

# 9 Warning Signs

# Digital Addiction

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Sustainable  
Development Goals  
and Targets



# Parent Rules of Engagement: “3 Things to Avoid”

## Avoid Labels

Don't use labels to describe teens. They are still learning and growing. Their characteristics are not fixed. When labels are used, it is difficult for them to ever get out of your box. Labeling is a way to classify people.

## Avoid Shutting Down

Commit to being engaged and intentional about creating a workable solution that the entire family can get behind. Shutting down is not an option.

## Avoid Disrespect

Honor each other and ensure everyone is heard.

Part 1:

# Understanding Digital Addiction

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Digital Addiction

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2022  
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# What is Digital Addiction?

Digital Addiction is the obsessive and compulsive overuse of technology as an escape from life, resulting in the prioritization of technology use over daily activities and interests and the continuation of use despite the negative consequences that may occur.

In 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) classified internet gaming disorder, a form of digital addiction, in their International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). The ICD-11 is a list of diseases and medical conditions that health professionals use to make diagnoses and treatment plans. (Effective January, 2022)<sup>06</sup>\*

Medical News Today\*



# Why The Concern?

Researchers analyzed the levels of dopamine release in the brains of about 20 ex-drug users and non-users as they played a motor-bike riding computer game and using their cellphones. They found that it affected dopamine release at levels similar to those exhibited by using drugs like ecstasy. These results imply that excessive use of technology may resemble substance abuse or addiction in that it may be a strategy that children use to cope with negative emotions like frustration, fear, and stress.

Similar studies on other forms of technology have resulted in similar outcomes such as social media and use of internet devices.



Part 2:

# 9 Warning Signs Of Digital Addiction



"Gaming floods the pleasure center of the brain with dopamine," says David Greenfield

# What Are the Warning Signs?

The American Psychiatric Association has identified nine warning signs to watch for when it comes to recognizing digital addiction. Although these can be helpful to better understand the severity of your own situation, it's important to always seek the advice of a professional.

*NOTE: If your teen meets five (or more) of the following warning signs in a 12-month period, you may have an addiction and should seek the help of a professional immediately.*





# 1. Preoccupation with video games

Your teen constantly thinks about digital or technology use activity or anticipates their next use of device, gaming, or other internet technology; and this becomes the dominant activity in their daily life.





## 2. Withdrawal symptoms

Your teen experiences withdrawal symptoms when their digital devices, gaming, or internet technology is taken away. These symptoms are typically described as anger, disrespectfulness, irritability, anxiety, boredom, cravings, or sadness.



## 3. Increased tolerance

Your teen has a need to spend increasing amounts of time engaged in video games. With gaming, this may be motivated by a need for the completion of increasingly intricate, time-consuming, or difficult goals to achieve satisfaction and/or reduce fears of missing out. With other technology, it may be motivated by increasing hours spent on devices, social media, or other technology.





## 4. Unsuccessful attempts to control use

Your teen becomes unsuccessful at controlling their participation in using their devices, gaming, or other technology use.



## 5. Loss of interest in previous hobbies

Your teen experiences a lack of interest in the things they used to enjoy. Technology use because their sole form of entertainment. Getting them to spend time with family and participate in activities outside of technology use becomes difficult.





## 6. Disregard for negative results

Despite the experience of negative results such as a drop in grades, detachment, health issues, and knowledge of psychosocial problems, your teen continues to spend excessive time using digital devices and interacting with technology. They begin to make excuses and blaming others for their results and choose to ignore the negative impact from technology overuse.



