# GAMING FOR GOOD

## Game Safe

In 2019 The World Health Organisation officially recognised 'Gaming Disorder' as a mental health condition. They characterised it as:

> *'a pattern of persistent or recurrent gaming behaviour in which people lose control of their gaming behaviour, give priority to gaming over other interests and activities, and continue gaming despite negative consequences, such as impairments in their family relationships, social lives, work duties or other areas.'*

As charities that witness the negative results of addiction and poor mental health amongst vulnerable young people, we have a responsibility to highlight the risks of gaming and encourage safe and fun gameplay for all.

## Safety Guidance

As we are asking you all to pick a game of your choice to play during our Gaming for Good festival it would be impossible for us to offer comprehensive advice on how to play all of these safely. However, we advise you read the instructions carefully and adhere to any safety guidance offered by your game of choice.

## Take a break

Gaming for Good isn't intended as an excuse to game for 2 weeks straight. If you've gamed a lot one night, take a break the next and spend some time away from screens. If you've got an important task to do tomorrow, make sure you don't stay up too late gaming the night before.

It all might sound like common sense but we know what it's like when you're on a roll, it can sometimes be hard to stop! Set yourself limits and break up gaming with other activities. Remember, as soon as it's not fun anymore or you are struggling to control your gaming, STOP. If you're worried about this or would like to speak to someone for some advice please get in touch with ADT Healthcare [here](#).

## E-Sport does not replace real sport

We've all done it, been so engrossed in a game of FIFA that it feels like you've actually just come off the pitch. It's important to remember though that you haven't. As sad as it is, gaming, including e-sports, is not a physical activity and therefore it's important that you make sure you are making time for exercise and fresh air. Go for a run or a walk and get your heart rate up from exercise not gameplay.

## "You'll get square eyes" -- *said every Mum ever*

This might be a threat you heard a hundred times when growing up but there is actually some truth in it. Okay, you won't get square eyes, but staring at a screen for hours on end without a break certainly isn't good for us. Headaches and sore, dry eyes are common symptoms that you've been looking at a screen for too long. Take a

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break from looking at the screen every 10-20 minutes, focusing on something in the distance that isn't digital. Go make a cup of tea, take a walk, read a book or have nap and if you start to get a headache or sore eyes, it's a sign you need to stop playing for the day.

## Keep it social!

Gaming has provided an amazing way for us to connect with friends, family, colleagues and strangers during a time when we can't see people in person because of lockdowns. We want Gaming for Good to celebrate this and so we encourage you to organise tournaments or matches, host virtual board game nights or complete a game with a tag team of mates. Even if you'd rather game solo you can share your Gaming for Good challenge on social media and connect with family and friends in that way.

## Things to watch out for:

We don't want to scare you, the majority of people who game do not develop a gaming disorder!

We just want to ensure that people who are taking part in Gaming for Good are alert to the amount of time they spend gaming and are mindful to the following signs that may signify that you are developing a dependency:

- A strong desire to play video games
- Difficulties in controlling its use
- Persisting in its use despite harmful consequences
- A higher priority given to video games than to other priorities and obligations
- A low mood, a dip in motivation and a lack of desire for activities other than gaming

If you want more information or wish to talk to an expert about video gaming addiction, visit this website run by ADT healthcare, who specialise in video gaming disorders and provide a 24hr helpline for confidential advice and support.

## Staying Safe on the Internet

One of the best things about gaming is being able to play with friends and fellow gamers all around the world- it's the social element that has got a lot of us through lockdown! As great as this feature is, there are some things that you need to be aware of when playing online to keep yourself safe:

## Bullying

Some players may deliberately exclude you from a game or criticise you for how well you're playing. If using voice chat, some players may swear or use abusive language which you may find distressing. Remember if you ever feel like you are being threatened or bullied, you can block and report players within the game, meaning

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they will no longer be able to contact you. See Net Aware, in partnership with O2, for guidance on specific games.

## Trolling, Griefing and Scams

As in the rest of life, there are always a small number of people who want to ruin it for others. Griefers are gamers who deliberately try to ruin the game for other players; this can also be called trolling. Some players may also try to trick or scam you into giving up 'skins' or other in-game items by offering money or hacking your account. Try and be aware of this when interacting with players you don't know and if you are a victim of this kind of behaviour then report it immediately.

## In Game Purchases

Some games can be misleading when it comes to in-game purchases and downloads. It may be a free game to start with but as gameplay goes on you may be encouraged to unlock other features or downloads by paying a fee. Be aware of this, particularly if the card you used to purchase or register for the game was not yours and instead belongs to a parent or guardian.

## Talking to Strangers

For many, meeting new people and chatting to fellow gamers from around the world is one of the best things about gaming. You do however need to be careful when interacting with people you don't know. Some players create fake online personas and so may be posing as a 17 year old but are actually much older. Others befriend fellow players with the aim of grooming them, sometimes asking for money or being inappropriately sexual. If anything like this happens, then immediately block the player and report them within the game

## Safe gambling

Make sure to read this information on safe gambling online before entering our raffle event. It is important for you to know the age restrictions and guidelines on online gambling before taking part.

## REPORTING A PROBLEM

As this is a remote event, the EYH team will not be there to monitor content shared whilst you are gaming. If you need to report an issue, or inappropriate behaviour please contact us directly at info@eyh.org.uk.

*If you have questions or concerns about the above please contact info@eyh.org.uk*

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