Computer Addiction

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	WHAT'S COVERED

Although a computer is a valuable tool with many productive applications, some people develop usage habits that are counterproductive and can actually cause harm to their lives or the lives of others. This type of behavior tends to be categorized as addiction, due to the signs and consequences associated with it. In this tutorial, we will discuss computer addiction and how to receive assistance for it.

Our discussion will break down as follows:

1. Computer Addiction

Computer addiction refers to the excessive use of a computer as a primary form of stress relief. Computer addiction is characterized by continued excessive use, in spite of serious negative consequences in the addict's personal life. It, often times, manifests as uncontrolled gaming, uncontrolled viewing of pornography, or immoderate text messaging. There is no commonly accepted number of usage hours to describe a computer addict, as it is typically based on the consequences associated with a person's usage habits.

	TERM TO KNOW

Computer Addiction
Excessive use of a computer as a primary form of stress relief.

2. Signs of Computer Addiction

As with all addictions, people will usually display signs or symptoms that they are in some way dependent. Listed below are some signs of computer addiction.

Symptom	Description
Downplaying Computer Use	--Lying about time spent using a computer
Lack of Control	--Difficult time trying to quit using the computer --Habitually losing track of time while using the computer --Poor performance in school or at work as a result of time spent on computer and the

	type of information shared or activities participated in
Neglect	--Neglecting family and friends --Personal responsibilities (i.e. bills, school assignments)
Uncomfortable Feelings	--Upset or angry when time on computer is cut short --Using computer when upset, sad, or depressed --Anxious when not able to use a computer

3. Help for Computer Addiction

There are many resources for a person who has admitted to, or who displays, the signs of computer addiction. When in this situation, it is important to be very truthful about your feelings or the feelings of a loved one. Furthermore, limiting computer usage, engaging in other activities, and finding professional addiction counseling is highly advisable. The table below provides suggestions on how to cope with computer addiction.

Guideline	Activities
Set limits and restrictions on computer usage	--Schedule computer usage for designated times during the day --Ask friends or family to recommend amount of time to spend on the computer --Maintain a usage time limit (i.e., one hour on the computer only per day) --Use a stopwatch or timer to enforce usage time limits --Use computer for school work or professional reasons only --Use passwords to block access to unproductive or inappropriate websites --Uninstall unproductive software applications (games, entertainment software) --Restrict computer usage to certain places (i.e., library, school, job)
Engage in other activities	--Engage in physical activities (i.e., jogging, sports, walking, karate, etc.) --Pursue a hobby (i.e., painting, musical instrument, traveling) --Examine new ways of entertainment such as going to the movies, playing board games, or going to museums --Spend time with friends and family
Seek professional counseling	--Know the signs of addiction --Talk with a therapist --Join a support group --Seek help and support from family and friends

Recovering from computer addiction is not impossible, as there are many therapies for computer addicts today. It is important to understand that computer addiction should be treated individually and not similar to the treatment plans for addicts of other things such as drugs and alcohol. For example, drug addicts in treatment are often encouraged to completely abstain from the source of their addiction. The goal for computer addicts should not be to abstain completely from computers, as computers are a valuable tool. However, if there are problematic applications, then those should be avoided.

SUMMARY

Computer addiction, or excessive use of a computer with negative consequences, is a problem for some people. Knowing the **warning signs** or symptoms of computer addiction can **help** to prevent a situation from getting out of control. In this tutorial, we discussed what computer addiction is and the associated warning signs.

📄 TERMS TO KNOW

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