

# Internet & Technology Addiction

## Practical Application of Effective Strategies

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### Case Study #1

Doug:

- 16 year-old, white, cis-het male
- Only child
- Dual-income family in WA
- Struggles to form and maintain friendships with peers
- Consistent arguing with parents
- Has always enjoyed video games, but started to engage technology for more than 10 hours a day about a year ago
- Grades have slipped; failed one class
- Presenting depressive symptoms

Discuss...

- What additional information do we need to learn about the client?
- What are your initial wonderings about what Doug might be experiencing?
- What do you think about the increase of his tech use?



### Role Play: Gaining Information



Any volunteers?



## Role Play: Impact of Tech Use

### Group Discussion

In your small group, discuss the following:

- What important information was learned and how was it obtained?
- What skills did you notice being used?
- Would you have done anything differently?

### Skill #5: Identifying Positive and Negative Consequences

- Opportunity for the client to share their perspective of the consequences of their use (other than what parents or others tell them)
- Acknowledges that both positive and negative consequences can exist at the same time
- Opportunity for the clinician to identify the client's current willingness to address their technology use (signs of change)

### Group Discussion

In your small group, discuss the following:

What was different between the two role plays?

What skills were utilized during the second role play and what did those interventions lead to?

What observations did you make about the client?



### Skill #1: Exploring Specific Tech Use

- Clarifies the present problem
- Leads to the client feeling understood (not being "sawed")
- Validates the client that like they can talk about their actual use
- Foundations of empathizing or empathy and related

Discussion question: Do you feel comfortable asking about specific technology use? Why or why not?

### Skill #2: Validating the Positives of Technology

- The clinician validates clients to talk to but not another who is trying to get what they want
- The client begins to see that it is important to them
- The begins to see it as a step for a sustainable relationship with technology rather than being technology as being a problem to solve

## Role Play: Community



### Group Discussion

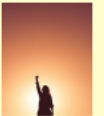
In your small group, discuss the following:

- What important information was learned and how was it obtained?
- What skills were used?

How does this group role play information influence our understanding of the presenting concern and the treatment plan?

### Skill #4: Extracting Strengths and Values

- Identifies strengths that can be utilized outside the context of technology use
- Begins to set the stage for understanding identity and identity formation
- Client starts to acknowledge their own role in who they become/what is in front of them



### Skill #5: Navigating Online Relationships

- Validating online relationships while not encouraging a dependency on them
- Finding support on the difference between in-person and online relationships (online relationships)
- Identifying the impact of difficulty connecting the idea of having both being better



### Skill #6: Externalizing the Desire for Technology Use

- Validating the client to understand the role of their technology use in the context of their life and needs and desires
- Opportunity to explore FOC (desires and self-awareness)
- Leads to exploring how their FOC and needs could be met in different, more sustainable ways



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## Discuss...

- What additional information do we need to learn about the client?
- What are your initial wonderings about what Doug might be experiencing?
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# Role Play: Gaining Information



Any Volunteers?

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## Skill #1: Exploring Specific Tech Use



- Clarifies the presenting problem
- Leads to the client feeling understood (not being boxed in)
- Makes the client feel like they can talk about their actual use
- Foundations of extrapolating strengths and values

Discussion question: Do you feel comfortable asking about specific technology use? Why or why not?

## Skill #2: Validating the Positives of Technology

- You become a safe person to talk to (not just another adult trying to get them off their screens)
- You gain access to what is important to them
- You begin to build a case for a sustainable relationship with technology (rather than viewing technology as being inherently bad)

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# Role Play: Impact of Tech Use

# Group Discussion

In your small group, discuss the following:

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- What skills did you notice being used?
- Would you have done anything differently?

