Staying Safe Online
Montpelier Senior Center

Week #8
Playing Games Safely

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Topics

> **Internet Games Can Be Positive**
> **Game Addiction**
> **Harassment in Gameworld**

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Internet Games Can Be Positive (1)

➢ **Puzzle/strategy games can help develop problem-solving and critical thinking**

➢ **Some action/adventure games can help improve spatial awareness**

➢ **Some first-person shooters enhance speed of reflexes**

➢ **Complex games (e.g., Lumosity) can improve memory and learning**

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Internet Games Can Be Positive (2)

➢ **Ted Talk: Your Brain on Video Games / Daphne Bavelier (17:58)**

❑ **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FktsFcooIG8**

➢ **Ted Talk: An Argument for Game Artistry / Kellee Santiago (15:37)**

❑ **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9y6MYDSAww**

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Game Addiction (1)

- Video-game addiction = "gaming disorder"
  - Excessive / compulsive use of video games
  - Difficulty resisting
  - Spending so much time it interferes with normal life
- Roughly 1 to 10% of "gamers"
  - Preoccupation
  - Withdrawal difficult
  - Increasing time
  - Inability to stop

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Game Addiction (2)

- Why so addictive?
  - Constant positive feedback in designs
  - Multiplayer games can have positive social groups – form communities of like-minded players
  - Some people have impulsive tendencies
- Possible negative consequences
  - Problems of posture, eye, carpal-tunnel symptoms
  - Psychological difficulties: anxiety, depression, isolation
  - Sleep disruption (playing too late or at night)

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Game Addiction (3)

- Ted Talk: Does Video Gaming Ruin People's Lives? (9:59)
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tQs5ZSrNwc
- Ted Talk: Escaping Video-Game Addiction (6:05)
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHmC2D0_Hdg
- Ted Talk: How to Save a Loved One from Game Addiction (14:33)
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzL2A5l-eVU

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Harassment in Video Games (1)

- Harassment can include
  - Verbal abuse
  - Sexual harassment
  - Doxxing – posting contact info
  - Trolling – constant abuse
  - Long-term cyberbullying
- Estimates from surveys
  - ~60% of online gamers have been harassed
  - Girls/women & people of color have worse
  - Anonymous players can be worse (e.g., in Fortnite, Call of Duty)

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Harassment (2)

Factors increasing harassment include:

➤ **Anonymity – can't trace malefactors in real world**

➤ **Competition – may improve scores by intimidating competitors**

➤ **Lack of consequences – games may have no penalties for bad behavior**

➤ **Culture – some games may reward harassment**

➤ **Groupthink – bond with other players through harassment**

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Responding to Harassment

➤ **Goal of the bullies is to create discomfort**

➤ **Responding is a positive encouragement to bullies**
  ❑ **Stronger the negative response the better**
  ❑ **Generates yet more harassment**

➤ **Defenses vary by game (or even social media)**
  ❑ **If possible to BLOCK further comments from an individual, do so**
  ❑ **If possible to REPORT bullying to admins, do so**
  ❑ **Otherwise IGNORE the bullies completely**

➤ **May have to quit the game entirely if too distressing**

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