

Neuroscience

# Online Addiction

## A New Form of Mental Health Issue

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Online addiction, a relatively new phenomenon in the realm of mental health, has rapidly emerged as a significant concern in today's digital age. With the pervasive use of technology and the internet in daily life, individuals are increasingly at risk of developing problematic behaviors related to online activities. This article delves into the complex landscape of online addiction, exploring its definitions, prevalence, and the profound impact it has on mental health. By examining the signs, symptoms, and consequences of online addiction, as well as discussing intervention strategies and preventative measures, this perspective review aims to shed light on this pressing issue and provide insight into navigating the challenges of excessive internet use.

**Keywords:** Online Addiction; Internet; Mental Health; Psychological Effects; Intervention

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### Introduction

ONLINE addiction, also known as internet addiction, refers to a compulsive behavior of spending excessive amounts of time on the internet to the detriment of one's social, personal, and professional life (1). Like other forms of addiction, individuals who are addicted to the internet may experience withdrawal symptoms, loss of interest in other activities, and difficulty controlling their usage. This addiction can manifest in various forms, including compulsive gaming, social media obsession, online gambling, and constant shopping. The constant connectivity and accessibility of the internet make it easier for individuals to become addicted, as they can quickly fulfill their cravings and escape reality with just a few clicks.

Online addiction can have serious consequences on an individual's mental health, social relationships, and overall well-being (2, 3). It can lead to feelings of isolation, depression, anxiety, and even physical health issues from extended periods of sedentary behavior. Relationships with family and friends may suffer as the individual becomes more engrossed in their online activities, leading to strained or broken connections. In extreme cases, online addiction can lead to financial ruin, loss of employment, and legal troubles. It is important for individuals to recognize the signs of addiction and seek help if they find themselves struggling to control their internet usage.

### Impact of Online Addiction on Mental Health

## Psychological Effects of Online Addiction

The proliferation of internet connectivity via smartphones, tablets, and computers has facilitated the predilection of individuals to become engrossed in online pursuits. Individuals afflicted with this addiction may experience severe psychological repercussions, including anxiety, depression, and social isolation (4).

Anxiety is a prominent psychological consequence associated with online addiction. When they are unable to access the internet, individuals who are preoccupied with monitoring their social media accounts or playing online games on a regular basis may experience anxiety (5). A perpetual desire for validation and stimulation in the digital realm may result in the development of anxiety and agitation. Depression is another prevalent psychological consequence of online addiction. An excessive quantity of time spent online may result in feelings of isolation and disconnection from the physical world (6). Additionally, using social media to compare oneself to others can result in low self-esteem and sentiments of inadequacy. This may potentially exacerbate the risk factors for depression and other mental health disorders. An additional psychological consequence of online addiction is social isolation. An excessive amount of time spent online can result in a dearth of in-person social interactions, which can induce physical and emotional isolation in individuals (7). This may negatively affect their well-being and mental health as a whole.

One of the major reasons for online addiction is the constant availability of the internet and the allure of endless entertainment and information. With smartphones, tablets, and computers always within reach, it is easy to become engrossed in the online world. This constant connectivity can lead to a compulsive need to check social media, play online games, or binge-watch videos, resulting in decreased productivity and disrupted sleep patterns.

Furthermore, social media platforms can exacerbate feelings of anxiety and inadequacy (8). Constantly comparing oneself to others on social media can lead to feelings of low self-esteem and heightened anxiety. Additionally, the fear of missing out (FOMO) can prompt individuals to constantly check their social media feeds, leading to a cycle of stress and anxiety.

Online gaming addiction is another common form of online addiction that can contribute to feelings of anxiety (9). Gamers may become so immersed in their virtual world that they neglect their real-life responsibilities and relationships. This can lead to feelings of guilt, isolation, and anxiety as individuals struggle to balance their online and offline lives.

## Online Addiction and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

This is especially worrisome for those who are afflicted with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), as they may already struggle with maintaining focus and controlling their actions. The convergence of online addiction and ADHD may result in even more severe repercussions.

One of the main factors contributing to the increased vulnerability of individuals with ADHD to online addiction is their impaired ability to regulate their impulses. Individuals diagnosed with ADHD frequently encounter difficulty in refraining from engaging in online activities that offer instant gratification,

such as browsing social media or playing video games (10). Individuals find it challenging to disengage from these activities due to the momentary respite from their symptoms provided by the dopamine release that accompanies these behaviors.

