

INTERNET AND GAMING OVERUSE

Where to go when you're looking for help

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The internet is a popular way to connect with others, share information and seek entertainment. Some people use the internet to cope with stress or difficult emotions by immersing themselves in online communities or activities, such as gaming. For young people, internet use and gaming can become a problem when it gets in the way of developing age-appropriate skills and interests, including schoolwork and socializing. For adults, internet overuse can affect their relationships, work and health.

Internet overuse is often associated with mental health problems, such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), depression, learning disabilities and social anxiety. Proper assessment and treatment can help people develop a healthier relationship with their internet use and gaming to regain control of their behaviours. Counselling is the most common approach to treatment and involves helping people learn to use the internet in a balanced and healthy way.

Finding Help

ConnexOntario

<https://connexontario.ca/contact-us>

Tel.: 1 866 531-2600 (or text “connex” to 247247)

<https://connexontario.ca/email-us>

Services: 24/7 free and confidential support line that is anonymous and available to anyone affected by mental health, addiction and gambling; trained agents are available by phone, text, live chat or email to help people find the services they need (e.g., counselling, crisis support, community programs)

If any of this information is incorrect or outdated, please email the information to us at access.resources@camh.ca. Visit the RBC Patient and Family Learning Space for mental health info and help finding services: <https://camh.ca/pfls>

This resource list is for information purposes only and does not constitute an endorsement by CAMH or guarantee any particular outcome.

Assessment and Treatment: All Ages

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), Problem Gambling and Technology Use Treatment Services

60 White Squirrel Way, 4th floor, Toronto

www.camh.ca/en/your-care/programs-and-services/problem-gambling--technology-use-treatment

Tel.: 416 535-8501, press 2 (Access CAMH)

Services: Provides specialized services for individuals whose technology use (internet, computer gaming, social media or smart phone) is problematic and has led to difficulties in other parts of their lives (e.g., relationships, school achievement, finances, self-care, work); offers assessment and referrals, group-based treatment for individuals (youth/adults) and their families specific to technology use, group psycho-education and support for family members/loved ones, group and individual support for parents of youth with problem technology use, Emotion Regulation group, psychiatric consultation and follow-up

Eligibility: Youth (ages 16–25) and adults (age 18+) with problem technology use

Referral: Self-referral accepted through Access CAMH

Fee: Free

Halton Alcohol, Drug and Gambling Assessment, Prevention and Treatment Services (ADAPT)

165 Cross Avenue, Oakville | 777 Guelph Line, Suite 214, Burlington |

470 Bronte Street South, Suite 204–205, Milton | 360 Guelph Street, Unit 33, Georgetown

<https://haltonadapt.org/problem-gambling-gaming-behavioural-addictions>

Tel.: 905 639-6537, ext. 0 (clinical intake) | 1 866 783-7073 (toll-free)

adapt@haltonadapt.org

Services: Offers comprehensive assessment and individualized treatment plans to support youth and adults struggling with gaming and technology overuse; treatment plans include individual, group, couples/family counselling, as well as referrals to other community resources

Referral: Self-referrals accepted for most programs (form available online)

Fee: Free

Note: Wait-lists vary depending on the program, location and service demands

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Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare, Centre for Problem Gambling and Digital Dependency

1453 Prince Road, Windsor | 215 Talbot Street East, Leamington

<https://www.hdgh.org/pgsservice>

Tel.: 519 254-2112

problem.gambling@hdgh.org

Services: Provides free, confidential and professional treatment services to individuals and their families and friends impacted by gaming and/or problematic internet use-related concerns, as well as education presentations, workshops, seminars and training for professionals and the larger community; offers two types of treatment—outpatient (includes individual counselling, pre-treatment groups, treatment groups, aftercare groups and family workshops) and bed-based (a structured 21-day live-in “closed cycle” treatment plan that includes individual and group therapy); offers two additional complementary programs—family retreat weekend, where family members and friends receive education and support, and refresher treatment program, a six-day refresher week for those who’ve successfully completed the bed-based program; 55+ program specifically designed for 55+ adults and their families

Referral: Self-referral accepted

Fee: Services are covered by OHIP

Hours: Windsor Program is open Monday and Friday, 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., and Tuesday to Thursday, 8:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.; Leamington Program is open Friday, 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Assessment and Treatment: Adults

The Mindfulness Clinic

425 University Avenue, Suite 801, Toronto

www.themindfulnessclinic.ca

Tel.: 416 847-7118 | 1 866 848-7118 (toll-free)

info@themindfulnessclinic.ca

Services: Offers individual and group therapy (10–12 participants) sessions with a therapist who specializes in behavioural issues or addictions; treatment programs are based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), mindfulness and other relapse prevention techniques

Referral: Self-referral accepted

Fee: Varies, depending on the program (may be covered by private insurance); contact the organization for details

Hours: Office is open Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.; therapists are available Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.

