Slide 1

Thinking Outside the ROBLOX

A GUIDE TO HEALTHY USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

ESC

CLIFFORD SUSSMAN MD, PLLC
www.cliffordsussmanmd.com

Pyle Middle School
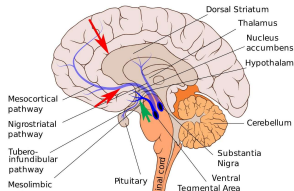**Friday Mar 14, 2025**

1

Slide 2

WWW.CLIFFORDSUSSMANMD.COM

- Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
- Private Practice in Chevy Chase, DC since 2008
- Specialty: Internet and Video Game Addiction.
- Background: Programming, Game/ Educational Software developer
- Frequent public speaking, author of multiple articles
- Media appearances
  - Parents Magazine
  - New York Times
  - ABC News
  - Time Magazine for Kids
  - HBO Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel
  - Bethesda Magazine
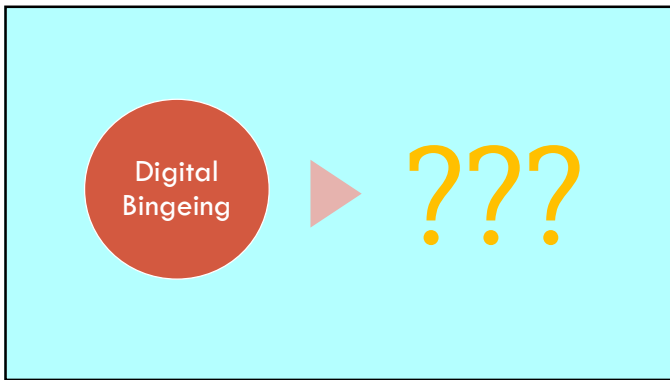
2

Slide 3

This is your brain on screens.

- Driver: Immediate gratification and continuous stimulation.
- Brakes: Prefrontal Cortex.

Dorsal Striatum
Thalamus
Nucleus accumbens
Hypothalamus
Mesocortical pathway
Nigrostriatal pathway
Tubero-infundibular pathway
Mesolimbic pathway
Pituitary
Spinal cord
Cerebellum
Substantia Nigra
Ventral Tegmental Area

3

THE SHORTCUT MACHINE

4

Digital Bingeing ▶ ???

5

Digital Bingeing ▶ More Boredom
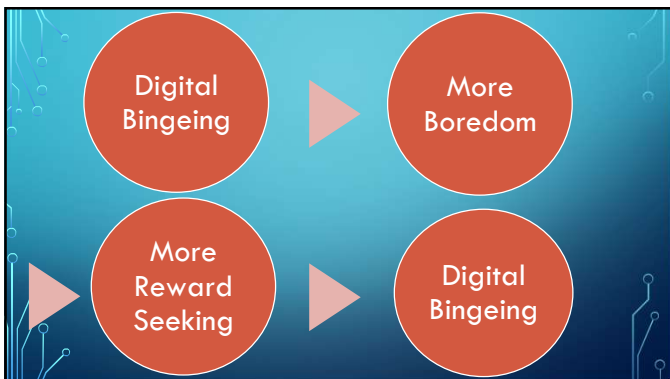
More Reward Seeking ▶ Digital Bingeing
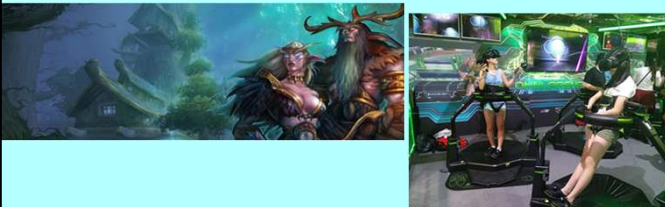
6

WHY CHOOSE SCREENS?

7

WHY CHOOSE SCREENS?

8

WHY CHOOSE SCREENS?

