



### Understanding the Warning Signs of Internet Addiction

- ❖ **Internet chat, game-playing or porn viewing is disrupting school, work or family life.** If the Internet has replaced friends or family as the major source of that person's emotional life, there is most definitely a problem.
- ❖ **In order to feel good or even just *okay*, your son or daughter spends more time playing games or searching the Internet** (building up of tolerance...the person doesn't get the same "high" from previous amounts of exposure).
- ❖ **Use your common sense and look for signs:** Do you ask your son or daughter to "turn off the computer" or "get off the internet" only to find them back at the computer 30 minutes or an hour later? Do you wake up at midnight or 1:30 a.m. and find them still on the internet? Do they tell you they "just couldn't sleep" and thought they'd get online for a while?
- ❖ **Time away from the computer causes moodiness, increased aggression or agitation,** anxiety or other symptoms of withdrawal, and these symptoms are relieved by more exposure to the Internet activity.
- ❖ **If your student is spending 8-10 hours a day** rearranging or sending files (music or otherwise), playing games, surfing the net, visiting chat rooms, instant messaging, and reading emails, there is almost certainly a problem.
- ❖ **Subjective feelings of being out of control** with computer or video use. Student has made unsuccessful attempts to cut back or stop using the Internet. Sometimes your son or daughter will actually approach you or a friend of theirs and actually say that they feel their Internet use is "out of control."
- ❖ **Physical symptoms:** carpal tunnel syndrome, sleep disturbances, back and neck aches, headaches, dry or sore eyes, failure to eat regularly or neglect of personal hygiene; subjective feelings of depression. If the physical symptoms get bad enough (especially the lack of sleep), children may have trouble going to sleep, and trouble getting up in the morning.

*If any of these symptoms persists despite your efforts to talk with your son or daughter and help them with the behavior, you might want to consult a mental health professional*

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