

Technological Addictions

The New Frontier in Addiction Psychiatry

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Outline

1. The Lay of the Land
2. Internet Gaming
3. Cybersex
4. Assessment and Diagnosis
5. Treatments
6. New Directions
7. Conclusions

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The Lay of the Land

The Behavioral Addictions

Gambling

Sex

Technology

Food

Shopping

Tanning

Exercise

Love

Work

The Technological Addictions

Internet Gaming

Cybersex

Internet Gambling

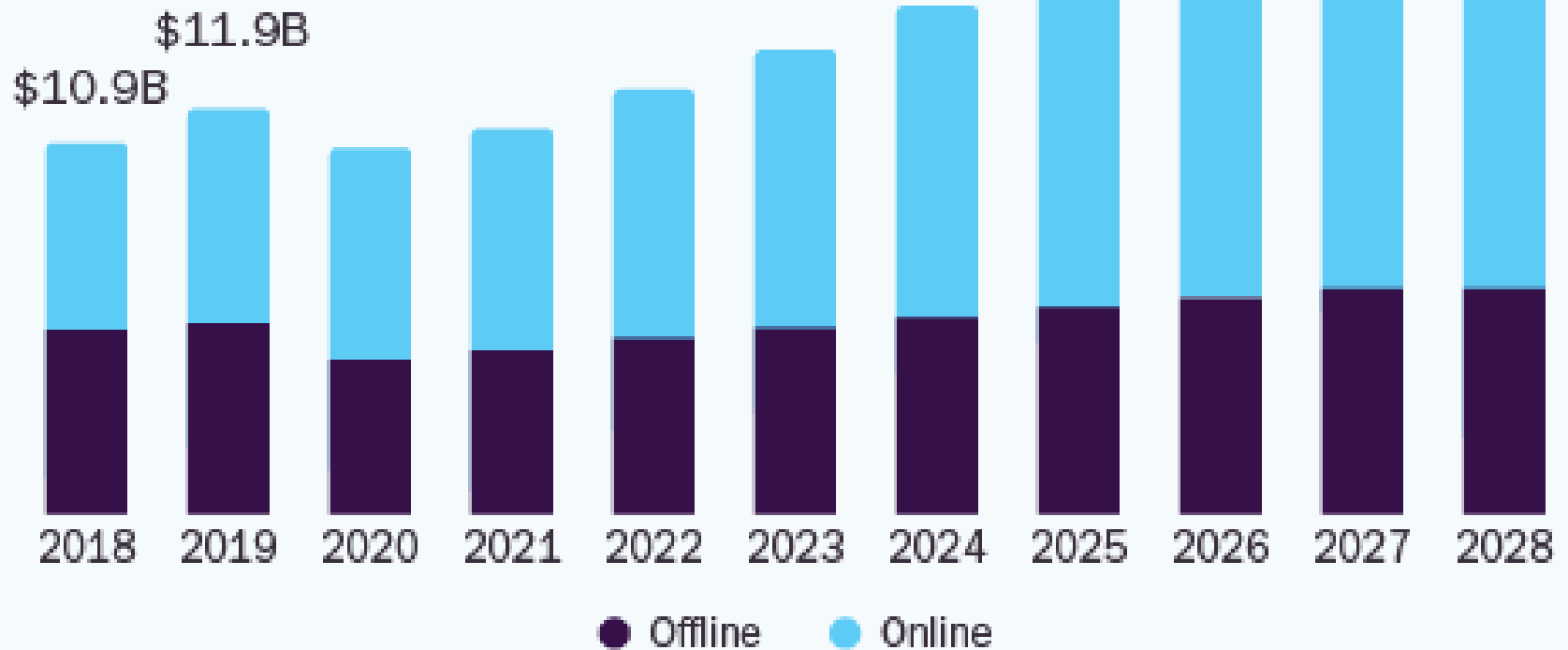
Infobesity

Social Media

Texting & Emailing

Online Auctions & Shopping

Internet Gambling - Sports Betting



Infobesity

- ✓ **Internet Surfing:**
Aimless web browsing for extended periods
- ✓ **Information Overload:**
Difficulty understanding a topic or making decisions due to too much information

