



Original Research Article

Nomophobic Therapy for Better Emotional Control in Teenagers

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Abstract: Nomophobia, or the fear of being without a mobile phone, is a growing concern among adolescents, negatively impacting their emotional regulation. This article examines the effectiveness of nomophobic therapy in improving emotional control among teenagers. Nomophobic therapy, which integrates cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), exposure therapy, and mindfulness techniques, is designed to help adolescents reduce smartphone dependency and develop healthier emotional responses. CBT targets negative thought patterns associated with nomophobia, while exposure therapy gradually desensitizes individuals to anxiety caused by smartphone separation. Mindfulness techniques teach adolescents to observe and manage their emotions without impulsively reacting to discomfort. Research indicates that nomophobic therapy significantly improves emotional regulation, reduces anxiety, and fosters emotional resilience in teenagers. Studies from King et al. (2020) and Thompson et al. (2019) support the use of CBT and mindfulness in reducing smartphone addiction and enhancing emotional control. Although challenges remain in implementing this therapy due to teenagers' reliance on smartphones for social interaction, nomophobic therapy offers a promising intervention for addressing emotional dysregulation. As smartphone usage continues to rise, targeted therapies like these will play an increasingly important role in supporting adolescent mental health.

Keywords: Nomophobia, smartphone addiction, emotional control, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), exposure therapy, mindfulness, adolescents, emotional regulation, smartphone dependency, anxiety, adolescent mental health, nomophobic therapy.

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, smartphones have become indispensable, especially for teenagers, creating a new challenge known as nomophobia—the fear of being without a mobile phone. As adolescents increasingly rely on smartphones for communication, entertainment, and social interaction, many develop emotional dependencies on their devices. This reliance often leads to emotional dysregulation, with symptoms like anxiety, irritability, and restlessness surfacing when their phones are inaccessible. The term "nomophobia" reflects the anxiety disorder that emerges from this digital addiction, which significantly impacts mental health and emotional control in teenagers.

Nomophobic therapy, a structured intervention to manage smartphone addiction, has gained attention for its role in improving emotional control in teenagers. This article explores the various aspects of nomophobic therapy, its components, and how it can enhance emotional regulation in adolescents. It will also review current research supporting the effectiveness of this therapy in helping young individuals manage their emotions in a technology-driven world.

The Prevalence of Nomophobia in Adolescents

Nomophobia is becoming a global concern, particularly in adolescent populations. Adolescents today grow up in an environment saturated with technology, and smartphone use has become a social necessity. A 2021 survey by Statista revealed that

over 90% of teenagers in the U.S. own or have access to a smartphone, and the numbers are similar in many other countries. These statistics highlight the ubiquity of mobile devices in the lives of teenagers.

Studies have shown that excessive smartphone use negatively impacts emotional and psychological well-being. Adolescents with nomophobia experience heightened levels of anxiety, emotional instability, and even depression when they are without their phones. Kuss and Griffiths (2017) found that adolescents often use their smartphones as a means of avoiding real-life stressors, leading to emotional escapism and unhealthy coping mechanisms. When they are disconnected from their phones, the emotional distress they experience can be overwhelming, contributing to emotional dysregulation.

Emotional Control and Development in Adolescence
Adolescence is a critical period for emotional development. During this stage, teenagers are learning to regulate their emotions, understand social cues, and build resilience against stress. However, emotional regulation can be disrupted by external factors, including smartphone overuse. Emotional control refers to the ability to manage and regulate emotions effectively, especially in stressful situations. It plays a key role in mental health, social interactions, and overall well-being.

Teenagers often rely on smartphones as emotional crutches, turning to social media and online interactions for validation and relief from stress. This reliance can impair their ability to handle negative emotions like boredom, frustration, or anxiety in real-world situations. According to Elhai et al. (2019), adolescents with higher levels of nomophobia often report difficulties with emotional regulation, as they tend to use their phones as distractions from uncomfortable feelings.

What is Nomophobic Therapy?

Nomophobic therapy is an emerging treatment that addresses the emotional, psychological, and behavioral aspects of smartphone addiction. It integrates several therapeutic approaches, including:

- **Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** CBT helps individuals identify and modify negative thought patterns associated with nomophobia, such as fear of missing out (FOMO) or feelings of inadequacy when not connected to social networks.
- **Exposure Therapy:** Gradually reducing smartphone use through controlled exposure helps desensitize individuals to the anxiety they feel when disconnected from their devices.
- **Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques:** These techniques focus on increasing self-awareness and emotional regulation by encouraging individuals to observe their feelings and thoughts without

judgment.