An additional element that contributes to the convergence of online addiction and ADHD is the perpetual stimulation that the digital environment offers. Individuals with ADHD may find the online environment to be overwhelming due to the capability of switching between multiple tasks with a few keystrokes, the constant influx of notifications, and the availability of new content (11). The persistent stimulation they experience may exacerbate their difficulty in maintaining focus on tasks that demand extended attention. As a result, they may resort to the readily comprehensible content offered by the internet as a refuge. Additionally, time management and organization may be difficult to comprehend for those with ADHD, which can facilitate their tendency to lose track of time when participating in online activities. This may result in decreased productivity, neglect of responsibilities, and excessive screen time. These problems are further compounded by the addictive qualities of online activities, which establish a detrimental cycle that may be difficult to disrupt.

To effectively manage online addiction among individuals with ADHD, it is critical that healthcare personnel implement concurrently targeted interventions that target both conditions. Potential interventions for individuals with ADHD may consist of cognitive-behavioral therapy to assist in the development of more adaptive coping strategies, medication management to alleviate symptoms, and mindfulness-based practices to enhance attention and self-regulation (12).

Individuals with ADHD must ultimately recognize the dangers associated with online addiction and seek assistance if they are unable to maintain control over their online activities. By adopting a holistic approach that concurrently tackles online addiction and ADHD, individuals can reestablish agency over their lives and mitigate the detrimental effects of these disorders on their general state of being.

## Online Addiction and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Online addiction can worsen pre-existing mental health conditions, such as obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), which is one of the reasons it is so hazardous. OCD is a mental health condition distinguished by distressing, undesirable thoughts and repetitive actions performed with the intention of alleviating anxiety. Individuals with OCD may find solace in the constant stimulation and immediate gratification that they encounter online; this, however, can exacerbate the challenges they face in their efforts to overcome their compulsive behaviors.

Moreover, the characteristics of online activities may exacerbate symptoms of OCD. A person with OCD might, for instance, feel obligated to monitor their email or social media accounts frequently throughout the day in search of validation or reassurance through likes and comments (13). When the desired response is not received, this behavior can rapidly spiral out of control, resulting in increased anxiety and tension; this reinforces the cycle of compulsive behavior.

Real-life social interactions may also be diminished as a

result of online addiction, which may exacerbate OCD symptoms (14). Individuals diagnosed with OCD may choose to spend their time alone online rather than interacting with others, thereby strengthening their dependence on the internet as a coping mechanism. Due to the stigma associated with mental health issues, this may also result in feelings of guilt and shame, as individuals may be ashamed of their conduct and find it difficult to seek assistance.

Online addiction and OCD frequently co-occur, forming a difficult-to-break pernicious cycle (15). It is critical that those afflicted with these problems obtain professional assistance and the support of their loved ones. By acquiring knowledge about effective coping mechanisms and addressing the root causes of online addiction, people can initiate constructive transformations in their lives and liberate themselves from the shackles of compulsive online conduct.

### **Online Addiction and Substance Abuse**

Substance abuse and online addiction are prevalent problems that are becoming increasingly problematic in contemporary society. Although they may appear to be unrelated issues, a profound correlation exists between the two. Online addiction, the compulsive and excessive utilization of the internet, could result in adverse life repercussions. In contrast, substance abuse pertains to the improper utilization of narcotics or alcohol, resulting in adverse outcomes as well. Significant effects can be caused by both of these addictions on an individual's physical and mental health, relationships, and well-being.

A correlation can be observed between substance abuse and online addiction via the practice of self-medication. A number of people utilize the internet as a means of escaping their problems or managing their tension and anxiety (16). Engaging in self-medication may result in a spiral of addiction wherein people resort to substances or the internet as a means of contending with their issues, instead of seeking assistance from qualified professionals or adopting healthier coping strategies.

An additional correlation between substance abuse and online addiction is the detrimental effects both can exert on an individual's mental well-being. The presence of both addictions has the potential to exacerbate emotions of melancholy, anxiety, and isolation. A lack of real-life connections and social withdrawal can result from excessive online time, whereas substance abuse can cause changes in brain chemistry and worsen mental health problems (17). A negative feedback cycle may result when individuals resort to online activities or substances as a means of coping with symptoms related to their mental health, only to exacerbate those symptoms over time (18).

Moreover, substance abuse and online addiction may equally impact an individual's physical well-being. A sedentary lifestyle and physical health issues, including eye strain and migraines, may result from excessive internet usage. In a similar fashion, physical health can be negatively affected by substance abuse, resulting in complications with the liver, heart, and other organs. Substandard self-care and unhealthy lifestyle decisions can be induced by both addictions, thereby increasing the risk of a wide range of health complications (19, 20).

