



## A word from the editor

A substance or an activity becomes an addiction when it is pleasurable but continuing with the act, or use, becomes compulsive and interferes with ordinary life. An addiction can be so heavily ingrained that a user may not even be aware that their behaviour is out of control and is causing problems for themselves or others.

Things that people may not be aware about addictions are:



- Addiction is fundamentally about compulsive behaviour.
- Compulsive drug seeking is initiated outside of consciousness. The nucleus accumbens, a key limbic structure, puts drug-seeking behaviour into motion and so 'decision making' can be said to occur unconsciously.
- Most people with addictions who present for help, also have other psychiatric problems.
- Addiction is a chronic relapsing disorder in the majority of people who present for help.
- Different psychotherapies appear to produce similar treatment outcomes.
- 'Come back when you're motivated' is no longer an acceptable therapeutic response. Times have changed and therapy should begin where the patient is, rather than where the therapist expects them to be. Therapies which are useful include motivational interviewing - incorporating the Prochaska & DiClemente stages of change model, and using a client-centred approach.
- Change takes time. A key to achieving recovery from compulsive behaviour is having the patience to practice new behaviour for a long period of time.

*Elizabeth Lourenco*  
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### In this edition:

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Obsessions often have a  
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Addictions having a fall-  
in. (Peter Horton)

Addicted to Online Games  
(Karen Luu)

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## Obsessions often have a fall out leading to Addictions having a fall-in.

The concept of obsessions need clarity and relies on a definition of thinking about something too often. Can then, obsessions be interpreted as addictions? From the observers point of view they can often look the same. To understand the comparison, it is worthwhile defining: addiction as to become dependant and obsession as to become pre-occupied.

So when is too much of anything harmful? What can we do? Where is the help? Every human being has obsessed thoughts, falling in and out of love, a desire, money, a holiday, work, disaster, loss, grief and much more.

All positive and negative emotional pain relies on created perceptions and stems primarily from a visual and/or thought process. This human activity called thoughts leads to two outcomes; we either extinguish the thought or become obsessed with our thinking. In everyone's head a thought is alone and no-one in the world will have an inclining of what it is.

However when thoughts become behaviours either verbal or actions, then the world can measure and judge. It is when the measured observations is interpreted, that a calculated assessment is made.



Therefore both positive and negative obsessions are categorised by ordinary onlookers, the judgement of excessive or absorbed pre-occupations are seen as predictors of a potential behaviour interference or problematic behaviour. Ongoing continual obsessive thoughts leading to actual behaviours is the precursor to falling into addictive behaviours.

*Peter Horton*  
*Psychologist*

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*“Every form of addiction is bad, no matter whether the narcotic be alcohol or morphine or idealism.”*  
- Carl Jung

*“At the bottom of every person's dependency, there is always pain, Discovering the pain and healing it is an essential step in ending dependency.”*  
- Chris Prentiss,  
*The Alcoholism and Addiction Cure*

*“We are addicted to our thoughts. We cannot change anything if we cannot change our thinking.”*  
- Santosh Kalwar,

*Reality is just a crutch for people who can't handle drugs.”*  
- Robin Williams





## Addicted to online games



How many of you have picked up your phone lately for a few games of Candy Crush? Have you ever wondered if the many long hours spent on the phone waiting for that big win, may actually be more than just a fun game but can be the first signs of an Addiction to Online Gaming. In recent years, there has been news of online gamers who have exhausted themselves to death – engaged in marathon gaming sessions lasting for days with no rest, sleep or food.

A recent Herald Sun article reported that the problem of online gaming addictions pave the way for other behavioural or social issues. Psychologist Collett Smart said that some of her clients have “...stopped sleeping, game through the night, take food into their bedrooms, stop interacting face to face and cease sport or things that they used to enjoy.”

However, Dr Daniel Johnson, Games Research and Interaction Design Lab at the Queensland University of Technology, says reasons why young people become hooked on gaming are due to the existence of problems in other areas of life which lead them to turn to video games. Dr Johnson reported that there is an association between gaming and stress reduction and improved mood. He said that video games create feelings of competence, autonomy, resilience and sometimes relatedness.

Whether it is a win that you need or a sense of competence, resilience or relatedness, it is important to monitor how we use online gaming and how long we spend playing games. The increase in online activity and access to the online world, makes online gaming readily available and portable. However, if over dependence on online games exists where normal social activities or daily life is overlooked, then perhaps further assistance and support is required.

*Karen Luu*

*Life and Business Coach—MABNLP*

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## Addiction and Personality

It is common for individuals to describe themselves or others as having an addictive personality. If such personalities exist then does this mean that the culprit in addiction is not the substance but instead just the people who use them? Does this also mean that it is only those who have such a personality who are at risk of addiction? If some people are more likely to become addicted this might also mean that they can be targeted with an intervention before it happens.

