

Presentation and Communication Skills

Mentality Of An Addict

A Report

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Abstract

Addiction is a growing problem in today's world. While the major focus has been on society's take on addictions, this report gives insight on what actually causes addiction and how it should be dealt with. Also, not just the number of addictions but the types of addictions have increased over the last few years. Some addictions like smoking, drinking, gambling have social stigma associated with them while other addictions like gaming, work addiction go unnoticed. This report focuses on various addictions, their causes and effects and proposes a view in which society and addicts are not against each other but rather they are in this together and must fight addiction together.

Acknowledgement

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Introduction

People are addicted to something for a variety of reasons, and not everyone comes from a destructive childhood, but it is common. People will try drugs, alcohol, etc. for various reasons, including; self-medicating for depression or other untreated mental illness, curiosity and experimentation, stress from life, boredom, to be social, to fit in, to seem grown up, and to rebel. Sometimes people even become addicted to medications prescribed for a valid health condition, or pain management.

Addiction is no way to live life. It is destructive for every aspect of an addicts life. Although there is a high relapse rate for drug addicts, they can get their lives together and be sober. Trying a drug is voluntary, addiction is not. Hate the disease, not the addict. With the proper support many lives are changed and saved for those addicted to drugs, even before an addict hits rock bottom. Family support, rehabs and a genuine desire to change are needed for and from the addict. Some would say it is easier said than done, and yes it is true. The main reasons being addicts treated as an outcaste and failure of the society to understand what actually they are going through, their mentality.

Also, addictions which are are considered not so serious like addiction to gaming, internet are usually neglected by the society and the people with such addictions continue to lead their life without knowing that it will fade into oblivion.

Discussion

Addiction is habitual psychological or physiologic dependence on a substance or practice that is beyond voluntary control. People with an addiction do not have control over what they are doing, taking or using. Their addiction may reach a point at which it is harmful. Addictions not only include physical things we consume, such as drugs or alcohol, but may include virtually anything, such as gaming, excessive usage of internet, gambling, eating, smoking. Some of the addictions are described below.

Alcoholism

Alcohol addiction is defined as a chronic disease in which your body and mind become dependent on alcohol. Though its definition is universal, its effects mean different things to different people: job loss, family estrangement, physical deterioration, etc.

Why do people drink?

Although scientists cannot pinpoint specific reasons why alcoholism develops, they have identified several contributing factors. Genetic predisposition, environment, and mental health are the leading risk factors for developing this disease. These factors explain why members of a family with similar life experiences may respond to alcohol consumption in different ways. Even in families where alcohol abuse and addiction are prevalent, different members may respond very differently to treatment and face unique challenges in recovery. Throughout history humans have engaged in practices that alter their psychological state. There are many reasons why people wish to change their mental and emotional status. It is not hard to imagine the rationale for the very first alcohol-induced experience--it arose from curiosity. Perhaps one of our ancestors ate some fermenting fruit and felt a pleasant sensation that piqued his curiosity. Curiosity is still a prevalent reason for alcohol consumption today. We are bombarded with messages promoting alcohol use, and we are curious to find out just what it feels like to consume alcohol. Another reason for alcohol consumption is stress reduction. We live in trying times, and alcohol is seen as a way to alleviate our stress. Self-medication for other problems carries over to alcohol ingestion. Alcohol can ease physical and emotional pain. If the person who consumes alcohol is also using medications for pain relief, the effects of alcohol can be intensified.

Effects of drinking

Long-term alcohol abuse poses great dangers to an alcoholic's physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual health.