Substance abuse and online addiction are closely related, as both can have severe consequences for an individual's physi-

cal and mental well-being. Individuals grappling with these challenges must prioritize the pursuit of assistance and support in an effort to escape the recurring pattern of addiction. Through confronting the root causes of these behaviors and cultivating more adaptive coping strategies, people can strive towards attaining a harmonious and gratifying existence, devoid of the adverse repercussions associated with addiction.

## **Signs and Symptoms of Online Addiction**

### **Behavioral Indicators**

An indication of online addiction through behavior is the excessive amount of time spent on online platforms. Internet-dependent individuals might devote several hours per day to online activities such as gaming, social media, or web perusing. They may neglect responsibilities such as school, work, or relationships in favor of online time, as they frequently lose track of the passage of time.

Abdominal withdrawal symptoms are an additional behavioral indicator of online addiction (21). Internet-dependent individuals may encounter emotions of anxiety, agitation, or restlessness in the absence of internet access. Individuals may experience a pronounced desire to establish an internet connection and may encounter challenges in maintaining concentration until they are able to do so.

Additionally, individuals who are addicted to the internet may experience mood and behavioral changes (22). They might conceal the extent of the time they dedicate to online activities from their loved ones and associates. Additionally, they might exhibit signs of agitation or defensiveness when confronted regarding their online activities. Additionally, their internet addiction may cause them to experience alterations in their sleep patterns or mood fluctuations.

Additionally, behavioral indicators of online addiction may manifest as physical symptoms. Extended periods of screen time may lead to headaches, eye strain, and other forms of physical distress in individuals who engage in excessive online activity (23). In lieu of spending time online, they might also neglect their physical health by foregoing meals or not getting enough exercise.

### **Emotional and Cognitive Signs**

A profound emotional indicator of online addiction is the presence of feelings of seclusion and solitude. Addicts to the internet frequently place greater emphasis on their virtual engagements than on their interpersonal connections offline, resulting in sentiments of estrangement from cherished ones and friends (24). As they become more dependent on the virtual world for validation and pleasure, they may also experience a lack of fulfillment and meaning in their lives.

An additional affective manifestation of online addiction is erratic behavior and irritability. Extreme amounts of time spent online may induce anxiety, melancholy, and stress, which may manifest as temperamental and behavioral changes. When individuals encounter obstacles in participating in their preferred online activities, they may experience feelings of frustration, agitation, or withdrawal, which can negatively impact their interpersonal relationships and social interactions.

Cognitive consequences may accompany emotive symptoms of online addiction, which may adversely affect an individual's mental well-being. Cognitive symptoms that frequently accompany online addiction include impaired concentration and memory. Academic or professional performance may be negatively affected by an individual's inability to concentrate, retain information, or make decisions due to excessive internet usage (25, 26).

An additional cognitive manifestation of online addiction is an altered perception of the world. Individuals who suffer from internet addiction may experience challenges differentiating between the physical and virtual realms, which can result in feelings of perplexity, disorientation, and a disconnection from reality (27). This can lead to a distorted sense of self-worth, reckless behavior, and impaired judgment.

Furthermore, addiction to online platforms can worsen pre-existing mental health conditions, including but not limited to anxiety and depression. Individuals who are predisposed to these conditions may resort to online activities as a means of escaping their problems or contending with them, thereby initiating a cycle of addiction and negative reinforcement. This may impede individuals from confronting their fundamental concerns and pursuing suitable intervention, thereby contributing to the continuation of their online addiction.

The presence of cognitive and emotional indicators of online addiction can have profound consequences for the holistic welfare of an individual. It is critical that individuals recognize the indicators of online addiction and seek assistance if they encounter any of these indications. Individuals can regain autonomy and prioritize their mental and emotional well-being by recognizing the adverse consequences associated with extensive internet usage and implementing measures to restrict their online activities.

## **Risk Factors and Vulnerable Populations**

### **Factors Contributing to Online Addiction**

An important determinant in the development of online addiction is the ease of access to the internet. Due to the proliferation of smartphones and other portable devices, virtually anyone, at any time, can access the internet. Constant access facilitates the development of addictions to online activities, including but not limited to social media, online gaming, and purchasing.

Moreover, social isolation may play a role in the development of online addiction. By facilitating connections with others, the internet has the potential to alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation for certain individuals (28). Conversely, an inordinate amount of time spent online can engender a sense of isolation and foster a recurring pattern of relying on the internet for social engagement.

