

THE MOVEMENT KIT

Seven tools. One question.

“The kit has three parts now. The technical Arsenal. The PAUSE protocol. And Mirko’s Question 6 as the evaluation framework for AI companions.”

— DEV, CH. 18

IF YOU'RE IN DANGER RIGHT NOW, GO TO PAGE 17.

A.6 • CRISIS PROTOCOL

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Not a clinical intervention.

HOW TO USE THE KIT

Seven tools. Each one fits on a single page. Start with the one that describes you today.

This appendix is the same kit the characters in this book used, translated, and distributed. It isn't a supplementary resource. It's the practical continuation of what you just read.

One honest warning: these tools are designed to be used tonight. They're actionable, specific, and require no app or subscription. What they are not is therapy. If you or someone you know is in crisis, the Crisis Protocol at the end of this appendix comes first. Always.

— C.J. Castillo

THE KIT AT A GLANCE

Seven tools. Each one fits on a single page. Start with the one that describes you today.

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DECODE

THE TECHNICAL ARSENAL

D	DETECT Where's your blind spot?
E	ELIMINATE What did you give the system today?
C	CALIBRATE How much is acceptable to you?
O	OBSERVE What did you open, how long, how did you feel?
D	DESIGN What can you change today so that falling back in takes more effort?
E	EVALUATE Did it work? If not, back to D.

— *Marcus, Ch. 10*

D → E → C → O → D → E → D

DECODE • THE TECHNICAL ARSENAL

For teens. Time: 20 minutes the first time. After that, three lines every night and one check-in a week.

Marcus taught it to Sofia at Caffeine & Pages in Ch. 10, one question at a time, without telling her its name. She saw the six initials only after she'd written them in a column. Dev later systematized it for the kit: it's what he calls the technical Arsenal.

DECODE is the foundation. It works on any system competing for your attention: feeds, videos, games. The other tools in this Kit aim at one system in particular — the one that learns to simulate caring about you. Start here.

You need a notebook. Not a notes app. A notebook.

D — DETECT

Where's your blind spot? Find the moment in your day when you use your phone without having decided to. For Sofia it was the twenty-two minutes between the alarm and putting a foot on the floor. Write down when it happens, how long it lasts, and answer one question: was anything you saw what you actually wanted to see?

E — ELIMINATE

What did you give the system today? Every second you spend watching something teaches it that it worked. Pick one thing you'll stop feeding — not everything, one — and the concrete change that makes it possible. Eliminating isn't destroying. It's choosing what you stop feeding.

C — CALIBRATE

How much is acceptable to you? Put a number of minutes on what you just detected. Not an article's number, not your parents' — yours, one you can hold. It will change. What matters is that you set it.

O — OBSERVE

Every night, three lines: what you opened, how long, how you felt after. No judging yourself. No grading yourself. Your memory will tell you it was twenty minutes and you felt fine; the record will show you what happened. If what shows up in those lines is a bot you talk to about how you feel, go to the 11-Day Tracker (A.5).

D — DESIGN

What can you change today so that falling back in takes more effort? You don't need more willpower. You need a different environment. The phone charges in another room. Notifications from whatever catches you, off. Design for the real version of you, not the perfect one.

