

BalancedLiving

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WHAT IS INTERNET ADDICTION

Internet addiction is described as an impulse control disorder, which does not involve use of an intoxicating drug and is very similar to pathological gambling.

Signs of Internet addiction include the following:

- Preoccupation with the Internet. (Thoughts about previous on-line activity or anticipation of the next on-line session.)
- Use of the Internet in increasing amounts of time in order to achieve satisfaction.
- Repeated, unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop Internet use.
- Feelings of restlessness, moodiness, depression or irritability when attempting to cut down use of the Internet.
- On-line longer than originally intended.
- Jeopardized or risked loss of significant relationships, job, educational or career opportunities because of Internet use.
- Lies to family members, therapist, or others to conceal the extent of involvement with the Internet.
- Use of the Internet as a way to escape from problems or to relieve a dysphoric mood. (e.g., feelings of hopelessness, guilt, anxiety, depression.)



Problems caused by Internet Addiction

Internet addiction results in personal, family, academic, financial and occupational problems that are characteristic of other addictions.

Impairment of real life relationships are disrupted as a result of excessive use of the internet. Internet addicts spend more time in solitary seclusion and spend less time with real people in their lives. Arguments may result due to the volume of time spent on-line. Internet addicts may attempt to conceal the amount of time spent on-line, which results in distrust and the disturbance of quality in once stable relationships.

Financial problems may occur due to the significant amount of time spent on-line and the service provider charges. Common financial issues are large bills for use of some services, the telephone connection charges and telephone bills for calls made to friends in chat rooms. Other financial charges may include a connection with compulsive spending/shopping. Internet addicts may choose to shop on-line and credit card charges for purchases may become high. Also, a connection with gambling exists with the availability of on-line casinos.

What makes the Internet addictive?

Some internet users may develop an emotional attachment to on-line friends and activities they create on their computer screens. Internet users may enjoy aspects of the internet that allow them to meet, socialize and exchange ideas through the use of chat rooms or "virtual communities". These communities allow the person the means to escape from reality and seek out means to fulfill unmet emotional and psychological needs, which are more intimate and less threatening than real life relationships.

Some Internet addicts may also create on-line personas where they are able to alter their identities and pretend to be someone other than themselves. The highest risk for creation of a secret life are those who suffer from low self esteem, feelings of inadequacy, and fear of disapproval from others. Such negative self concepts lead to clinical problems of depression and anxiety.

There is help for Internet Addiction. The Illinois Institute for Addiction Recovery at Proctor Hospital provides assessment and treatment services for the Internet addict. Counselors trained in the identification and treatment of Internet addiction provide professional assessments to determine if addiction to the Internet exists and placement into a level of care for treatment.

A free, confidential assessment may be scheduled by calling the Illinois Institute for Addiction Recovery at Proctor Hospital at (309) 691-1055 or 800-522-3784.

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SIMPLE SUMMER SAFETY

Before you run to the beach or go to the pool, read these tips to help you stay safe this summer.

Sunscreen

Protect your children's skin from the sun. Use sunscreen to cut down their risk of skin cancer later in life.

Here are some tips:

- Remember that sun exposure near water is increased by reflection from the water. You need to be particularly careful to avoid sunburn
- Wear a waterproof sunscreen of at least SPF 30 that protects against both UVA and UVB. Reapply the sunscreen periodically as recommended by the directions
- When out of the water slip on a light-colored comfortable clothing to protect against excessive sun exposure
- Use a beach umbrella or find shade when not actually in the water
- Wear UV proof sunglasses when not in the water



Safety in water

Swimming is fun for the whole family. It's great exercise. Although swimming is fun and healthy, you must take care because accidents can happen.

Follow these tips to help prevent drowning:

- Teach children to swim. If you can't teach them, enroll any child 4 or older in swimming lessons. Sign up for lessons yourself.
- If you have a pool at home, put a fence around the pool to keep small children out.
- Do not allow children to run or horseplay around the pool since wet surfaces are slick.
- Watch young children at ALL times. Don't do anything else while you are supposed to be watching the children. Don't talk on the phone, read or mow the lawn.
- Learn CPR, particularly if you have a pool at home.