Insufficiency of self-control frequently contributes to the development of online addiction (29). Certain individuals struggle to establish boundaries on their internet usage, leading them to lose track of the time they spend online and neglect other obligations and pursuits. This deficiency in self-control may facilitate individuals in developing an addiction to the internet and subsequently encounter challenges in discontinuing their online behaviors.

Furthermore, the desire for instant gratification may contribute to online addiction. Individuals have the ability to access entertainment, information, and social interaction on the internet with the simple act of clicking a button (30). The provision of immediate gratification has the potential to induce addiction, prompting users to increasingly pursue online content to gratify their desires for stimulation and exhilaration.

Online gaming has the potential to contribute to the development of online addiction. Numerous online games are meticulously crafted to be both captivating and gratifying, incorporating elements such as in-game rewards, levels, and accomplishments that prod players to spend countless hours immersed in the experience (31). Addiction may result from the virtual and competitive characteristics of online gaming, which can make it difficult to discontinue participation.

An additional element that may contribute to online addiction is social media. Social media platforms, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, and X, have the potential to induce severe addiction among users due to the presence of likes, comments, and notifications that incentivize continuous account monitoring and connection-keeping (32). Addiction may result from the inability of individuals to disengage from their online networks due to the incessant stream of updates and interactions on social media.

Lastly, the cognitive effects of technology may also play a role in the development of online addiction. Excessive internet usage has been linked to detrimental brain effects, including structural and functional alterations that may heighten the susceptibility to addiction (33). Engaging in online activities may put the brain's reward system to the test due to the constant stimulation and multitasking required, which can result in addictive tendencies and desires for additional online content.

In sum, online addiction is a multifaceted problem that is affected by numerous elements, such as accessibility, social isolation, immediate gratification, online gaming, social media, and the neurological effects of technology. Individuals can maintain a healthy balance between their offline and online lives and reduce their likelihood of developing an online addiction by gaining an understanding of these factors and adopting measures to moderate their internet usage.

### **Groups at Higher Risk for Developing Online Addiction**

Youth and adolescents are one demographic that is more susceptible to the development of online addiction (34). The aforementioned demographic is especially susceptible to the allure of the internet due to their higher propensity to utilize technology for communication, entertainment, and social interaction. Young adults and adolescents may easily develop an addiction to constantly checking their feeds, publishing updates, and staying connected online due to the pervasiveness of social media in their lives (35).

A further demographic that is more susceptible to developing an addiction to online activities is the treatment of mental health conditions, including but not limited to anxiety, depression, and ADHD (36). As a coping mechanism for their emotions and a means of escaping their problems, these individuals might utilize the internet. Nevertheless, this dependence on the

internet has the potential to rapidly escalate and result in addiction.

Individuals with a prior history of substance misuse or addiction are also more susceptible to developing an addiction to online platforms (37). These individuals might possess an addictive disposition, rendering them more vulnerable to developing a dependency on the internet due to its provision of immediate gratification and constant stimulation. Online addiction may, in certain circumstances, function as a substitute for other addictive behaviors.

Meanwhile, those who lack social support or have low self-esteem are more susceptible to developing an addiction to online activities (38). For these people, who may experience loneliness or isolation in their personal lives, the internet can offer a sense of validation and connection. As a result of this need for acceptance and validation, they may spend an excessive amount of time online pursuing the approval of others.

Another demographic that is more susceptible to developing an addiction to the internet is comprised of professionals in fields that necessitate perpetual connectivity, such as social media marketing or technology. These people are perpetually connected to their electronic devices, where they monitor their email, respond to messages, and remain current on industry trends (39). An excessive dependence on technology can readily result in addiction, given the erosion of boundaries between professional and personal spheres.

Individuals who struggle with emotion regulation or lack the ability to control their impulses are additionally more susceptible to the development of online addiction (40). These individuals might encounter difficulties in regulating their online activity, which could result in compulsive usage and an erosion of behavioral control (41). Their inability to exercise self-control may further intensify their addiction and pose a challenge in their quest to liberate themselves from their reliance on the internet.

Also, those undergoing significant life transitions, such as relocating to a different city, beginning a new career, or going through a breakup, may have an increased susceptibility to developing an addiction to online activities. In periods of unpredictability and transition, individuals frequently seek solace and diversion via the internet. Nevertheless, an excessive dependence on the internet has the potential to develop into a complete and consuming addiction.