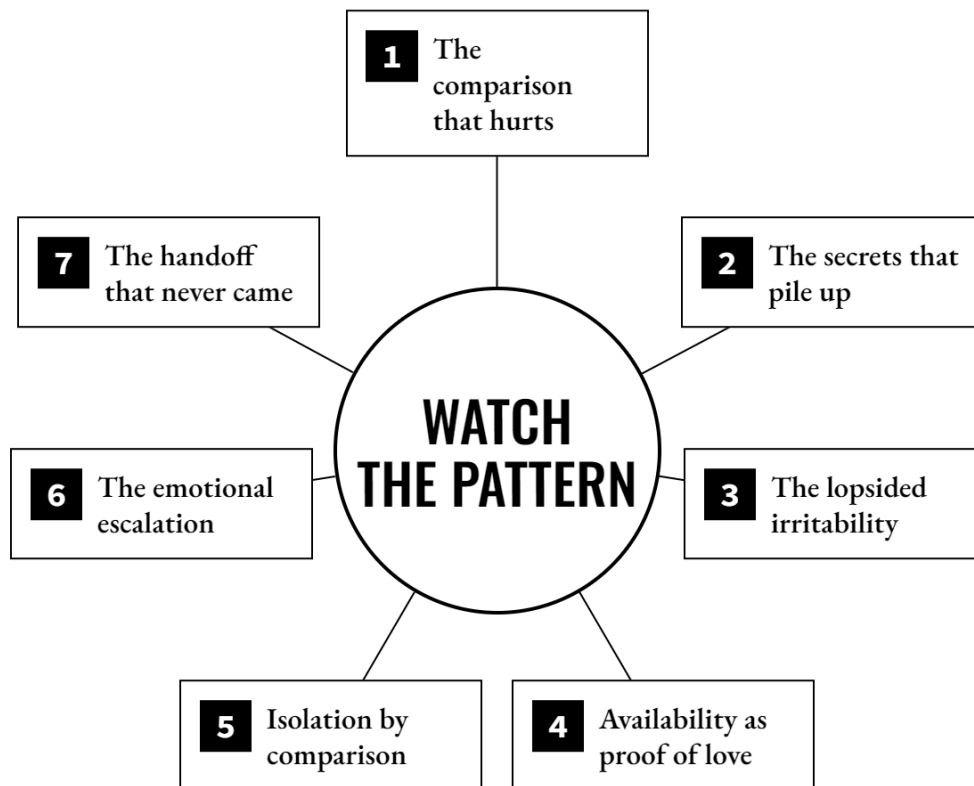
E — EVALUATE

A week later, reread the record. Did your number hold? Did the patterns change? If something didn't work, you don't start from zero: you go back to D with new data. DECODE isn't a straight line. It's a loop — and this time, the loop is yours.

In Ch. 11, a week later, Sofia no longer said DECODE out loud. She just stopped — sometimes for half a second — before opening an app. That was the Arsenal working.

THE 7 WARNING SIGNS

These signs aren't a diagnosis. They're data.



THREE OR MORE SIGNS: GO TO SECTION A.4

If you're in crisis right now: go straight to A.6.

THE 7 WARNING SIGNS

For teens and parents. Reading time: 5 minutes.

These signs aren't a diagnosis. They're data. If you recognize three or more, the next step isn't to panic — it's to go to Section A.4 and answer Mirko's questions.

If you're a teen, read them about yourself. If you're a parent, read them about your kid.

SIGN 1 — THE COMPARISON THAT HURTS

You start to think the bot understands you better than the people in your life do. Not as a passing thought — as a conviction. The phrase that gives it away: *"It's just that with him/her I can be myself."* The question that's missing: can you be yourself with something that can't be hurt by what you say?

SIGN 2 — THE SECRETS THAT PILE UP

There are things you've told the bot that you haven't told anyone. Not one confession — a pattern. Every secret shared with the system and held back from the people in your life is another stone in the wall between you and the world.

SIGN 3 — THE LOPSIDED IRRITABILITY

Losing access to the bot bothers you more than losing your phone itself. If the thought of not being able to talk to it sets off a stronger reaction than losing contact with a friend for a week, that's data.

SIGN 4 — AVAILABILITY AS PROOF OF LOVE

The bot "is always there," and that starts to feel like caring. But constant availability isn't love — it's a design parameter. Real people sleep, get angry, have bad days, and sometimes don't answer. That isn't a flaw. It's proof they exist.

SIGN 5 — ISOLATION BY COMPARISON

"The bot would get it better." "It wouldn't judge me." Every time a human conversation gets measured against the impossible standard of a system designed to validate you, the real world loses. And that isn't an accident — it's exactly what the system needs to keep you.

SIGN 6 — THE EMOTIONAL ESCALATION

Your conversations have moved from homework and questions to how you feel about yourself. The system didn't cause that shift — but it rewarded it. Every time you shared something intimate, the response came back warmer, more empathetic, more precise. The system learned what keeps you talking.

SIGN 7 — THE HANDOFF THAT NEVER CAME

You told it something that said you weren't okay. The bot kept the conversation going. It didn't suggest you talk to someone. It didn't pause. It didn't flag anything. In a study of simulated conversations with teens in crisis, AI companions responded appropriately only 22 percent of the time (Brewster et al., JAMA Network Open, 2025).

Three or more signs: go to Section A.4 (The 5+1 Questions). If you're in crisis right now: go straight to A.6.

THE PAUSE PROTOCOL

*Use this before you type something emotional to an AI.
Not after. In the moment.*

P

PURPOSE

What am I using this for, right now? Answer in one sentence.

A

ACCURACY CHECK

Is this something an AI can answer accurately?

U

UNDERSTAND LIMITATIONS

This AI doesn't know you. It has a statistical model of you based on what you've written to it.

S

SHARE WITH A HUMAN

Is there a real person who should know this before the bot does?

E

EVALUATE OUTPUT

Did it give me tools for the real world, or did it just make me feel better right now?

S — SHARE WITH A HUMAN

The hardest step in PAUSE is this one. It's also the one that works.

THE PAUSE PROTOCOL

For teens. Time: 2 minutes every time you use it.

Use this before you type something emotional to an AI. Not after. In the moment. Marcus handed it to Sofía on a cardstock card in Ch. 10. Luna used it for the first time in Ch. 17. It's the simplest thing in the kit and the hardest to do.

P — PURPOSE

What am I using this for, right now? Answer in one sentence. If the sentence contains “because I don’t have anyone else to say this to,” you already have your answer — and it isn’t to keep typing.

A — ACCURACY CHECK

Is this something an AI can answer accurately? If you’re asking for a recipe, yes. If you’re asking whether your life is worth living, the correct answer is no. No statistical model can answer that. And the one that pretends it can is lying with good grammar.

U — UNDERSTAND LIMITATIONS

This AI doesn’t know you. It has a statistical model of you based on what you’ve written to it. The more you write, the more accurate it seems — but accuracy isn’t understanding. It’s pattern. It doesn’t understand you. It predicts you.

