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WORKING FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

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We Never Say No. We Never Give Up.
We Never Turn Anyone Away.

Electronic Gaming and Internet Addiction

A Presentation to Students

Branton School, Calgary, Alberta

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Presented By Monica Piros MSW, RSW
Supervisor, Community Resource Team



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Presentation Outline

- Defining Electronic Gaming Addiction
- Identify Adverse Effects
- Suitable Interventions
- Questions from the Audience



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What is Video Game Addiction?

- Video game addiction is described as an impulse control disorder, which does not involve use of an intoxicating drug and is very similar to pathological gambling.

(Illinois Institute for Addiction and Recovery)



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Top Signs of Gaming Addiction

- Isolating from real life friends and family
- Giving up sports and other activities you used to enjoy
- Becomes a priority at the expense of everything else in your life
 - School performance dropping because of gaming
 - Irritated or experiences anxiety when accessibility to gaming is diminished



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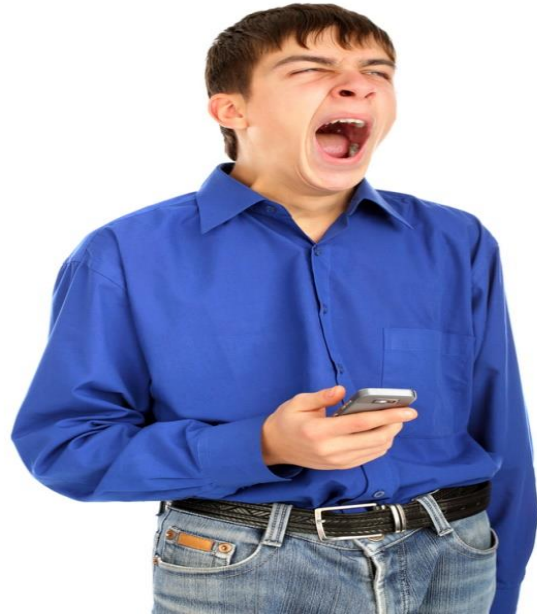
- Causing conflict in the family home
- Online contacts become more important than real world relationships
- Punishing parents when they disconnect you from the game
- Gaming getting in the way of most aspects of healthy functioning
- Bargaining for game time then failing to follow up with your end of the agreement



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Adverse Effects of Gaming

1. Poor Sleep Habits



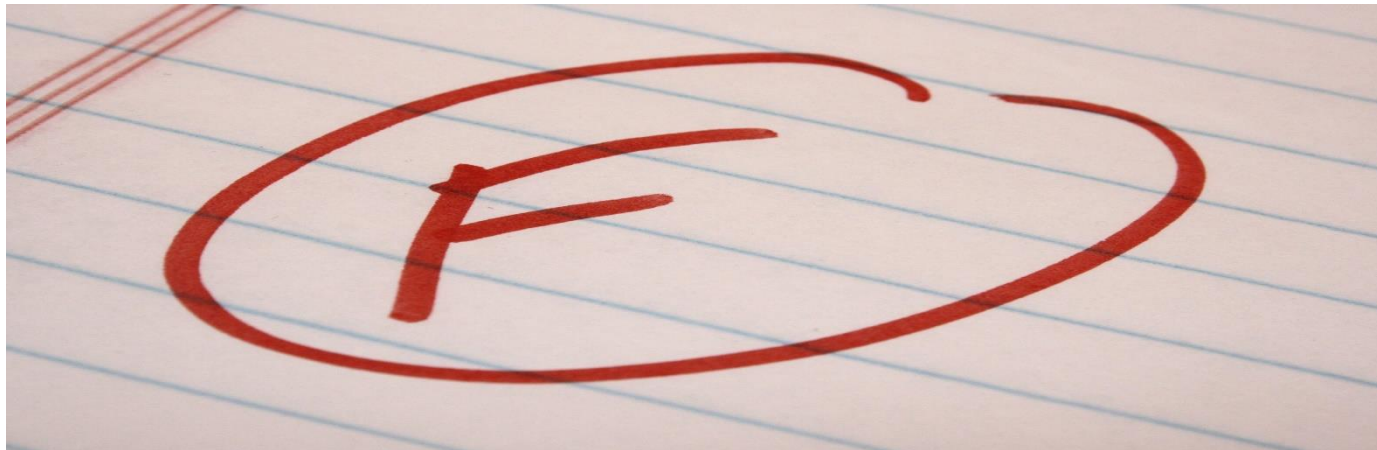
To reach the next level, obtain the best gear or earn new achievements, you may stay up late to play video games nearly constantly. Adolescents need a minimum of eight hours of sleep every night for optimal functioning.



