



CARE's WorkLife Solutions

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Addicted to the “Net”

The Internet is a wonderful, useful addition to our lives. Yet, reports about problems associated with the Internet — “people” problems, not technical problems — show that its use can have complications. Some couples have divorced and others have separated because one partner spent too much time on the ‘Net. Others lost their partners to an “Internet romance.” Still more individuals have sought help for problems related to Internet pornography or gambling sites.

To determine if you or someone close to you may have a problem related to use of the Internet, answer the following questions truthfully and honestly.

- Do you need more and more time at your computer or on the Internet?
- When you try to cut back on your use, do you get anxious or find that you are constantly thinking about what you are missing?
- Are your friendships, schoolwork or health suffering because of the amount of time you spend online?
- Are you spending too much for unneeded items online or upgrading your computer to hold more and more downloads?
- Do you lose awareness of time when you are online chatting, gaming, etc?
- Have you lost sleep or missed appointments because of your use?
- Have you tried unsuccessfully to cut back on your Internet use?
- Do other people comment negatively on the amount of time you spend at the computer?
- Do you block out disturbing thoughts about your life with soothing thoughts of the time you spend online?
- Do you think your life without the Internet would be boring, empty or joyless?
- Do you act annoyed at people for bothering you when you are online?

As you can see from these questions, Internet overuse can create problems. If you answered "yes" to several of these questions, you might consider learning ways to decrease the amount of time you or someone close to you spend online.