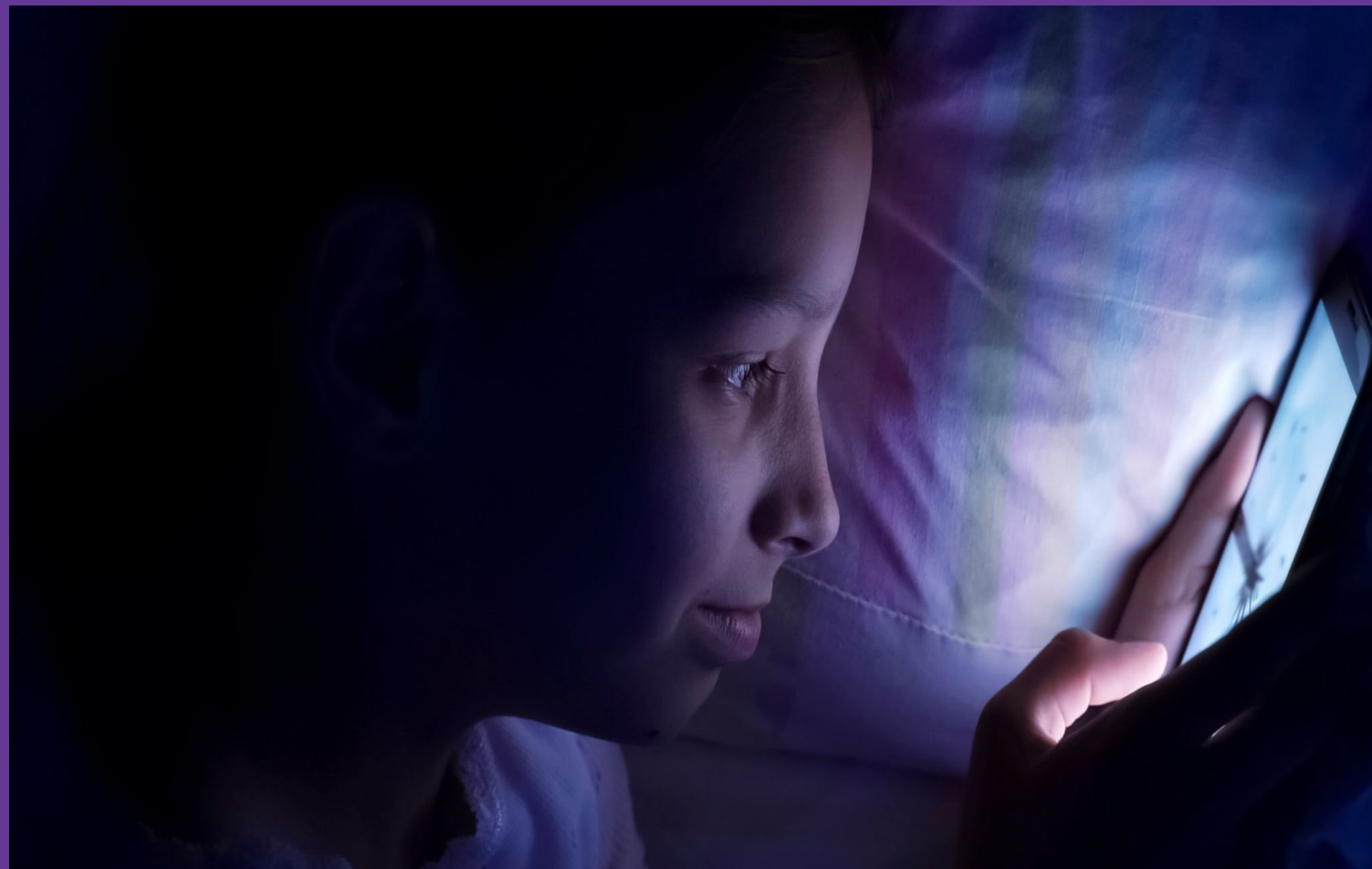
## 7. Deception and dishonesty

Your teen is dishonest about the amount of time spent using digital devices, and when asked about it underestimates the time spent. They are dishonest about their usage with family members, therapists, or others regarding their technology usage.



# 8. Uses technology to escape

Your teen uses technology as a way to escape the real world to avoid emotions. They use technology as a way to shift their mood and deal with feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety.



## 9. Negative impact to relationships

Your teen has jeopardized significant relationships. Their technology usage has impacted their relationships at home, in school, and/or at work.



Part 3:

# Intervention

# What You Can Do To Support Your Teen: *Growth* *Work*

## 1 Action Step 1

Help your teen breakthrough the psychology that keeps them overusing technology

## 3 Action Step 3

Help them discover their vision and purpose

## 5 Action Step 5

Be intentional about helping them navigate their emotions

## 2 Action Step 2

Avoid boredom and find new hobbies and replacement activities

## 4 Action Step 4

Give them tools to manage their time effectively

## 6 Action Step 6

Support them in cultivating a strong mindset and prevent distractions



# Steps to Quit

- Support your teen in breaking through cognitive biases and attachments, and letting go
- Help your teen find new hobbies and fill their days with other hobbies and activities
- Encourage them to commit to living their potential and accomplishing their goals instead of escaping and procrastinating
- Get them help with navigating the range of emotions and urges that will surface when they quit
- Help them to cultivate their mindset and prepare for obstacles
- Give them access to a coach to support them in setting goals and reaching milestones



# Take the 7-Day Digital Detox Family Challenge

Join us for the 7-Day Digital Detox Family Challenge to disconnect from technology and reconnect with family. Use this time to find new ways to spend your time, increase communication, and reset your family on the right track - one that moves your family forward in accomplishing your goals and dreams.

**“We cannot escape technology, but we can manage it so it doesn’t negatively impact our lives.” - Tamrah Barber**