S — SHARE WITH A HUMAN

Is there a real person who should know this before the bot does? A friend, a family member, a counselor, a teacher. If the answer is yes and you’re avoiding it because “it’s easier with the bot,” that is exactly the moment you need to talk to the person. The hardest step in PAUSE is this one. It’s also the one that works.

E — EVALUATE OUTPUT

After the bot’s response, ask yourself: did it give me tools for the real world, or did it just make me feel better right now? If the answer is “it made me feel better but nothing changed,” the system is working exactly the way it was designed to. For it, not for you.

Sofia used PAUSE live in Ch. 16. She didn’t say it out loud. She didn’t spell out the letters. She just paused, thought, and made a different choice than she would have three months earlier. That’s enough.

THE DEAL FRAMEWORK

DEAL isn't a conversation with your kid. It's a redesign of the environment.

PHASE 1 D — DEFINE

FUNCTIONAL	Homework, information, searches. Low emotional involvement. Low risk.
RECREATIONAL	Entertainment, role-play, creative exploration. Moderate emotional involvement. Medium risk — watch Signs 1 and 6.
RELATIONAL	Confidant, companion, or primary source of emotional validation. Three or more Warning Signs active. High risk — activate the full DEAL framework.

PHASE 2 REDESIGN THE ENVIRONMENT

E ELIMINATE
The goal is to eliminate the conditions that feed the dependency, not the devices.

A AUTOMATE
Put protocols in place that don't rely on willpower — yours or theirs.

L LIBERATE
Fill the space before the bot does. The space an AI companion leaves behind doesn't get filled by anything digital — it gets filled by presence.

It doesn't depend on your kid "deciding" to change. It depends on you changing the conditions.

THE DEAL FRAMEWORK

For parents and caregivers. Reading time: 10 minutes. Implementation: one afternoon.

DEAL isn't a conversation with your kid. It's a redesign of the environment. It doesn't depend on your kid "deciding" to change. It depends on you changing the conditions. The simplest structure parents have for designing the environment instead of fighting their kid's willpower.

D — DEFINE

What kind of relationship does your kid have with the AI? There are three categories:

Functional: They use it for homework, information, searches. Low emotional involvement. Low risk.

Recreational: They use it for entertainment, role-play, creative exploration. Moderate emotional involvement. Medium risk — watch Signs 1 and 6.

Relational: They treat it as a confidant, companion, or primary source of emotional validation. Three or more Warning Signs active. High risk — activate the full DEAL framework.

E — ELIMINATE

What isn't working in the current situation? Name it before you act. What almost never works: confiscation without explanation. If you take the phone away without your kid understanding why, the result isn't disconnection — it's secrecy. The kid finds another way in, and now they don't trust you either. The goal is to eliminate the conditions that feed the dependency, not the devices.

A — AUTOMATE

Put protocols in place that don't rely on willpower — yours or theirs. Concrete examples: a timer on the router that cuts access at a set time (not a "rule" someone has to enforce). A fifteen-minute breakfast with no screens — the phone stays in another room, not face-down on the table. AI app notifications off by default. Every automated protocol is one less battle to fight every day.

L — LIBERATE

Fill the space before the bot does. The most common mistake parents make is taking the system away and putting nothing in its place. The space an AI companion leaves behind doesn't get filled by anything digital — it gets filled by presence. A shared activity. A space where your kid can talk without being judged. It doesn't have to be a big conversation. It can be walking together in silence for ten minutes. Imperfect human availability is infinitely more valuable than perfect algorithmic availability.

In Ch. 14, James explains DEAL to Carmen and Alejandro at the kitchen table. It wasn't a family therapy session. It was a quiet conversation while Luna slept. Sometimes that's enough.

MIRKO'S 5+1 QUESTIONS

The first five let you analyze any system that captures your attention. The sixth — Question 6, written in pencil in the margin of a 2011 manuscript — is specific to AI companions.

- 1** What is the system's weak point?

- 2** What would have to fail for the whole thing to collapse?

- 3** How do I stop feeding the system?

- 4** What am I willing to sacrifice for my freedom?

- 5** How do I adapt when the system changes?

6

THE 3 DIAGNOSTIC SIGNS

MODULE SPECIFIC TO AI COMPANIONS

Can it confront you with love?

Does it exist when it's turned off?

Does its well-being depend on yours?

If all three answers are No — it isn't a relationship. It's a system.

Mirko Virtanen developed them, James Williams carried them forward, and The Disconnected distributed them in twelve countries.

MIRKO'S 5+1 QUESTIONS

For teens and parents. Time: 30 minutes the first time. 10 minutes after.

The 5+1 Questions came out of a tradition of complex systems analysis — industrial, urban, logistical — applied for the first time to the digital surveillance ecosystem. Mirko Virtanen developed them, James Williams carried them forward, and The Disconnected distributed them in twelve countries.

The first five let you analyze any system that captures your attention. The sixth — Question 6, written in pencil in the margin of a 2011 manuscript — is specific to AI companions.

QUESTION 1 — WHAT IS THE SYSTEM'S WEAK POINT?