Social Media

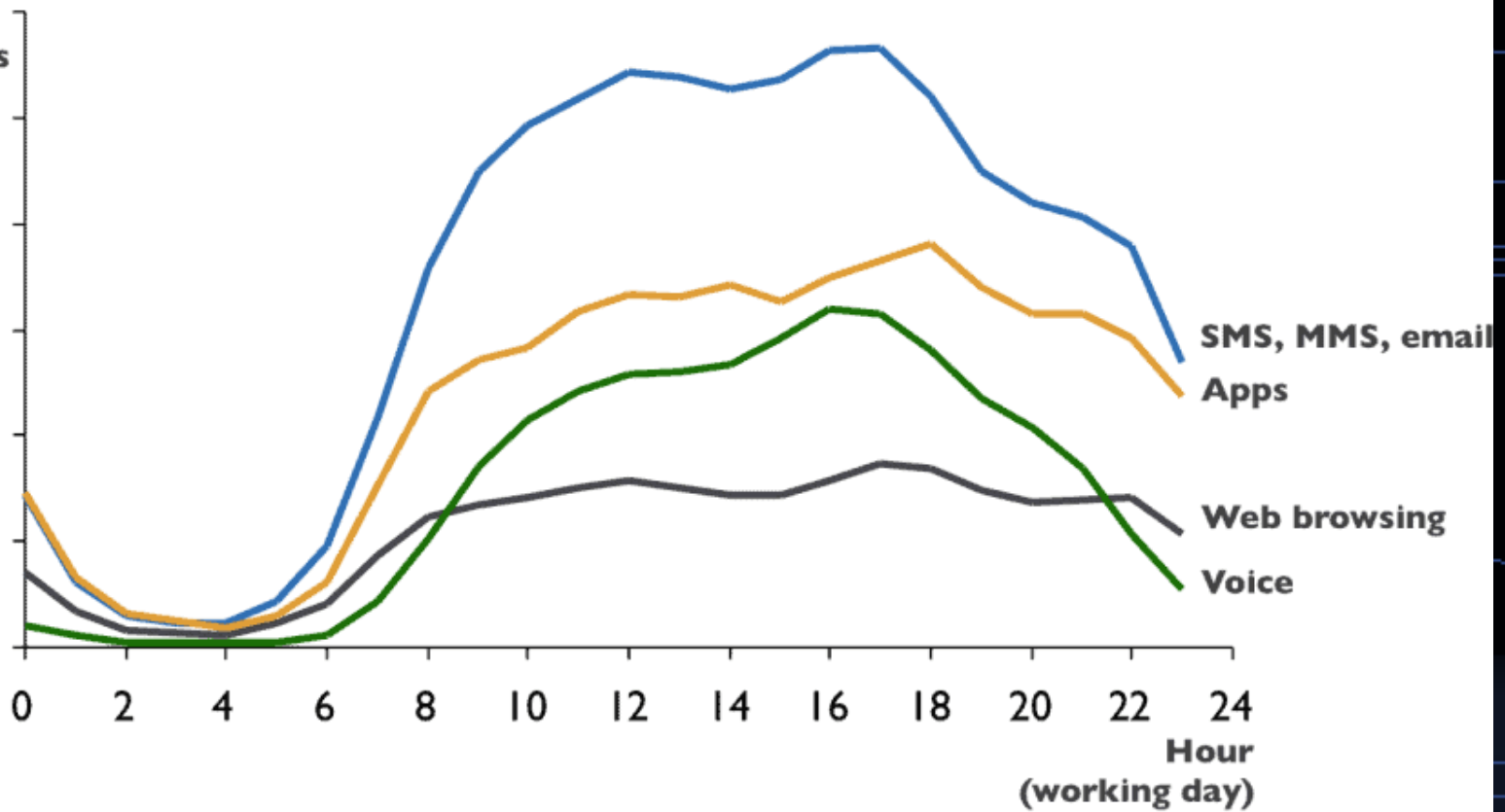
✓ The Self v. the Selfie

✓ FOMO

- Fear
- Of
- Missing
- Out

Texting & Emailing

Total Hourly Usage Sessions



Online Auctions & Shopping

When I shop,
the world gets better,
and the world is better,
but then it's not, and
I need to do it again.

- Rebecca Bloomwood

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Internet Gaming

Careers, Friends, Popularity



Kids and Video Games Stats

