Gaming & Social Media Addiction

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Introduction

- My name is Nathan Driskell. I am a Licensed Professional Counselor – Supervisor with a private practice in the Houston / Cypress area.

- I specialize in treating Internet Addiction & Asperger's (High Functioning) Autism

- I am an Internet Addict. Specifically, I have Internet Gaming Disorder.

Personal Internet Addiction Definition

Internet Addiction consists of three main parts:

1. Spending excessive time online engaged in non-work or school activities that is disruptive to daily life.

2. While not online, **one often thinks about activities one will conduct online**, often distracting them from current activities.

3. Relationships suffer as a result of the misplaced time online, resulting in damage to the family system and to all members of the family.

Consequences of Internet Addiction

- In 2009, a couple in South Korea let their real life baby starve to death while raising a virtual child. They played an online game named Prius Online, where the care of a fake child, called an Anima, took priority over their own daughter. The husband served jail time while the wife received suspension. HBO made a documentary called "Love Child" discussing this case (Strochilic, 2014).

Consequences of Internet Addiction

- Joseph, a 20 year-old client I saw at my practice a year ago, was addicted to League of Legends, a popular online game. He spent 10-12 hours a day playing, and did not go to school or work. His parents brought him in because they did not know what to do. After six months of therapy he started to play games less and interact more in life. Joseph also suffered from social anxiety and career concerns. Joseph now attends college, has a job, and a girlfriend.

Technological Advances

- Smart Phones allow access to the Internet from anywhere.
- These phones give the user the ability to access their music, video, and social media from any location.
- Personal Computers will eventually be 100% portable, possibly even wearable (smart watches) or eventually implanted.
- Access to the Internet 24 hours a day is a reality.
- Released in 2016, the Oculus Rift allows user to engage within a virtual world. Users wear goggles which project a 3D world. By moving one's head, the scene will shift to the direction the user is viewing. Users will be able to interact via motions with their arms.

Components of Internet Addiction

- An Excessive amount of time spent online impacts all aspects of daily life.

- The activity of being online satisfies a need for the afflicted. This need, or multiple needs, are not being met in the real world.

- As with most addictions, most addicts do not understand the dire state of their addiction, and the overall consequences of continuing the addiction.

- Comorbidity with other disorders is high, especially depression.

- Relationships are strained or destroyed, especially with Online Sexual Addiction.

- Professional help with severe Internet Dependence is often required but hardly ever delivered.

- Addicts often switch to different addictions once 'cured'.

Online Gaming Addiction

- Millions of people around the world suffer from Online Gaming Addiction.

- Often online games allow a person to become someone different, allowing them to experience an 'ideal' life.

- Players often enter into virtual worlds, often with other real players. Players often enter into relationships with others, sometimes becoming romantic.

- To the addicted, the virtual world is more appealing then the real world. They exist in the real world to flourish in the virtual world.

- Many software companies understand the components of addiction, and have made their products as addicting as possible to increase profit.

Minecraft

Minecraft

- Minecraft is a virtual sandbox allowing players to create objects in a blocky 3D world. Players can build complex creations and can work together online.

- Minecraft is available for numerous systems, including: PC, OS X, Android, iOS, Windows Phone, XBOX 360, XBOX One, PS3, & PS4

- With numerous play modes and unlimited replay ability, users can spend thousands of hours in game.

- Minecraft can be productive and educational, and has numerous benefits, however it can also be addictive.

- Most autistic clients I have had were addicted to Minecraft and played 10-12 hours a day, often having meltdowns if not allowed to play.

Minecraft

- Minecraft is often an outlet for creativity, and while positive, can become obsessive.
- Some players have spent six months to a year on creations in Minecraft, which often become jobs to create.
- Many players use Minecraft for social interaction, especially children, as they can make friends who have a similar interest.
- Some of these relationships can be exploitative and dangerous.
- Minecraft addiction is one of the most severe addictions I see at my practice, with users feeling empty and without purpose if they cannot create within the game.

Destiny 2

Destiny 2

- Destiny 2 is a first-person shooter set in a science fiction universe. Players can play against the computer or each other.

- Players level up their characters by gaining EXP (experience points) used to upgrade their skills and abilities. EXP comes from completing missions and killing opponents.

- Players pick different classes which offer different skills and abilities, leading to a different play style.

- Players can play against each other (PVP) in various different game modes. This is the main focus of Destiny 2.

- Destiny 2 came out 2 months ago for Playstation 4 and Xbox One, and almost a month ago for PC.

- As far as first person shooters go, this is currently the most popular because it is new.

League of Legends

League of Legends

- League of Legends is a Multiplayer Online Battle Arena, Real Time Strategy Video game. It pits two teams of 4 real life players against each other in a variety of fantasy settings.

- Players choose "champions" each with different skills and abilities.

- The goal is for each team to destroy the other's nexus, which ends the match.

- League of Legends is highly competitive, with the top players spending 12-15 hours a day sharpening their skills.

- Considered an eSport, players spend months, even years, working up the rankings with the goal to be one of the top players in the world.