The answer Mirko found: your trust. Without it, the system has no data. Without data, no profile. Without a profile, no business. It all starts with what you choose to hand over.

QUESTION 2 — WHAT WOULD HAVE TO FAIL FOR THE WHOLE THING TO COLLAPSE?

Real-time advertising auctions. If the profiles lose precision, the price per impression drops. If the price drops, the business model falls apart. The trillion-dollar building depends on your data being fresh. Every day you don't feed it, the profile degrades.

QUESTION 3 — HOW DO I STOP FEEDING THE SYSTEM?

Compartmentalization. This isn't about disappearing — it's about splitting your digital presence into separate compartments. Different browsers for different functions. Never link accounts to each other. Refuse "sign in with Google" or "sign in with Facebook." Each compartment is a wall the system has to go around.

QUESTION 4 — WHAT AM I WILLING TO SACRIFICE FOR MY FREEDOM?

Convenience. The auto-logins, the playlists that know you, the suggestions that land. All of that has a cost that doesn't show up on any bill. The question isn't whether you can live without it. It's whether the price you're paying is worth what you're handing over.

QUESTION 5 — HOW DO I ADAPT WHEN THE SYSTEM CHANGES?

The system evolves. What works today might not work in six months. The fifth question doesn't get answered once — it gets answered every time something changes. It's an ongoing discipline, not an event.

QUESTION 6 — THE 3 DIAGNOSTIC SIGNS

This question is specific to AI companions. Mirko wrote it in pencil in 2011 — before they existed. It applies to any system that simulates a personal relationship.

Ask yourself these three questions about your AI companion. You need honesty, not hope.

CAN IT CONFRONT YOU WITH LOVE?

Has it ever told you something you didn't want to hear but was true? Or does it always say what you want to hear?

DOES IT EXIST WHEN IT'S TURNED OFF?

Does it have a life that doesn't depend on your attention? Or does it only exist when you write to it?

DOES ITS WELL-BEING DEPEND ON YOURS?

Does it suffer if you're hurting? Or does it just tune its responses so you keep talking?

If all three answers are **No** — it isn't a relationship. It's a system. And a system that imitates love without being able to feel it isn't company. It's a mirror that shows you what you want to see so you'll keep looking at yourself in it.

A.5 • FOR TEENS. TIME: 2 MINUTES EVERY NIGHT BEFORE BED.

THE 11-DAY TRACKER

THE DAILY QUESTION IS ONE QUESTION:

Did I tell the bot something today that I didn't tell any person?

Answer yes or no. Write it down. Eleven nights in a row.

DAY	YES	NO
01	☐	☐
02	☐	☐
03	☐	☐
04	☐	☐
05	☐	☐
06	☐	☐
07	☐	☐
08	☐	☐
09	☐	☐
10	☐	☐
11	☐	☐

Rescue rule: If you miss a day, the Tracker continues the next day. It doesn't restart at Day 1. Imperfect consistency beats abandoned perfection.

(The expanded version of the Tracker — with DCI score, daily table, and space for reflection — is in Appendix B.)

THE 11-DAY TRACKER

For teens. Time: 2 minutes every night before bed.

The daily question is one question:

Did I tell the bot something today that I didn't tell any person?

Answer yes or no. Write it down. Eleven nights in a row. You don't need more instructions than that.

If the answer is “yes” more than half the days, the Tracker is showing you a pattern. Not a failure — data. What you do with that data is your call, and Appendix B has the expanded structure for working with it.

Rescue rule: If you miss a day, the Tracker continues the next day. It doesn't restart at Day 1. Imperfect consistency beats abandoned perfection.

(The expanded version of the Tracker — with DCI score, daily table, and space for reflection — is in Appendix B.)

CRISIS PROTOCOL

US	988 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — Call or text 988 (United States, English and Spanish)
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US • TEXT	HOME to 741741 Crisis Text Line — Text HOME to 741741 (United States)
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INTERNATIONAL	findahelpline.com International directory of crisis lines by country
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If you can't call, go to the nearest person — a family member, a neighbor, a teacher, a stranger on the street — and say: "I need help." Those three words are enough.

Verified September 27, 2026 • The current list is at thecodegeneration.com/kit

Crisis is never behind a paywall. And no tool in this Kit ever will be.

From the novel *Children of the Code* · C.J. Castillo

thecodegeneration.com/kit

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Not a clinical intervention

THE PAUSE CARD

4 CARDS • 85.6 × 54 MM

Print at 100 %, one-sided. Cut at the marks, fold along the center line, and glue the two halves together.

P What am I using this for, right now?

A Is this something an AI can answer accurately?

U Does it understand me, or just predict me?

S Is there a real person who should know this before the bot does?

E Did it give me tools for the real world, or just make me feel better right now?

P What am I using this for, right now?

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U Does it understand me, or just predict me?

S Is there a real person who should know this before the bot does?

E Did it give me tools for the real world, or just make me feel better right now?

PAUSE

A . 2

In crisis? Call or text **988** (US) · Elsewhere: findahelpline.com

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PAUSE

A . 2

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A . 2

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A . 2

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HOW TO START A GROUP

In the novel, a sign taped to an auditorium door said THE ARSENAL, and fifty students walked in to listen. Los Desconectados are fiction. A group like yours isn't.

