


When Technology Takes Over; Navigating the Teen Years

OCSB - Parent Conference
Longfields-Davidson Heights Secondary School
November 9, 2019



Rideauwood
ADDICTION & FAMILY SERVICES

Outline

- ▶ 1. Welcome
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- ▶ 6. How to get help
- ▶ 7. Questions and feedback

Rideauwood Overview

Founded in 1976, Rideauwood Addiction and Family Service is a non-profit agency serving adults, adolescents and family members. We provide non-residential, group and individual treatment, as well as training and consultation.

We currently provide the following programs:

- ▶ Adult / Family / Parent / RAOT
- ▶ School-Based / Youth & Young Adult / RAOT
- ▶ Adult Drug Treatment Court
- ▶ Youth Mental Health Court / Youth Probation
- ▶ Gambling
- ▶ Public Education, Training, & Consultation

School-Based Program

1986 – Present

- All 29 OCDSB high schools
 - Onsite weekly during school year
 - Support continues throughout the summer
 - Grades 7-12
- All 47 Senior Elementary Schools – RPEP
 - 2 presentations delivered to all grade 7 & grade 8 classes

School-Based Program

- Referrals
- Consent
- Confidential Counselling
- Parent Involvement – key fact
- School Staff Support & Collaboration
- Class Presentations



Prevention & Education Program

- RPEP
 - Provides an important aspect of life learning that students can build on as they progress through school
 - Builds resilience, self awareness, coping skills, refusal skills, and the understanding of potential risk factors, as well as, habit forming behaviours
 - Earlier identification of counselling needs
 - Assists in bridging services to the high school program

Definition

Addiction is any repeated behaviour, substance-related or not, in which a person feels compelled to persist, regardless of its negative impact on their life and the life of others.

Gabor Mate, 2008

DSM-V (2013)

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is the handbook used by health care professionals in most of the world as the authoritative guide to the diagnosis of mental disorders. DSM contains descriptions, symptoms, and other criteria for diagnosing mental disorders.

World Health Organization (WHO)

Diagnostic criteria:
Impaired control over gaming
Increasing priority to gaming vs other activities
Escalation of gaming despite negative consequences

(ICD-11, 2018)

DSM-V (2013)

- ▶ "Substance-related and Addictive Disorders" replaces the "Substance-related Disorders" category
- ▶ Gambling is the only recognized Behavioural Addiction (Addictive Disorder)
- ▶ Other behaviours under consideration for addictive disorders:
 - Video gaming, eating, internet (shopping, pornography, etc)
 - Under consideration for next DSM is that all these behaviours, including substance abuse, will be categorized as Behavioural Disorders

Technology Addiction

- › is an umbrella term that may include excessive behaviours related to playing video games, watching YouTube, streaming movies and sports, accessing social networks, cybersex and online porn, gambling, online shopping, social media, excessive texting or smartphone overuse.

How Are Video Games Addictive

- › Most video games are designed to be addictive
- › Video games allow the player to escape from their reality, to a place where they can live vicariously through their avatars.
- › Many games are multi-player, thus allowing people to build relationships with other people. This becomes a place where they're most accepted, which draws them back to the game and reinforces their behavior that may lead to addiction.
- › Research has shown that dopamine levels in players brains doubles while playing. Dopamine is a mood-regulating hormone associated with feelings of pleasure. (Weinstein, Livny, & Weitzman, 2017)

Considerations For Changes to Tech Use

- Given the universality of technology today abstinence is not a realistic goal. In most cases, a harm reduction approach, aiming to reduce the negative consequences is a more appropriate goal. Examples:
 - turning off all notifications
 - scheduled times to check technology
 - recognizing triggers for turning to technology and developing healthier ways of coping
 - practicing alternative ways of connecting to others without devices
 - tech use is not all bad - balance

Novelty -The Anticipation Effect in Gambling



Universal Risk Factor: Habit Strength

- How often an individual participates in a behaviour (their habit strength) is a key factor in the establishment of an addiction
- Low habit strength vs. high habit strength is based on repetition and frequency of the behaviour
- Research indicates that addictions can develop solely through high level of frequency and repetition i.e. based on high habit strength alone
(Grant, Potenza, Weinstein, & Gorelick, 2010)



Simulation Technology

- Simulation allows people to use their minds to get into a reality video game. It is an experience where you suspend your disbelief enabling you to be affected emotionally and cognitively.
- A virtual world is a computer-based online community environment that is designed for players to interact in a custom-built, simulated world. Users interact with each other through use of avatars.