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Simcoe Addiction and Mental Health

4136 3rd Line, Cookstown

www.simcoerehab.ca/behavioural-addiction-treatment

Tel.: 1 833 304-8181 | 705-458-8181

info@simcoerehab.ca

Services: Offers a range of treatments to combat internet addiction, including cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), individual and/or group-based therapy, family therapy and experiential approaches to help clients understand their behaviours, build coping skills and develop healthier habits; offers inpatient and outpatient therapy sessions to help patients overcome video game addiction, including a three-step process (identifying relapse triggers, avoiding situational triggers, coping techniques), detoxing, and long-term recovery plans

Eligibility: Individuals age 18+ capable of taking care of one's own needs, in good enough health to take part in therapy and motivated to begin recovery

Referral: Self-referral accepted (confidential pre-assessment required before admission)

Fee: Varies, depending on the program; contact the organization for details

Trafalgar Addiction Treatment Centres

5483 Trafalgar Road North, Erin

<https://trafalgarresidence.com>

Tel.: 1 855 972-9760

Services: Offers virtual outpatient treatment for internet and gaming addiction; provide personalized support over 4 or 6 weeks of intensive treatment and recovery, skills and process groups, and online aftercare services to prevent relapse

Eligibility: Individuals age 19+ who are medically and physically stable enough to participate in treatment and motivated to begin recovery

Referral: Self-referral accepted (contact for e-intake form); a confidential assessment call is conducted before admission

Fee: Varies, depending on the program (may be covered by private insurance; financing is available); contact the organization for details

Assessment and Treatment: Youth

Addiction and Mental Health Services, Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington (AMHS-KFLA)

552 Princess St., Kingston | 70 Dundas Street East, Napanee

www.amhs-kfla.ca

Tel.: 1 888 488-6697 | 613 544-1356 (Kingston) | 613 354-7521 (Napanee)

info@amhs-kfla.ca (general) | PG@amhs-kfla.ca

Services: Problem gambling and gaming addiction program that includes assessment, individual counselling, relapse prevention, as well as workshops and support for family members

Eligibility: Individuals age 12+ and youth, ages 16–24, for the Youth Team service

Referral: Self-referral accepted (via AccessMHA) and referrals from health professionals (form available online)

Fee: Free

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Mental Health and Addiction Services of Ottawa

1489 Merivale Road, Unit 200, Ottawa

www.mhaso.ca/services

Tel.: 613 225-7272

info@mhaso.ca

Services: Offers group-based and individual counselling for behavioural addictions, including internet and gaming; SMART Recovery 4-Point Program for addiction recovery support (virtual/in-person meetings, open to the public); addiction recovery coaching offered by phone or virtually (low-cost option to therapy/counselling)

Eligibility: Individuals age 15+

Referral: Self-referral accepted; professional referral may be necessary for coverage by private insurance

Fee: Fees range from \$140.00–165.00 per 50-minute session (therapy and counselling services may be covered by private insurance)

Note: SMART Recovery meetings are free to attend

Vasantham Health and Wellness Centre

2660 Eglinton Avenue East, Scarborough

www.vasantham.ca

Tel.: 416 847-4172

info@vasantham.ca

Services: Offers free and confidential gaming addiction counselling for any child willing to participate; Youth Gaming Addiction Prevention program; addictions drop-in program every Wednesday (5:00–6:00 p.m.)

Eligibility: Tamil children and youth

Referral: Self-referral accepted

Fee: Free

Languages: English, Tamil

Online Educational Resources

School of Mental Health Ontario

20 Education Court, Hamilton

<https://smho-smso.ca/online-resources/info-sheet-helping-your-child-manage-digital-technology>

<https://smho-smso.ca/about-us/contact-us>

Services: Offers resources and information for parents on how to manage their children's digital technology usage, including a downloadable info sheet, helpful websites sources of professional support and research papers

Note: Translated versions of resources are available in Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional), Hindi, Korean, Portuguese, Punjabi (Gurmukhi), Punjabi (Shahmukhi), Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil (India), Tamil (Sri Lanka), Ukrainian and Urdu

The Center for Parenting Education

www.centerforparentingeducation.org/resource-directory

info@parentingedu.org

Services: Free directory of educational resources to teach parents about media and internet safety

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