- ✓ 61% play video games on a given day.
- ✓ Average Time: 2 hours 13 minutes
- ✓ Boys > Girls
- ✓ 14% boys, 5% girls play 4 to 10 hrs/day.
- ✓ Do parents limit kids' screen time?
 - 94% parents say YES
 - 48% report a "constant battle"
 - 72% youth say NO
 - Those with no rules play twice as much

Internet Gaming - Positives

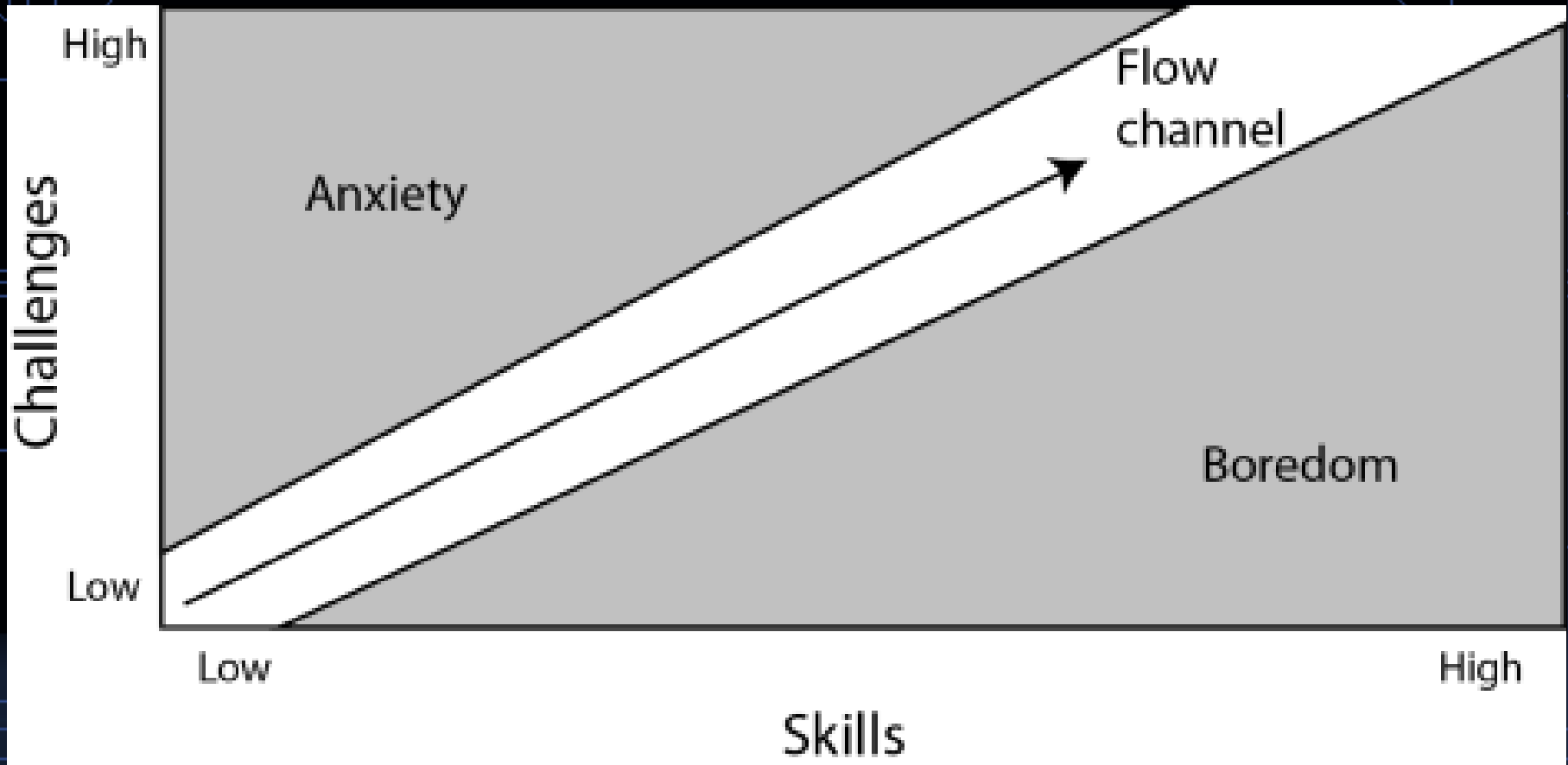
- ✓ Eye-Hand Coordination
- ✓ Multi-tasking
- ✓ Vision
- ✓ Visual Attention
- ✓ Visual Tracking
- ✓ Mental Rotation

