PREVENTING DIGITAL ADDICTION

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Technological advancement has received growing attention and recognition over the past years with the hope to improve the lives of mankind and with search for more scientific breakthroughs. There is notable evidence of the impact of innovation and modernization in the world today including everything from television used to bring entertainment and news around the world, to machines used to freeze and preserve egg cells, to nanotechnology that are being used to improve and revolutionize other fields of science. However, the disadvantage of technology especially its harmful effect on one’s physical and mental health is being ignored and downplayed.

World Health Organization has recognized the global impact of addictive technology. Concerns about internet addiction, excessive use of computers, smartphones and other electronic devices have been on the rise among health professionals in decades. The evidence from around the world highly suggests that people are suffering from this condition and with the COVID-19 pandemic, more people are getting addicted and more are likely to in the future. Some hazardous effects of technology overuse include poor vision and hearing, aggressive behavior, reduced work and academic performance, poor social development, sleep deprivation, and sedentary lifestyle that leads to other physical and psychosocial problems. Continual efforts should be made to avoid problematic technology use during the pandemic and beyond. There are few small and important steps that we can do in order to prevent getting addicted to our devices and reclaim our control.
Social media platforms are specifically designed to influence its user’s behavior and attitude. Technology companies persuade the users to spend more time using their applications by putting prompting features such as push notification and red notification dots with numbers on them; capturing your attention, triggering your sense of urgency, and pulling you back to the application. You can reclaim your time by turning these notifications off but if you find yourself feeling moody, restless, and irritable as result of getting too hooked on these platforms, uninstalling these applications might be the best thing to do. It is also advisable to use screen time reminders and turn off the Wi-Fi at night to manage your time better and prevent sleep deprivation. You should also refrain from checking your phone the moment you wake up in the morning and when you spend time with your family. Another effective way to break constant social media check-ins is to download helpful applications such as those that help eradicate social media noise, remove blue light from computer, track your screen time and help change habit, temporarily remove applications, and those applications that promote well-being and mindfulness. Fully disconnecting from internet for a set period of time is also a powerful way to reconnect with yourself and loved ones.

For those whom the technology addiction has completely overtaken their lives, there are available treatment interventions such as Cognitive behavioral therapy, group therapy, self-help treatment groups, and family therapy. With new technologies on the rise in all parts of the world, it has become clear that it can negatively affect all of us; users, businesses, and policy makers should integrate plans and strategies for prevention of technology use disorders and treatment of internet dependence. You can find hope outside your digital life by developing healthy habits, finding new hobbies, focusing on your goals, and building stronger connections with your family and friends. By exploring other ways to improve your well-being, you can effectively reduce continual usage and reliance on your devices, ultimately leading to a more fulfilling life.
Reference:

https://www.humanetech.com/persuasive-technology