Mental Health & Cyber Tools

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Thank you:
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"These days we have Smartphones, Smart cars, Smartboards, Smart everything, but consider this: if the technology is getting smarter, does that mean humans are getting dumber?" - *Rebecca McNutt*

Even worse – are people getting addicted thereby harming their mental health and wellbeing?

How many young Indian people are stuck to their phones?

Magnitude of smartphone addiction in Indian adolescents: 39% to 44% (Davey & Davey 2014)

Flow of this presentation

What is 'good mental health' → How is cyber-addiction affecting mental health → How to address addiction and harness the Internet for good

Body and Mind are intimately correlated

Is mental health necessary?

- Mental health is essential for the well-being and functioning of individuals, families, communities and nations
- Mental health contributes to
  - Social functioning & affects overall productivity
  - Individual's quality of life,
  - Can be increased or diminished by the actions of society.
- An important aspect of good mental health is the capacity for <u>mutually satisfying and enduring relationships</u>
- Social cohesion is critical for community's economic prosperity

What is mental health

- **<u>Health</u> is** *a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity* (WHO 2001)

- **<u>Mental health</u>** *is a state of well-being in which the individual*

  - *Realizes his or her own abilities*

  - *Can cope with the normal stresses of life*

  - *Can work productively and fruitfully*

  - *Is able to make a contribution to his or her community* (WHO 2001)

Rajat

- *Rajat is always 'putting himself down', remains isolated because he feels he is no good at anything.*

- *Is Rajat mentally healthy?*

- *Does Rajat have low self esteem?*

Mental, physical and social health are interdependent

- Mental health denotes fitness rather than freedom from illness
- Mental health is affected by
  - Individual factors and experiences
  - Social interaction
  - Societal structures and resources
  - Cultural values
  - Experiences in everyday life, in families and schools, on streets, and at work (Lehtinen, Riikonen & Lahtinen 1997; Lahtinen et al. 1999)

Emotional health is part of mental health

- Positive emotions such as feelings of happiness
- Self-esteem and feelings of mastery over environment
- Resilience - capacity to cope with adversity
- Autonomy - ability to identify, confront, and solve problems
- Self-realization - opportunity to exploit own potential
- Subjective sense of well-being

Physical health is part of mental health....

- Optimism, personal control, and a sense of meaning protect mental & physical health

- Good physical health influences both occurrence & outcome of mental and physical illnesses

- Poor general health is 3 times commoner among people with significant emotional distress

  - **Behaviors that lead to increased risk for health problems include sedentary habits, binge drinking, smoking, and eating a poor diet**

Social health is part of mental health too

- Good mental health is the capacity for mutually satisfying and enduring social relationships.

- Social cohesion is critical for economic prosperity

- Social connectedness is intimately related to general health

- Social capital is networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit

  - Socially isolated people have poorer health

  - Socially cohesive societies are healthier, with lower mortality

Some characteristics of mental health

- Sense of coherence
- Optimism
- Acceptance of reality
- Reliance on personal growth
  - Capacity to cope with adversity & avoid breakdown when confronted by stressors
  - Capacity to respond flexibly to stressors

Flow of this presentation

What is 'good mental health'

How is cyber-addiction affecting mental health

How to address addiction and harness the Internet for good

Behavioural addictions include those to

Social networking
Texting
Dating apps
Online gambling
Pornography
Games

Reminder: Smartphone addiction in Indian adolescents:
39% to 44%

Warning signs of excess internet use

- Trouble completing tasks at work or home.

- Isolation from family and friends.

- Concealing smartphone use

- Having a "fear of missing out" (or FOMO).

- Feeling of dread, anxiety, or panic if we leave our smartphone at home,

- Withdrawal symptoms:

