**SEVEN HOUR CE COURSE: ELECTRONIC AND VIDEO GAME ADDICTION**

**BY: JAY BERK PH.D.**

**NOTES**

**WARNING: NO COPIES OF THIS DOCUMENT ARE TO BE MADE WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION OF AUTHOR**

**Intro**

* Family interaction important to treatment
* Interventions take diagnosis, treatment and healing
* Electronics are more stimulating than some physical activities such as playing at the beach
* Children don’t entertain themselves because of the electronics
* Parents need to help plan activities
* Socialization starts young
	+ Sets baseline for social skills
	+ Lack of social skills can lead to electronic addiction
* Parental and school involvement important
* Push-in Model
	+ Socialization taught without application not as effective
* 90% of children do nothing when others are bullied
* Early team activities require skills: Examples Include:
	+ Encourage parents to involve their child early on to kickstart skills (if they are athletic)
	+ Arts for more creative students (theatre)

**What Works?**

* Set limits early on
	+ Monitor ratings and what apps are appropriate and not
		- Open chats, content, etc.

**Study done by Douglas A. Gentile**

* shows average length of video games were played 20 hours per week
* 72% of houses play video games
* 9% of 3,034 showed signs of video game addiction
* 4% were categorized as extreme users with 50 hours over week of playtime
	+ No concrete number to categorize as extreme or addicted
* Not many studies have been done but more are circulating
* Use varies on weekend, weekday, breaks, weather, etc.

**Game Addiction**

* Addiction vs. Problem
* Addiction
	+ Failing out of school lack of activities, unable to function, interferes with daily living, impacts work school and friendships, rage
* Problem
	+ Can become addiction, showing signs of rages when told to get off, rages after exposure, not only while playing but before and after, school work and friendships diminish, need instruction and intervention for change,
* Likelihood of depression and anxiety
	+ Other mental health can be there and use gaming to avoid the problem
	+ Gaming population shows many of these co-occurring issues

**Signs of Addiction (most common ones)**

* Use despite negative impact
* More than one year
* Serious impact to life
* Impaired control
* Gaming takes precedent
* Health issues (weight, eye sight)

**Free Downloads and Videos**

* Background History
* Take into consideration:
	+ New behavior? Mental health history? Social Skills? Other issues (academics, drugs? IEPs or other school plans? Learning issues? Parent Interventions? Medications?
* Assess electronic use
	+ Time spent playing? What games?
* Why take action now?
* Treatment
	+ How it affects them? Does child want help? Are they open?
* Some are open to help and recognize problem others do what parents say and do not see a problem
* Ego Dystonic = not okay with it
* Ego Syntonic = okay with it
* Emergency and immediate action
* First Meeting
	+ Child attends with a parent
	+ Sense about person (school, grades, social life, interests)
	+ Gain a connection
	+ Get sense of other activities
	+ Mental health background
	+ School background
	+ Games and use of internet, phones, social media
	+ Friendships
	+ Activities
	+ Inappropriate Content
	+ Is their community in reality or online?
	+ Legal or discipline issues

**What if I am Not a Clinician?**

* You can still assess
* Lead parent to where to get information
* Unify efforts of everyone involved
* Keep observations and records
* Provide information to parents
* Access to tools
* Keep a list of providers who help with area of concern
* Is there an underlying issues?
* Consider setting goals
* Parents viewpoints
* Acknowledge parent efforts
* Make a plan
* Meet with child and parents individually and as a whole

**Younger Children**

* Healthy balance early on
* Electronics not just games
* Parents need to role model
* Family activities
* Boundaries on devices
	+ School devices
	+ If they hide electronics or sneak is a sign there’s a problem
* Euphoric recall
* Planning use is another signal

**Testing**

* Understand underlying issues that lead to problem/addiction
* IQ, standard, projective, achievement,
* Collect data from child, parents, school
* Treatment plan including all aspects of care, modality, and delivery
* Groups for social skills almost always a “must”
* Cognitive behavioral therapy works well
* “Pay to play”

**What if they get really angry?**

* Make a plan
* Prepare for retaliation

**In a Session**

* Be prepared and have a direction
* Individual goals
* Practice in sessions then try outside lessons
* Challenges and collaborative problem solving
	+ Work together on how to solve issues
	+ Include them to change
	+ What worked? What didn’t?
* Not perfection but progress

**World Health Organization (WHO)**

* Announced there is gaming addiction
* Significant impact on life
* Seen across the globe
* Takes 12 months

The WHO:

