



Phubbing:

How Cell Phones Destroy Relationships

Technology never stops surprising us. Every year endless new phones, computers, and tablets come out, each one more modern than the last. The same thing is happening with apps and programs, giving us all kinds of ways to communicate. However, it's ironic how the thing that connects us with people far away actually pushes us away from the ones close to us. "Phubbing", that is, the act of ignoring others by constantly checking our mobile phones, is here to stay.

The first cell phones were a true revolution. Everyone talked about how easy it was to start up conversations with people who lived hundreds of miles away. When they brought this wonderful new thing to the whole world, it meant creating new, smaller, lighter models.

What started as a novelty is slowly turning into an addiction, one called “phubbing.” Now people line up for hours at a store to buy the newest model; teenagers who live to be liked on social media, and alarming new disorders are arising.

What is Phubbing?

The word “phubbing” came from Australia a few years ago when they mixed the words “phone” and “snubbing.” We could define it as ignoring or undervaluing a person or surrounding because we’re focused on some kind of mobile device.

The addiction some of these things create distances people from the physical reality. Instead, they pay more attention to virtual reality. Today it is a very common problem, and very controversial.



Loyal defenders of new technology claim that phubbing is just collateral damage. They say it’s the price we pay for connecting to the world for a low cost, in real time.

On the other hand, detractors are very critical of the whole issue. They think society, especially the younger population, might find life completely shaped by this obsession.

The controversy isn't just about tendinitis, vision problems, and back, neck, or head pain. In addition, accidents and crashes are happening because people don't pay enough attention to the road. And being obsessed with getting approval and popularity on social media has its own physical, psychological, and social problems.

Plus, paying more attention to our phone than our relationship, friends, or families is a lack of basic respect. It can lead to really serious problems.

**“The real problem is not whether machines think
but whether men do.”**

-B.F. Skinner-



Illnesses Related to Phubbing

There disorders related to these new technologies. Phubbing might be one of the most well-known, but there are much more serious, unusual ones. In general, we can treat them with the help of a trained specialist. But we ourselves have to realize there's a problem in the first place.

◆ FOMO (“Fear of Missing Out”)

This is the need to always be connected because we're afraid we'll miss out on something. An obsession with constantly being on Facebook or other social media is unhealthy. The person is constantly checking their notifications.

They are incapable of leaving the house without their phone. They'll even say no to certain living situations or hotels if they don't have wifi.

◆ Nomophobia

Nomophobia is the extreme panic someone feels when they don't have their phone. It tends to happen when the device won't work, or someone stole it. It entails real anxiety and panic attacks. These things have a huge impact on them.

Like people who suffer from FOMO, their main concern is missing out on something while they don't have their phone. In fact, a lot of the time, they don't care how much it costs to repair it or get a new one.

◆ Cyber Hypochondriasis

Cyber hypochondriasis is one of the most common disorders.

The internet is a huge source of information, but we have to remember that it's not a doctor. A lot of people prefer to look their symptoms up on the internet. But then they end up diagnosing themselves with illnesses they don't actually have.

This belief that any forum or website is trustworthy makes people turn into hypochondriacs. They think they might have any illness, which becomes dangerous if they decide to treat themselves.

◆ Phantom Vibration Syndrome

There's another variety of this syndrome where people think they hear their phone ringing. They feel nonexistent vibrations because of their extreme obsession with their phone. Even if they haven't turned their screen on, people will confidently say they felt a vibration.

◆ The Google Effect

This is one of the least well-known effects, but one of the most significant ones, long-term. Our brain gets so used to looking things up on the internet that it stops absorbing information it learns in a normal way.

In the long term this can cause an inability to retain information. If this happens, it has a very negative effect on our memory.



New technologies can help us in a lot of ways, but they can cause problems too. If we pay more attention to a screen than what's happening around us, the consequences could be disastrous.

Interacting with others and thinking about our health are much more important priorities than the internet. That's something we should always keep in mind.

