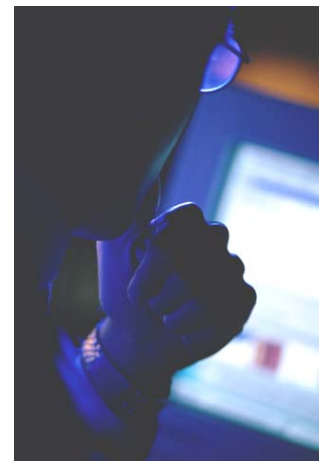


Hooked On The Internet?

Spending too much time on the Internet? Know someone who is? In homes across the country, these scenes are familiar: eleven year olds instant messaging their friends instead of doing their homework; teenagers playing on-line poker late into the night; adults spending hours surfing the web; people waking up in the middle of the night to join internet chat rooms.

The internet has made its way into most American homes, allowing easy, affordable access to information and bringing positive changes to many people's lives.

For others, however, the Internet's easy access and almost limitless opportunities have led to problems. Some people are drawn to the excitement of Internet gambling and lose control of the money they spend. Some find themselves shopping on-line for hours, spending more money than they should. Others use their computer to seek out on-line pornography. Once they're "hooked," the easy access and low risk of being caught lead people quickly into compulsive overuse. The on-line addict loses his ability to consider the consequences of his use and will stay on the computer all night to gamble, chat, play interactive games, or surf pornographic sites. Some people have so much difficulty resisting the urge to visit their favorite sites that they find themselves "sneaking" onto the sites while at work. Others are staying up all night, leaving for work the next day bleary-eyed and exhausted even though they had promised themselves they wouldn't do this to themselves again.



Almost everyone uses a computer, and many people occasionally stay on-line too long. So how do you draw the line between normal and unhealthy use? Ask yourself these questions:

1. Is your computer use interfering with your other responsibilities?
2. Is your on-line time leaving you exhausted or short-tempered?
3. Have others noticed a change in you?
4. Do you feel guilty about your Internet use?
5. Are you hiding your use from others? Sneaking to use without others knowing?
6. Are you spending too much money on your Internet habit?
7. Have you started to worry about your Internet use?

If you are concerned about your Internet use or are worried about someone you care about, help is available. Contact your EAP to discuss getting "unhooked"!

800-437-0911

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