

# Is Internet Addiction a Viable Mental Health Issue?

*Department of Psychology, California Southern University, USA*

Barbara Lackey, Core Faculty, Department of Psychology, California Southern University, USA, Tel: + 7148384174; Fax: 9492187561; E-mail: drblackey@cox.net

February 07, 2018;

March 23, 2018;



Another social media addict is usually a woman. She may have difficulty establishing and maintaining real-life friendships. She is competitive in her life. She spends many/most hours online checking out the activities of others, as well as interacting with "virtual" friends, interacting less with "real life" friends and family members. She can brag about making numerous virtual friends. She ignores her family [23].

Very seldom will the social media addict come for therapy. She believes that her virtual friends are her therapists. Her children, however, will be present as the therapy patients, acting out because they are not well parented.

A social media addict is probably the most difficult to treat. If she can be encouraged to establish a meaningful life and to support her children and grandchildren, she can begin recovery.

Narrative therapy [24] can be helpful to let the recovering addict create a meaningful life. When she changes her internet involvement to an online 12-step program [5] work and therapy, she can use her energies to continue a viable recovery.

## Conclusion

Ongoing research and clinical experience strongly suggest that Internet Addiction does indeed exist [4,7,12]. Research further suggests that addictive behaviors and substances use/abuse have similar impacts on the brain [23].

Currently, addiction is considered by some to be a perjorative term.

Therefore, the term, Internet Use Disorder, is considered more acceptable than Internet Addiction. Whatever it is called, internet addiction continues to be an ongoing issue.

As an aside, a 60- Minutes program addressed how companies present internet activities in a way that promotes addiction, much like the old beer and cigarette ads. It is fascinating that brain chemistry can trigger internet addiction and can be manipulated to do so [12,13].

Technology presents many opportunities for enhancing the quality of life yet, as with any activities, can be taken to extremes and become addictions. Questions to be explored: Is there a genetic component? Is there an addictive personality type? How can one with an "addictive personality" prevent addiction? Should the term, internet use disorder, rather than addiction, be used?

While each type of addiction presents with slightly unique issues, internet addicts have much in common. The challenges are great. The impact of their addictions on themselves and their families and perhaps on society is ever-reaching. Yet, when they become motivated