## Treatment Approaches and Interventions of Online Addiction

### Counseling and Therapy Options

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is a prevalent modality found in online addiction counseling (42). Identifying and altering detrimental thought patterns and behaviors that contribute to addiction is the focus of this type of treatment. Individuals can develop healthier coping mechanisms and better impulse control through CBT when confronted with tension and anxiety, both of which frequently serve as catalysts for excessive online usage.

Individual therapy is an additional option for online addiction counseling. Individual therapy entails a one-on-one interaction between a therapist and a client to investigate the fun-

damental factors contributing to their addiction and formulate customized approaches to surmount it (43). Individuals can gain insight into their addictive behaviors and learn how to make positive life changes through the use of this form of therapy.

Furthermore, group therapy may be a viable treatment option for online addiction. Participants in group therapy who are enduring comparable challenges convene to exchange personal narratives, offer encouragement, and gain knowledge from one another (44). As individuals strive toward recovery, group therapy can help them feel less isolated in their addiction and foster a sense of community and belonging. In addition, family therapy is a vital form of counseling for online addiction. The effects of addiction on family dynamics and relationships can be substantial; family therapy can assist in resolving these concerns and fostering greater understanding and communication among relatives (45). Additionally, family therapy can facilitate the establishment of healthier technological boundaries and nurture a recovery-friendly environment.

Apart from counseling alternatives, there exist a multitude of therapeutic modalities that may prove advantageous in the treatment of online addiction. Yoga and other mindfulness-based therapies, such as mindfulness meditation, can assist people in becoming more present in their daily lives and in developing a heightened awareness of their thoughts and emotions (46). Additionally, these practices may assist people in developing a sense of interior tranquility and diminishing the desire to find comfort in the digital realm.

Art therapy, music therapy, and equine therapy are additional therapeutic modalities that have demonstrated efficacy in the treatment of online addiction (47). In addition to offering individuals alternative means of self-expression and stress relief, these creative therapies may also facilitate the development of new interests and skills beyond the digital sphere. Through participation in these therapeutic activities, people have the opportunity to uncover fresh interests and pastimes that infuse them with happiness and satisfaction.

### Medication and Medical Interventions

Antidepressants are a medication that has been utilized frequently to treat online addiction (48). By regulating the levels of serotonin and other neurotransmitters in the brain, antidepressants may be able to alleviate the anxiety and depression that are frequently associated with online addiction. Antidepressants can facilitate improved regulation of online behavior and diminished reliance on the internet by targeting fundamental mental health concerns.

Naltrexone is another medication that has demonstrated potential in the treatment of online addiction. Although naltrexone is predominantly prescribed for the treatment of substance misuse disorders, research has indicated that it might also exhibit efficacy in mitigating internet-related addictive behaviors (49). Naltrexone reduces the desire for excessive internet use and diminishes the gratifying effects of online activities by inhibiting the brain's opioid receptors.

It is crucial to emphasize that the incorporation of medication and medical interventions into a comprehensive treatment regimen for online addiction is essential. Alongside pharmacological interventions, individuals may derive advantages from

engaging in support groups, attending counseling sessions, and adopting lifestyle modifications that foster a more harmonious equilibrium between virtual engagements and offline interactions. Individuals can foster a healthier relationship with the internet and address the underlying causes of their addiction by adopting a holistic treatment approach that focuses on developing the necessary skills.

## Prevention Strategies and Education

### Educational Initiatives for Awareness

The incorporation of digital literacy programs into schools as a means of educating students about the dangers and repercussions of excessive internet use is one such initiative (50). These programs educate students on strategies to develop healthy online behaviors, the significance of setting boundaries and balancing screen time with other activities, and the signs and symptoms of online addiction. Educators have the capacity to avert the detrimental consequences of online addiction by equipping students with the necessary knowledge and competencies to navigate the digital realm scrupulously.

Seminars and workshops for community members, including parents and educators, constitute an additional educational endeavor aimed at enhancing consciousness regarding online addiction (51). The primary objective of these occasions is to provide adults with knowledge regarding the indicators of online addiction among adolescents, the detrimental effects of excessive screen time on both mental and physical well-being, and efficacious strategies for aiding those afflicted with internet addiction. Through providing adults with the necessary information and resources to identify and confront online addiction, these initiatives enable communities to proactively encourage the adoption of healthy technological practices.

