

Internet Addiction: Components and Consequences

Internet addictions share the following four components:

1. Excessive use, often associated with a loss of sense of time or a neglect of basic drives and duties.
2. Withdrawal symptoms, including feelings of anger, tension, and/or depression when the computer is inaccessible.
3. Tolerance, including the need for upgraded computer equipment, more software programs, and longer hours of use. In the addiction world, tolerance refers to how the body can get use to a medication so that you no longer get the same effect. In addictions it means you have to take more and more of a drug to get the same effect.
4. Negative repercussions, including arguments, family abuse, lying, poor achievement, social isolation, and fatigue.

Consequences

1. The important relationships that need nurturing will increasingly be neglected. This could result in more marriage failures, affairs, and family breakdowns (either parent neglecting their children or children avoiding their parents.)
2. Loss of employment, because of excessive use of the internet for personal uses while at work. Or, the distraction of the internet interfering with work effectiveness.
3. Loss of sleep. Where excessive use of the internet at home and late at night can lead to insomnia or just plain "sleep robbing." Lack of sleep is now linked to obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and the development of heart disease.
4. Diminished energy, not just from sleep deprivation, but also from excessive digital engagement in general.
5. Health problems associated with sitting for long periods, including eyestrain, carpal tunnel syndrome, headaches, backaches, and obesity.
6. Internet addiction opens the pleasure-center door on a lot of other addictions, such as gambling, gaming, and pornography, as well as drugs and alcohol.

Symptoms of Internet Addiction

- There is a heightened sense of euphoria whenever they are involved in Internet activities.
- There is a general neglect of friends and family, and priority given to internet activity.
- They have tried several times to cut back on internet usage but have failed in their attempts to control behavior.
- They suffer from serious sleep deprivation because they engage the internet well into the night.
- They develop a general style of dishonesty and increasingly engage in denial.
- Physical changes are noticeable, such as an increase in stress, weight gain or loss, backaches, headaches, high blood pressure, gastric or other health problems.
- They withdraw from all real-life activities that were once pleasurable, giving priority to some form of digital entertainment.
- They may have feelings of guilt, shame, anxiety, or depression that are the result of excess online behavior.