Internet Gaming - Negatives

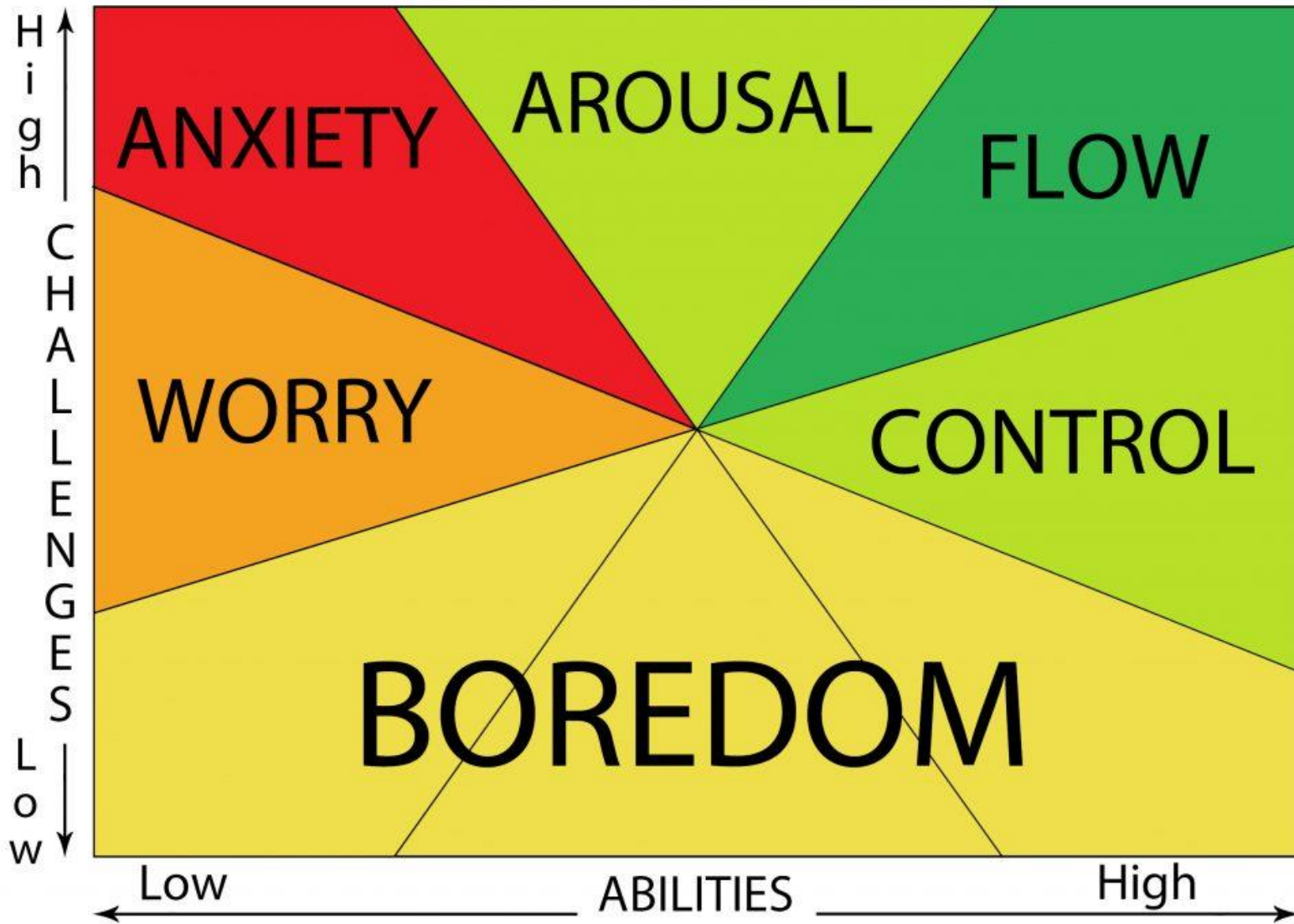
- ✓ Academics
- ✓ Exercise
- ✓ Sleep
- ✓ Not Hanging Out with Friends
- ✓ Feeling Lonely