### Addictive Personality Defined

To say that an individual has an addictive personality implies that they have certain characteristics that make them more susceptible to this type of problem. It is believed that as much as 15% of the population in the US has an addictive personality.



### Criticisms of Addictive Personality Disorder

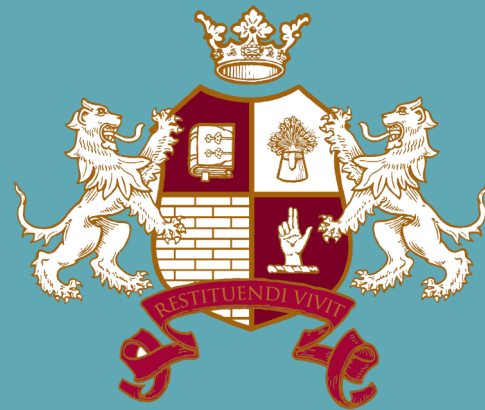
The idea of an addictive personality is not universally accepted by everyone. Critics point out that a personality just refers to a way of acting and thinking at a certain time. Personality is not a static thing but instead changes as people pass through their life. By labeling people as having an addictive personality it may do more harm than good. The fact that researchers are unable to completely agree on the traits of an addictive personality further suggests that it may not exist at all.

### Characteristics of Addictive Behaviors

Those individuals who are involved in addictive behaviors will tend to exhibit certain characteristics including:

- \* They may try to hide the full extent of their behavior from family and friends
- \* They may continue the behavior even when there is evidence

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# INSIDE TRAUMA



that it is causing them harm

- \* They may think about it all the time so that it becomes an obsession
- \* They seem unable to control the amount of time they spend on the behavior
- \* If they are confronted about their behavior they will exhibit denial
- \* They may suffer from periods of depression
- \* They may experience blackouts while engaged in the behavior
- \* The individual may find it difficult to give up the behavior
- \* If they do manage to stop the activity they may experience withdrawal symptoms. These may be physiological or psychological in nature – with substance addition they are usually both

## Characteristics of an Addictive Personality

The National Academy of Sciences (USA) conducted a study with the aim of finding the shared characteristics of all types of addict. They were unable to discover one set of characteristics that fit everyone, but they did find many frequently shared similarities between the different addicts. These similarities were:

- \* A high sense of stress in their lives
- \* Low self-esteem
- \* A feeling of alienation from others
- \* They valued nonconformity
- \* They tended to act impulsively
- \* They found it hard to delay gratification
- \* Prone to attention seeking behavior
- \* Highly insecure in relationships
- \* Usually suffer from depression or anxiety
- \* Antisocial tendencies
- \* High tolerance for deviance



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## Upcoming Events:

**TAPIG seminar in  
Queensland on October 11th  
2014**

TAPIG exists to promote and present best practice trauma management across Australia by providing professional support, supervision and advocacy for practitioners.

This seminar will have a focus on Trauma and Addictions.

Please email  
[elizabeth.lourenco@traumacentre.com.au](mailto:elizabeth.lourenco@traumacentre.com.au) for more information.





## Treatment for Addictive Personality Disorder

The usual approach for dealing with addictive personality disorder is to help the individual escape their current addiction. The way this is done will depend on the type and extent of the addiction. Sex and work addictions may be treated with some type of counseling approach. Those individuals who have alcohol or drug addictions may require rehab and significant amount of support during the early weeks and months of recovery. Self-help groups like AA can be useful for helping people stay free of substance abuse long term.

## Addictive Personality Disorder in Recovery

Those individuals who have the characteristics of an addictive personality need to be vigilant in recovery. There is a risk of them moving from one addiction to another. This may involve spending all their time at work or becoming a fitness fanatic. It could even involve them become obsessive about a recovery group. While some addictions may be less harmful than others they can all lead to suffering. It is therefore necessary for the individual in recovery to be on their guard against this type of behavior.

*Peter Barta*

*Psychologist*

**If you feel somebody may need assistance with addiction or require support, please contact:**

**Trauma Centre Australia — (03) 9205 9488**

**Lifeline — 13 11 14**

## Sources:

Herald sun - <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/special-unit-to-help-kids-with-severe-internet-addiction/story-fni0fiyv-1226831924547?nk=8a6d4ae0ba082add652b6992914405ea>

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Sellman, D. (2010). The 10 most important things known about addiction. *Addiction*, 105(1), 6-13.

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*“I believe in recovery, and as a role model I have the responsibility to let young people know that you can make a mistake and come back from it.”*

— Ann Richards

*“Rock bottom became the solid foundation on which I rebuilt my life”*

— J.K. Rowling

*“Busy is a drug that a lot of people are addicted to”*

— Rob Bell

