

Ethics and Values
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Lecture – 53
Abuse of Technologies

Hello friends. In the previous lecture we discussed the issues related to plagiarism and completed module 6. Now, we are beginning module 7 with the topic abuse of technologies.

Can you imagine a world without internet? In this era of postmodern societies, every individual is interconnected through a network of information and communication technologies. These technologies have become one of the most important factors of socialization for young people and adolescents. As we all know, technology can be used for educational purposes and also to connect with our family and friends and also for entertainment purposes. But they can also be misused and abused. Abuse of technologies has become a serious concern throughout the world.

Now, how do we abuse technologies? According to Beard and Wolf, abuse of technology is the use of the internet that creates psychological, social, school or work difficulties in a person's life". The problem of technology abusers is that they don't realize the time spent online. They mostly are engaged in online activities and avoid any face to face contact with friends and family. Such abuse of technology can cause physical and psychological problems to an individual. One of the first symptoms of this problem commonly observed among such people is the feeling of anxiety, anger and outbursts when network is weak or is lost. Even problematic use of technologies like internet addiction, mobile addiction or compulsive use of these technologies can also be called as abuse of technologies. There are many research works which state that adolescents are more likely to become addicted to these technologies as they tend to use them more frequently than adults.

Now, you all must be having a mobile phone of your own, well this was not the situation some 20 or 30 years before. As an adolescent, some 20 years before I could not even imagine to own a mobile phone or a laptop. Now, every household might be having at least a basic smart phone. During this pandemic period, mobile phones and laptops with internet connection has become an inevitable component for ensuring unabated flow of information. In this module we will be discussing some topics like cybercrime, gaming, mobile and internet addiction also.

Now, let's have a reflection spot. The question is on the screen.

Among the following, identify abuse of technology.

- a) Extensive use of social networking sites
- b) Gaming addiction

c) Sending abusive texts and messages using social media

d) All of the above

Take some time and try to answer the question. Did you get the right answer? You see, as I have already stated any activity which leads to abuse of technology, let it be technology facilitated abuse like hacking, cyber harassment etc., can be called as abuse of technology. So, option d is the right answer.

Ok friends, in the next lecture we will understand the meaning of cybercrime and the types of cybercrime.

Until then, thank you and take care.

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Lecture – 54
Cyber-crimes

Welcome back to the lectures on ethics and values. We were discussing abuse of technology and in this lecture we will understand the meaning and the common types of cybercrime.

Cybercrime is a generic term which tends to cover all sorts of civil and criminal wrongs related to a computer. We can also say that all crimes resorted by abuse of electronic media with the intention of influencing the functioning of a computer or computer system can be called as cybercrime. So, it is essential that a cybercrime involves a computer and a network where the computer may or may not play an instrumental part in the commission of the crime. These are the high tech variations of the conventional crimes. Here, the perpetrator would tamper the transmission of data for some sort of illegal or unethical purposes. Even criminal exploitation of internet or net crime can also be seen as a type of cybercrime. With the advancement of technology and the inclusion of computer and internet in every field of life, let it be banking, telecommunication, travel, medicine or education, there is an increase in the rate of commission of such crimes. Issues surrounding this type of crime have become high-profile, particularly those surrounding hacking, copyright infringement, child pornography and child grooming etc.

Based on the data from National Cybercrime reporting portal under the Ministry of Home Affairs, it was found that a total of over 3.17 lakh cybercrimes and 5,771 FIRs were registered online through the centralized portal from August 30, 2019 till March 01, 2021 and maximum number of cases was reported from Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Now, these crimes can sustain beyond any geographical boundaries. On the global scale we have issues like cyber terrorism and cyber warfare emerging as a serious threat to the security, privacy and safety of nations. Such crimes engage activities like espionage, financial and data theft and cross border crimes etc. A cyber-attack can potentially disable the economy of a city, state or an entire country.

Computer crimes encompass a broad range of illegal activities and broadly they can be divided into three categories which are:

- Crimes that target computer networks or devices directly
- Computer as incidental to crime
- Computer as a tool in the execution of the crime

Now let's discuss each of these categories. The first category deals with offences that target a computer network or a device directly. Well, such crimes involve trespassing or unauthorized access to a computer network or data in a computer and the common victims of such crimes

are military and intelligence computer systems, commercial, industrial or trading companies, research, development or scientific organizations etc. Examples of such crimes are sabotage of computer systems, operating systems, theft of data and information, unlawful and unauthorized access to government data and records. As you all know, we have certain other forms of threat like VIRUS (Vital Information Resource under Siege), Trojan horses, spam, hacking, spoofing, logic bombs and worms etc.

