Most people with problem technology use think they can go online for just a few hours to blow off steam. However, this may lead to spending more time online than intended, resulting in problems such as missed time with loved ones and lack of sleep. These beliefs, when unchallenged, can lead to slips or relapses.

People are continuously thinking throughout the day. Some of these thoughts are in the form of “self-talk,” which can be helpful and supportive or negative, irrational and self-defeating. Talking to yourself in a positive but realistic way can be very effective in helping you to overcome the urge to go online or to interrupt the habit of going online. Self-talk can be an immediate way to challenge your thinking, respond to urges and make going online less automatic.

Check off which irrational statements you have made about your technology use:

- I can control my technology use.
- I only need a few more minutes online.
- I just need to achieve one more level in my video game.
- I can’t stop.
- I can stop anytime.
- All my friends are online.
- I’ve had a stressful day. I need to go online to relax.
- I can only meet people online.
- I don’t know what else to spend my time on.
- This is the last time I will go online or play video games.
- I’m bored. I have nothing else to do.

Take a moment to close your eyes and imagine you are online or about to go online. Are there other thoughts that go through your mind?

Now continue the exercise by listing two things that are irrational about each of the thoughts you identified above. Then, enter a rational thought you could use to replace it. Write down anything else you think you could do when faced with these thoughts. With practice, you can challenge these thoughts right away when you are actually in the situation.

An example can be found on the next page.
Irrational thought:  I need to go online to relax.

What specifically is irrational about it?

1) When I go online, I often lose track of time and feel exhausted the next day. It also puts a strain on my relationship with my partner.

2) There are other activities I can do to relax, such as going for a walk or meeting with a loved one face to face.

Rational thought to replace it:  I do not need to go online to relax. I can instead find an activity offline with friends or family.

Irrational thought:

What specifically is irrational about it?

1) 

2) 

Rational thought to replace it: 