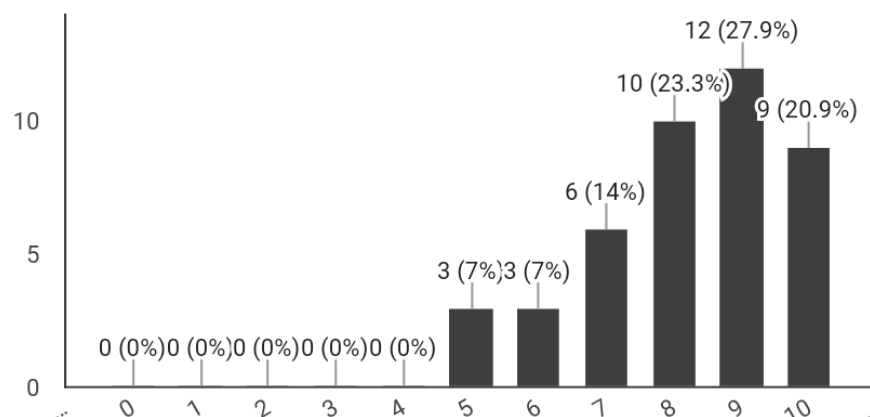
- Liver
- Nervous system
- Heart

Alcohol abuse and addiction also produce other medical side effects.

- High blood pressure
- Sexual problems
- Cancer

Alcoholism often causes severe social consequences on a person's life as well. Domestic violence, marital conflict, legal problems and isolation from friends and family are also common results of alcohol abuse, which may be worsened by the presence of co-occurring anorexia or bulimia.

On a scale of 0 - 10 rate the dangers of Alcohol Addiction? (43 responses)



Drug Abuse

The epidemic of substance abuse in young generation has assumed alarming dimensions in India. Changing cultural values, increasing economic stress and dwindling supportive bonds are leading to initiation into substance use. Cannabis, heroin, and Indian-produced pharmaceutical drugs are the most frequently abused drugs in India. Major counter measures are lacking to fight the increasing rate of addiction. A major reason could be the way the society looks at addicts. Their inability to understand what actually the addict is feeling or going through.

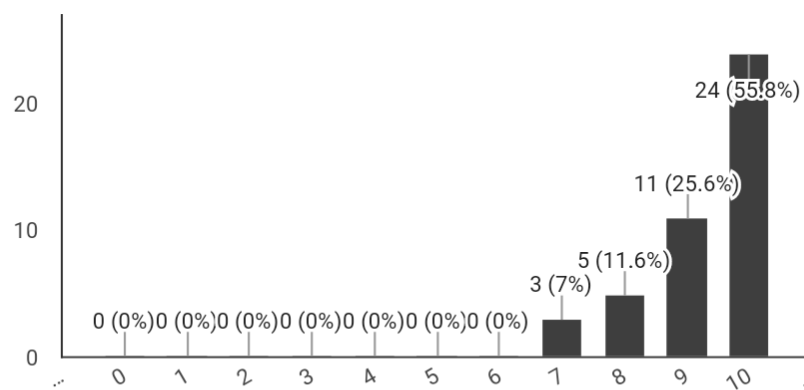
Causes

- Inability to connect with others, lack of friends
- Poor performance at work or school
- Poor stress coping skills
- Participation in a sport where performance-enhancing drugs are encouraged
- A peer group that uses or promotes drug use
- People of lower socioeconomic status are at greater risk of drug addiction
- Gender and ethnicity contribute to addiction of some drugs

Effects

- Stress and hassle associated with keeping your secret from coworkers, friends, lovers, and family. Lying to the people you are closest to and then feeling less close to them because you have to lie to them.
- Risk of legal punishment and/or social disgrace
- Depending on the strand and situation, occasionally can lead to increased anxiety and slight paranoia.
- Lowers inhibitions (e.g., more likely to snack or watch TV to excess)
- Severely impaired performance for: social interactions, physically-demanding activities, mentally-demanding activities that require intense focus and coherence.
- Getting bored more easily when sober (i.e., this is interesting but I could be stoned right now). Becoming a more boring person as a result (boredom is boring).

On a scale of 0 - 10 rate the dangers of Drug Addiction?
(43 responses)



Smoking

Smoking is responsible for several diseases, such as cancer, long-term (chronic) respiratory diseases, and heart disease, as well as premature death. The drug inside tobacco that people are addicted to is called nicotine. Just like with other addictions, people who are addicted to cigarettes have a compulsive need to smoke—their body craves regular doses of nicotine. When someone smokes, it will often lead to changes in their brain and nervous system.

