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Article 2

The Net is No Joke

Have you ever been out to dinner with a friend who interrupts your conversation to check their Blackberry? For some, the Internet may be turning into an addiction. Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD) is becoming more of a problem around the country. However, according to the actual book for classification and treatment of addictions called the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, IAD has not yet been classified as a true addiction. On the other hand, IAD is exemplified by addiction-like symptoms including excessive time spent with the addictive substance, lack of interest in relationships, lack of sleep, and difficulty reducing use (Louis).

People who spend excessive amounts of time online tend to suffer with the exact same issues that other addicts experience. These issues include difficulties with employment, relationships with family and friends, and even financial problems (MacMillan). According to Dr. Kimberly Young, who presented the first research on IAD in 1996, if the Internet is the cause of major issues in your life, then you have a problem (Louis).

The Internet is like the food or drugs in the other addictions that people struggle with. It provides a similar high that people become dependent on in order for them to feel normal. These types of people are looking for the temporary fix of pleasure opposed to the normal long-term positive feeling of relationships. Also, Internet addicts battle to control their behaviors and experience hopelessness when they constantly see themselves

fail. Overtime, their loss of self-esteem grows, which triggers them to continue their ritual of addictive behaviors (Louis).

In order to be diagnosed with IAD certain criteria must be met. First, you are preoccupied with the Internet. All you can think about is previous Internet activity or you anticipate the next time you will be online. Second, you need to spend longer and longer amounts of time online in order to feel satisfied. Third, you do not succeed at your efforts in controlling, cutting back, or stopping Internet use. Fourth, you tend to be restless, moody, depressed or irritable. Finally, you end up staying online much longer than you originally intended (Louis).

It is estimated that almost one in eight Americans suffer from at least one sign of IAD. If you are experiencing one or more of the symptoms, you should seek help. In fact, reStart is an IAD recovery center that offers a 45-day program to help Internet addicts. It helps wean people off of online activities such as gaming, texting, and Facebook (Louis).

Other treatment options include counseling, support groups, and other educational workshops. Treatment for Internet Addiction primarily focuses on moderation and controlled use of the Internet. It is important to address the underlying problems in the Internet addict's life that are causing them to use the Internet as means of escaping other things (The Center).

Works Cited

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