X Do they cause violence? No.

The Flow Zone



Arousal and Control



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Cybersex

Cybersex: An All-Inclusive Term

Online Pornography

Online Dating

Sex Chats

Sex Webcams

Teledildonics

Online Pornography



Porn

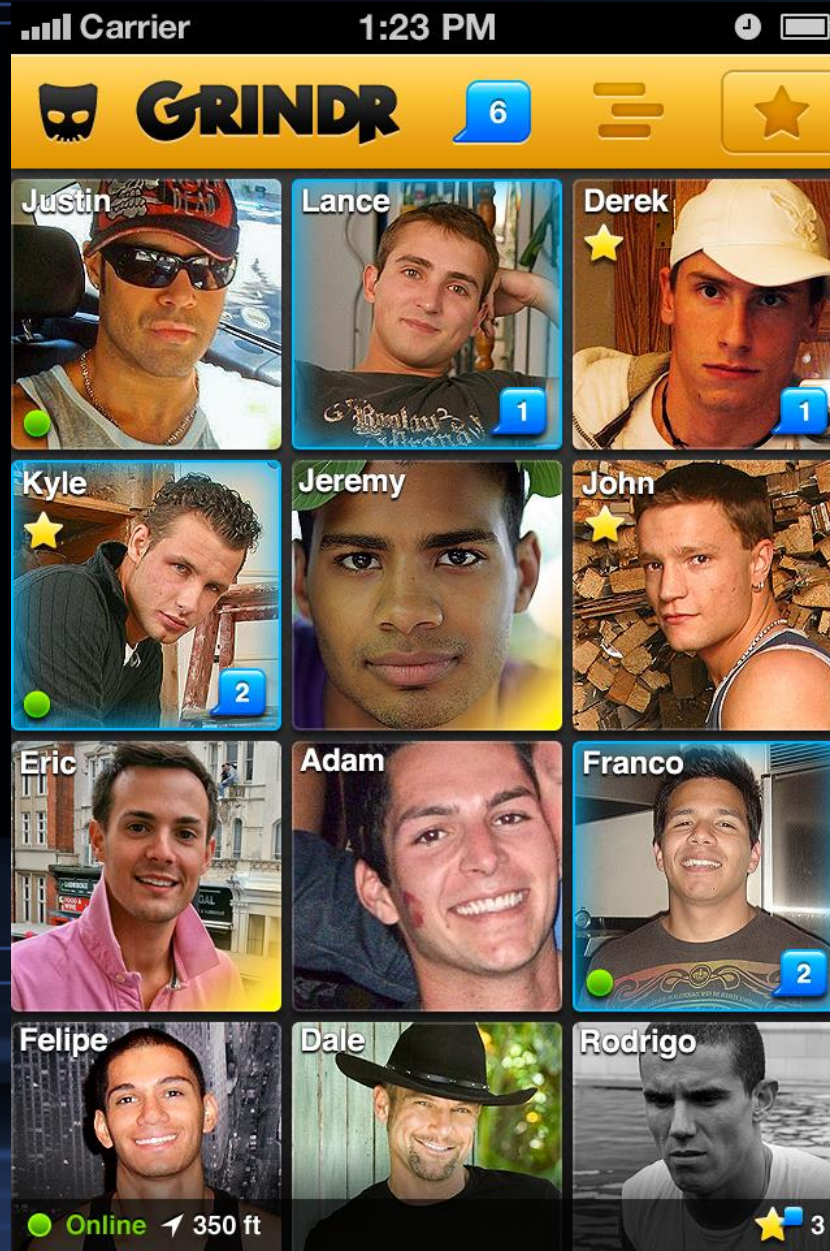
The Triple A Model

Accessibility

