

# DIGITAL ADDICTION

ANHEDONIA, ADDICTION & TREATMENT



SHEPHERDS  
HILL ACADEMY



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In today's digital age there is more access than ever to digital devices and stimuli. With technology constantly 'evolving' to make our lives easier, is there any wonder that many feel as though they just can't live without it?

## About Digital Addiction

With such a dependence on technological devices, it seems that we are seeing a generation of youth suffering from [digital addictions](#) (also referred to as "technology addictions"). But what exactly is a digital addiction?

The term "addiction," especially when describing a child, is not taken lightly. In fact, the thought of our kids having their body and brain chemistries compromised by [drug abuse](#) and addiction is one of the most frightening thoughts a parent can have. The effects of biochemistry intrusions can alter a child's life forever.

## The Effects of Digital Addiction on Children

Did you know that digital addiction can be just as chemically debilitating as drugs? Time in front of a screen can drastically affect the life of your child. For starters, your child may choose technology over simple things like:

- Playing outside and engaging in exercise
- Socializing with friends & developing interpersonal relationships
- Spending time with family
- Doing chores & learning basic life skills
- Acquiring a job & gaining life experience
- Developing new skills and talents

As a parent, the thought of a child being deprived of just those simple things is terrifying! Technology addiction can seriously hinder and impair your child from leading a healthy, successful and productive life.

## Psychological Effects of Digital Addiction

Digital addiction can result in what is referred to as anhedonia. In his book, [Thrilled to Death](#), Dr. Archibald Hart unpacks the subject of anhedonia. Anhedonia is a result of digital addiction and multi-tasking taken to unhealthy levels. According to [Psychology Today](#), neuroscience now suggests that the brain's reaction to digital addiction is similar in part to the reaction to alcohol, porn, and gambling addictions.

## What is Anhedonia

In the medical and mental health field, anhedonia is understood as a symptom of [depression](#), schizophrenia, or [drug addiction](#). Anhedonia is a destruction of the pleasure center in the brain that doesn't allow a person to experience pleasure from the things of life that should bring pleasure.

When children are exposed to digital devices and technology, they are oftentimes becoming dependent, leaving them wanting more. Anhedonia takes the pleasure out of simple things in life, leaving your child feeling empty. Withdraw from digital technology can also be present, leading to irritability, frustration, and other emotions regularly found in drug addictions.

Dr. Hart believes that in the 21st century 80% of the US population suffers from anhedonia to some degree.

## How Do I Know if My Child Has a Digital Addiction?

Does your child suffer from digital addiction? Is he more concerned with his iPad, cell phone, or gaming system than spending time in interpersonal interactions? Does she bring her cell phone to the dinner table and text friends rather than engaging in conversation with family? Does your child fail to respond to basic requests to do chores or activities? All of these examples may be signs that a larger problem exists.

## Is There Treatment for Digital Addiction?

Realizing your child has an addiction can be stunning, horrifying, and tragic. No parent wants their child's life to be hindered by an addiction of any nature. At Shepherds Hill Academy we have worked with many students who suffered from the effects of digital addiction. Many of those students had:

- Strained relationships with their families
- Fallen behind in school
- Lack of interest in social interaction
- Experience weight gain & unhealthy eating habits

At Shepherds Hill, we offer a Therapeutic Wilderness Program to treat digital addiction. Our unplugged process will place your student in an environment where digital technology simply isn't a part of life.

The [Therapeutic Wilderness Program](#) is designed to bring your child back to a simpler version of life. The program focuses on building character, personal growth, identifying talents and skills, and empowering your child to take steps to becoming successful and fulfilled.

[Contact Shepherds Hill Academy](#) today to Learn more about our Therapeutic Wilderness Program and how it can truly change your family.

## Discover More Parenting Resources

Read more articles, like this one, on [Common Teen Issues](#)

Listen to Podcasts & One-Minute Features from Parenting Experts on [License to Parent](#)

## Article Resources

Cash, Hilarie (Ph.D) and Kim McDaniel, M.A., L.M.H.C., (n.d.), Psychology Today, Retrieved from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/digital-addiction>