

Health Task : Substance Abuse and Addictive Behaviours

On the topics of drug use, internet or video game addiction or gambling, etc, produce a help brochure, poster or other media that gives advice to young people on how to :

- I) avoid the problem in the first place
- ii) recognise symptoms and the problem
- iii) Treat the problem

You may use the sample article below or resources online or in the textbook :

Chinese teen chops hand off to 'cure' internet addiction

By Tom Phillips, Beijing (Daily Telegraph)

10:35AM GMT 03 Feb 2015

A Chinese teenager has been rushed to hospital after chopping off his hand in a desperate attempt to cure his addiction to the internet.

There are currently an estimated 24 million young “web junkies” in China according to official estimates and a growing number of clinics and military-style “boot camps” designed to rehabilitate them.

However, hoping to rid himself of the vice, one 19-year-old from the city of Nantong in Jiangsu province took drastic measures of his own. He hacked his left hand off, according to a report on the Jiangsu TV channel.

“We cannot accept what has happened. It was completely out of the blue. He was a smart boy,” his mother, who declined to be identified, told reporters.

The woman said she had gone to her son’s bedroom at around 11pm last Wednesday only to find that he had disappeared. She found a handwritten note on the bed in which he should have been sleeping.

“Mum, I have gone to hospital for a while,” it read. “Don't worry. I will definitely come back this evening.”

By then, her son, who was identified only as “Little Wang” had already smuggled a kitchen knife from their home and snuck out. Safely out of sight, the teenager severed his left hand at the wrist. He called a taxi to take him a nearby A&E and left the hand lying on the ground.

Local television broadcast gory images of a bloodstained bench on which the boy had reportedly been sitting when he cut off his hand.

Surgeons at a local university hospital managed to reattach the hand after it was recovered by police but said they could not guarantee full mobility would return. One of the boy's teachers, who was not named, blamed his actions on an internet addiction which had made him "impetuous".

Campaigners say Asian countries such as China, which boasts some 649 million internet users, are in the midst of a major online addiction epidemic.

Tao Ran, an army psychologist who runs a well-known Beijing rehab centre for internet addicts, estimated that around 14 per cent of his country's youth were now hooked.

Symptoms ranged from young people who skipped lessons at school to others who were so severely addicted that they rarely left their bedrooms and inhabited an almost entirely virtual universe.

"They only do two things: sleeping and playing," said Mr Tao, who traced the crisis back around a decade.

Politicians are also starting to take note. Last month Taiwanese lawmakers approved changes to legislation that meant authorities could fine parents who allowed their children to spend excessive amounts of time using "electronic products".

In Japan, internet "fasting camps" have been set up in response to claims that hundreds of thousands of teenagers are abandoning the real world for the virtual one.

In late 2013, Shanghai approved new laws demanding that parents take action to "prevent and stop minors smoking, drinking alcohol, roaming the streets, or being overindulgent with online and electronic games".

Mr Tao, from the Beijing rehabilitation centre, said even more radical steps were needed.

Children under the age of seven should be kept away from the internet and online games. Under-18s should be forbidden from stepping inside internet cafés, he said.

"I heard about the young man who chopped off his hand," Mr Tao added. "But I fear he will become addicted again."

Additional reporting Ailin Tang