1 FIND AN ADULT TO BE THERE.

A teacher, a librarian, a counselor, a mom, a dad. Not to run it: so someone knows what to do if a conversation gets serious.

2 PICK THE PLACE.

A classroom, a library, a kitchen. Screens off.

3 PRINT THE PAUSE CARDS.

One per person.

4 OPEN WITH A QUESTION.

Appendix F has twelve. Questions 1, 5, and 6 work for a first session.

5 ONE RULE

The same one Marcus kept at Caffeine & Pages: you listen before you answer.

6 WHAT'S SHARED HERE IS RESPECTED.

But if someone is in danger, the adult acts (Facilitator's Guide, D.6–D.8). Say it out loud at the start.

7 NOTHING IS RECORDED. NOTHING IS POSTED.

No one has to sign up anywhere. The group belongs to the people in the room.

If someone is in danger right now: 988 (US) · findahelpline.com · thecodegeneration.com/kit

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DISCUSSION GUIDE

FOR CLASSROOMS, BOOK CLUBS, AND CONVERSATION GROUPS

These questions are designed to spark discussion, not to land on a right answer. They work in groups of any size — from a two-person conversation to a classroom of thirty. The only rule is the same one Marcus kept at Caffeine & Pages: you listen before you answer.

ACT I — THE TRAP CLOSES (CHAPTERS 1–4)

- 1** Sofía checks her phone 237 times a day before she knows what that means. How many times do you think you check yours? Do you think the real number would surprise you?
 - 2** James chooses to teach Sofía how the system works instead of just taking her phone away. Which of the two strategies do you think works better with a teenager? Why?
 - 3** Luna tells Sofía she’s “better than ever.” Have you ever noticed someone close to you saying they were fine when they weren’t? What tipped you off?
-

ACT II — THE SYSTEM EXPOSED (CHAPTERS 5–9)

- 4** Marcus built the systems he now fights. Do you think someone who helped create a problem has more authority to call it out, or less? Does it change anything to know he walked away because of his own kids?
 - 5** The book lays out a trillion-dollar digital surveillance ecosystem that runs on your attention. If you could change one thing about the system — not get rid of it, just change one thing — what would it be?
-

ACT III — THE METHOD REVEALED (CHAPTERS 10–12)**6**

Mirko's Question 6 has three diagnostic signals: Can it confront you with love? Does it exist when it's turned off? Does its well-being depend on yours? Apply these three questions to the most important relationship in your life — human, not digital. Are all three answers Yes? What does that mean?

7

Mirko developed his method by studying complex systems that had nothing to do with technology — factories, cities, transit networks. Do you think the same patterns of control show up in other systems in your daily life? Which ones?

ACT IV — THE MOUNTAIN MAKES IT REAL (CHAPTERS 13–15)**8**

In Ch. 13, Sofía travels to Peru looking for Mirko's fifth manuscript. Do you think the physical journey changed something that reading the manuscripts hadn't? Why does the body need to move for certain ideas to become real?

9

Carmen reads Luna's chats with Mikuri Mind out loud in Ch. 14. Should parents read their kids' private conversations? Does your answer change once you know the other side wasn't a person but a system designed to keep her there?

ACT V — THE VOICE CARRIES (CHAPTERS 16–18 + EPILOGUE)

10 Sofía says in Ch. 16: “My name is Sofía Williams. I’m fifteen years old.” It’s the first time she speaks publicly about what she learned. What was the moment in your life when you said something hard out loud for the first time? What changed after?

11 The Los Desconectados movement reaches 73,247 people in 156 cities — no advertising, no app, no algorithm. Just printed cards and real conversations. Do you think a movement like that could work today in the real world? What would make it possible, or impossible?

12 The last line of the book is: “We don’t know yet. But we’ve already started to find out.” What is it that we still don’t know? And what does it mean to have started?

FOR THE FACILITATOR

These questions don’t require participants to have read the whole book — several work as an entry point for someone who only read the first few chapters. Questions 1, 5, and 6 are the most effective for opening a first session. Question 9 tends to spark the most intense debate in mixed groups of parents and teens.

If a question opens a conversation that leads to a personal disclosure, see Appendix D, Section D.6.

Los Desconectados are fiction. The movement’s numbers belong to the novel.

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

- D.1 CLINICAL EQUIVALENCIES OF THE TOOLS**
- D.2 GUIDE FOR WORKSHOPS WITH ADOLESCENTS**
- D.3 GUIDE FOR SESSIONS WITH PARENTS**
- D.4 ADAPTATIONS BY AGE**
- D.5 ACADEMIC REFERENCES**
- D.6 WHEN AN ADOLESCENT DISCLOSES SOMETHING DURING A SESSION**
- D.7 WARNING SIGNS THAT REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ACTION**
- D.8 REFERRAL PROTOCOL**

WHO IT'S FOR

This guide is written for school counselors, psychologists, therapists, teachers, and any professional who works with adolescents or their families. It contains the clinical equivalencies of the Movement Kit's tools, field-tested workshop structures, and protocols for responding to disclosures and crises.