Before we move further, let's try to answer a question. Identify the correct option.

Statement 1 - The speed of transmission for virus is slower than worms

Statement 2 - Virus corrupts or erases a file or a program and worms can halt the system completely

- a) Statement 1 is false.
- b) Statement 2 is only true
- c) Both statements are false
- d) Both statements are true.

You must be aware of such threats like virus and worms, for which we take extra care by installing antivirus and firewalls in our systems. Virus or Vital Information Resource under Siege is computer program, which when executed replicates itself affecting the functioning of the computer. On the other hand, worms can spread from one computer to another without any human interaction. They can halt the system completely. Their speed of transmission is faster than virus. So, option d is the right answer.

Now, let's move on to the next category where a computer is used to facilitate the commission of the crime such as processing of data, e-mailing, electronic trading and electronic money transfer etc. a lot of people including educated and well placed individuals get cheated by illegal online lotteries which again is an example of misusing online platforms.

In the third category of computer crimes, a computer or an online platform is used as a tool for committing an offence. We have examples like computers being used for pornography, gambling, stealing money by hacking and illegal money transfer etc. Some of the crimes include deceitful use of Debit/Credit cards, online bank accounts, electronic fund transfer, online stock transfers telecommunication frauds etc. Even cyber stalking, cyber bullying and cyber harassment fall into this category of computer crimes, where an individual faces derogatory comments may be due to their online post, gender, religion, nationality etc.

We must also be aware of some of the types of cybercrimes like phishing, cyber terrorism, hacking, online drug trafficking etc.

Phishing is the process by which someone can acquire the personal and sensitive information of another individual by disguising as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication. In such cases, an individual's personal information like their bank account number, login id, and password is obtained by creating a false website of an organization. It is a form of identity theft. The purpose behind such criminal activities is to misuse the information gathered. Now, if a telephone is used as a medium for identity theft, it is known as Vishing or voice phishing. Another form of phishing is Smishing, in which SMS is used to lure the customers of an organization.

The next type which we must understand is cyber – terrorism. As the name suggests, it is the use of online platforms or computer resources to intimidate civilian population or to coerce a government or any sections of our society or may be an organization to obtain some political or social objectives by launching a computer based attack against networks and computer systems. This has become a growing concern among the federal agents and the security officials of our nation to stop such organized intrusions made by terrorist groups or foreign intelligence services.

Now, hacking is a practice of altering computer hardware and software to achieve a goal that is outside the creator's original purpose. There are various reasons behind hacking like it might be for demonstrating someone's technical skill, or may be to steal certain confidential information, or may be to modify and destroy some information for social, political, security and economic reasons. As we all know, corporates hire hackers, some government bodies hire hackers may be to seek certain crucial data or to fix security vulnerabilities of a computer network. The hackers may be broadly classified into four categories: white hat, black hat, grey hat and blue hat.

White hat hackers are the people who hack the system to find the security vulnerabilities of a system and to notify the organizations. In this way, a preventive action can be taken to protect the system from outside hackers. These people may be paid employees of an organization to find the security loop-holes, or they may also be freelancers who just want to prove their capability in this field. They are popularly known as ethical hackers.

In contrast to the white hat hackers, the black hats, hack the system with ill intentions. They might have certain illicit intentions for which they identify the security loopholes of the system and keep the information to themselves or exploit the system for personal or organizational benefits. They are known as unethical hackers or crackers.

Grey hat hackers find out the security vulnerabilities and report to the site administrators and offer the fix of the security bug for a consultancy fee whereas a blue hat hacker is someone working outside computer security consulting firms who is hired to bug-test a system prior to its launch, looking for exploits so that they can be closed.

Now, before we discuss any further, let's have reflection spot. You have to match the following examples with the type of cybercrime.

a) Cyber stalking

b) Spamming

c) Data theft

1. Crimes that target computer networks or devices directly

2. Computer as a tool in the execution of the crime

3. Computer as incidental to crime

Well, did you get the correct match. If you have any doubt, you can listen to my lecture again or just try to remember. Cyber stalking can be matched with option 2. Spamming can be matched with option 2 and data theft can be matched with option 1. I hope you got the right answer. Now, let's move on.