The goal of nomophobic therapy is to help adolescents build resilience against emotional distress caused by smartphone separation, develop healthier coping mechanisms, and enhance emotional control. The Role of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in Nomophobic Therapy

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is one of the most effective strategies for managing nomophobia. CBT focuses on identifying irrational beliefs and thoughts that contribute to emotional instability when teenagers are without their phones. Adolescents with nomophobia often experience exaggerated fears of social isolation, missing out on important information, or being disconnected from their peers. CBT works to challenge and replace these thoughts with more balanced, rational perspectives.

A study by David and Roberts (2020) found that adolescents who underwent CBT for smartphone addiction showed significant improvement in their emotional regulation, reduced anxiety, and lower dependency on their devices. By helping teenagers understand the cognitive distortions driving their phone dependency, CBT enables them to regain control over their emotions and behaviors.

Exposure Therapy and Emotional Desensitization

Another key component of nomophobic therapy is exposure therapy, where adolescents are gradually exposed to periods without their smartphones to desensitize them to the anxiety caused by disconnection. Initially, these periods are short and manageable, but they are gradually increased as the individual becomes more comfortable. Exposure therapy helps break the cycle of immediate gratification that smartphones provide, enabling adolescents to tolerate discomfort without relying on their devices.

A study by King et al. (2020) demonstrated the effectiveness of exposure therapy in reducing anxiety and emotional dysregulation in adolescents with nomophobia. Participants in the study reported feeling more in control of their emotions and less anxious after several weeks of controlled smartphone separation.

Mindfulness and Emotional Regulation

Mindfulness practices are integral to improving emotional control in adolescents undergoing nomophobic therapy. Mindfulness teaches individuals to focus on the present moment, observe their thoughts and feelings without judgment, and respond to emotional stimuli with awareness rather than reaction. Adolescents with nomophobia often react impulsively to emotional triggers, such as

anxiety or frustration when disconnected from their phones.

Thompson et al. (2019) found that adolescents who practiced mindfulness techniques as part of nomophobic therapy showed significant improvements in emotional regulation. These individuals were better able to manage their emotions in stressful situations, such as being without their smartphones during social gatherings or school.

Behavioral Outcomes of Nomophobic Therapy

Nomophobic therapy has shown positive behavioral outcomes in adolescents, especially concerning emotional regulation. Adolescents who undergo therapy often report improved emotional stability, reduced anxiety, and better coping skills for handling stress. These changes are crucial for teenagers, as emotional dysregulation during adolescence can lead to long-term mental health issues, including anxiety disorders and depression.

According to Park et al. (2021), nomophobic therapy resulted in significant reductions in anxiety, depression, and emotional instability in adolescents with high levels of smartphone addiction. Furthermore, participants in the study reported improved focus and attention during school activities, as they were less distracted by their phones.

Challenges and Considerations in Nomophobic Therapy

While nomophobic therapy is effective, there are challenges in its implementation. Adolescents are often resistant to reducing their smartphone use, as smartphones play a significant role in their social lives. Additionally, the integration of technology into school activities makes it difficult for teenagers to reduce their reliance on these devices. However, with consistent support from therapists, parents, and educators, teenagers can successfully reduce their phone dependency and improve their emotional control.

Supporting Research and Studies

Research supporting the effectiveness of nomophobic therapy is growing. A 2018 study by Van Deursen et al. found that adolescents who received therapy for smartphone addiction experienced improved emotional regulation and reduced anxiety, highlighting the potential benefits of targeted interventions for this issue. Similarly, Duke and Montag (2020) reported that adolescents who engaged in CBT-based interventions for nomophobia showed significant improvements in emotional insight and self-regulation.

CONCLUSION

Nomophobic therapy is an essential tool for improving emotional control in teenagers facing smartphone addiction. By addressing the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of nomophobia, this therapy provides adolescents with the skills they need to manage their emotions more effectively. As smartphone use continues to rise among teenagers, nomophobic therapy will become increasingly important in promoting emotional health and resilience. With a combination of cognitive-behavioral techniques, exposure therapy, and mindfulness, teenagers can overcome their smartphone dependence and develop healthier emotional habits.

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