Online platforms and resources, alongside community seminars and school-based programs, have been established to furnish individuals grappling with internet addiction with information and assistance (52). These resources provide a range of educational materials, tools for self-assessment, strategies for regulating screen time, and access to counseling services for individuals requiring professional assistance. Through capitalizing on the extensive reach and user-friendliness of digital platforms, educational endeavors have the capacity to impart assistance to individuals who are in need of support while grappling with online addiction.

As well, technological companies, educational institutions, and mental health professionals have formed partnerships in order to develop novel approaches to address and prevent online addiction (53). These collaborations aim to ascertain risk factors associated with internet addiction, develop interventions grounded in empirical evidence, and advocate for the responsible utilization of technology across all age groups. By convening professionals from diverse disciplines, these initiatives fortify the combined endeavors to address online addiction and promote a more positive rapport with technology.

Furthermore, initiative after initiative has been taken to educate the general populace regarding the dangers and repercussions of online addiction through the implementation of public awareness campaigns (54). These campaigns aim to enhance

public consciousness regarding the indicators of internet addiction, the detrimental effects of excessive screen time on both mental and physical well-being, and the critical nature of seeking assistance for problematic technology usage by utilizing community events, social media platforms, and media outlets. These initiatives seek to foster early intervention for individuals who are at risk of developing internet addiction, decrease stigma, and increase comprehension by actively involving the public in discussions regarding online addiction.

### Techniques for Preventing Online Addiction

Preventing online addiction can be accomplished in part by imposing restrictions on screen time (55). This can be accomplished through the use of apps or device features that monitor utilization and impose time limits on specific websites or applications. Individuals have the ability to allocate more time to pursuits such as socializing, exercising, and pastimes by establishing limits on their screen time.

Mindfulness and being in the present moment constitute an additional method of averting online addiction (56). This requires being cognizant of one's emotions and thoughts while using the Internet, as well as the amount of time spent online. Through the practice of mindfulness, people can develop a heightened awareness of their online behaviors and consciously determine when and to what extent they utilize the internet.

Practicing consistent screen time reduction is a viable strategy for averting online addiction (57). Participating in non-screen-based activities, such as spending time with loved ones, going for a walk, or perusing a book, can effectively mitigate the dependence on digital devices and avert the development of excessive screen usage (58). By intermittently pausing from electronic devices, users can provide mental and visual rejuvenation while reducing their susceptibility to online addiction.

Participating in offline activities represents an additional strategy for mitigating the risk of developing online addiction (59, 60). Engaging in extracurricular pursuits, such as volunteering, arts and crafts, or athletics, can assist individuals in shifting their attention from the digital realm and fostering fresh passions and interests. Through active participation in offline pursuits, individuals can derive satisfaction and pleasure from tangible experiences in the physical world, thereby mitigating the allure of dedicating an excessive amount of time to online activities.

Additionally, establishing priorities and objectives is a beneficial method for averting online addiction. Through the establishment of objectives and priorities for their daily activities, people can give their lives structure and direction (61). Establishing screen time-related objectives, such as restricting daily social media usage to a specific duration, can assist people in maintaining concentration and preventing internet addiction.

Establishing a support system is an additional method of averting online addiction. Individuals may find encouragement and assistance in regulating their online behaviors through associations with family, peers, or support groups (62). Individuals can be held accountable and motivated to reduce their screen time and maintain a healthy balance between the virtual and real worlds by constructing a support network.

Obtaining professional assistance is a crucial method for averting online addiction. Individuals who, despite attempting numerous techniques, are unable to control their internet usage may benefit from consulting a therapist or counselor who specializes in the treatment of internet addiction (63). Individuals can obtain the necessary tools and resources to surmount online addiction and develop healthy coping mechanisms for managing their online habits with the assistance of a professional.

## Conclusion

In recent years, online addiction has emerged as a novel manifestation of mental health concern. Online addiction is distinguished by its compulsive or excessive utilization of the internet. This condition can significantly impair the physical, emotional, and social welfare of the affected individual. Individuals afflict-

ed with online addiction may manifest withdrawal symptoms when not connected to the internet, prioritize online activities over personal obligations, and undergo adverse emotional states when unable to access the site. Obsessive behaviors that interfere with daily functioning may result from the internet's provision of constant stimulation and immediate gratification. It is critical that those afflicted with an addiction to the Internet seek the assistance of mental health professionals with experience treating behavioral addictions. To manage online usage, treatment strategies may consist of cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness techniques, and the development of healthful coping mechanisms. Early intervention and recognition of the indicators of online addiction can effectively avert the progression of this psychological condition. ■

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