

Video Transcript: Problem Technology Use Clinical Simulation

Therapist: Hey, Bart. How are you doing? How was your week?

Bart: Uh, well, I gamed the other night.

Therapist: Okay. Well, I'm glad that you're here. Do you want to tell me a little bit about what happened?

Bart: Okay. I had an assignment for school. It was due Friday, but I didn't really understand it, and so

I went online instead.

Therapist: Okay. Okay. And then what happened.

Bart: I felt stressed, so I went online, and before I knew it, it was 2 AM and I felt tired so I went to sleep. You know, I didn't think the assignment was worth that much anyways. Didn't really care.

Therapist: Okay. Well, it's good that you were aware of how you were thinking and feeling leading up to going online to game. Do you remember when we talked about cognitive-behavioural therapy, and why we use it to help people cut down or stop gaming?

Bart: Yeah, something about, um, about knowing what you're thinking and how certain thoughts can lead to feeling bad, which can lead to urges.

Therapist: Exactly. Now, would you be willing today to spend a few minutes with me, and we can work on an exercise that would help us understand exactly what happened the other night that led to going online. And then what you can also try the next time to prevent it from happening again.

Bart: Sure, but it's not a big deal, I don't really care about this course anyways.

Therapist: Okay. So it sounds like you're not sure what the benefit would be of identifying the triggers, and then coming up with some ideas for what you can do the next time.

Bart: Well, I mean, I guess, if we figure out how to deal with the urges then, it's a—it'll help me in the future, 'cause I need to get my marks up or my parents are gonna take away my car.

Therapist: So you really want to be able to keep your car.

Bart: Yeah.

Therapist: And learning ways to deal with some of the stress about school, that might help prevent you from gaming instead of doing your assignments.

Bart: Yeah.

Therapist: Yeah? Okay. We're going to use a worksheet that you're familiar with, it's one that we've touched on in the past, it's the Learning from Slips and Relapses sheet. So this is the one that's going to help us track what we identify here as some of the triggers of your situation, some things that led up to that happening, and then the steps that we can come up with together, how you can prevent it from happening again. So why don't we start right at the beginning. Can you tell me a little bit about what was going on before you went online to game the other night?

Bart: We just had dinner, and so I went upstairs about 8, but when I read the outline for the assignment I didn't really understand what the teacher wanted.

Therapist: Okay. So it sounds like you weren't clear about what you were supposed to do.

Bart: Yeah. I didn't get it.

Therapist: Now how were you feeling when you realized that you didn't know how to proceed?

Bart: I felt stressed and frustrated.

Therapist: Okay, and then what did you think?

Bart: Um, I thought, "Screw it, it's not that big a deal, I'll just deal with it later".

Therapist: Okay. And then what happened?

Bart: I went online and I got really into my game and I was doing really well, and my team was winning.

Therapist: So it sounds like being online felt good, and that would have been a nice break from feeling stressed. And, what, you do really well online?

Bart: Yeah.

Therapist: So then you just keep playing, and that makes sense.

Bart: Yeah.

Therapist: Okay. Then what happened?

Bart: By the time the game finished, I looked at the clock and it was already 2, or past 2, and I...I just was too tired to do the assignment, and I figured it's only worth 10 percent of my mark anyways, I can just make it up on the next assignment.

Therapist: Okay. And how are you doing in that course?

Bart: Not great. I think I need an 80 on the final exam to pass the class.

Therapist: Okay, so that does put a little bit of pressure on that final exam.

Bart: Yeah.

Therapist: So, it may have taken some of that pressure off a bit if you were feeling clearer in this case, and then able to tackle this last assignment, yeah? Alright. Well what we have now is an opportunity for us to problem solve, at least for next time, assuming that you can't approach the teacher now and inquire an extension, maybe?

Bart: No.

Therapist: Or handing it in later?

Bart: The teacher said no more extensions.

Therapist: Okay, I see. Well, let's go back to that night, okay? And we'll get some of the thoughts you shared with me. You said that you, you didn't know exactly what the teacher wanted. Now, do you mean that you didn't understand the instructions for the assignment?

Bart: Yeah, I didn't get it.

Therapist: Alright, so if we're looking at what you can do to prevent it from happening again, what else could you have done in that moment that may have helped you gain some understanding?

Bart: Um, I could have emailed a classmate, um, but it was late and I don't think they would have gotten back to me.

Therapist: Well, they may not have. But one of them might have as well. Okay. So even before that, what else could have increased the likelihood that you may have had some assistance or someone else able to get back to you to help you?

Bart: Having more time? So, I guess, I could have started earlier.

Therapist: That's a great idea. Okay, and then even before that, maybe looking at the assignment when you get it? And then you have some time to see if you understand it. Or if you need to ask the teacher, or a classmate right then.

Bart: I could do that.

Therapist: Okay. So it looks to me like we have 3 possible strategies here. So, the first one we came up with, which was your idea here, which was to email a classmate to ask. The second was to start earlier, so that you would have more time to get in touch with someone who could be of assistance to you. And then the third one would be to look at the assignment right when you get it, so that you have a chance right there, in the class, to see if you understand it, and makes sense to you, and then, if it doesn't, then you're able to ask someone to help.

Bart: This makes sense.

Therapist: Okay.