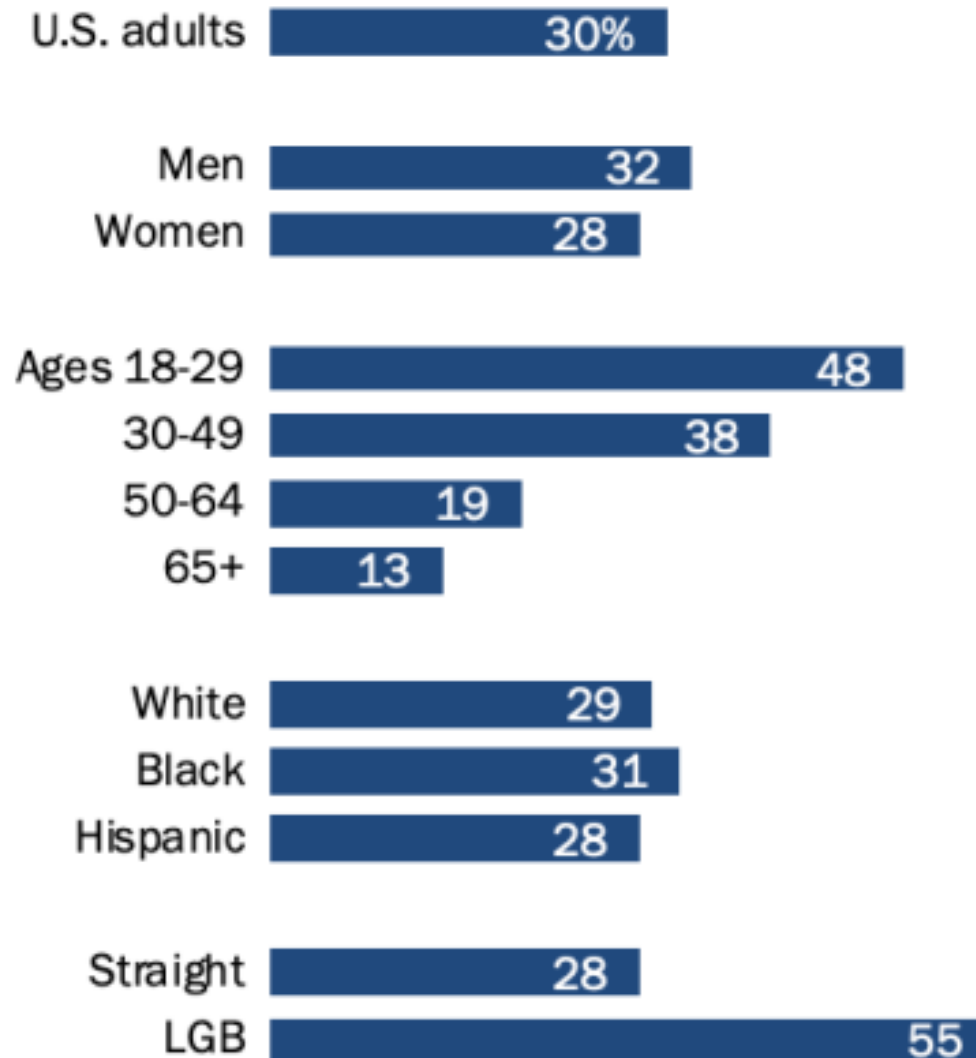
Affordability

Anonymity

Online Dating



Dating on Sites & Apps Stats



Love and Sex in Today's World

- Sex, both virtual and real is only a click or a swipe away.
- Variable ratio (intermittent) reinforcement.

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Assessment and Diagnosis

How do I know my
patient is addicted to