So, we discussed about hacking and now we are moving forward with another type of cyber-crime that is, online drug trafficking. You might be aware that drug trafficking is happening over the internet also. Well, it is the fastest medium through which information can be passed and gathered. Drug traffickers are misusing this platform to sell their illegal substances and make drug deals through encrypted or password protected mails. A recent study on the global Internet-facilitated illicit drug trade identified the presence of online vendors of drugs over the darknet where more than 1,000 drug listings were published from India across 50 online crypto-market platforms. Moreover, in the year 2017, authorities in India dismantled two illicit pharmacies selling psychotropic drugs over the Internet and arresting 15 people in the process. It was further identified in the study that non-medical use of pharmaceutical drugs, containing controlled substances, continues to be prevalent in virtually all South Asian countries.

Well, the seriousness of the issue of drug abuse which is prevalent in India is something we have already discussed in module 5. It is actually upon us to ensure our safety and security while using computers. So, we need to take certain precautions which are extensively discussed by various government bodies. In the next lecture, we will look into some of the impacts of cybercrime.

Bye and thank you.

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Lecture – 55
Impact of Cyber-crimes

Hello everyone! Welcome back. I hope that you have understood the meaning of cybercrime and its type from the previous lecture. So, in this lecture we will look into some of the impacts caused by cybercrime. How do you think a cybercrime can affect us?

You see, the consequences of cyber-crime on adolescents are manifold. It can have a physical, emotional, economic and psychological implication that not only impact the academic performance of a student but also affect their daily life. Based on a study published in the Indian journal of Law and Human behavior, it was identified that the major cause of increasing crime rates among youth is the greed towards making “easy money”. Moreover, the study also mentioned other factors like unemployment, peer pressure, attention seeking behavior which motivates youth to commit atrocious crimes.

As an impact of cyber bullying, one can face increase of stress and anger. It can even cause depression due to the fear of talking about the problem to anyone. The victim might become isolated and frustrated and start hurting themselves. This feeling of embarrassment and humiliation can have a negative impact on their academic performance which further affects their self-esteem and confidence. In some of the extreme cases, the victims might also attempt suicide.

I don't know whether you have heard the term cyber grooming? Well, cyber grooming is also growing as one of the major cyber threats faced by children and adolescents. The perpetrators of this crime are called cyber groomers. They create a fake account on gaming websites, chat rooms, social media, instant messaging etc. and pretend to be a child or someone having an interest in the child. They slowly build an emotional bond with the child through social media or other messaging platform with an objective to attain their trust to exploit them. Cyber groomers mostly target teenagers and adolescents as they face immense biological, emotional, personal and social changes. Now, every teenager has a smart phone with them. These criminals utilize the curious and impulsive nature of adolescents, making them vulnerable to cyber grooming. The devastating effects of online grooming can have long term impacts and sometimes haunt the victim even in their adulthood.

We all know, as soon as a smart phone reaches our hand, a never ending world of online content gets opened before us. As teenagers we will be excited and curious to explore anything that comes to our attention. One such platform is the world of online gaming. More and more young people are gaming online and I am sure the numbers are going to increase in the coming future. And whenever a platform has online users in abundance, the cybercriminals seek opportunities to victimize them. There are chances that you might face bullying from aggressive players who are playing online. They might deliberately harass you

and use inappropriate language which might provoke you to spend more money to move from one level of gaming to the next level. There are chances that someone might help you out by giving you tips about the games and share points and as a result, use this opportunity to run a scam against you to gather your personal information. Sometimes you might end up downloading viruses and malwares while installing free online games which in turn harms your laptops, smart phones or other gaming devices. As I already said, in some of the online games, you are asked to share your credit card details for improving your performance or for some extra advantage. Well, criminals can use this platform to capture your credit card information and misuse it. And yes there have been cases, where due to addiction and ignorance, people start spending money for advantages in online games.

Now, before we end this lecture. I have a question for you. What is name of the online platform created by the Ministry of Home affairs, Government of India to address the menace of cybercrime?

- a) National Cybercrime reporting portal
- b) National portal
- c) National cyber volunteer programme
- d) National cyber cell portal

Just think for a while and try to answer the question. Well, the right answer for the question is option a National Cybercrime Reporting Portal about which we will be discussing in the next lecture which is on the prevention of cybercrime.

Until then, thank you and do take care of your mobile phones and laptops.