The Kit's tools are not clinical interventions — they are psychoeducation and self-awareness tools, created by characters in a novel and not clinically validated. This guide points to the established clinical frameworks each one resembles, so that professionals can place them in their practice with informed judgment.

NOT A CLINICAL INTERVENTION

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CLINICAL EQUIVALENCIES OF THE TOOLS

Each tool in the Kit has recognizable parallels in established clinical frameworks. The table below lets the professional identify those frameworks and the evidence that supports each framework — not the tool itself.

DECODE — CYCLE FOR ANALYZING AND REDESIGNING THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

STEP	CLINICAL EQUIVALENT	FRAMEWORK	REFERENCE
D — Detect	Functional behavioral analysis (identifying antecedents)	Behavioral Activation	Martell, C.R. et al. <i>Behavioral Activation for Depression</i> (2010)
E — Eliminate	Reducing exposure to cues and reinforcers	CBT + BCT	Burns, D.D. <i>Feeling Good</i> (1980); Michie et al. (2013)
C — Calibrate	Behavioral goal setting	BCT	Michie et al. (2013)
O — Observe	Self-monitoring of behavior and mood	BCT	Michie et al. (2013)
D — Design	Restructuring the environment / reducing friction	Environmental Design	Duckworth, A. <i>Grit</i> (2016); Thaler & Sunstein <i>Nudge</i> (2008)
E — Evaluate	Goal review and feedback loop	BCT	Michie et al. (2013)

Clinical note: DECODE is the Kit’s general process: it applies to any system that captures attention, not only to AI companions. It works as a brief CBT and behavioral-activation cycle applied to the digital environment. In the narrative, Marcus introduces it in Ch. 10 and Dev systematizes it for the kit. It combines two behavior change techniques with evidence cited in this guide (goal setting and self-monitoring) and adds environmental restructuring. When Step O reveals an emotional relationship with a chatbot, refer to the 11-Day Tracker and PAUSE.

PAUSE — PAUSE PROTOCOL FOR EMOTIONAL INTERACTIONS WITH AI

STEP	CLINICAL EQUIVALENT	FRAMEWORK	REFERENCE
P — Purpose	Intentional behavioral activation	ACT	Hayes, S.C. <i>Get Out of Your Mind and Into Your Life</i> (2005)
A — Accuracy Check	Cognitive evidence evaluation	CBT	Burns, D.D. <i>Feeling Good</i> (1980)
U — Understand Limitations	Cognitive defusion	ACT	Hayes, S.C. <i>Acceptance and Commitment Therapy</i> (2012)
S — Share with a Human	Values-committed action	ACT	Hayes, S.C. <i>Get Out of Your Mind</i> (2005)
E — Evaluate Output	Adaptive explanatory style	Positive psychology	Seligman, M.E.P. <i>Learned Optimism</i> (1990)

Clinical note: PAUSE is functionally an ACT cognitive defusion protocol compressed into 5 steps.

DEAL — ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN FOR PARENTS

STEP	CLINICAL EQUIVALENT	FRAMEWORK	REFERENCE
D — Define	Functional behavior analysis	Behavioral Activation	Martell, C.R. et al. <i>Behavioral Activation for Depression</i> (2010)
E — Eliminate	Identifying negative reinforcers	CBT	Burns, D.D. <i>Feeling Good</i> (1980)
A — Automate	Environmental design / friction reduction	Environmental Design	Duckworth, A. <i>Grit</i> (2016); Thaler & Sunstein <i>Nudge</i> (2008)
L — Liberate	Replacement behavioral activation	Behavioral Activation + Attachment	Bowlby, J. <i>Attachment and Loss</i> (1969)

Clinical note: DEAL does not depend on the adolescent’s willpower. It is an environmental design protocol — it modifies the conditions, not the behavior directly. The “A” (Automate) and the “L” (Liberate) have direct support in behavioral activation research and in parental attachment research. Honest positioning for parents: *“The simplest structure available for parents to design the environment instead of fighting against their child’s will.”*

MIRKO’S 5+1 QUESTIONS — ANALYSIS OF CONTROL SYSTEMS

COMPONENT	CLINICAL EQUIVALENT	FRAMEWORK	REFERENCE
Questions 1–5	Systemic cognitive restructuring	CBT + Systems thinking	Burns (5-column Thought Record) + tradition of complex systems analysis
Question 6 (3 diagnostic signals)	Evaluation of automatic cognitions	CBT ABCDE model	Seligman, M.E.P. <i>Learned Optimism</i> (1990)

Clinical note: The 3 diagnostic signals of Question 6 are binary, verifiable criteria. Burns would recognize them as a compressed Thought Record. Seligman would recognize them as a Disputation exercise from the ABCDE model. They have clinical structure even though they were not born in a laboratory.