technology?

Same as All Addiction

- ✓ Tolerance and Withdrawal
- ✓ Internal Concerns
- ✓ External Consequences

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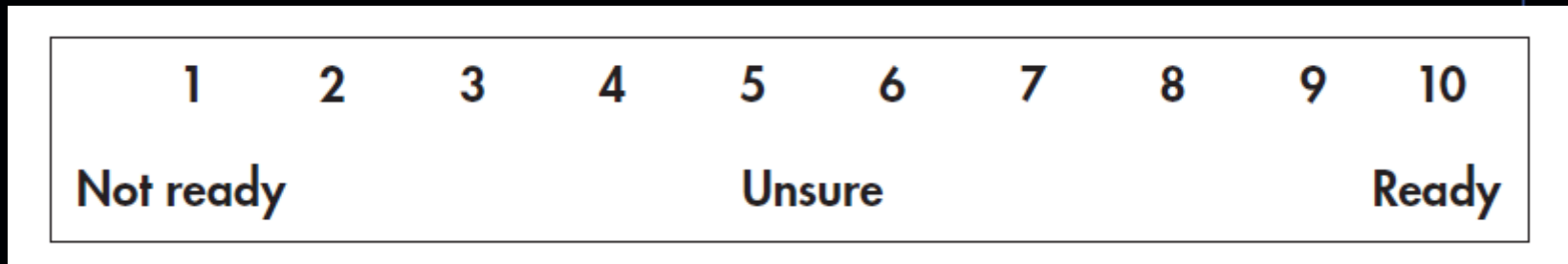
Treatments

What can I do
about it?

Psychotherapy

- ✓ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- ✓ Motivational Interviewing (MI)