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Lecture – 56
Prevention of Cyber-crimes

Welcome back my dear friends. We were discussing cybercrime. In the previous lecture, we have covered the impacts of cybercrime and in this we will understand some of the preventive measures to be undertaken.

First of all, you need to secure your online presence as you secure yourself. You need to ensure right settings on your social media accounts, to avoid any unwanted downloading and viewing of your personal photos and videos, by other than your friends, without your knowledge. I would recommend that before joining any social media platform, you need to read their guideline, especially those related to security. It's true that we can't read the entire terms and conditions but at least familiarize yourself with some of the essential features like how to block someone who makes you uncomfortable and how to remove someone from the friends list. So, ensure right privacy settings and content sharing filters. And be selective about accepting friend request of strangers on social media. And remember to logout from your social media accounts after use. Secure your laptops and phones with passwords which should not be shared with others apart from your family members, because they won't attempt to hack you or bully you online.

Another very important thing which I want to say is that be aware and alert of your presence in online video calls and chats. You never know, sometimes the other person might record the content. There have been instances where conversations which are meant to be private in nature get shared online through social media groups and websites. Do not accept video chat and call request from strangers.

Now, apart from calling someone, people use smartphones for taking high clarity pictures and videos and we sometimes forget that these videos and pictures that we click might be saved in cloud storage. All the smart phones have this feature. So make sure you delete your images from your device while repairing, servicing or selling phones and also ensure that you do a factory reset, which erases all the data on your device.

Now, before we move further, let's answer a question. What would you do when you identify that you have become a victim of cybercrime?

- a) Be quiet about it
- b) Talk to friends
- c) Talk to parents
- d) Ignore or avoid the problem

Well, this is a question which reflects your reaction and you must be genuine while answering it. If you remain quiet and suffer alone, or if you avoid or ignore the problem, then there are chances that the situation might become severe and go out of your hand. By doing this you are also creating a congenial environment for the abuser or the criminal to spread the menace. Talking to friends also won't help you so; the right option is option c, to talk to your parents and let them guide you.

Now, let's move on with our discussion.

Protect yourself from cyber stalking and cyber bullying as well as online grooming. When you observe that someone is constantly trying to contact you online despite your clear indication of disinterest, then I suggest you people to inform this first to your parents and file an online complaint on the National Cybercrime reporting portal. Well, by doing this you might be saving several youngsters from becoming a victim. So refrain from sharing your location details online and also your personal information like phone number, email id, address and photographs to strangers. Do consult your family, teachers and trustworthy friends, if you think you are a victim of cybercrime.

Be aware of fake social media accounts and websites. I have already spoken about this while discussing the problem of phishing. I would also say that do not use your friend's mobile phone, public computer, cyber café or free Wi-Fi while doing online transactions or for sensitive browsing as there are chances that the data may get stolen.

If anybody shares any content related to child pornography, child sexual abuse or sexually explicit material such as rape/gang rape with you, then it is your duty as a responsible citizen to inform the concerned person that sharing such content is illegal. You can even report it on National cybercrime reporting portal.

One of the best ways to keep attackers away from your computer is to apply patches and other software fixes when they become available. By regularly updating your computer, you block attackers from being able to take advantage of software flaws or vulnerabilities that they could otherwise use to break into your system.

In order to curb the menace caused by the cybercriminals, the government has enacted the Information Technology Act, 2000 whose prime objective is to create an enabling environment for effective use of the internet along with reporting the cybercrime in India. The IT Act is a comprehensive law that deals with technology with respect to e-governance, e-commerce, and e-banking. The cyber law also lays down penalties and cybercrime punishment in India.

As I mentioned in the previous sections, we also have National Cybercrime reporting portal under the Ministry of Home affairs to register cases. You should also be aware of yet another initiative by the Ministry of Home Affairs known as the cybercrime volunteers. Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) has been established under Ministry of Home affairs (MHA) to act as a nodal point at National level in the fight against cybercrime. It aims to

provide a platform to deal with cybercrimes in a coordinated and comprehensive manner. One of the important objectives of the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre is to create an ecosystem that brings together academia, industry, public and government in prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of cybercrimes. Well, this programme was initiated to bring together citizens with passion to serve the nation on a single platform and contribute in fight against cybercrime in the country.

I hope that you would take part in this noble initiative, by becoming cyber volunteers. You know, this is platform where you can showcase your expertise, solve problems, gather information and generate awareness.

As individuals, we should learn to use technology wisely and not let these technologies use us.