* The WHO’s definition of gaming addiction calls for at least five out of the following symptoms to be present:
* Obsession with games
* Withdrawal symptoms when not playing
* Tolerance for gaming
* At least 1 failed attempt to stop or cut back on games
* Loss of interest in life activities
* Overuse despite realization
* Lying about usage
* Using as an escape to relive anxiety or guilt\*\*\*
* Relationships lost or risked

**WHO Part 2**

* Gaming disorder will be likely be in the ICD11
	+ Not used in the US as much as the DSM5
* 12 months for the “gaming disorder”

**In Treatment Focus on the Positives**

* Practice healthy use
* Healthy balance
* Realistic
* Natural progression

**Post Positive Social Media**

* Postings
* Help make others feel good

**In the case “I Just Can’t Stop”**

* 20 year old, wants change, deletes apps on laptop, to make it less accessible, short term goals, exercise, long term goals,
* What’s holding you back from the goals?
* Gaming provides escape/distraction
* Come up with a plan once everything is taken into consideration
* Consider their “Currency”

**Parent Tips**

* Set limits at the very start
* WHO suggests ages 0-1 no electronics, ages 1-2 limited usage, ages 2-4 one hour or less
* Admit you made a mistake if it is out of hand
* Prepare for the worst
* Help them find activities
* Get your valuables out of house to prevent their destruction

**Siblings**

* Have a plan
	+ Therapist meet with siblings
	+ Make an exit plan
	+ Place to vent
	+ Work with the siblings
	+ Parents reward siblings behaving
	+ Spend time with other siblings
* See their point of view of sibling

**Social Skills**

* Para relationships = online friendships
	+ They are friendships until/unless they become a problem
* Pre-selected candidates online easier to find people who share a common interest
* Online chats give control
* Are they being social for validation?
* Online dating apps are very common now and can be successful

**Online Friends and more**

* What skills are missing?
* Different skills in different places (code switching)
	+ Different language in different settings
* Taking advantage
* Do they know the traps and dangers? Terminology?
* Graphic images that stay with them long term
* Talk with them about the images that have stayed with them
* Big trap is money for winnings, skins, game enhancements
	+ Sense of achievement
	+ Subtle peer pressure
	+ Online presence

**Online I Can Be Another Person**

* Teach being in the moment

**Ongoing Care**

* What should be considered?
* Social Skills group
	+ Direct contact and interaction
* Teach and enforce
* Identify triggers
* Subcategories
	+ Acceptance
	+ Thrill
	+ Similar
* Binge watching, not wanting to wait

**Case**

* 20 year old, attending high school (good first quarter, not so much in 2nd and third quarters), goal to go to college, to community college, first part okay then downhill and withdrawing from classes, says it’s not her direction/major/passion, second semester changes major, starts strong then found lying, failing, and not attending classes. Phone is a huge problem, gaming on phone, watching Youtube
* She was depressed, ADHD and used to take meds but stopped because she did not like the feeling
* Is electronic addiction primary or secondary diagnosis?

**Survey Says**

* Research/Poll from Parents
* Connecting for Kids
* What do they use and why?
* Youtube used most, then gaming
* Tactics to lure similar
* When exposed… Bullied, done after told not to,

**Powerful Psychology**

* Psychological manipulation
	+ Followers
* Targeted and retargeted Marketing

**Trick of the Trade**

* More on digital education
* What else hooks you?
	+ Teach digital education
	+ Click to win
	+ Look for spelling
	+ Terms of service
	+ Automatic renewals
	+ Free trials
	+ Cookies
	+ Loot boxes

**Have Kids Make an Educational Video**

* Punishment or lesson
* Groups

**Psychoeducational**

* Avoidance
	+ Okay in little bits
	+ Avoiding what?
* Reinforcement
	+ Things that take patience like puzzles
* What’s the point?

**What are the parent’s rules for money?**

* Establish out front
* Mowed the lawn, it is their money, what do you allow them to do?
* Teach about money management

**Online more Dangerous than Driving**

* What is taught to kids about the power of their voice?
* Peer impact
* Educate
* How do they see the world?

**“Rip Off” and Personal Danger**

* Psychosocial education

**Get involved**

* As an individual and a client
* Get them involved with activities or hobbies
* Alternate activities

**Another Case**

10-year-old boy, parents divorced, anguish between, mother complained he is aggressive noncompliant trouble with behaving with words to others, doesn’t know what words he says mean. Where does the child learn the words? Diagnosis of ADHD, parents in different “camps” regarding ADHD and medication, plays Fortnite, and on Youtube.