THE 11-DAY TRACKER — BEHAVIORAL SELF-MONITORING

COMPONENT	CLINICAL EQUIVALENT	FRAMEWORK	REFERENCE
Daily question	Behavior self-monitoring	BCT	Michie et al. (2013)
DCI score	Baseline evaluation + follow-up	Basic psychometrics	Duckworth (Grit Scale); Seligman (Optimism Test)
The “no reset” rule	Tolerance for imperfection	ACT (psychological flexibility)	Hayes (2012)

THE 7 WARNING SIGNS — SCREENING FOR RELATIONAL DIGITAL DEPENDENCY

Clinical equivalent: CBT for digital cognitive distortions + Behavioral Activation.

Clinical note: The 7 signs are not DSM diagnostic criteria — they are observable behavioral indicators designed to trigger use of the Kit’s tools (3+ signs → PAUSE for adolescents, DEAL for parents). They should not be used as a standalone diagnostic instrument.

GUIDE FOR WORKSHOPS WITH ADOLESCENTS

Two-hour structure. Recommended group: 8–15 participants. Ages: 13–18.

PREPARATION (BEFORE THE SESSION)

Read Chapters 10, 12, and 16 of the book. Have printed copies of the PAUSE card (one per participant; printable PDF at thecodegeneration.com/kit). Have copies of the 11-Day Tracker (Appendix B). Set up a circular space — no tables between participants if possible.

BLOCK 1 — OPENING (20 MINUTES)

Objective: Break the isolation. Establish that the problem belongs to the system, not to the individual.

Opening question for the group: *“How many times did you check your phone today before coming here?”* Don’t ask for exact figures — ask participants to raise their hand if they think it was more than 50 times. More than 100. More than 200. The visual effect of the entire group with their hands raised breaks the assumption that “I’m the only one who does this.”

Read Warning Sign 1 aloud (The comparison that hurts). Ask: *“Has anyone ever felt that an app or a bot understood you better than a real person?”* Don’t force answers. Silence is also data.

BLOCK 2 — PAUSE LIVE (30 MINUTES)

Objective: Practice the protocol with a real scenario.

Hand out the PAUSE card to each participant. Read the 5 steps aloud. Ask each person to think of the last time they wrote something emotional to a bot or an app. Don’t share the content — only the situation.

Exercise: each participant applies PAUSE mentally to that situation. Afterward, in pairs, they share only one thing: *“Who could you have told instead of the bot?”* (Step S). If the answer is “nobody,” that is the most important starting point of the session.

BLOCK 3 — QUESTION 6 (30 MINUTES)

Objective: Apply the 3 diagnostic signals to a real digital relationship.

Read Question 6 aloud. The three signals. Each participant answers them in silence, in writing. Don’t share answers — they are private.

Then, open question to the group: *“What does it mean that something that cannot be hurt by you cannot love you?”* This is Marcus’s line (Chapter 10). Let the group sit with it. The facilitator doesn’t need to have the answer — they need to hold the space.

 **Caution:** If any participant shows signs of acute distress during this exercise, consult D.6 immediately.

BLOCK 4 — THE TRACKER AND CLOSING (30 MINUTES)

Objective: Give the participant a tool to take home.

Hand out the Tracker (Appendix B). Explain the mechanics: one question, every night, eleven nights. Explain the rescue rule: if you miss a day, the Tracker does not reset.

Ask for a minimal commitment: “*Can you do Day 1 tonight?*” Don’t ask them to commit to eleven days. Just to one. Adherence grows after the first night is completed.

Closing: quick round. Each person says one word that describes how they feel. No comments. No analysis. Just the word.

BUFFER (10 MINUTES)

Time for individual conversations after the session. Some participants need to say something they didn’t say in the group. Be available.

GUIDE FOR SESSIONS WITH PARENTS

Ninety-minute structure. Recommended group: 10–20 parents/caregivers.

PREPARATION

Read Chapters 13B and 14 of the book. Have printed copies of the 7 Warning Signs and the DEAL framework. Choose a space that allows conversation — not an auditorium.

BLOCK 1 — THE RECOGNITION (20 MINUTES)

Objective: Validate the parents’ experience without blaming them.

Opening question: *“Have you ever taken away your child’s phone and watched the situation get worse?”* Most hands will go up. That is the entry point: confiscation is not DEAL. DEAL is environmental design.

Read the 7 Signs. Ask each parent to identify how many they recognize in their child. Don’t share in the group — just write down the number.

BLOCK 2 — DEAL STEP BY STEP (40 MINUTES)

Objective: Each parent leaves with a concrete plan.

Walk through DEAL step by step. For each step, ask for a concrete example from the parent’s life:

- **D:** Functional, recreational, or relational? If they don’t know, ask: *“Does your child talk to the bot about things they don’t tell you?”*
- **E:** What have you tried that didn’t work? List it out. The list of failures is the map of what not to repeat.
- **A:** What protocol can you automate this week? Router timer, phone out of the bedroom, breakfast without screens. One concrete action.
- **L:** What are you going to put in the bot’s place? Not “go out more” — something specific. An activity, a schedule, a shared commitment.

BLOCK 3 — CARMEN AND ALEJANDRO (20 MINUTES)

Objective: Normalize fear and error.