So, friends, I hope you would remember my word. In the next lecture, we will understand another form of addiction which doesn't involve substances but are caused by obsessive behaviors.

Bye and thank you.

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Lecture – 57
Behavioural Addiction

Hello everyone. In the previous lectures, we have discussed a lot about cybercrime, its impact and preventive measures. Now we are going to look into another set of problems called behavioral addiction.

As the name clearly suggests, behavioral addiction is the inability to resist an impulse, drive or temptation to perform an act which is harmful to the person or to others. Well, the characteristics are similar to the characteristics of substance addiction, with one most important difference – in substance dependence, you are addicted to an addictive substance but here you are obsessed with an act.

Now, you have a question on the screen. Which among the following is an example of behavioral addiction?

- a) Smoking
- b) Alcoholism
- c) Gaming addiction
- d) Drug addiction

I am sure you would have found the answer which is option c gaming addiction where someone gets addicted to the act of playing online games. Options a, b and d are examples of substance addiction. We will be discussing addiction to online games in the coming lectures.

Now, moving on.

In case of behavioral addictions also, one gets fixated and preoccupied with the thoughts of performing that particular activity which slowly deteriorates the quality of social life for the person. This activity takes over that person's feelings and causes mood modifications. It starts to provide comfort, pleasure and relaxation. The person starts to develop tolerance towards the activity and sometimes increases its frequency or spends more time in doing the particular activity to achieve the same effect. The individual also experiences withdrawal symptoms subsequent to discontinuation. Such behaviors eventually lead to interpersonal conflict and conflict with other activities like job, social life, hobbies and interests, or emotional issues due to the inability to stop the behavior despite adverse consequences. If not addressed properly, then there is every chance for the habit to revert after a period of complete abstinence.

Therefore, the salient features of behavioral addiction can be described using 4Cs.

Craving, Control, Compulsion and Consequences which may include depression, academic and professional underperformance, lack of social activities, isolation and psychological distress due to excessive engagement in the particular activity.

As I already said, there are similarities between substance dependence and behavioral addiction as shown in the table on the screen.

The symptoms common to behavior addictions include compulsive need to act out the behavior, frequent mood swings, experiencing a feeling of euphoria from the activity, obsession and fixation towards the activity and preoccupied with the thought of planning the behavior ahead, such that it takes precedence over work, health and family.

Different types of behavioral addictions include gambling, internet addiction, cellphone addiction, eating addiction, shopping addiction, exercise addiction, sex addiction, work addiction, etc.

As you all know, the present lifestyle has made us dependent on mobile phones. From morning alarm to watching news, interacting with friends and even our work and study is performed using this device. But when do we understand that we have become addicted to it? You will get the answer in the next lecture.

Until then, bye and thank you.

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Lecture – 58
Addiction to Mobile Phone

Welcome back friends. In the previous lecture, we have discussed the meaning of behavioral addiction. Now we are going to understand, what constitutes mobile addiction or cell phone addiction.

Mobile or cell phone addiction is not yet recognized as a formal disorder by behavioral scientists but as we all know, excessive usage of mobile phones can be associated with a loss of sense of time or a lack of interest in other activities. A person addicted with cell phone may show symptoms like sudden anger, tension, and irritation and in some extreme cases the person faces depression when the mobile phone is not working or when the network is inaccessible. In such form of addiction, tolerance to the use of the device is manifested when the user demands new and latest mobile phones with varied applications and more hours of use.

Cell phone addiction can have both physical and psychological consequences. Excessive use of cell phone results in fatigue, eye strain, blurred vision, neck problems. As you all know, texting and driving is also dangerous as drinking and driving. Multitasking and the tendency to answer calls and using phones while driving can be lethal not only for the driver and the passengers but also for the people on the road.

Cell phone addiction has been linked to sleep disorders as well. Studies have also shown that using mobile phone prior to bedtime might increase the chances of insomnia. It can also lead to compulsive obsessive disorder. We all know that the first thing many people do after waking up is to check their mobile notifications and some people watch videos till late night before going to sleep. When we hear the notification sound, some people find it difficult to control the impulse to check the message in their phones. These habits can have negative repercussions which include lying, creating unnecessary arguments especially with family members, poor performance in academics and at workplace, social isolation, impaired physical activity and fatigue.

Does all this sound familiar to you? Then please reflect upon your habits of using mobile phone.