* What would you do?
	+ Take away games/sports?. He is active in sports. Dad wanted to stop Fortnite. Mom says all his friends play the same video game. Is 10 too early? Should you take sports away?
	+ Be aware of information child is consuming

**Difficult Times Call for Simpler Measures**

What can a parent do? What they can do to control situation?

* Take away is not most productive, add positive to replace
* Bolster not punish.
* Make plan with child as a family
* Communicate with child with actions being taken
* Parent needs to stand ground
* Parents can track behavior
* Track patterns
	+ Is it related to medical, eating, sleep, school, living situations, exercise, medication, correlated to games?
* Set limits early on, help child monitor their own gaming limits

**Encopresis- Another Case**

9 year old boy, defecating in pants, Mom says it is a problem for a while, he ignores it, siblings notice, not done at school, sits through games & ignores it, when talked to he shuts down, siblings resistant to being by him, no success. Correlating to games

* What are you going to suggest?
	+ Does he have a history? Difficult to potty training. Looking back at his history, when started, behaviors after what?
	+ Bring to office, make a plan, child tears & child uses head nods, he stayed in room, and discussed in his own way
	+ He states he does not have the feeling to go to the bathroom, Is he missing certain sensations
	+ Behavior modification plan
		- Responsibility for cleanup
		- Rewards when take supplements

**Zones and Phones**

* Use is evolving
* Need types of rules
	+ Red zone= no phone at all (classroom, religious service)
	+ Yellow zone= out with permission (cafeteria, library)
	+ Green zone= go ahead & use phone
* Why use these?
	+ Classroom can be cheating, cafeteria preventing discussion, situations
		- At home with company is not appropriate
* Home Zones
	+ Prep discussions to avoid nerves in unfamiliar situations
	+ If you take away electronic, suggest a replacement activity
* 2 main types of Consequences
	+ Artificial consequence
		- Teacher takes phone
	+ Natural consequence
		- teacher is frustrated
* Social Media
	+ Are they going to “flip out “ when asked to get off?

**Are There Risk Factors?**

* What are risk factors?
* Reality vs. Fantasy
* Extremes
	+ Reality fantasy is a blur
	+ Trouble in relationships
	+ Loss of functioning
* Possible video games opened up a predisposition of psychological issues

**Inoculation**

* Can it be done
* Idea is to prevent by using experiences
* Talk about impulsivity
* Both child and parents

**Special Diagnosis**

* Autism
	+ Vulnerable
	+ Need balance
	+ Obsessed
	+ DSM eliminated the diagnosis of Asperger’s
	+ Theory of Mind
* Tricky
	+ Relationships
* ADHD
	+ Impulsive
	+ Knowing boundaries
	+ Having access
* Speech and Language Issues
	+ Giving other activities at ability
* Mood Disorder
	+ Kids who are raging, physical

**Social Media**

* Isn’t all bad
* Keeping balance
* Making good choices
* Social etiquette
* Responsible use
* Technology policy

**Magic Dust**

* Many, not all, have co-occurring issues
* Electronic issues does not mean a full blown addiction
* Pay to play
* How much time
* Contract
* Parents- don’t react in the moment, plan a reaction

**Additional Signs of an Issue**

* Extreme issues when needing to stop
* No balance in activity
* All friends are cyber
* Up at night
* School grade issues
* Finding “like” peers
* Rage quitting
* Stealing to buy “mods”
* Inappropriate materials

**Sleep Issues Include**

* Over use at bedtime
* Harder to fall asleep
* Up in middle of night
* Blue light
* Wake up to answer texts

**Basic and Vital Concepts**

* Cannot completely eliminate electronics
* Stop for a period of time
* How long
* School laptop

Parents monitoring

**Case 1**

* 15 year old boy, on spectrum, 2nd time caught with inappropriate pornography, parents found photos being sent and exchanged, hiding information, parents looking for direction
* No electronics for now
* Socialization, appropriate boundaries, safety
* Limit use

**Case 2**

* 2nd grade female, parents find she is googling pornography, early puberty,
* No history of abuse (MOST IMPORTANT)
* Find source
* Isolate from influence
* Healthy boundaries
* Monitor usage
* Female counselor
* Follow up about the puberty

**Case 3**

* 15 year old male, looks older, refuses to put away game, wants a girlfriend but no particular reason, into gaming, people only useful if needed, no limits on games, isolated, no activities
* What do you want in life?
* Placements

**Case 4**

* Male into “My Little Pony”, wants to go to a convention, wants to meet girls, playing Huniepop without parent’s permission,