Internet deaddiction

Internet addiction

Internet or social media addiction is generally defined as the compulsive use of internet/social media platforms that results in significant impairment in an individual's function in various life domains over a prolonged period.

It is usually characterized by excessive or poorly controlled preoccupations, urges or behaviours regarding computer use and internet access that lead to impairment or distress. This compulsive behaviour interferes with normal living and causes severe stress on family, friends, loved ones, and one's work environment.

**Signs of Internet addiction**

According to the American Psychiatric Association, internet addiction can include three or more of the following:

- The user needs to spend ever-increasing amounts of time online to feel the same sense of satisfaction.
- If they can't go online, the user experiences unpleasant withdrawal symptoms such as anxiety, moodiness and compulsive fantasising about the Internet. Using the Internet relieves these symptoms.
- The user turns to the Internet to cope with negative feelings such as guilt, anxiety or depression.
- The user spends a significant amount of time engaging in other activities related to the Internet (such as researching internet vendors, internet books etc).
- The user neglects other areas of life (such as relationships, work, school and leisure pursuits) in favour of spending time on the Internet.
- The user is prepared to lose relationships, jobs or other important things in favour of the Internet.

Addiction to the Internet includes:

• Failed attempts to control behaviour
• Neglecting friends and family
• Neglecting sleep to stay online
• Being dishonest with others
• Feeling guilty, ashamed, anxious, or depressed as a result of online behaviour
• Weight gain or loss, backaches, headaches, carpal tunnel syndrome
• Withdrawing from other pleasurable activities
• Problematic social media use also is associated with mental health symptoms such as anxiety and depression in children and young people

Breaking Internet Addiction
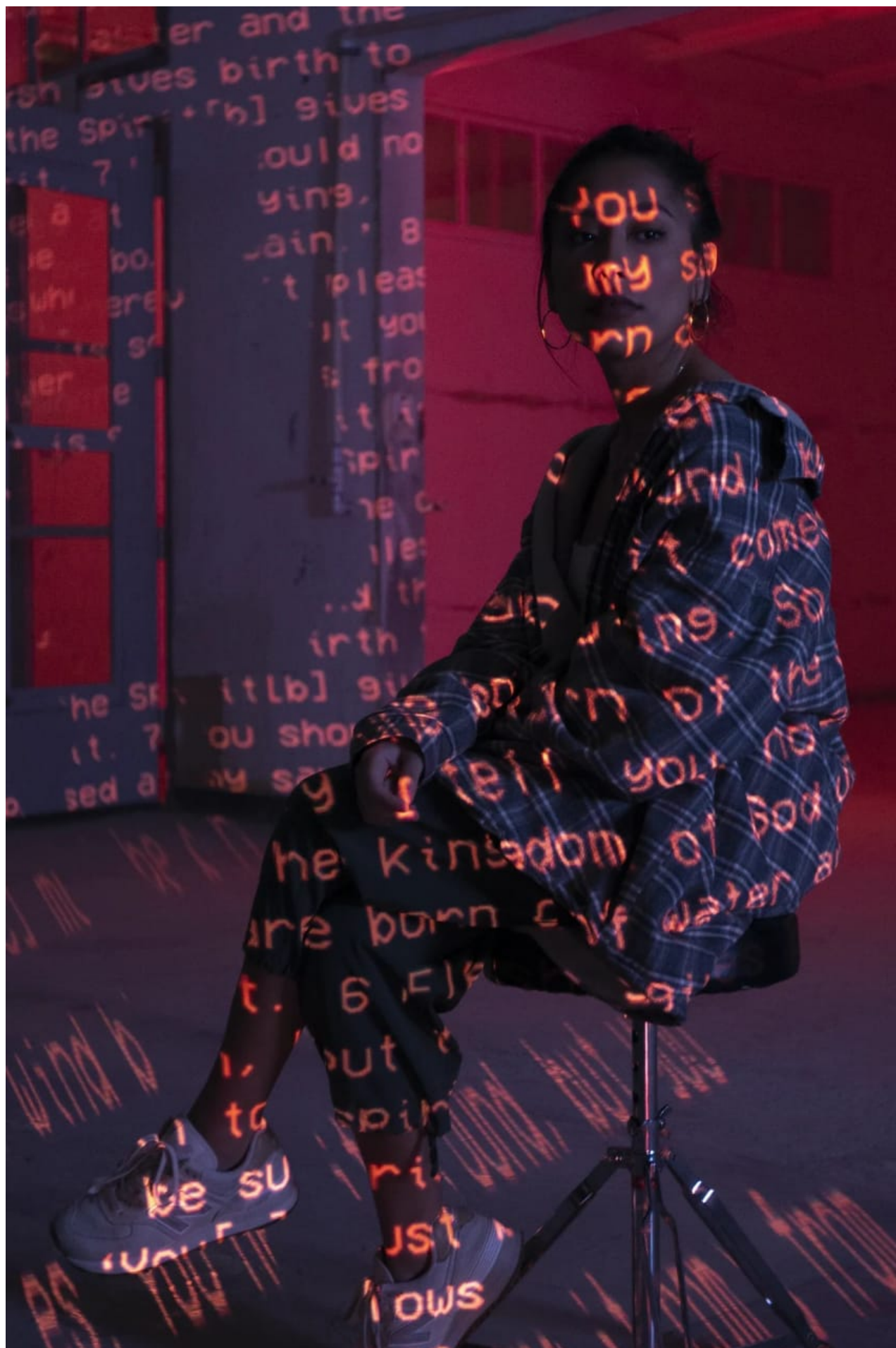
Self-help interventions, including application-specific timers could be the first step towards internet/social media addiction. If one feels it can't be managed by themselves, it is better to get help from a mental health professional.

1. Set your computer usage boundaries early on. There's no point trying to change your habits if you haven't decided on your new boundaries. How long are you going to use the computer from now on? For what purposes? Decide this first, take action second.
2. Get your family and friends to help and support you. Ensure your family keeps you accountable and limits the amount of time you spend online. Set a time limit in hours or minutes and make it clear that there are no valid excuses for extended use; you've got to be dragged away from the computer no matter what, once your time runs out.
3. Modify your routine. If you trap yourself by checking your phone, first thing in the morning or heading straight for the computer when you get home from work, intending to get off and do other things but never quite getting there, change your routine a bit and get the tempting things out of the way first. It's much easier to get off the computer if you don't get on it! Wait until you've done your household chores and got time to spend with the kids (or pets, if that's more your thing)and then give yourself some net time. Reward yourself, in small amounts, for holding out.
4. Don't use the phone/computer for recreational purposes. Remove the emotive feel-good incentive to use the computer by using it for business and email. Get it done and get off. Uninstall computer games, and vow to stay away from social networks and other recreational web destinations for at least a month or two. Find recreational activities in real life and completely replace your internet entertainment with them.
5. Track your progress. Remind yourself how much progress you're making by tracking the amount of time you spend online compared to the boundaries you set in step one. Only spent 8 hours online out of the 10 you allotted yourself for the week? Great work! You'll do even better next week!

Some useful apps to control your internet addiction
https://99u.adobe.com/articles/6969/10-Online-Tools-for-Better-Attention-Focus
https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/business/trends-and-insights/articles/8-ways-to-control-your-internet-addiction-1/
For those who wish to take a digital detox, the link given below is recommended.
https://g.co/kgs/q5ywqz