

# Excessive Internet Use

## What Is It?

Excessive internet use is characterised by repetitive, compulsive and uncontrolled preoccupations, urges, or behaviours regarding computer use and Internet access to the point where an individual experiences problematic outcomes that negatively affects his life.

### 5 core components:

#### **Salience**

- Most important activity in one's life

#### **Mood Modification**

- Changes or enhances your mood

#### **Tolerance**

- Increasing amounts of the behaviour are required to achieve the former mood-modifying effects

#### **Withdrawal Symptoms**

- Unpleasant feeling states and/or physical effects that occur when the person is unable to engage in the behaviour

#### **Relapse**

- Tendency for repeated reversions to earlier patterns of excessive behaviour to recur

# Excessive Internet Use: Risk and Protective Factors

## Environment



- ✓ School and home have clear and consistent rules for responsible use of ICT.
- ✓ Parents place consistent limits on the time spent online and the types of activities, and make sure activities do not take the place of adequate sleep, physical activity and other behaviours essential to health.

- ✗ There is negative adult role-modelling e.g. parents engaged with online activities during meal time.
- ✗ Students are going online at a younger age and spending more time online.

## Teachers



- ✓ Teachers use developmentally appropriate ICT to complement students' learning.
- ✓ They facilitate and guide students when using ICT for teaching and learning.
- ✓ They use ICT judiciously to ensure the safety and well-being of students.
- ✓ Teachers identify students who are at-risk of using Internet excessively and refer them for support.

- ✗ Teachers do not apply class rules on responsible use of ICT and designated media-free locations or time in school.

## Students



- ✓ Students have strong sense of self and life satisfaction, healthy stress and emotion management strategies, and engage in meaningful and diverse interests.

- ✗ Students escape to online games to feel a sense of achievement or to escape from boredom.
- ✗ Students are anxious and fear missing out of social media updates and online chats.
- ✗ Students feel lonely due to lack of social interactions or have no one to confide in.

## Curriculum & Resources



- ✓ Teachers equip students with skills to manage their "digital diet" (time spent online), "digital nutrition" (making better choices of online activities) and life stressors.
- ✓ School provides learning opportunities for at-risk students to develop a strong sense of self and nurture diverse interests so that they can find meaning and satisfaction with other aspects of life.
- ✓ School collects data to understand students' online habits and identify at-risk students for early intervention.
- ✗ School has limited parent engagement activities to involve them in guiding and supporting their children at home to develop healthy online habits.

## Peers



- ✓ The classes have regular bonding sessions to engage in real-world activities.
- ✓ Students reach out and help at-risk students to balance their online activities.
- ✗ Students chat with one another online late into the night.
- ✗ Students ostracise peers who are socially awkward and are more comfortable online than face-to-face.

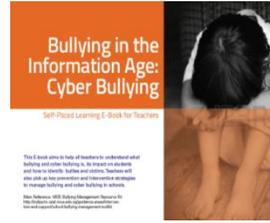
# Cyber Bullying

## What Is It?

“Cyber bullying is any behaviour performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort over time against a victim.”

MOE – School Bullying Management Resource Kit

# Cyber Bullying: Risk and Protective Factors



For more information, view the **Self-paced Learning e-book on Bullying and Cyber Bullying** on OPAL:  
<http://subjects.opal.moe.edu.sg/subjects/slot/u1141540/index.html#p=2>



## Environment

- ✓ Parents provide emotional support and guidance to minimise psychological impact on children involved in cyber bullying incidents.
- ✓ School has articulated zero-tolerance stance towards cyber bullying (i.e. clear rules, consistent follow-up, support for affected students, restore affected relationships).
- ✗ Exposure to violence e.g. violent films, physical violence within the family.
- ✗ Exposure to harsh, unkind online communities e.g. online vigilantism, bullying in online games.

## Teachers

- ✓ Teachers encourage students to broaden their social circle and facilitate peer bonding (e.g. change seat partner and groups for activities).
- ✓ They provide warm and supportive learning environment.
- ✓ They guide/ support students who are at-risk of being cyber bullied or bullying others.
- ✗ They are ineffective in managing the classroom and engaging students in learning.
- ✗ They do not respond to teasing and bullying incidents in class or online.