## Skill #3:

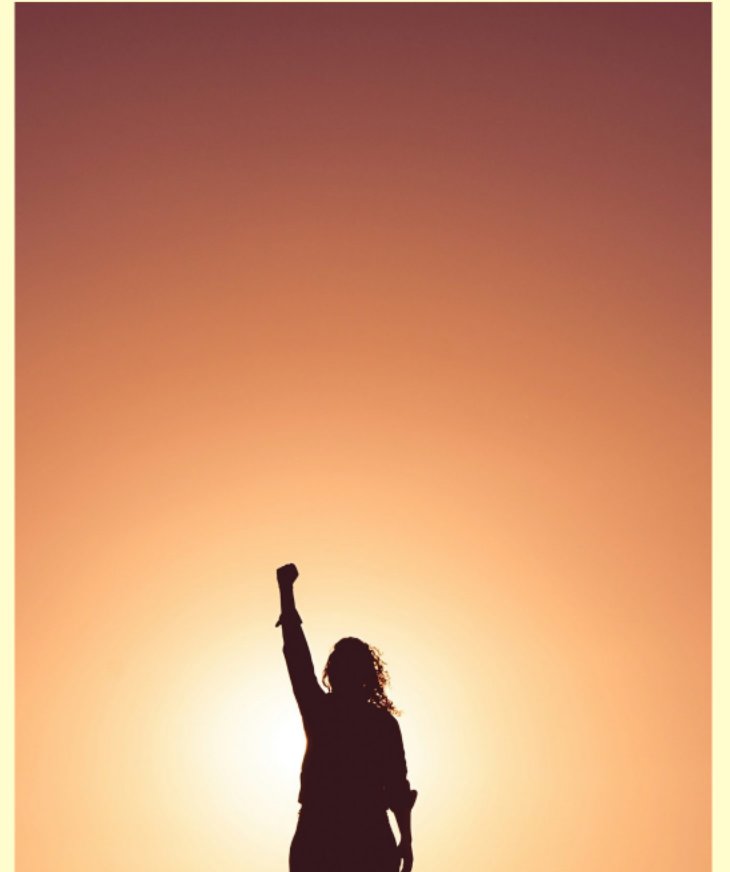
# Identifying Positive and Negative Consequences

- Opportunity for the client to share their perspective of the consequences of their use (rather than what parents or others tell them)
- Acknowledges that both positive and negative consequences can exist at the same time
- Opportunity for the clinician to identify the client's current willingness to address their technology use (stages of change)

# Skill #4:

## Extracting Strengths and Values

- Identifies strengths that can be utilized outside the context of technology use
- Begins to set the stage for understanding identity and identity formation
- Client starts to acknowledge their own role in who they become/what is in front of them





# Role Play: Community





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## Group Discussion

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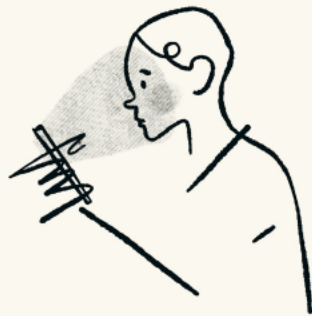
- Validating online relationships while not encouraging a dependency on them
- Providing education on the difference between in-person and online relationships ("Limbic Resonance")
- Identifying the depth of difficulty surrounding the idea of having tech being taken away



## Skill #6:

# Externalizing the Desire for Technology Use

- Inviting the client to better understand the role of their technology use in the context of fulfilling their needs and desires
- Opportunity to explore FOO dynamics and influences
- Avenue to exploring how these unfulfilled needs could be met in different, more sustainable ways



# Treatment Timeline



## 1. Build Trust & Gain Information

- Asking about specific tech use
- Validating positive aspects of technology
- Explore positive and negative consequences of use
- Identify client's view of their own use (stage of change)
- Speak with family for context (if applicable)

## 2. Provide Education & Resources

- Client is given the opportunity to learn and practice coping skills
- Therapist provides education on:
  - Criteria of IT addiction
  - Neurobiology of addiction
  - Concept of powerlessness
  - Difference between in-person and online connections
  - Intentional vs unintentional technology use (**Skill #7**)
  - Importance of establishing "building blocks" (**Skill #8**)
  - Connection between discomfort and meaning (Tice Rest)
  - Differentiation between client's self and the addicted part of self (**Skill #9**)

## 3. Detox

- Identify and implement building blocks of life
- Create and practice list of alternative activities
- Identify the expectations and details of the detox
  - What technology can be used, how long can it be used, when during the day can it be used
  - What cannot be used
  - Create top, middle, and bottom lines (**Skill #9**)
  - Family involvement/"Family Contract" (**Skill #10**)
  - Length of time
  - Settings on phone (accountability software)
  - Storage of devices

## 4. Identity Formation & Detox Processing

- Extracting strengths and values
- Begin developing sustainable technology use plan
- Practice habit stacking
- Acknowledge and challenge the workings of the addicted part of self
- Explore the client's engagement with top, middle, and bottom lines
- Provide the client the opportunity to learn and practice pro-social skills
- Encourage engagement with a 12-Step community
- Provide additional informational resources (articles, books, worksheets...etc.)

## 5. Technology Reengagement, Maintenance, and Trauma Work

- Sustainable technology plan is utilized after the end of the detox
- Client maintains plan and reflects upon effectiveness of plan (Therapist and Client collaboratively adjust plan as needed)
- Once the client has an established "foundation," therapist and client can dive deeper into potential trauma work

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