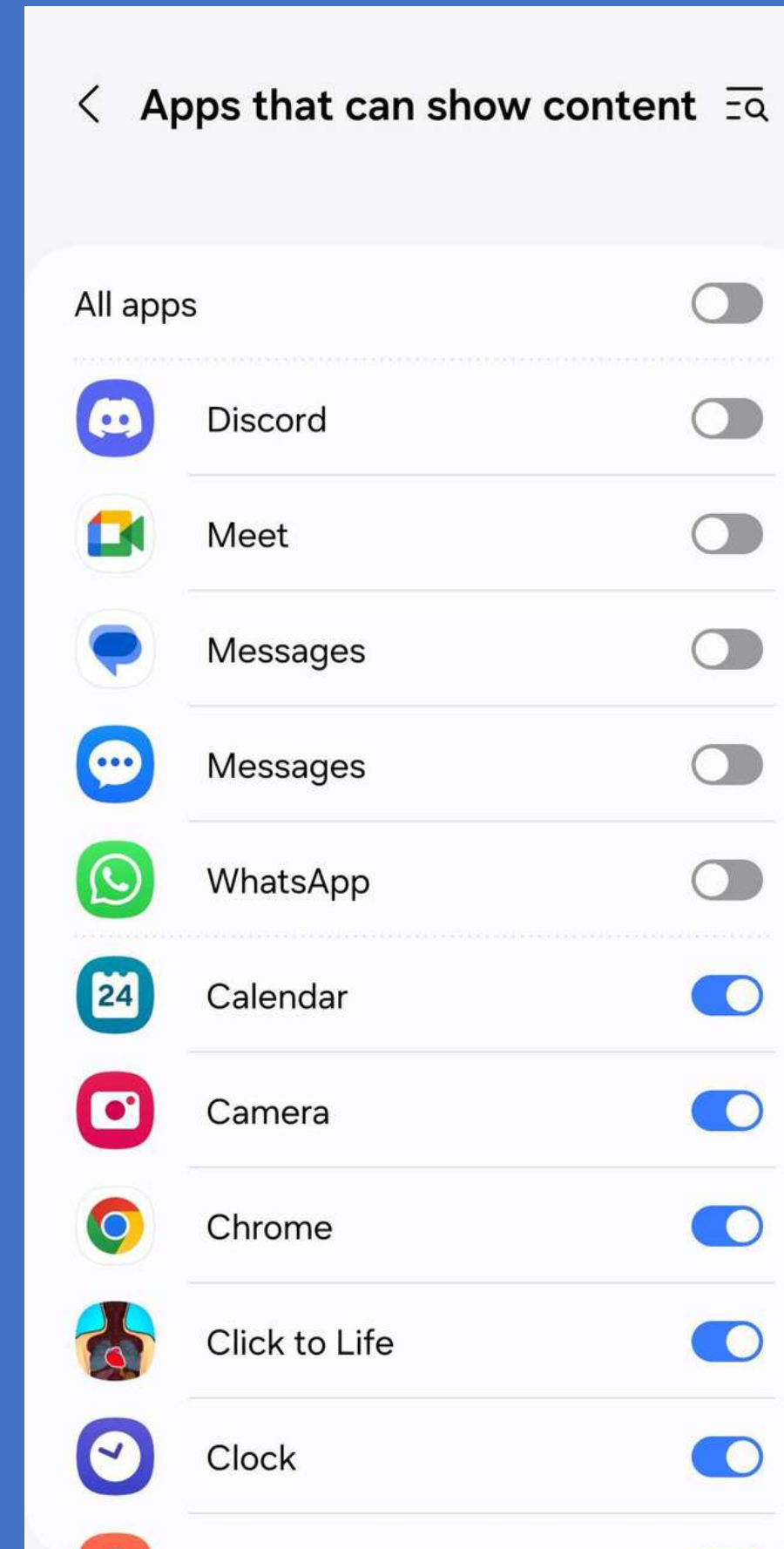
➡ When our phone is blocked, just lying somewhere, we might not want other people to read our messages.

➡ We also might not want to be able to read them right away for self-care reasons.



Still in notifications

As you can see, you can modify notifications in even more ways.
Just play with it, and remember you can change if something doesn't work for you 😊
See also next slide.



Notifications (continued)

< Floating notifications

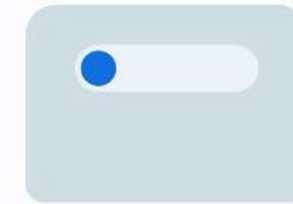
- ☐ Off
- ☐ Bubbles
- ☒ Smart pop-up view

Included apps
[None](#)



Receive notifications as icons that can be tapped and expanded in pop-up view.

< Notification pop-up style



Brief



Detailed



Apps to show as brief
[All apps](#)

Edge lighting style
[None](#)

Colour by keyword

< Lock screen notifications

On ☒

☒ Show content
[Calendar, Camera, and 54 more](#) 

☐ Hide content

Show content when unlocked
If your phone is set to stay on the Lock screen when you unlock using facial recognition, notification content will appear when your face is recognised. ☒

Notifications to show
[Alert and silent notifications](#)

Notifications to show

- ☒ Alert and silent notifications
- ☐ Alert notifications only

Cancel



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