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## Opinions Word of Mouth

### There is a Way Out from World of Warcraft

Posted by [Neal Leavitt](#) on January 27th, 2011 at 8:57 pm

Are your kids spending hours upon hours playing World of Warcraft and other video games to the point where you've noticed disturbing behavioral patterns?

No joke – these could be signs and symptoms of what's called Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD).

In fact, a program called reStart, co-founded by Cosette Rae and Hilarie Cash, was launched a few months ago. The 45-day program is held at the Heavensfield Retreat Center in Fall City, WA, not far from Redmond (where Microsoft is located).

Some signs of computer/Internet/gaming addiction that reStart identified (3-4 yes responses suggest abuse; 5 or more suggest addiction) include:

- Increasing amounts of time spent on computer/Internet activities
- Failed attempts to control behavior

- Heightened sense of euphoria while involved in computer/Internet activities
- Craving more time on the computer and Internet
- Neglecting friends and family
- Feeling restless when not engaged in the activity
- Being dishonest with others
- Computer use interfering with job/school performance
- Feeling guilty, ashamed, anxious or depressed as a result of behavior
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Physical changes such as weight gain or loss, backaches, headaches, carpal tunnel syndrome
- Withdrawing from other pleasurable activities

While IAD is not currently included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), we probably all know someone either directly or indirectly who has been sucked in to playing video games incessantly, or spends way too much time online to the detriment of ignoring real-world obligations/social responsibilities.

Dr. Cash noted that both China and South Korea have already designated IAD as a significant problem and have developed multiple treatment programs.

“The United States, by contrast,” notes Dr. Cash, “has been slower to recognize and respond to the problem but now is beginning to take some proactive steps.”

The reStart program isn't cheap – there's an initial \$200 application fee; an \$800 2-day screen interview fee and the 45-day retreat center day costs \$17,500 (\$322 per day).

The motives are noble – “provide a family-style retreat where its participants can have an Internet and video-game-free therapeutic experience.”

But unlike drug and alcohol addiction, completely abstaining/avoiding the Internet post-treatment would be near impossible because of the ubiquity of the web.

Hopefully programs like reStart will at least provide a roadmap for overcoming cyber addiction.

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