  - Restlessness

  - Anger or irritability

  - Difficulty concentrating

  - Sleep problems

- Craving access to our smartphone or other device

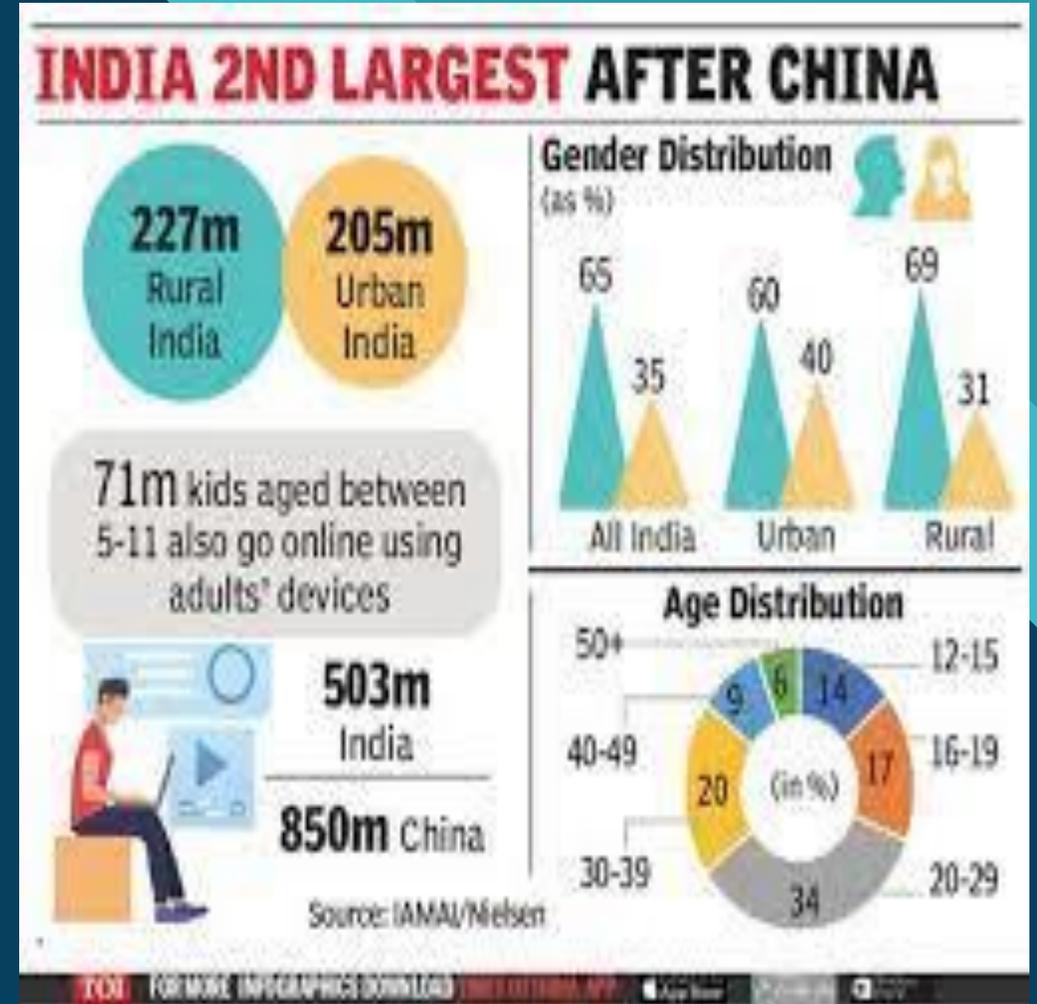# Internet addiction

- At least 5 of 7 symptoms below:

  (1) Preoccupation with internet;

  (2) Increasing amount of time spent online;

  (3) Failure to cut back use with concomitant restlessness;

  (4) Moodiness or depression;

  (5) Staying online longer than originally intended;

  (6) Running risk of losing job, relationship, or other opportunity because of internet use; and

  (7) Lying to conceal the extent of internet use and/or using the internet to escape negative feelings.

Types of Internet addiction

1. Cybersex addiction (viewing pornography)
2. Cyber-relational addiction (online relationships become more important than real ones)
3. Online gaming (gambling, stock trading)
4. Compulsive, debt-inducing shopping
5. Information overload
6. Net compulsivity
7. Computer (non-Internet) addiction (e.g., computer games)

INDIA 2ND LARGEST AFTER CHINA

227m Rural India
205m Urban India

71m kids aged between 5-11 also go online using adults' devices

503m India
850m China

Source: IAMAI/Nielsen

Gender Distribution (as %)
65 35 — All India
60 40 — Urban
69 31 — Rural

Age Distribution (in %)
50+ : 9
40-49 : 20
30-39 : 34
20-29 : 17
16-19 : 14
12-15 : 6

FOR MORE INFOGRAPHICS DOWNLOAD

Sanjay

- *I have switched off all notifications on my phone. While it does help when I'm concentrating on some task like reading a book, my urge to check it every few minutes still doesn't go away. How can I tackle this problem?*

Coping skills

Something which help you deal with risk situations and pass the urge

- **Cognitive coping skills**:
  - Things you can tell yourself
- **Behavioral coping skills**
  - Actions you can take or things you can do

Delay

Distract

Deep breaths

Drink water

Rewards & consequences of excess internet use

Rewards

1. Likes, emoji use
2. Social engagement with a larger audience
3. Validate our thoughts or interests
4. Use as a 'security blanket'
5. Dopamine 'high'
6. Boredom
7. Distraction

Consequences

1. Tolerance- need more time to get same high
2. Withdrawal symptoms: Anxiety, irritability, distress
3. Lower concentration
4. Cannot think deeply or creatively
5. Disturbed sleep
6. Encourages self-absorption
7. Unhealthy self-centeredness
8. Need to be constantly alert
9. Distancing from real-life relationships
10. Harder to cope with stress