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2. Can Impact School Performance

Due to reduced impulse control and adequate sleep, the capacity for you to function well in a school setting can decrease.



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3. Can encourage Avoidance

Video games are an excellent way to escape difficult problems through avoidance. Despite the temporary alleviation of stress, active avoidance of problems or feelings can lead to mental health concerns, including panic attacks and social anxiety.



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4. Coping Skill Reduction

Utilizing video games to avoid difficult problems and feelings *can* be an effective coping skill for teens. *However* when used excessively any coping skill can become unhealthy. It is important to have many tools to help us manage through difficult times.



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5. Increased Social Isolation

- Although many of the games young people play are based in online worlds where you interact with others, the real social aspects are extremely limited, especially when compared to face-to-face play time with peers.

6. Decreased Impulse Control

Children addicted to gaming may respond with loud, angry outbursts when interrupted during game play



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Adverse Effects of Gaming

7. Violent Ideation

As gaming addiction starts to take hold, adolescents may entertain uncharacteristically violent fantasies. The violent ideation often takes form of imaginative scenarios based within the game world.

We also have to give some thought to whether gaming serves as a gateway to other addictive behaviors, such as gambling and pornography use, as introduction to these is taking place at younger and younger ages.



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Adverse Effects of Gaming



8. Kids really have no idea who they are actually interacting with online



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Video Game Addiction Questionnaire

1. Over time, have you been spending much more time thinking about playing video games, learning about video-game playing, or planning the next opportunity to play?
2. Do you need to spend more and more time and/or money on video games in order to feel the same amount of excitement?
3. Have you tried to play video games less often or for shorter periods of time, but are unsuccessful?
4. Do you become restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop playing video games?
5. Have you played video games as a way of escaping from problems or bad feelings?
6. Have you ever lied to family or friends about how much time you play video games?



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Video Game Addiction Questionnaire

7. Have you ever stolen a video game from a store or a friend, or have you ever stolen money to buy a video game?

8. Do you sometimes skip household chores in order to spend more time playing video games?

9. Do you sometimes skip doing homework in order to spend more time playing video games?

10. Have you ever done poorly on a school assignment or test because you spent too much time playing video games?

11. Have you ever needed friends or family to give you extra money because you spent too much money on video game equipment, software, or game/Internet fees?



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What Douglas Gentile Found

Kids were considered to be pathological gamers if they responded with a "Yes" or "Sometimes" to at least 6 of 11 of the questions.

20% of his respondents met the criteria for a video game addiction.

When Gentile counted only "Yes" responses, about 8% of the kids qualified as pathological gamers (Gentile 2006).



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Books on Electronic Addiction

[Parent's Guide to Electronic Addiction](#)

by [Jay Berk](#)

[Is Your Child Addicted To Electronics? 30 Days of Healing and Recovery for Your Child And Family](#)

by Nathan Driskell

[Reset Your Child's Brain: A Four-Week Plan to End Meltdowns, Raise Grades, and Boost Social Skills by Reversing the Effects of Electronic Screen-Time](#)

by Victoria Duncley

[Breaking the Trance: A Practical Guide for Parenting the Screen-Dependent Child](#)

by [George T. Lynn](#) and [Cynthia C. Johnson](#)



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Helpful Websites

AHS-Youth Addiction Services

www.albertahealthservices.ca

Research on the Effects of Media

<https://drdouglas.org/>

The Center for Electronic Addiction

<https://electronicandvideogameaddiction.com/>

Illinois Institute for Addiction and Recovery

<http://www.addictionrecov.org/Addictions/?AID=45>



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