Therefore, some of the important characteristics of cellphone addiction include excessive use which is manifested in the gradual increase in use to obtain the same level of satisfaction and also to frequently replace the old mobiles with new and more sophisticated models. Some people also showcase the tendency of spending more money to replace the old devices and create problems especially with parents. Excessive use of mobile phone can interfere in your

academic performance and cause emotional alterations when the phone use is discontinued or there is impeded network coverage.

Now, before we end this lecture, lets try to answer a question which is on your screen.

Which is the term that defines the fear of being detached from mobile phone connectivity?

- a) Claustrophobia
- b) Brontophobia
- c) Nomophobia
- d) Acrophobia

Well, did you get the right answer? Do you find it difficult to put your smartphone somewhere without using it or do you feel anxious and angry when you don't get network coverage? Do you fear losing your mobile phone and get distressed just by imagining it loss? If so, then it's possible that you have this modern phobia caused by increased dependence on technology and the concern over what would you do if you don't get access to required information. This fear is called nomophobia or no mobile phobia. So, the right answer is option c. There are certain emotional and physical symptoms of nomophobia like stress, anxiety, irritation when you can't check your phone and some people would also experience rapid heartbeat, tightness in the chest, dizziness and disorientation etc. while they lose their mobile phones or mobile phone connectivity. Now, for your information, claustrophobia is the fear of closed spaces, Brontophobia is the fear of thunder and Acrophobia is the fear of heights.

As I already said, you should be the master of your device and don't let these devices control you. In the next lecture, we will discuss the characteristics of addiction to video games. Bye and thank you.

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Lecture – 59
Addiction to Video Games

Welcome back my dear friends. In the previous lecture we discussed the characteristics of mobile phone addiction and we also came across the term nomophobia. In today's lecture, we will look into some of the issues related to online gaming addiction.

As I have already discussed in the previous lectures, internet has become an essential element of our daily life. Especially, during the pandemic period, everybody is using internet to make contact with their friends, family, also to do a job, to ensure education and dissemination of information etc. It does have its benefits but it also carries a danger along with it. Internet opens wide world of opportunities for us which if used properly can provide benefits or even entertain us but excessive and obsessive utilization of these facilities can have dangerous impacts as well.

In the year 2018, the WHO, classified “gaming disorders” under the category of disorders due to addictive behaviours in its diagnostic manual on International Classification of Diseases. The World Health Organization defines gaming addiction as a pattern of persistent or recurrent gaming behavior which may be online or even offline. The gaming addiction is manifested as an impaired control over gaming i.e. its intensity, frequency and duration gradually grows, then, the user progressively starts to give priority to gaming which takes precedence over other life activities and the continuation of gaming, despite negative consequences.

There are basically two major types of video games and hence, we can have two types of video game addictions. We have standard video games which is usually designed for a single player and involve a clear goal or mission. Well, the addiction to such games is often related to the obsession of finishing the task or beating a high score or completing the mission. Now, there is this other type of video game which involves the participation of multiple players at the same time. These games are highly addictive because of the element of competition and sometimes the competitor might use aggressive comments, which further motivates adolescents to continue the game. Gamers addicted to such video games enjoy creating and temporarily assuming an online character. Such games can create an opportunity for cyber groomers.

Now, what causes addiction to video games? There are many reasons and one of the first reason is that they are designed to make people addicted. The challenges and new hurdles introduced in games motivate young people to continue playing the game and the reward obtained after every stage and challenge, triggers the pleasure centers of brain and acts as an element causing addiction. There are many studies which say that the spiral of challenges and achievements along with rewards and the gradual enjoyment of the virtual world where

someone feels free from societal responsibilities, expectations and control from family can be a contributing factor. This might seem tempting for some and they seek out an adventure without realizing its consequences.

- Here are some of the symptoms of gaming addiction:
- Thinking about gaming all or a lot of the time
- Feeling stressed when you can't play
- Increase in the time spent for playing to feel happy
- Finding difficulty in quitting or playing less
- Withdrawing from other common activities
- Having problems at work, school, or home because of gaming
- Continuing online gaming despite problems
- Lying to people close to you about how much spent on playing
- Using gaming to ease bad moods and feelings

Are you experiencing these signs, then, I would suggest you to reflect on what you are undergoing and decide what to do next.

