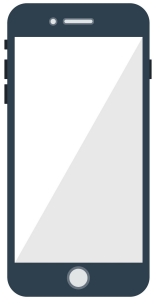

Internet and Technology Addiction: The Addict's Experience & Therapeutic Strategies

Joshua Germain, MA, LMHC

Let’s Paint a Picture Together...

Sound Familiar?
L
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10

DSM-5 Proposed Criteria for Internet & Gaming Disorder

A) Users are involved in repetitive use of video games with other players over the Internet with impairment in lifestyle functioning. B) Criteria must be met over the past 12 months; C) Five of the following types of criteria must be present:

1. Compulsive or obsessive engagement or preoccupation with Internet gaming.
2. Users experience withdrawal symptoms when Internet game play ceases.
3. Tolerance is identified; increased video game engagement
4. Attempts to stop or reduce engagement with video games have failed.
5. Users loss interest in non-video game activities or hobbies.
6. Continued use or excessive use despite negative consequences.
7. Lying to others about use to others.
8. Engagement with Internet-based gaming used as a way to escape
9. Relationship difficulties or loss as a result of play.

(Team reSTART, 2015)

So what can we do?

The Do’s and Do Not’s of treating IT addiction…

DO NOT…

- Invalidate their passion for technology or why it might be something worth enjoying
- Solely focus on what to take away
- Set unrealistic expectations/goals that do not take into account the neurobiology of addiction
- Pose yourself as being unaffected by technology (even in subtle ways)
- Avoid talking about the specifics (even if it feels uncomfortable)
- Make their addiction comfortable/let the “Cannibal” eat

It's not okay to be a Cannibal

How to Keep Addiction from Eating Your Family Alive

Andrew T. Wainwright
Robert Poznanovich

And the National Intervention Team at Addiction Intervention Resources

DO...

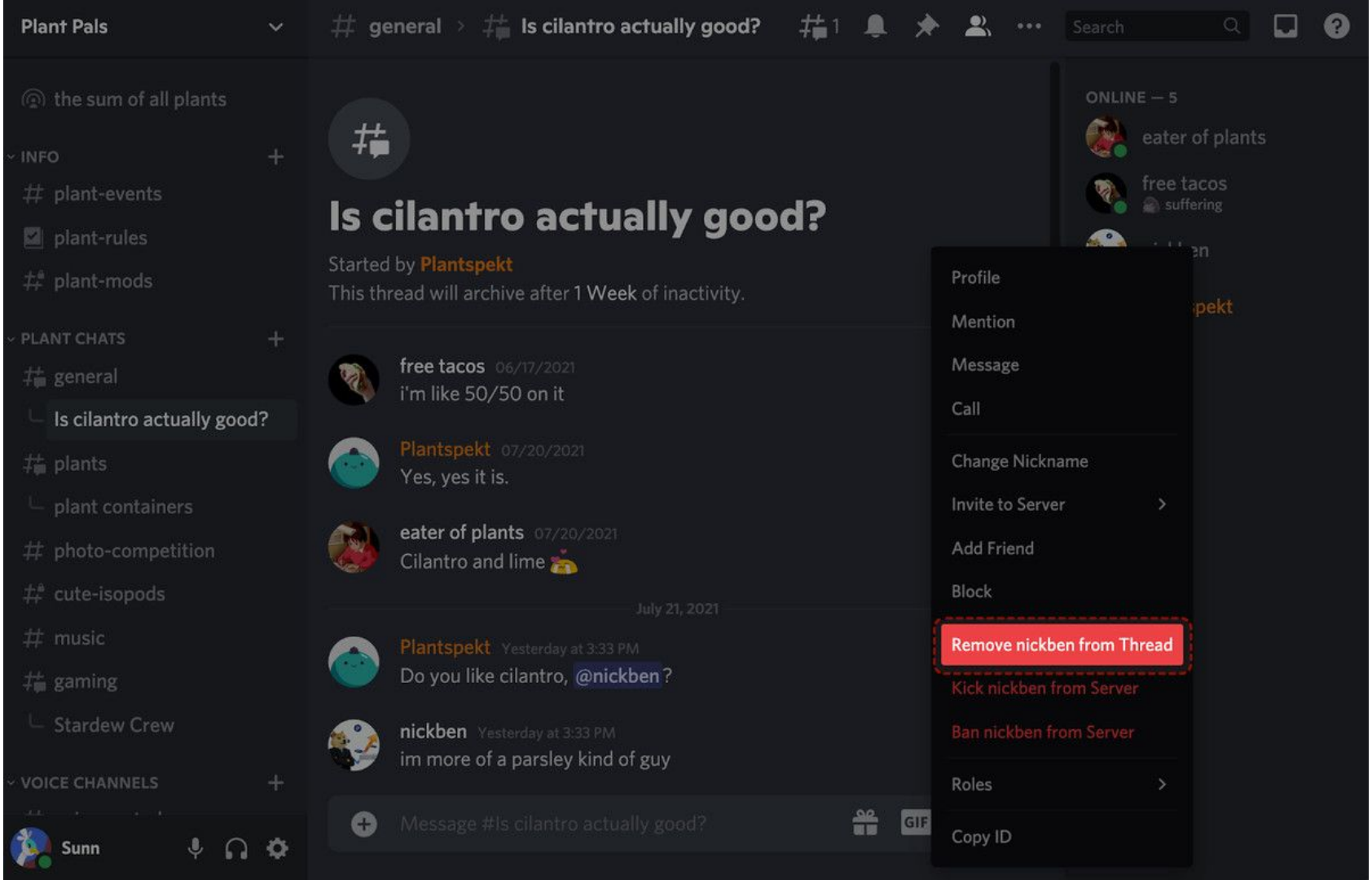
- Acknowledge the good of technology
- Gain an understanding of why they love/are drawn to technology
    - Use this understanding to shed light on other activities that share these features
- Discuss the specifics (games, servers, social media platforms, types of pornography...etc.)
- Provide psychoeducation in regards to what addiction is
    - Neurobiology of addiction - how this informs the importance of detox
    - Understanding powerlessness and the differentiation between one's self and their addict self (cannibal)
- Explore consequences that can come from excessive technology use (involving family can be helpful in becoming aware of some of these consequences)

