

... DO YOU ENJOY SURFING OR GAME PLAYING ON THE INTERNET?

The internet enables us to make contact with others via social networking sites and chat rooms, to relax, play video games online, visit adult websites, gamble money online... or simply search for information.

Occasionally, using electronic media, such as the internet can become problematic, with negative effects on health, well being and relationships with others. The press refer to this problem as "internet addiction". However, professionals prefer the term "electronic media related disorder". Problems can sometimes arise as a result of another difficulty or addiction.

... WHAT IS AN ELECTRONIC MEDIA RELATED DISORDER?

- Surfing to escape worries or negative emotions such as sadness or fear
- Spending increasing amounts of time using the internet
- Spending significant sums of money on online purchases
- Constantly thinking about gaming websites, social networking sites, forums or chat rooms
- Neglecting family, friends, school or work because of the internet
- Experiencing negative consequences, which may be physical (sore eyes, bad back etc.) and psychological (tiredness, depression etc.)

Internet use becomes problematic when the user is no longer able to resist using the internet, despite the negative consequences that will arise for them. Feeling troubled and keeping this to themselves may maintain the problem or create further difficulties.

... INTERNET FOR THE BETTER, RATHER THAN THE WORSE!

For the internet to remain a positive experience, it is important to:

- Surf only for entertainment or work
- Fix time limits
- Fix limits on the money spent on online purchasing, game playing and gambling
- Introduce a variety of pastimes and interests
- Speak openly about internet use
- Ask for support

For those close to an internet user, it is helpful to openly address their questions and concerns, without making judgements. A parent, or someone else who is close to the player can also request independent support, which can be combined with, or separate from support received by the internet user.