Adolescents and not just adolescents, even adults love to play online. People might begin and just attempt playing online for curiosity and excitement. I would also like to mention that not everyone who likes to play online gets addicted to gaming. WHO says that to diagnose gaming disorder, it is required that the behaviour pattern must be of adequate severity to result in significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational or other important areas of functioning. It should normally be evident for at least 12 months. As I already said, gaming disorder affects only a very small number of people who continuously engage in video gaming activities. However, people who involve in online gaming should be alert to the amount of time they spend on gaming activities, particularly when they play while avoiding their daily activities. They should also be aware regarding any changes in their physical and psychological health that could be attributed to their pattern of gaming behaviour.

Now, let's have a reflection spot. What would you do if you realize that you are addicted to an online game?

- a) Ignore the thought and continue playing the game
- b) Become aware of the problem and start measures to stop
- c) Talk to your parents and seek professional help
- d) Talk to your friends

I definitely hope that you will be genuine in answering the question. There can be more options than the ones I have specified but as a teacher, I would suggest you people to first talk to your parents and seek professional help because we might think that we can solve the

problem alone but addictions mostly show the tendency of recurrence. So, I would suggest you people to go for option c.

Now, how can we prevent this problem? First of all, we need to set time limits and stick to them. Also, make sure that you don't keep your mobile phone in bedroom or where you sleep so that you can avoid the temptation to play or use whenever you see it. Another very important problem with online gaming is the sedentary lifestyle which gets gradually developed among young people causing obesity in some. So, we should make sure that we walk and remain active to avoid such diversions.

There are studies that even show that some children who are exposed to violent online games exhibit anger and aggression more than those who did not play. There are also studies which state that most adolescents who are addicted to computer games have high heart beat and blood pressure due to too much excitement and stress. You might have heard of instances caused by deadly online games like Blue Whale and Free Fire, when children sometimes were found engaging in self-harm and in some extreme cases even suicide. In certain cases, even the children were found of playing for more than 20 hours, they stop eating and talking to their family members and always demand of getting a new sophisticated mobile phone for better gaming experience.

Well, the intention of this course is for you people to reflect on your actions. So, if you are facing any such condition, then, please find help and take steps to stop it. I repeat what I said before, we should not let technology control us and not let it make us its slave. Spend more time with your family members, and do understand that no technology can be a substitute for the care, joy and love we get from our family and friends.

In the next lecture, we will be discussing another form of behavioral addiction which is addiction to social networking sites.

Bye and thank you.

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Lecture – 60
Addiction to Social Networking Sites

Hello friends. Welcome back. In the previous lecture we had a detailed discussion on addiction to online gaming and in this lecture we will understand the issues of addiction to social networking sites.

Online social networking sites gained importance with more and more individuals connecting others via social networking sites. People use social networking sites to connect to their friends and also to explore people with similar interests. Hence, it may develop the need to be online and in some cases resulting in symptoms and implications which were traditionally associated with substance addiction. As you all know, they can have a major influence on adolescents. These networks can create vast opportunities and similarly, cause severe harm to those who get fixated with it and use it beyond a certain limit.

The history of social networking sites dates back to 1997, when the first social networking site six degrees emerged. In the year 2004, Facebook was launched as an online community for Harvard students and as we all know, since then it has become the world's most popular social networking site. Over the past few years, new networks have emerged like Instagram, Snapchat, Whatsapp etc. that have gradually risen in popularity particularly amongst youngsters. As you all know, social networking activities comprise a wide variety of usage motivations and requirements, which range from casual friendly connection, gaming, and romantic endeavors etc. Now, all these motivations enhance the impact of such networking sites on the everyday life of users.

As already discussed, there are many studies which stress upon the impact of social networking sites on generating addictive behaviors among people. It may lead to symptoms like salience, mood modifications, tolerance, withdrawal, relapse and conflict which are traditionally associated with substance addictions.

For certain people, use of social networking sites might become the single most important activity of each day and they would sometimes get so much preoccupied with these sites that they deliberately do things which can be uploaded on these sites. Then, the activities on these sites are used to induce mood alterations. Tolerance develops when increased amounts of time and energy are required to obtain the same feelings and state of mind that was experienced during the initial phases of usage. Now, suppose the individual discontinues the use, then they might experience negative psychological and physiological symptoms. Emergence of withdrawal symptoms might lead to a restoration of the problematic behavior. As a consequence, the person experiences intrapsychic and interpersonal conflicts where they might face subjective loss of control and problems in relationship, work and education.