- Matches are televised in countries like South Korea, with top players earning millions of dollars.

League of Legends

- League of Legends is highly addictive, so much so most of my "hardcore" gaming addicts are addicted to it.

- While most hardcore players will spend 10-15 hours a day, most will never be good enough due to innate reflexes.

- Many of my clients addicted to League of Legends are often in their upper teens and early 20's, and wish to play to earn money and to make it their profession.

- Many of my addicts of League of Legends have social anxiety and career concerns, and wish to play League to avoid going to college or finding a real world job.

Social Media Addiction

- Social Media Addiction consists of spending hours per day on social media applications, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat Kik & others.

- According to a report by Common Sense Media, teens on average are spending 9 Hours a Day consuming media, with much of it being social media (Wallace, 2015).

- Often users talk with strangers whom they have befriended in the application. These "friends" are often mistaken for real friends, especially for those who have problems making friends in real life.

- Social Media Addiction can be severe, so severe people have lost jobs, families, and even their lives.

- Social Media Addicts can experience physiological withdrawal symptoms, such as shaking, if they do not have access to it.

Common Social Media Apps

- **GroupMe**: Texting app, it is free to use and includes group chat. Users can send GIF's, some with adult themes, such as drinking or sex.

- **Kik Messenger**: Another free texting app, Kik allows people to text each other. Stranger danger is a concern. It asks to connect to others in your address book, and is "pushy".

- **Instagram**: photo sharing app, Instagram allows users to post, share and edit photos. Users can private message people and some of the content can be of adult nature.

- **Tumblr**: A cross between a blog site and Twitter, Tumblr allows users to create short blogs that can include photos, music or videos. Pornography is easy to find and there are privacy concerns.

Common Social Media Apps

- **Twitter**: Now allows 280 character "tweets" sent to all your followers. These tweets can contain photos or videos. Pornography is extremely easy to find, and much of the community is vile and toxic.

- **Houseparty – Group Video Chat**: Allows from 2-8 people to connect via video. Can be made up of friends, but also random people if allowed. These chats are not monitored and screenshots can be taken, which allows for the possibility of pornography.

- **Live.me**: A Live Video streaming service, it allows users to view live content, and even broadcast their own. Inappropriate content is allowed and the community is toxic.

- **Snapchat**: A messaging application which allows for short term messages and pictures to be exchanged. These messages and pictures can be saved with the user's consent. A prime source of sexing and underage pornography.

Common Social Media Apps

- **Whisper**: a social "confessional" app that allows users to post anything they want, which is often sexual in nature.

- **Monkey – Have Fun Chats**: Allows users of Snapchat to connect to strangers for 10 seconds. Anything can happen in those 10 seconds, all though users can accept or reject a chat.

- **MeetMe**: Chat and Meet New People: While it is not marketed as a dating app, it might as well be. It asks for a lot of information of the user, such as first and last name, age and zip code, which can be used by others to find your location. (Elgersma, 2017)

Warning Signs for Internet Addiction

- Increased time spent on the computer, or any device with internet access, including: cell phones, gaming counsels (Xbox, PS4, Wii U), computers, notebooks, netbooks, smart watches.
- Anxiety present if not allowed to access the Internet, or the desired component of the Internet.
- Neglect of responsibilities including: home, work, school and relationships.
- Obsessive thoughts when not online about future internet activities.
- Defensive attitude when confronted.
- Neglecting real life relationships.
- Large increase in online relationships.
- Anger issues are common for Internet Addicts, as games or social media often lead to anger outbursts.

What You Can Do

- Take control of all your child's devices. They are your devices, you are the parent.

- Learn about all the Apps and games they play.

- Learn who they talk to and who their friends are.

- Set a time for online access and times where there is none.

- Limit the amount of electronics in their room, especially phones while they sleep.

- Use Parental Control Applications such as Norton Family to know what your children are up to online.

- Talk to your children about their online activities and show interest in their world, as not all apps or games are bad.

- If you feel your child is addicted to games, social media or electronics in general, find a therapist to help in this, as these addictions should be taken seriously.