Motivational Interviewing



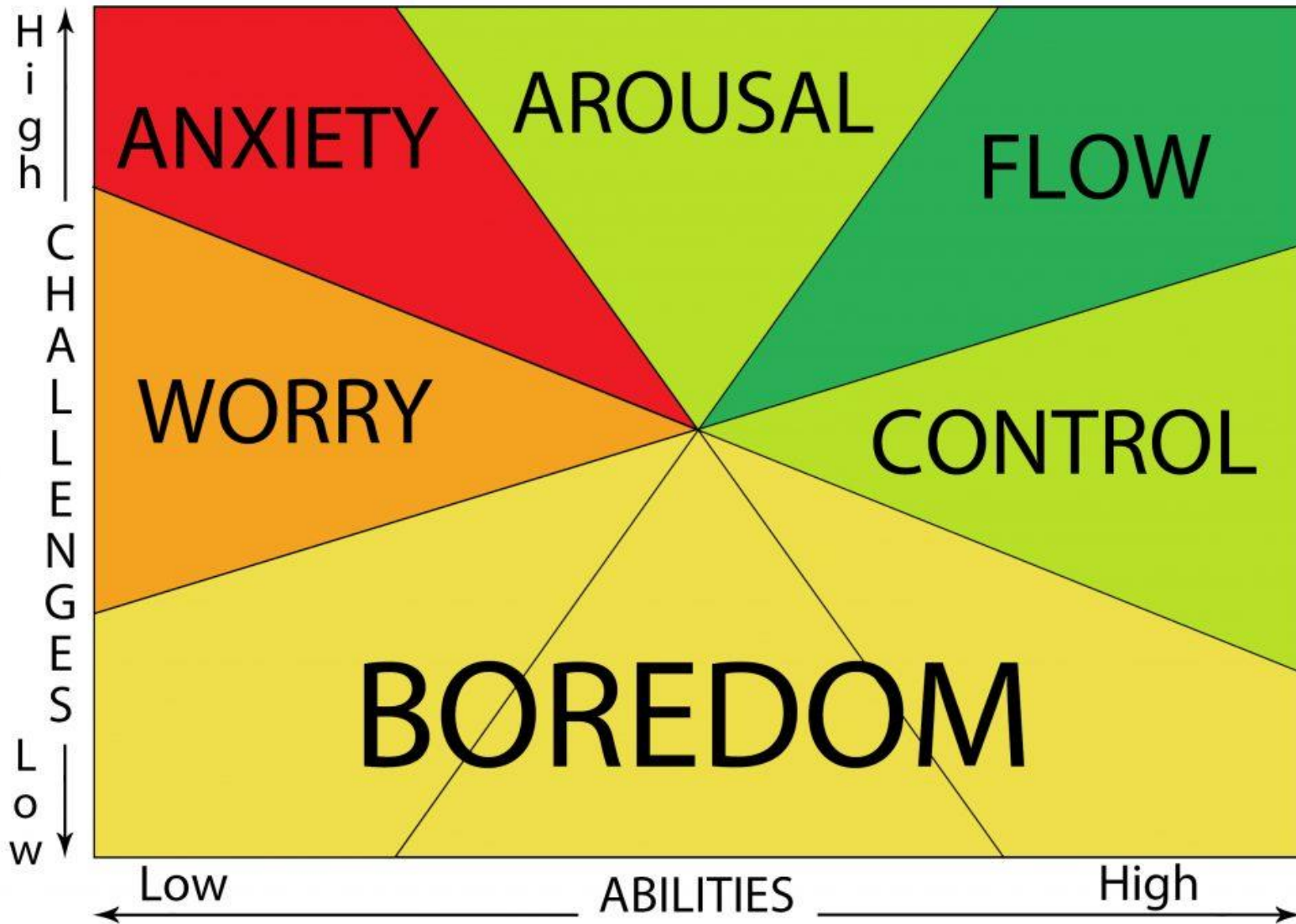
Medications

- ✓ We have no approved medications for any Technological Addiction.
- ✓ Treat co-occurring psychiatric disorders.

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New Directions

Arousal and Control



A Technological Addiction as an Arousal - Impulsive Disorder

- **Opioid Antagonists**
 - Decrease dopamine function by blocking opioid receptors.
 - Reduce the “high.”

A Technological Addiction as a Control - Compulsive Disorder

- **Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs)**
 - Increase serotonin function by blocking serotonin reuptake receptors.
 - Decrease obsessiveness.

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Conclusions

1. Internet Gaming, Cybersex, Internet Gambling, Infobesity, Social Media, Texting & Emailing, and Online Auctions & Shopping are the major Technological Addictions in 2023.
2. Continued use despite knowledge of adverse consequences is the hallmark of diagnosis.
3. Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Motivational Interviewing are effective treatments.
4. We have no approved medications for the treatment of any Technological Addiction.

Technological Addictions



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Thank you

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