Now, what causes addiction to social networking sites? What do you think? Is it the technology or is it what the technology allows them to do? There can be two perspectives to this question. There are some scholars who argue that it is the technology that acts as a medium or a tool that allows individuals to engage in particular behaviors like social networking or gaming. Well, there is another view which argues that the technology is not a matter at all while engaging in online platforms whereas it is people and information and the connections which makes individuals happy and gives a pleasurable feeling to them when they see these “likes” and positive comments of appreciations from friends and sometimes even strangers.

Does all this sound familiar to you?

Addicted people face negative impacts and suffer procrastination, distraction, and poor time-management. They are more prone to romantic relationships, jealousy and cyberstalking. They are also prone to relationship problems, substance abuse and associated legal action. They have more dysfunctional coping like escapism and avoidance.

There are studies which also state that vulnerable young people with narcissistic tendencies are prone to have this addictive behavior. People addicted to social networking sites also share similar symptoms with those affected by substance addiction. So, you have to realize whether you are just a friendly media user or an addict.

Now, before we leave I have question for you. Among the following, identify the vulnerable group that can get addicted to social networking sites.

- a) People with low self-esteem and confidence
- b) People seeking attention and recognition
- c) People facing loneliness
- d) People with high tendency to remain online
- e) Friendly media users
- f) All of the above

Now, what do you think is the right answer? Just think for a while and try to answer the question. You know there are many psychological studies which state that though social networking cultivates relationships and reduce loneliness but its excessive use negatively impacts an individual’s self-esteem and their social skills, especially communication. It also hampers mental health and reduces life satisfaction. So, did you get the right answer? Well, option f is correct answer as all of these categories are prone to get addicted to social networking sites. In the next lecture, we will look into some of the preventive measures to be undertaken against behavioral addiction.

Until then, bye and thank you.

Ethics and Values
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Lecture – 61
Prevention of Behavioural Addiction

Hello friends. We were talking about behavioral addiction and in the previous lecture we discussed a lot on addiction to social networking sites. In this lecture we will deal with some of the preventive measures.

There are basically five different types of social network site addiction. First is computer addiction or may be computer game addiction, second is information overload or addiction to web surfing or browsing. While the third is net compulsions like online gambling or online shopping addiction, fourth is a cyber-sexual addiction or addiction to online pornography or

online sex addiction, and then, we have the cyber-relationship addiction or addiction to online relationships.

Now, the prevention to all these problems lies with us. We need to adopt certain strategies to avoid using technologies beyond a limit.

Lets have a reflection spot. From the following, what can be considered as the initial step to begin preventive measure against behavioral addiction?

- a) Identify the cause of addiction
- b) Identify the severity of addiction
- c) Identify the period of addiction
- d) None of the above

Well, the question is easy and as an individual, I am sure you would first look into the triggering factor rather than the period and severity. First you need to know your triggers. Understand them and become aware of them and try to avoid situations that might trigger the need to perform the addictive behavior. So option a, is the right answer.

As I said, by identifying the triggering factor, you would get answer to the question like - What connects you to the addictive behavior? Is it boredom, peer pressure, physical or psychological stress, or lack of self-esteem and confidence? Knowing this in advance can help you prepare from inevitable challenges of daily life. Yes, it's true that behavioral addictions are less likely to become fatal, and can rarely yield immediate health consequences which motivate many people to mistakenly believe that they can tackle behavioral addiction on their own.

At the initial stages, we can make an effort on our own but in later stages, I would recommend a professional therapy which can further assist you to identify the underlying factors behind your addiction and guide you to implement healthy coping mechanism. There are several measures undertaken by professional counselors like cognitive behavioral therapy, group therapy and talk therapy etc. which can prevent the recurrence of the addictive behavior and also help you to resist temptation for the rest of your lives.

There are alternative coping mechanisms like engaging in physical exercises, doing yoga or taking part in sports activities, talking to a close friend, gardening, painting etc. Again self-regulation is an essential element to control cravings towards certain behaviors. So, learn to set clear guidelines for your behavior ahead of time. Restrict the usage of mobile phones or internet and do not engage in online activities especially before bedtime and immediately after waking up.

Before I end this lecture, I would suggest you people to inculcate the habit of following a zero technology hour, where you deliberately devoid yourselves from any form of technology. Go for a walk, read, meditate, spend quality time with your family and friends, indulge in some physical activities or do gardening or engage in some creative works.

So, with this we come to the end of module 7 which is the last module of our course. I hope this course has equipped you people to at least develop the habit of reflective analysis.

Wishing you all the best in your lives. Thank you and take care.