9

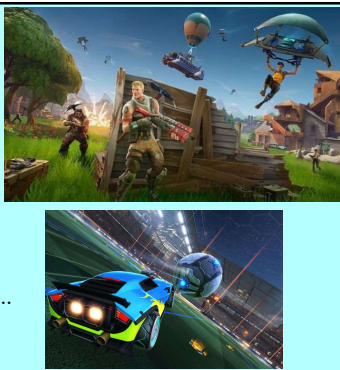**WHY CHOOSE SCREENS?**
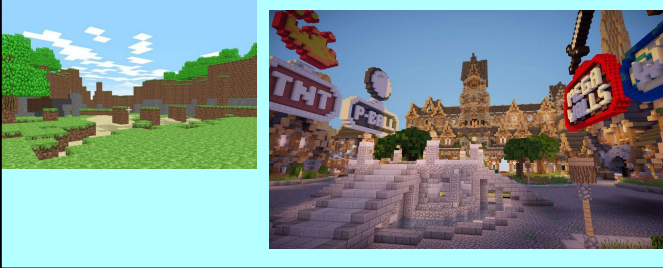
10

WHY CHOOSE SCREENS?

Millions of worlds

11

WHY CHOOSE SCREENS?

- Massive Multiplayer Online Games (MMO/MMPOG/MMPORG)
  - Fortnite
  - World of Warcraft (WOW)
  - Rocket League
  - Overwatch
  - Many others and more to come…

12

WHY CHOOSE SCREENS?
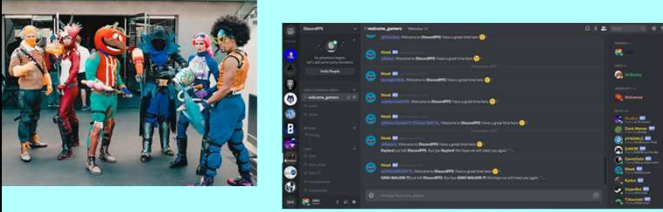
13

VARIABLE RATIO REINFORCEMENT
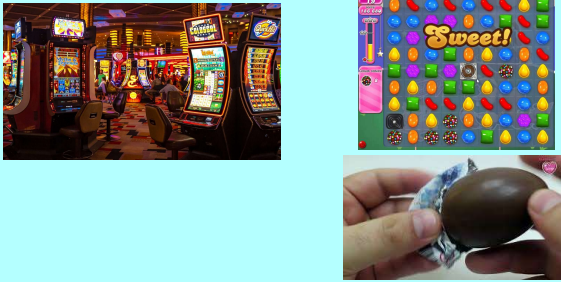
14

SOCIAL MEDIA

15

WHY IS GAMING ADDICTIVE?

	Cocaine and other Drugs	Gambling	Internet Gaming
Mood Changes	x	x	x
Sense of Mastery, Escape from Reality, Social Aid	x	x	x
Variable Ratio Reinforcement	x	x	x

16

SCREEN HOPPING
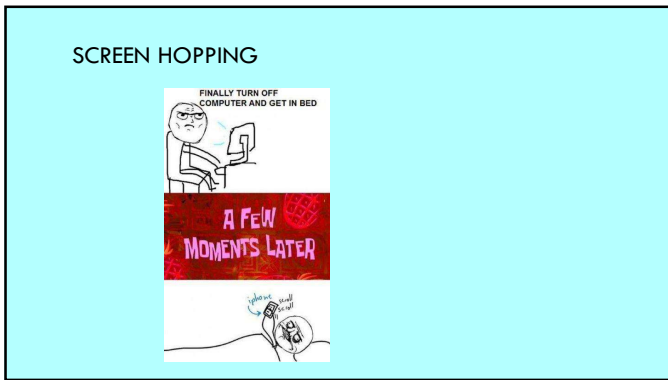
17

WHY NOT ABSTINENCE?