Why Smoke?

Most people start smoking when they are in their teens and are addicted by the time they reach adulthood. Some have tried to quit but have returned to cigarettes because smoking is such a strong addiction. It is a habit that is very difficult to break. There are many different reasons why people smoke.

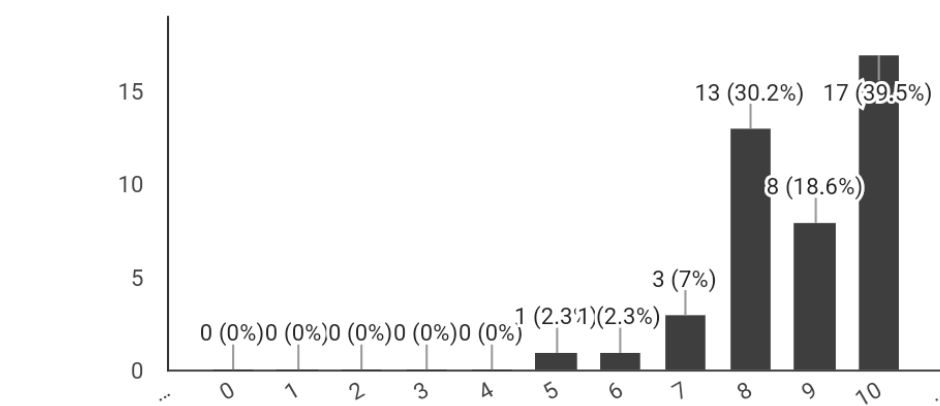
Three of the main reasons that young people smoke are to look mature, to be like their friends, and to experiment. Since teens see older people all around them smoking, especially their parents and relatives, they smoke to act older. If their friends or peers smoke, they may feel pressured into doing the same to be accepted. The last reason is the excitement of experimenting with something that is forbidden.

Adults smoke for other reasons. They may have a lot of stress and pressures because of economic and personal problems. They may be unemployed or working but not making enough money to take care of themselves and their families. They may be homeless, or they may be dealing with alcohol or cocaine/heroin addictions. Some may be in bad marriages or relationships in which there is physical and/or verbal abuse. All these people may smoke to feel relaxed or to give them energy while going through a hard time.

Effects

- Anxiety and Irritability
- Lung Cancer
- Bronchitis
- Blood Cancer
- Heart Diseases
- High Cholesterol
- Erectile Dysfunction
- Infertility, etc.

On a scale of 0 - 10 rate the dangers of Smoking
Addiction?
(43 responses)



Internet Addiction Disorder

Internet addiction can be described as the excessive or compulsive use of the internet which has a negative impact on personal, social or occupational life. It is referred to as problematic Internet use (PIU) or compulsive Internet use (CIU). It is often divided into subtypes by activity, such as gaming, online social networking, blogging, email, Internet pornography and Internet gambling.

Causes

- Whenever Internet addicts feel overwhelmed, stressed, depressed, lonely or anxious, they use the Internet to seek solace and escape.
- Certain people are predisposed to having a computer or Internet addiction, such as those who suffer from anxiety and depression. Their lack of emotional support means they turn to the Internet to fill this need.
- There are also those who have a history of other types of addiction, such as addictions to alcohol, drugs, sex and gambling.
- Even being stressed and unhappy can contribute greatly to the development of a computer or Internet addiction.
- People who are overly shy and cannot easily relate to their peers are also at a higher risk of developing a computer or Internet addiction.

