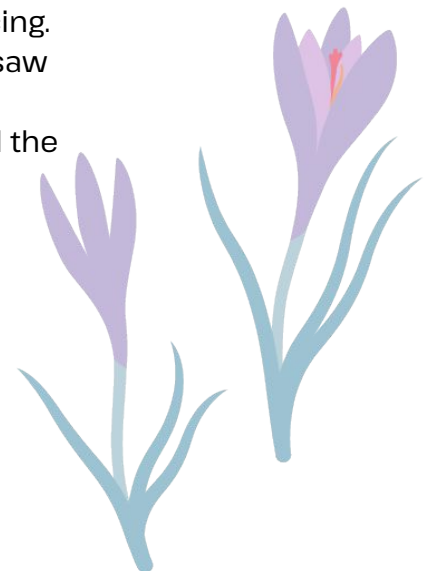


WHAT ARE MINDSHIFTS?

A mindshift for youth digital thriving is a meaningful change in perspective or approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities young people face while growing up in a tech-filled world. Working with young people has taught us to rethink how we (as adults) think and talk about teens and technology. We've seen time and again that adults' assumptions – often shaped by daunting news headlines about teens and tech – can undermine efforts to help youth. In our own work, we have discovered the power of embodying mindsets like:

- * **From Assuming to Asking:** When we replace assumptions about young people's uses and experiences with technology with questions and curiosity, we end up with new insights that fundamentally change how we act. Leaning into a pedagogy of listening is a game-changing move, especially when it comes to tech conversations.
- * **From Us-versus-Them to Us-AND-Them:** Adults often find themselves in a tug of war with young people over their devices. Acknowledging that pulls to the screen are both designed-in to technology and a challenge for us all can help us reframe tech conversations in the direction of a team-based approach. The reality is that we're all figuring out how to live with new technologies that are constantly changing, and seeing this as an us-and-them battle helps us break the tension and connect in meaningful ways to find better solutions.
- * **From Abstinence to Agency:** The pivot from Abstinence to Agency helps us go beyond only restricting tech so we can really equip youth with skills, strategies, and dispositions to navigate the world they are living in - a world where tech is often built into the fabric of everyday life. If we want to empower digital agency and well-being, we can't just start and stop with device bans or limiting screen time.
- * **From "What the Heck?" to "What's Familiar?":** Many of the apps young people use are new and filled with features we may not understand. But adults have so much relevant wisdom and familiarity with the feelings youth are experiencing. You may never have learned you were left out because you saw your friends' avatars gathered together on Snapmap, but you probably can remember the familiar feeling of exclusion and the longing for peer connection and validation, and what helped in those moments. Recognizing the familiar helps us shift from judgment to tapping empathy.



- * **From Tech-centered to Teen-centered:** Adults can often lead with the tech as the cause of all of young people's challenges. But there's power in temporarily bracketing tech to lead with questions that put youth at the center: focusing on things like their values, their strengths and vulnerabilities, their goals for themselves, and our goals for our communities. Once we have a deeper understanding of what teens are going through, then we're better equipped to ask how tech fits in - whether its role is positive, negative, or a bit of both.
- * **From Referee to Coach:** Adults often get into a battle with teens over tech where we are the referees blowing the whistle when they've gone overtime or out of bounds. But we can be much more helpful and effective if we recalibrate our roles to be more like coaches who help youth navigate the hard plays that are inevitable in life in general and in a world full of tech. Coaches help their players practice skills and strategize in real time.
- * **From Pulling the Weeds to Exploring the Roots:**
A perennial pain point for educators in particular is the role tech can play in social conflict or drama among young people. It's tempting to react to digital conflict and missteps by "pulling the weeds" - addressing the most visible "misstep" via an immediate consequence. To be sure, consequences are often warranted but when we start with Exploring the Roots - asking questions and listening to young people's perspectives first - we come away with new insights, clearer understandings, and, in many cases, deeper trust with them.
- * **From Handing Down to All Hands on Deck:**
By necessity, so many policies and regulations are handed down to young people. When it comes to tech, there's so much that adults are often missing about its role (both positive and negative) in young people's lives in and out of school. There's power in finding ways to partner with them - or at least tap their input - as we design tech-related policies. Having youth advisors is one way to live the adage of 'an ounce of prevention' because it helps us anticipate and design in ways that can get real buy-in from young people.