1. We are Functionally Dependent on Tech
2. 2 Important Skills for Life:
   - Delayed Gratification
   - Using the brakes

18

NOT JUST WORK VS PLAY…

High-Dopamine Activity (HDA) → Low-Dopamine Activity (LDA) → Healthy Use is Balancing the Two

19

Self Regulation — Limit Setting/ Natural consequences
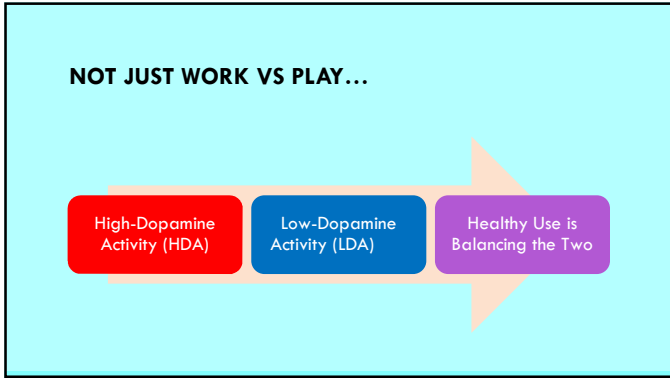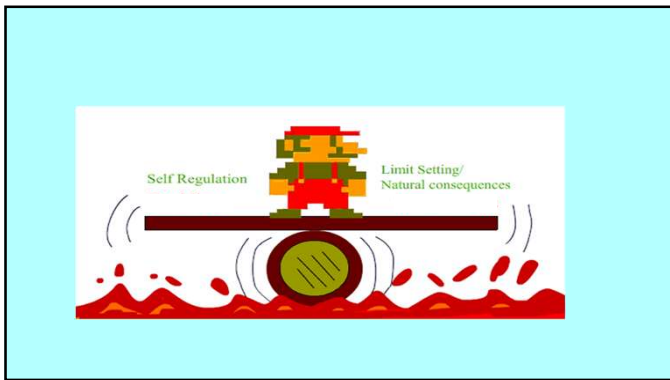
20

Limit Setting

- Structure
- Managing environmental cues
- Delayed gratification: Alternating HDA and LDA
- Logical and immediate consequences

21

USE YOUR CUES

22

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION-
GAMING DISORDER

- **"What is gaming disorder?**

- Gaming disorder is defined in the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as a pattern of gaming behavior ("digital-gaming" or "video-gaming") characterized by impaired control over gaming, increasing priority given to gaming over other activities to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other interests and daily activities, and continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences.

- For gaming disorder to be diagnosed, the behaviour pattern must be of sufficient severity to result in significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational or other important areas of functioning and would normally have been evident for at least 12 months." —www.who.int

23

RED FLAGS
of "SEEKING"

Aggression

Lying

Stealing

Suicidal Threats

24

25

---

3 PHASES TO A HEALTHY BALANCE

Digital
Detoxification

Balance Through
Self-Regulation

Balance Through
External
Regulation
(Children and
Teenagers)
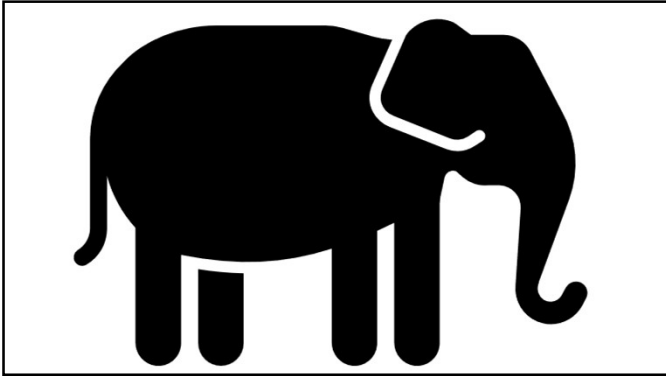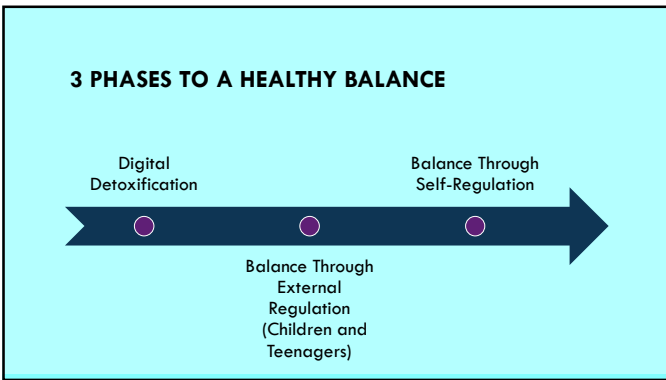
26