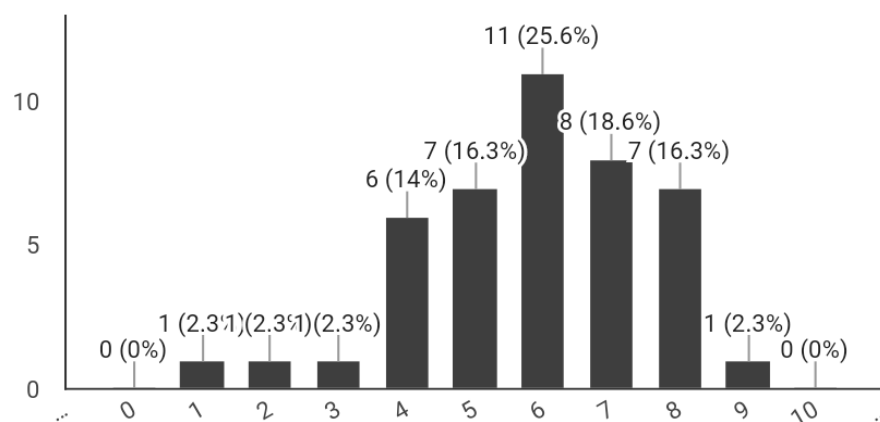
Effects

- **Poor impulse control:** Being unable to stop visiting websites, clicking links or checking emails.
 - **Procrastination:** A person may regularly perform activities such as website browsing or online gaming to avoid doing important tasks such as starting an essay or making a difficult phone call.
 - **Avoiding family and friends (reduction in social life):** People who become addicted to the internet often go out less frequently and interact with their friends and family less and less overtime.
 - **Lower productivity:** People who are addicted to the internet are likely to have lower rates of productivity as they put off doing their work and are unable to focus on the work at hand, becoming easily distracted.
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- **Time distortion:** Aimless web surfing or play online games is common among internet addicts who may find that time passes rapidly whilst doing these activities.
- **Physical effects** symptoms such as backache, neck pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, and vision problems from staring at the screen.
- **Bankruptcy:** It can also lead to bankruptcy, especially if the time spent online is focused on shopping, gambling and gaming.

On a scale of 0 - 10 rate the dangers of Internet Addiction?

(43 responses)



Gaming Addiction

Video game addiction is hypothesized to be an excessive or compulsive use of computer games or video games, which interferes with a person's everyday life. Video game addiction may present itself as compulsive game-playing; social isolation; mood swings; diminished imagination; and hyper-focus on in-game achievements, to the exclusion of other events in life. In May 2013, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) proposed criteria for video game addiction in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, concluding that there was insufficient evidence to include it as an official mental disorder. However, proposed criteria for "Internet Gaming Disorder" are included in Section 3, Conditions for Further Study.

Causes

There are several "hooks" that are built into games with the intent of making them "addictive":

- The High Score
- Beating the Game
- Role-Playing
- Discovery
- Relationships

Effects

Some of the physical effects of video game addiction include:

- Fatigue
- Migraines due to intense concentration or eye strain
- Poor personal hygiene

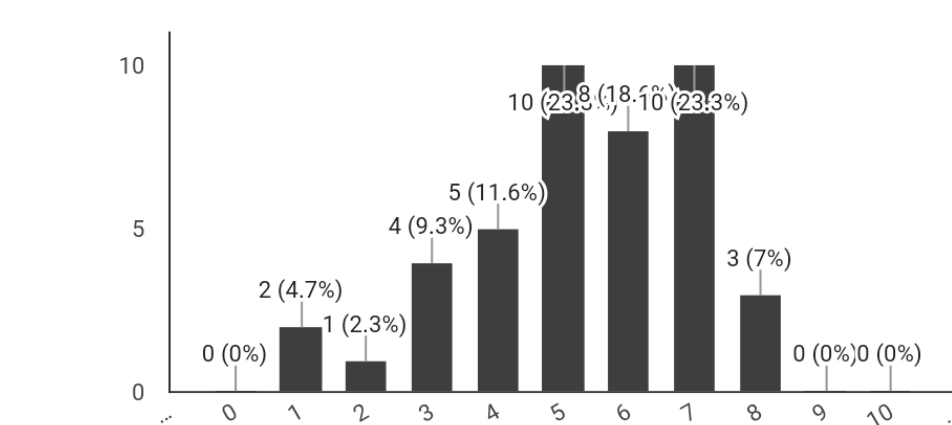
Some of the emotional effects of video game addiction include:

- Feelings of restlessness and/or irritability when unable to play
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- Preoccupation with thoughts of previous online activity or anticipation of the next online session
- Lying to friends or family members regarding the amount of time spent playing
- Isolation from others in order to spend more time gaming

On a scale of 0 - 10 rate the dangers of Gaming Addiction?