Web Resources

- ▶ Gamequitters.com – a material for gamers by Cameron Adair
- ▶ Cameron Adair's TEDX talk on Video Game Addiction:
- ▶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHmC2D0_Hdg

Effects of Electronic Devices Based on Time/Usage

- Smart phones used in moderation (1–2 hours per day) has not been found to have a negative impact on mental health. Experts recommended 90 minutes of use per day
- Over 2 hours is correlated with a negative impact on mental health and social development. Research identifies 2 main factors:
 - Preoccupation with attending to the device and being connected to social media
 - a crowding out effect caused by spending excessive time on devices resulting in less time spent on activities that are linked to better mental health eg. exercise and face to face interactions

Research shows that electronic social interaction is not the same as face to face interaction in terms of their mental health, and emotional and social skill development.

Effects Continued

Due to overexposure to gaming (super-stimulation), the brain can go through three structural changes:

1. **Numbed Pleasure Response:** every day pleasures no longer satisfy them
2. **Hyper-reactivity to Gaming:** Everything else is boring, but gaming is super exciting
3. **Willpower erosion:** Due to changes to their prefrontal cortex. Even if they wanted to quit, they often lack the willpower to do it.

Research indicates that the brain needs 90 days to reset to normal dopamine levels

Dr. Huu KIM LE (2017)

Are students more stressed?

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- Screen time
- Social media
- Problem video gaming
- 63% (almost 2/3) spend >3 hrs/day of free-time in front of a screen

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- Sleep
- Only 41% of students have >6 hrs of sleep
- Physical activity
- Only 22% meet daily physical activity guidelines
- Face-to-face time with fellow humans

OSDUHS, 2015

How Much Screen Time Is Too Much

- There is no specific magic number, excessive screen time depends on the child
- Guidelines from various organizations exist
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines (2011)
- Age 0-2 Max screen time - none
- Age 2-4 Max screen time - 1 hr/day; less is better
- Age 5-17 Max recreational screen time 2 hrs/day; less is better
- If the screen use is causing problems, it's too much

Social Media Use Recommendations

Online Etiquette

- Be nice to others, helps them to self reflect
- Before posting publicly, ask yourself is any information sensitive, such as telling potential thieves that you are away on holidays, location information in photographs, etc. If so, then remove it

Use privacy settings appropriately - never "friend" people you don't know, in the real world

Family and Peer Support

- Adults should model healthy screen use: Choose healthy alternatives, such as reading, outdoor play and creative, hands-on activities. Turn off their devices at home during family time. Turn off screens when not in use and avoid background TV
- Screen time shouldn't always be alone time
- Remember the value of face-to-face communication
- Limit digital media for your youngest family members
- Other suggestions?

Communicating With Your Youth

- Observe positive behavior out loud
 - Choose your battles but ensure that teens understand they are not equals - that parents have the final say
 - Ask open ended questions
 - Limit screen time during family time - establish boundaries
 - Allow yourself time to reflect before answering requests from your youth
 - It's okay to make mistakes or be unsure and acknowledge that to your youth
 - Become computer savvy - ex. learn about cyber safety
- **Remember that it matters to your child what you think!



If Concerns Continue...

- Explain change is needed - dismissed
- Set limits and time frame - futile
- Seek outside support - options
- Discuss issues at neutral time - pro active
- Arguments and backlash - avoidance
- Give it time - manage expectations

Now What.....

- Expansion of support (OPH) (OPS)
- Recent changes for distracted driving - increase in fine - January 2019
- Ontario Ministry Releases Cellphone Restriction Guidelines
- More to come...

To Summarize

Key messages include:

- Habit forming behaviors - many of them
- All in moderation
- Change it up - not have a routine
- Technology is here to stay - evolving all the time
- Communication important - Supports available
- Notice patterns and offer options
- Change can be difficult - be patient and get own support ie parent program

Resources

- CAMH Center for Addiction and Mental Health - <http://www.camh.ca/>
- <http://www.ementalhealth.ca/>
- CHEO - Dr. Michael Cheng MD, FRCP(C) Staff Psychiatrist
- CMHA - Canadian Mental health Association
<https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/addictions-and-problematic-internet-use/>
- Rideauwood Addiction & Family Services
School Based Counsellors in every Ottawa high school

Questions or Comments?

Thank you for attending this session!

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