Dangers of excessive internet use

- Cyberbullying, trolling
- Posting threatening messages, embarrassing pictures and rumors to cause harm to others
- Heightened exposure to pornographic material, even risky sexual behaviors
- Increase in mental distress, self-harm and suicidality
- Sharing personal details with strangers, pornography sites
- Risky behaviour (sharing photos, selfies, 'blue whale'), bank details
- Social isolation, impaired emotional and social intelligence
- Radicalization, brain washing
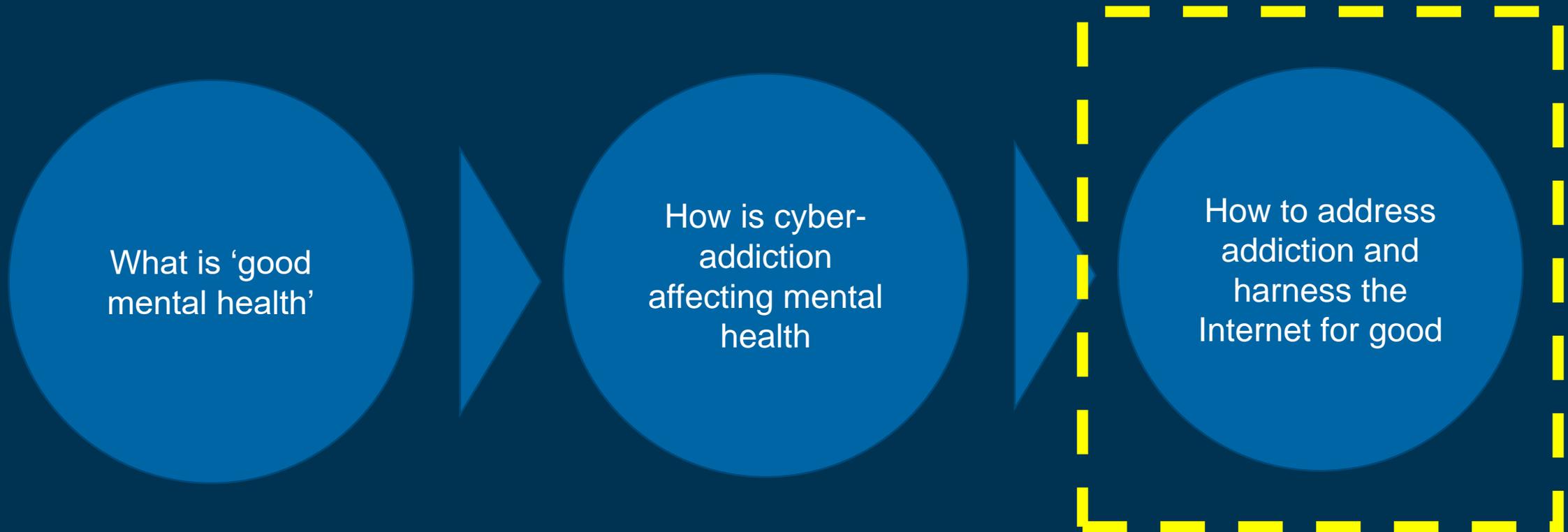
Risks & Protective factors

Risk factors

- Being a girl
- Liking anonymity, convenience, and escape (ACE)
- Addicted to real drugs- tobacco alcohol hard drugs
- Emotional problems: depression, mood or social disorders, anxiety
- Using Internet fantasy world to escape unpleasant feelings or stressful situations
- Relationship problems

Protective factors

- Good real life friendships
- Academic motivation
- School success
- Real life hobbies

Flow of this presentation

What is 'good mental health' ➤ How is cyber-addiction affecting mental health ➤ How to address addiction and harness the Internet for good

What is the remedy?

