

# INTERNET ADDICTION

Internet addiction is described as an impulse control disorder, which does not involve use of an intoxicating drug and is very similar to pathological gambling.

Similar to other addictions, those suffering from Internet addiction use the virtual fantasy world to connect with real people through the Internet, as a substitution for real-life human connection, which they are unable to achieve normally.

Do you play **video games** on the Internet in **excess**? Are you compulsively shopping online? Can't physically stop checking Facebook? Is your **excessive computer use** interfering with your daily life – relationships, work, school? If you answered **yes** to any of these questions, you may be experiencing this disorder's symptoms.

## WHAT CAUSES IT?

Like most disorders, it's not likely to pinpoint an exact cause of Internet Addiction Disorder.

Some studies link Internet Addiction Disorder to physically changing the brain structure – specifically affecting the amount of gray and white matter in regions of the **pre-frontal brain**. This area of the brain is associated with remembering details, attention, planning, and prioritizing tasks.

It is suggested that one of the causes of Internet Addiction Disorders is structural change to that specific area of the brain.

Predispositions of Internet addiction are also related to anxiety and depression. Oftentimes, if you are already suffering from anxiety or depression, you may turn to the Internet to relieve your suffering from these conditions.

“Every social association that is not face-to-face is injurious to your health”

– Nassim Nicholas Taleb





## SYMPTOMS

Some of the emotional symptoms of Internet Addiction Disorder may include:

- Depression
- Dishonesty
- Feelings of guilt
- Anxiety
- Inability to Prioritize or Keep Schedules
- Isolation
- No Sense of Time
- Defensiveness
- Avoidance of Work
- Mood Swings
- Fear
- Loneliness
- Boredom with Routine Tasks
- Procrastination

## Treatment

If you do not believe you have a problem, you are not likely to seek treatment. One of the overarching problems with the Internet is that there is often no accountability and no limits. You are hidden behind a screen – and some things that you may say or do online are things you would never do in person.

In many instances, multimodal treatments have been employed to treat Internet Addiction Disorder. In this method of treatment, if you are suffering from this condition, you might be prescribed both medications and psychotherapy to treat your addiction to the Internet.



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