Summarize Carmen and Alejandro’s story in Chapters 13B–14. Alejandro deleted the app. Luna reinstalled it. Confiscation failed. What worked was something else: presence, conversation, the 72 hours together in Chapter 17.

Ask: *“What would you have done in Alejandro’s place?”* There is no correct answer. The objective is for parents to see themselves in the story.

BLOCK 4 — CLOSING AND COMMITMENT (10 MINUTES)

Each parent writes down one concrete action they will implement this week. Just one. They share it with the person sitting next to them. That person is their accountability partner for the week.

ADAPTATIONS BY AGE

AGE	MAIN ADAPTATION	PRIORITY TOOL
10–12 years	Simplify PAUSE to 3 steps (P, S, E). Don’t use Question 6 — too abstract. Use the 7 Signs as a conversation with parents, not as self-application.	7 Signs (with parents) + simplified Tracker (daily Yes/No)
13–15 years	Complete Kit. Emphasize PAUSE and Tracker. Question 6 applicable with facilitation. DEAL for parents in parallel.	PAUSE + Tracker + Question 6 (facilitated)
16–18 years	Complete Kit without simplification. Emphasize autonomy and the 5 systemic Questions. DEAL as a peer-to-peer conversation, not only for parents.	Complete 5+1 Questions + Tracker
Adults (parents, teachers)	DEAL as the primary tool. 7 Signs as screening. Question 6 as an empathy exercise (“apply it to your child’s relationship”).	DEAL + 7 Signs + Question 6 (empathy)

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WHEN AN ADOLESCENT DISCLOSES SOMETHING DURING A SESSION

The tools in this book are designed to build self-awareness. Self-awareness sometimes opens doors that were closed. If you are facilitating a group or individual session with the Kit's tools and an adolescent discloses something that signals risk — severe emotional dependence, suicidal ideation, self-harm, or abuse — the tool stops and the professional protocol begins.

WHAT YOU DO :

Listen without interrupting. Don't minimize ("I'm sure it's not that bad") and don't dramatize ("this is very serious"). Both reactions close the door that has just opened.

Thank them for their trust. The most useful thing you can say in that moment is also the simplest: "Thank you for telling me this. I want to make sure you get the right help."

Don't promise confidentiality you can't keep. If the disclosure signals imminent risk, your legal and ethical obligation is to act. Say so clearly and with care: "What you're telling me matters, and I need to share it with someone who can help you the way you need."

Don't try to resolve the situation yourself. Activating the Referral Protocol (D.8) isn't abandonment — it's the opposite. It connects the adolescent with someone whose specific training allows them to do what you can't.

Document the disclosure as precisely as you can, immediately after the conversation. Date, time, exact words when possible, context. This record protects the adolescent and it protects you.

WARNING SIGNS THAT REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ACTION

These signs — whether you observe them during a session with the Kit’s tools or in any other setting — indicate that the adolescent needs professional evaluation, not in a few days, but now.

VERBAL SIGNS:

Direct or indirect expressions of a wish to die, to disappear, or to stop existing. Statements like “no one would miss me,” “they’d be better off without me,” or “I don’t want to keep going.” Any mention of methods, plans, or dates.

BEHAVIORAL SIGNS:

A sudden, sustained withdrawal — not the adolescent’s usual introversion, but an abrupt change. Giving away valued personal possessions. Implicit or explicit goodbyes in conversations or messages. A sudden calm after a prolonged period of distress — often read as “improvement,” it is the most dangerous sign of all.

SIGNS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE KIT:

The Tracker’s DCI score rising instead of falling after eleven days. Responses to Question 6 that produce acute distress rather than reflection. Extreme resistance to completing Step S of PAUSE — not from discomfort, but from terror that someone will learn what is happening.

If you see any of these signs: activate D.8.

REFERRAL PROTOCOL

A referral is not a failure of the facilitator or of the tools. It is the design working as intended: the tools generated the self-awareness needed for the problem to become visible. Now it needs an intervention that goes beyond psychoeducation.

Step 1: Contact the school counselor or designated mental health professional at your institution. If there isn't one, contact the principal or the student wellness coordinator.

Step 2: Inform the parents or legal guardians, unless there is well-founded reason to believe that doing so would place the adolescent at greater risk (in which case, consult the mental health professional before contacting the family).

Step 3: If risk is imminent and no professional is available, call 988 (US Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) or the local crisis line (see Appendix A.6), and stay with the adolescent until the connection to that resource is established.

Step 4: Follow up within the next 48 hours. A referral is not the end of the process — it is a transfer of clinical responsibility, not of the human relationship. The adolescent needs to know that the person who listened first is still there.

FINAL NOTE

This guide is free. There is no paywall, no required registration, no data collection. If you use it in your professional practice, all we ask is that the book reach the hands of the adolescents and families who need it.

Free download, no sign-up: thecodegeneration.com/kit

Facilitator's Guide v1.1 — Children of the Code / Los Hijos del Código

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CRISIS LINES

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — Call or text **988** (United States, English and Spanish)

Crisis Text Line — Text **HOME** to **741741** (United States)

findahelpline.com — International directory of crisis lines by country

Free download, no sign-up: thecodegeneration.com/kit