

Online Gaming

[NEW! - Kindle Ebook - When Gaming Becomes an Obsession: Help for Parents and Their Children who become addicted to Online Games by Dr. Kimberly Young](#)

Online gaming addiction is an addiction to online video games, role-playing games, or any interactive gaming environment available through the Internet. Online games such “Grand Theft Auto”, the “World of Warcraft”, the “Dark Age of Camelot”, or “Diablo II” – dubbed “heroinware” by some players – can pose much more complex problems. Extensive chat features give such games a social aspect missing from offline activities, and the collaborative/competitive nature of working with or against other players can make it hard to take a break.

A New Parental Concern

Parents across the globe are increasingly concerned about their sons and daughters online gaming habits. They are sure that there is a problem but counselors unfamiliar with online gaming addiction don’t understand how seductive they can be. One mother explained that she had talked to her son’s guidance counselors, the school psychologist, and two local [addiction rehabilitation centers](#)

. “No one had ever heard of someone getting addicted to X-Box Live,” she said. “They all told me it was a phase and that I should try to limit my son’s game playing. They didn’t understand that I couldn’t. He had lost touch with reality. My son lost interest in everything else. He didn’t want to eat, sleep, or go to school, the game was the only thing that mattered to him.”

Parents often feel alone and scared as their children become hooked to something that no one seems to understand. “My son’s counselor told me to just turn off the computer,” another mother explained. “That was like telling the parent of an alcoholic son to tell him to just stop drinking. It wasn’t that simple. We felt like no one was taking us seriously that our son had a real problem.”

Signs of Addiction

Gamers who become hooked show clear signs of addiction. Like a drug, gamers who play almost every day, play for extended periods of time (over 4 hours), get restless or irritable if they

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can't play, and sacrifice other social activities just to game are showing signs of addiction.

Warning signs include:

- A preoccupation with gaming
- Lying or hiding gaming use
- Disobedience at time limits
- Social withdrawal from family and friends
- [See full list of symptoms](#)

Where to turn?

[Dr. Kimberly Young](#) provides [individual and family therapy](#) for children and adults addicted to online gaming. She utilizes a holistic approach that involves understanding what makes the role-playing game so significant for the user and what type of emotional and psychological factors are sustaining the online gaming behavior. In many cases, gamers find acceptance, respect, and recognition through the game, and the online character replaces relationships that are missing in the gamer's life. She counsels parents dealing with an addicted child reluctant to enter treatment and for parent's unsure how to address their child's online gaming habit at home, Dr. Young has written, “

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that provides specific tools to help you and your family on the path towards recovery from compulsive online gaming.