## Students



- ✓ Students have quality friendships.
- ✓ They have skills to form and nurture friendships and to manage conflicts.
- ✓ They have empathy for victims and high self-efficacy in supporting them.
- ✗ Victims-turned-bullies have worse psychological outcomes.

## Curriculum & Resources



- ✓ Teachers equip students with knowledge and skills on respectful and responsible online communication (e.g. emotion regulation, perspective-taking, empathy).
- ✓ School corrects students' cyber bullying behaviour and teach them ways to improve their social skills.
- ✗ School has limited parent engagement activities to involve them in guiding their children and are not proactive in informing parents of affected students to support them at home.

## Peers



- ✓ Pro-social class or online norms to defend and support their classmates who are cyber bullied.
- ✓ Students seek help from teachers when their classmates are cyber bullied.
- ✗ Students tend to target those who are perceived as different from them.
- ✗ Students are in contact with negative peer influence (e.g. gangs).

# Handling Online Content – Scams

## Prevalence

- 16-year-old arrested for involvement in Carousell scams  
*The Straits Times 11 Jan 2017*
- DHL scammers cheated victims of S\$12 million in three months  
*Today, 28 Jul 2016*
- Police arrest teen accused of cheating customers on Carousell  
*AsiaOne, 6 Dec 2016*
- Teenager arrested for cheating victims of \$14,000 through online scams  
*The Straits Times 12 Jan 2016*

# Handling Online Content – Scams

## Examples of Types of Online Scams

- Job Scams
  - Job seeker provides personal information such as mobile phone and IC numbers which are used by the scammer to buy online credits
- Online Purchase Scam
  - Buyer sends money to the seller but does not receive purchase
- Fake payment notification
  - Seller sends item to the buyer but does not receive the money
- Phishing Scam
  - Personal information used by scammer for illegal activity
- Impersonation Scam
  - Scammer pretends to be an authority figure

For more information:  
Visit <https://www.scamalert.sg/>



# Handling Online Content – Scams

## The Psychology Behind Why Some People Fall for Scams

Some persuasive tactics scammers may use\*

- Visceral influences: appeal to target's feelings and wants  
e.g. greed, fear, lust or guilt
- Authority: use of an 'authority figure' increases target's trust towards the message
- Social conformity: targets are more likely to respond if the scam message comes from, or has been 'validated' by someone they know
- Scarcity: appeal of the item/ service provided increases as it appears to be unique/ rare
- Similarity: the idea that the scammer has similar interests and is a likeable individual, increases target's trust towards the message
- Commitment and consistency: once a target has committed to an action the first time, he/ she is more likely to continue the behaviour to remain consistent

### Victim's Profile\*

- Likely to be experiencing a need for money, desire for romantic relationships or fears etc.
- Individual's personality tends to be open to persuasion but has lower levels of self-control
- May have reduced cognitive ability at that point of decision-making  
e.g. distracted or multi-tasking

\*Each type of scam would usually use a different assortment of tactics to best persuade the target. Information is based on research, not based on local context.

Adapted from:

Jones, H. S., Towse, J. N., & Race, N. (2015). Susceptibility to Email Fraud: A Review of Psychological Perspectives, Data-Collection Methods, and Ethical Considerations. *International Journal of Cyber Behavior, Psychology and Learning (IJCBPL)*, 5(3), 13-29. doi: 10.4018/IJCBPL.2015070102

The psychology of scams: Provoking and committing errors of judgement. Prepared for the Office of Fair Trading by the University of Exeter School of Psychology May 2009

# Handling Online Content – Scams

## Tips to Avoid Being Scammed

- Avoid revealing personal information online
- Exercise caution when befriending strangers through social media platforms
- Do not open ‘pop-up’ advertisements or messages
- Verify the information provided with multiple sources
- Ask yourself:
  - Is it too good to be true?
  - Am I making a decision based on my emotions?
  - How is the information presented? Are there many errors?
- Seek advice from trusted individuals