(43 responses)



Society's View On Addicts

The society's view on addicts revolves around many myths. They are :

- Good kids don't use drugs, bad kids do.
- It's impossible to prevent addiction. Kids who are going to use are going to use.
- People who get addicted are weak and without morals.
- Addicts must hit bottom before they can be treated.

Now, this is clearly a common belief. Drug and alcohol habits are still simplistically associated with the impoverished in society, so much so that the emphasis of coverage revolves around irrelevant context, rather than focussing on the most damaging facet, the addiction itself.

That such ignorance is exhibited in newspapers across the world is hardly surprising, as these publications merely seek to reflect the prominent schools of thought that exist in society and often fail to overly interrogate them.

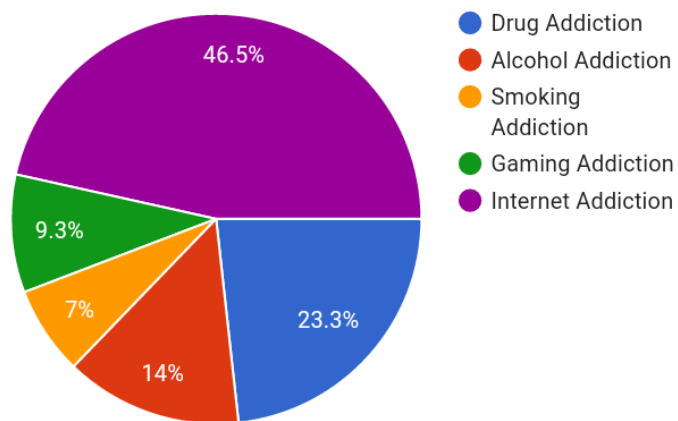
Also addictions like gaming and internet are not considered so serious. This is also quite visible from the society's survey regarding the danger posed by various addictions. The reality is that most people are addicts – For some, the addiction can be drugs or alcohol. For others, it can be work, shopping, gambling, thrill-seeking, hoarding, exercise, chocolates, there are probably a surprising amount of people on this planet that are addicted to it. But casually mention to a friend in conversation that you are addicted to drugs or alcohol and watch as their entire demeanor changes. It doesn't matter if that friend suffers from OCD and habitually washes and sanitizes his hands every five minutes, refuses to shake other's hands for fear of germs, and dreads the notion of touching a doorknob, but try to evoke the same empathy from that person to understand your compulsion to drink or use drugs, and more often than not you'll be met with that disapproving stare that many of us are all too intimate with.

Views – not all of course – on drug addiction are gradually changing for the better, with more people of the mind that drug users should be treated, not blamed and chastised, for their drug use.

Modern society, most notably modern Western society, is increasingly viewing drug addiction as a societal issue, not a criminal issue, one that should be treated by making rehabilitation more accessible for addicts, not by turning them into criminals.

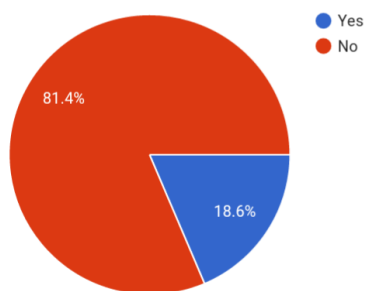
Which of the following do you think is a prominent addiction?

(43 responses)

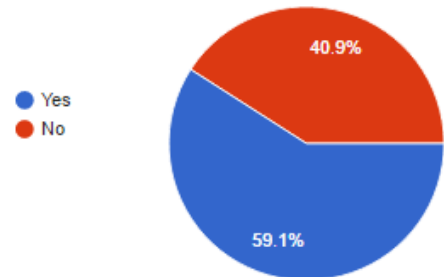


Do you treat addicts differently?