Parental Control Applications

- Norton Family (PC's + Android): http://bit.ly/1B0J8bR - Free + Paid Version

- Qustodio (PC, Android, iOS): http://bit.ly/1Jj0U0d - Free + Paid Version

- Net Nanny (Android, iOS): http://bit.ly/1Jvy62W - Free Trial, Paid

- WebWatcher (PC, Mac, Android, iPhone, iPad): http://bit.ly/1uq5CAt - Paid

Resources
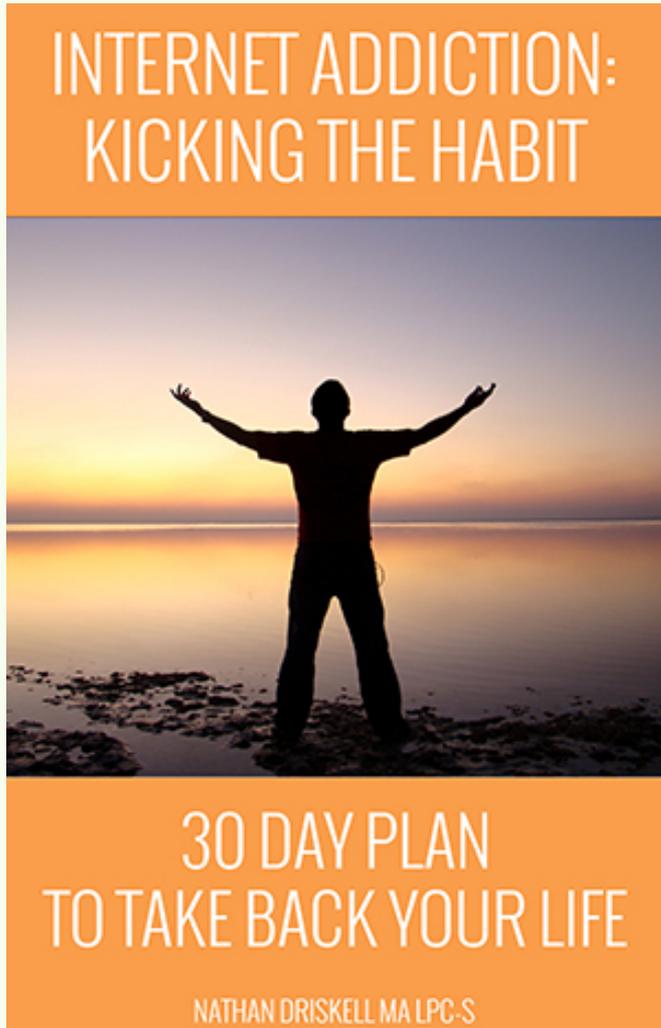
Internet Addiction: Kicking The Habit: 30 Day Plan To Take Back Your Life

http://amzn.to/2vya4Hs

Available on Amazon via EBook or Paperback

For all Mental Health Professionals, I am offering this book to you **for free!** E-Mail me, explain you are a mental health professional, and I will e-mail the book to you!

Resources

Is Your Child Addicted to Electronics? 30 Days of Healing & Recovery For Your Child & Family

http://amzn.to/2vD8eU5

Available on Amazon via EBook or Paperback

For all Mental Health Professionals, I am offering this book to you **for free**! E-Mail me, explain you are a mental health professional, and I will e-mail the book to you!

IS YOUR CHILD
ADDICTED TO ELECTRONICS?

30 DAYS OF HEALING & RECOVERY
FOR YOUR CHILD & FAMILY

NATHAN DRISKELL MA LPC-S
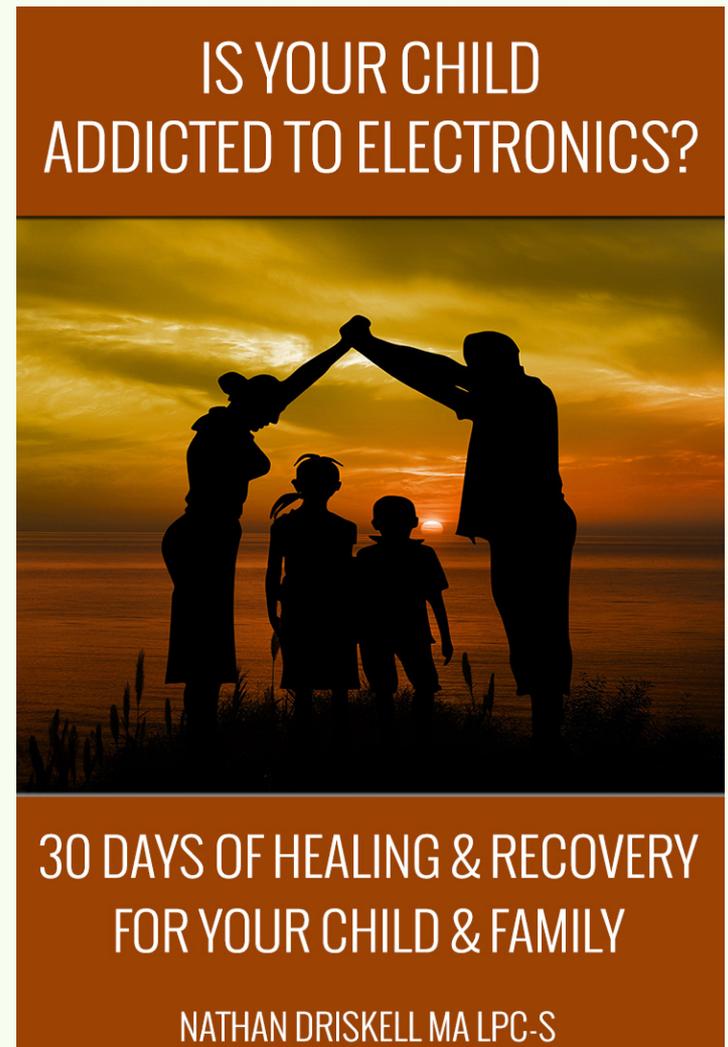
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