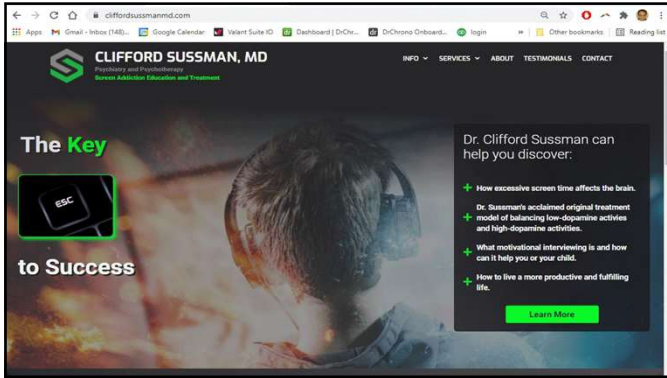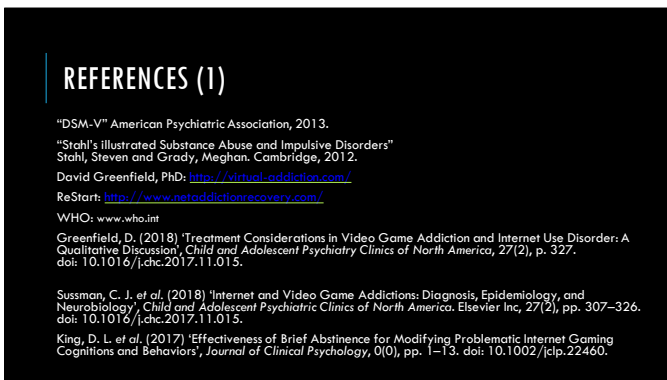*Overcoming Internet Addiction
for Dummies*

Available at:
Amazon.com

cliffordsussmanmd.com

27

28

REFERENCES (1)

"DSM-V" American Psychiatric Association, 2013.

"Stahl's illustrated Substance Abuse and Impulsive Disorders"
Stahl, Steven and Grady, Meghan. Cambridge, 2012.

David Greenfield, PhD: http://virtual-addiction.com/

ReStart: http://www.netaddictionrecovery.com/

WHO: www.who.int

Greenfield, D. (2018) 'Treatment Considerations in Video Game Addiction and Internet Use Disorder: A
Qualitative Discussion', *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Clinics of North America*, 27(2), p. 327.
doi: 10.1016/j.chc.2017.11.015.

Sussman, C. J. *et al.* (2018) 'Internet and Video Game Addictions: Diagnosis, Epidemiology, and
Neurobiology', *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Clinics of North America*. Elsevier Inc, 27(2), pp. 307–326.
doi: 10.1016/j.chc.2017.11.015.

King, D. L. *et al.* (2017) 'Effectiveness of Brief Abstinence for Modifying Problematic Internet Gaming
Cognitions and Behaviors', *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 0(0), pp. 1–13. doi: 10.1002/jclp.22460.

29

REFERENCES (2)

Pallesen, S. *et al.* (2015) 'An Exploratory Study Investigating the Effects of a Treatment Manual for Video
Game Addiction', *Psychological Reports*, 117(2), pp. 490–495. doi: 10.2466/02.PR0.117c14z9.

King, D. L. and Delfabbro, P. H. (2014) 'Internet gaming disorder treatment: A review of definitions of
diagnosis and treatment outcome', *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 70(10), pp. 942–955. doi:
10.1002/jclp.22097.

Weinstein, A. and Lejoyeux, M. (2015) 'New developments on the neurobiological and pharmaco-genetic
mechanisms underlying internet and videogame addiction', *American Journal on Addictions*, 24(2), pp. 117–
125. doi: 10.1111/ajad.12110.

Zajac, K. *et al.* (2017) 'Psychology of Addictive Behaviors Treatments for Internet Gaming Disorder and
Internet Treatments for Internet Gaming Disorder and Internet Addiction : A Systematic Review'.

"Irresistable" Alter, Adam. Penguin Press, 2017

For additional Information please contact
www.cliffordsussmanmd.com

30