DO...

- Help them learn and practice coping skills
- Use their language
- Explore values
- Explore strengths
- Explore purpose (“why statement”)
- Identify top, middle, and bottom lines
- Practice pro-social behaviors and challenge antisocial behaviors
- Challenge manipulative behaviors
- Challenge the idea that in-person and online social interactions are the same (without invalidating the connections they have online)
- Identify layers of accountability
- Help establish “building blocks of life”
- Differentiate between intentional and unintentional technology use
- Address underlying trauma and/or other mental health concerns once the groundwork has been laid

Community

Matters

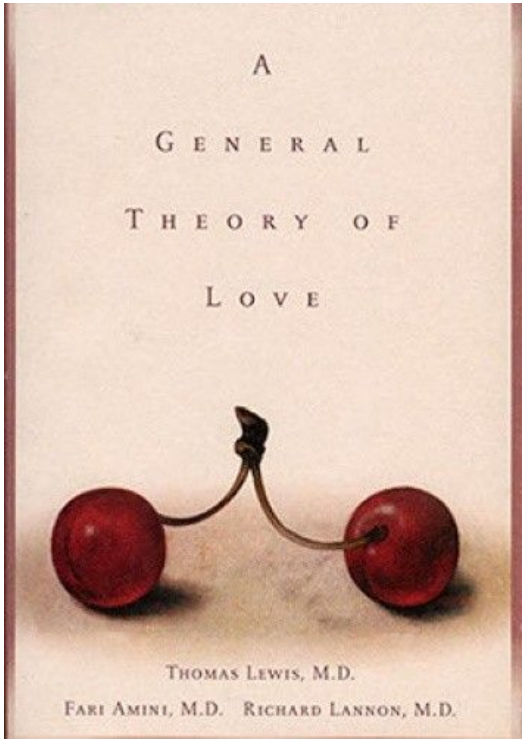

Plant Pals
general
Is cilantro actually good?
Search
the sum of all plants
INFO
plant-events
plant-rules
plant-mods
PLANT CHATS
general
Is cilantro actually good?
plants
plant containers
photo-competition
cute-isopods
music
gaming
Stardew Crew
VOICE CHANNELS
Sunn
Is cilantro actually good?
Started by Plantspekt
This thread will archive after 1 Week of inactivity.
free tacos 06/17/2021
i'm like 50/50 on it
Plantspekt 07/20/2021
Yes, yes it is.
eater of plants 07/20/2021
Cilantro and lime
July 21, 2021
Plantspekt Yesterday at 3:33 PM
Do you like cilantro, @nickben?
nickben Yesterday at 3:33 PM
im more of a parsley kind of guy
Message #Is cilantro actually good?
GIF
ONLINE — 5
eater of plants
free tacos
suffering
Profile
Mention
Message
Call
Change Nickname
Invite to Server
Add Friend
Block
Remove nickben from Thread
Kick nickben from Server
Ban nickben from Server
Roles
Copy ID

Limbic Resonance

Limbic Resonance

"It refers to the energetic exchange that happens between two people who are interacting in a caring and safe relationship. Their interaction stimulates the release of certain neurochemicals in the limbic region of the brain" (Cash, 2011, para. 4).

- **Connection with levels of anxiety and depression**
- **Lack of limbic resonance cycle**
- **Impact on child development**
- **"Intimacy Disorder"**



(Cash, 2011; Lewis, Amini, & Lannon, 2000)

Speaking about connection with others...

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