Swimmer's ear

Swimmer's ear is an infection of the ear canal that can happen to children who spend a lot of time swimming underwater.

Here are some tips to help prevent a water-related ear infection:

- Wear earplugs.
- Clean the outer area of the ear but not the inside.
- After swimming put two drops of a 50/50 mixture of rubbing alcohol and vinegar in each ear. The alcohol breaks the water tension and helps the canal dry. The vinegar is anti-bacterial and anti-fungal.
- Never put anything in the ear. This includes cotton swabs.

Talk to your doctor if your child complains about:

- Itching in the ears or a feeling of stuffed-up ears
- Pain, tenderness or swelling of the ears
- Fluid draining from the ears
- Hearing loss

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SECRETS TO BUILDING YOUR CONFIDENCE AT WORK

Training and talent can help you do your job well and keep you moving forward in your career. But your performance can take a nosedive when your self-confidence is on the skids.

The following suggestions can help you restore and increase your on-the-job self-confidence.

Do your homework

Learn as much as you can about the subject at hand—whether you're giving a speech, asking for a promotion or making a sales call. You can't be overprepared when your performance is on the line.

Analyze your mistakes

Knowing what went wrong and what you can do to keep from making the same mistake again can help you turn a negative situation into one that boosts your confidence in your problem-solving abilities.

Don't take the easy way out

One reward of taking risks is an increased potential for higher achievement. Ask for added responsibility when given a choice between maintaining the status quo or doing something more.

Always act confident

Do your best to dismiss your fears if you're worried a speech, meeting or sales presentation will bomb. Force yourself to smile and shake hands firmly. Walk with your head up and your shoulders back.

Prioritize your tasks each day

Daily to-do lists are a must, but to really take control of your day, you should complete tasks in order of priority. Completing one high-priority assignment will boost your confidence more than doing four or five low-priority ones.

Make change a positive

Welcoming instead of fearing change makes it easier to identify the advantages and opportunities presented by new responsibilities and directions.

Keep a list of accomplishments

Refer to the list when your confidence needs a lift. Items to include: a major project you completed on time and under budget, a successful meeting you conducted, a reorganization of your filing system or mastery of a new computer program.

Post your goals where you can see them

Keeping them in front of you increases your chances of internalizing and achieving them. Setting goals and meeting them creates a pattern of success you can build on.

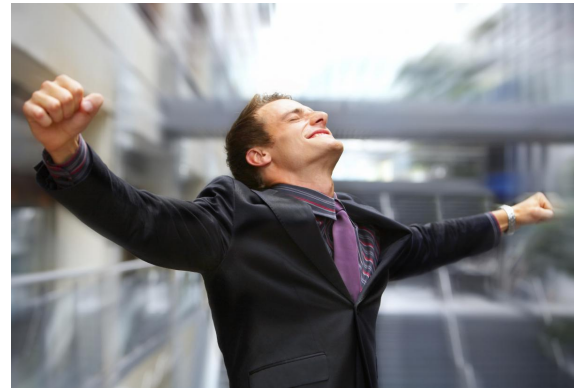


Stay calm when speaking with others

Rehearse difficult negotiations ahead of time. Excuse yourself if you are unable to control your emotions during a discussion.

Be responsible for your actions

Making yourself accountable for your failures also makes you responsible for your successes. If you take responsibility for your actions, you will believe that your hard work and intelligence-not luck-led to your achievements.



Avoid negative self-talk

Pay attention to your inner dialogue and replace negative comments with positive ones. For example: When your inner voice says, "I've got so much to do, I'll never get this assignment done on time," replace that thought with "I'm capable of focusing my energy on the task at hand and completing it in a timely fashion."

Don't be afraid of nervous energy

Butterflies in your stomach and a racing heart are your body's way of preparing for a challenge; they're confirmation that what you're about to do matters.

Compete against yourself

Assess your workplace performance for the past year. Then establish some specific goals for the year ahead. For example: increasing sales by 10 percent, getting to work on time every day, returning all your phone calls within 24 hours or completing routine administrative tasks 20% faster.

Keep your life in perspective

Maintaining a healthful balance between your personal and professional lives can help you weather a workplace crisis because you're less likely to define your self-worth by how well you do your job.

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