(43 responses)



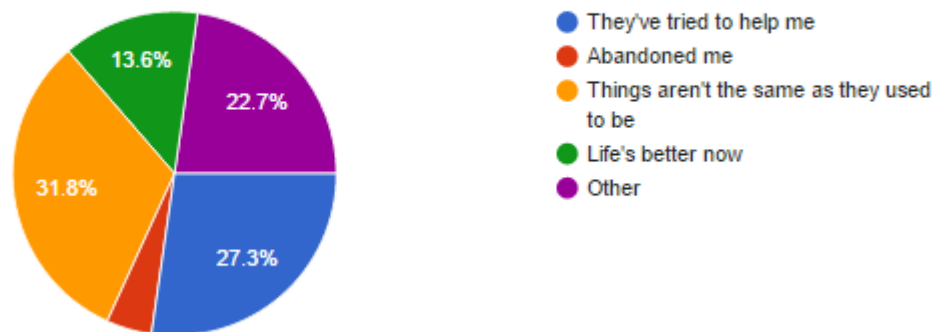
Do people who know about your addiction treat you differently?



What An Addict Feels?

Addicts feel that they are hit by social stigma and negative stereotypes. A lot of people judge them based on their preconceived notions. They are usually perceived as lazy, unmotivated, lacking in discipline and self-control, directionless, hedonistic, nihilistic. As a result they develop fear of society. It is just one of the many fears they have. They start fear they will run out of substance. Fear makes them act differently even when sober.

What does your family have to say about this?



The survey of addicts reveals how their relationship with their family took a turn for the worse after they came to know about their addiction. While those who got rid of thier addiction formed a much stronger bond with their family.

While some are always consciously aware of their addiction, others make it a part of their daily routine as if it is completely normal. The survey of addicts clearly revealed that they feel they are treated differently because of their addiction. While they are not 'chasing the high', they feeling extremely bored and stop mingling with anyone as everything seems dull and boring to them compared to their experience.

Also the two surveys (One for society and the other for addicts) resulted in contradicting answers when asked about their behaviour towards addicts. 59.1% addicts felt that people knowing about their addiction treated them differently while only 18.6% people actually agreed to it.

Summary and Conclusion

In conclusion, there are a few types of addictions which have surfaced to the view of our society like smoking, drinking, drug abuse, etc. but we have been overlooking some of them like addiction to gaming, the internet, etc. And the only reason is the former ones have a direct impact on one's life whereas the latter spread like slow cancer and affect one passively.

It has to be a mutual understanding, between the society and the addicts. Both are at fault and only an effort from both sides can lead to the betterment of each other. The addicts have to think about the future, the impact their continued practice can have on themselves and their loved ones. And in the current times, the society hasn't been treating them well. They deem the addicts as people who don't belong in the society and who have a flawed character or mindset.

We, as a society, shouldn't treat the affected as outcast members or consider them a taboo to the society. We should offer a helping hand to them so that they do not feel different and realise that whatever their addiction, they possess a life beyond that. There should be awareness sessions as well as rehabilitation groups and meetings where people can share their experiences. This practice would definitely be a lot better as each and every person in that group or meeting would exactly know how each and every person in that room feels. We shouldn't judge anyone by their addictions and rather help them come out of it. Sometimes all the addiction a person needs is a pair of ears or a warm hug.

Recommendations

Society and public policy has taught us all that drug addicts and alcoholics are all to blame for their addictions. It has put the onus of sobriety directly on the shoulders of those most disadvantaged by their conditions. And while there is truth to the notion that we are all ultimately responsible for our actions, it is naïve to simply place the blame of addiction at the feet of the addicted and expect them to clean up their own mess, without us recognizing that no one willfully chooses addiction.

Addiction shouldn't be met with shame; it should be met with compassion. For every person we leave in the shadows, we lose that person's potential to give back to society. For every person we write-off and dismiss from our lives for being an addict, we write-off and dismiss a part of ourselves. For every person we reclaim from addiction's grasp, we claim a victory for society. It is not enough to ignore the problem anymore; it is something we must address. We must not fear addiction, but rather, we must come together as a society to defeat it.

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