- Reduce number of apps to only essential ones
- Turn off notifications
- Don't sleep with phone next to bed
- Recognize triggers that make one reach for phone
- Set goals for when one can use the smartphone
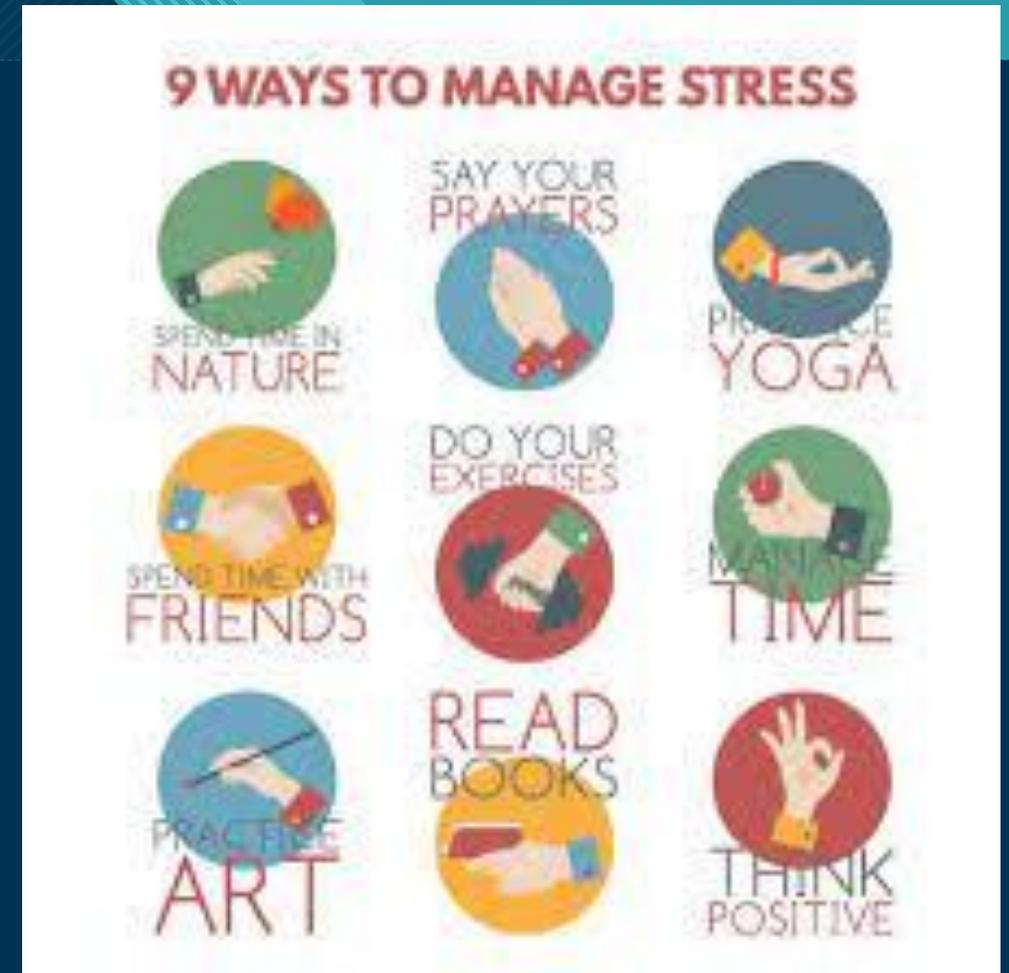- Turn off phone at certain times of the day

Kanchana

- *I work in a job where I receive and reply to multiple emails every hour. The problem is that whenever I unlock my phone and reply to the email, subconsciously afterwards I open another app (like whatsapp, reddit or facebook). How can I tackle this problem?*

Adopt different practical coping skills

Behavioral coping skills

- Actions you can take or things you can do

- Examples: ways to cope with urges that are sustainable and specific to the situation, such as:

  - Hand substitutes

  - Distractions

  - Delaying tactics

  - Changes in routine

What is the remedy? (2)

- If bored : exercise or try mindfulness to relax

- Understand difference between – and draw pleasure from - interacting in-person vs online

- Build your coping skills

- Strengthen your support network

- Replace your smartphone use with healthier physical activities

- Play the "phone stack" game

What can parents/family do?

- Be a good role model
- Use apps to monitor and limit your child's smartphone use
- Create "phone-free" zones
- Do other interests and social activities together
- Talk to your child about underlying issues
- Get help

How to use internet for positive health?

- Use good physical and mental health groups/sites
- Seek help for health promotion and issues, share experience, seek advice
- Mental health interventions
- Increase social connectivity, broaden social relationships
- Entertainment

How to put internet to positive use?

- Learn a new skill

- Obtain information (but consider all sides)

- Increase social participation, political awareness, direct engagement with leaders and celebrities

- Balance- develop new strategies to deal with online friendships and praise

- Facilitate technical skills, social connection and communication

- Some computer programs and videogames may improve memory, multitasking skills, fluid intelligence etc

Social media for promoting mental health

- Use social media for positive mental health:
  - Connect with friends and the global community
  - Engage with social media content
  - Use social media as an outlet for expression

Use media for positive mental health outcomes:
- Positive relationships and social capital
- Self-concept
- Coping
- Happiness
- Positivity and personal growth

So – who to blame?

- Neither the internet nor social media is to blame, but how we as users use these mediums

- We need to take responsibility for our behavior on the internet and on social media and <u>not see these as beyond our control</u>.

Another ACE model

- Avoid
- Control
- Escape

Thank You