



Issue 1: May 4, 2020

OUR MISSION

Adolescent Counseling Services (ACS) empowers youth in our community to find their way through social-emotional support and by building safe, accepting communities.

WHO WE SERVE

Adolescent Counseling Services (ACS) exists to support the wellbeing of all teens, tweens, and young adults ages 10-25 in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties.

OUR HISTORY

Founded in 1975, ACS currently implements four core programs in Santa Clara and San Mateo County communities:

Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment

Community Counseling

On-Campus Counseling

Outlet

Too Much Gaming? Tips for Youth and Parents

Over gaming can be a serious concern, as it can impact your social relationships, schoolwork, and ability to make money from having a job. On the pages below, there are warning signs to assess yourself or your child to see if too much video gaming is an issue.

Everyone has a different style of dealing with things. For some, taking a break from something may work, and for others, they may need someone to hold them accountable. On pages below, there are some tips for youth and parents that may be helpful in reducing the amount of video gaming.

Warning Signs for Youth

- Thinking about gaming all or a lot of the time
- Feeling bad when you can't play
- Needing to spend more and more time playing to feel good
- Not being able to quit or even play less
- Not wanting to do other things that you used to like
- Having problems at work, school, or home because of your gaming
- Playing despite these problems
- Lying to people close to you about how much time you spend playing
- Using gaming to ease bad moods and feelings



Tips for Youth

- Track your gaming time- Set a specific amount of time that you will be dedicating to video games and set a timer to hop off when that time is over.
- Add up your total amount of gaming at the end of the week to understand the amount of time dedicated to playing video games each week.
- Instead of playing through a game on the hardest difficulty, which will extend the game for much longer. Set the game settings to an easier mode to allow you to spend less time on each game.
- If you're able to multitask, watching video game videos online instead of playing can be a way to have access to the game while being able to do other things (homework, exercise, eating)-
- Detox from gaming periodically- stop playing video games for a few weeks to help reset your brain. You will find that the urge to constantly play video games has reduced significantly.
- Ask yourself why you are gaming. Is there something you are trying to escape from?
- Keep phones, laptops, and consoles out of the bedroom so that you are not tempted to play all night.
- Explore other enjoyable activities. Exercising is encouraged

Warning Signs for Parents

- Talk about their game(s) non-stop
- Play for hours on end every day.
- Become defensive when told about their excessive gaming.
- Become explosive or angry when made to stop.
- Sacrifice basic needs (sleep, hygiene) in order to play more.
- Downplay or hide their time spent gaming.
- Seem overly preoccupied, depressed, or lonely.
- Mood shifts. Calm when playing video games to cranky when not playing
- Withdrawal symptoms when unable to play.
- Child becomes more isolated the more they become addicted. Less time with family and friends.



Tips for Parents

- Encourage other activities. Specifically, physical activities can be useful since they increase blood levels of serotonin and can have a positive impact on mood and symptoms of over gaming.
- Having a conversation with your child about why they enjoy gaming. Understanding motivation will help to identify any underlying issues going on.
- When requesting that your child gets off the video game, it is helpful to have another activity for them to shift to. This can include family outings or dinner (having a reason for them to hop off).
- It is not as effective to tell the child to hop off because "I said so". This approach leads to the child feeling as if their parents wants them to get off "just cause".
- When requesting your child hop off of a game, give them a small period to wrap up the progress in the game. Continuously being asked to get off mid-game can create arguments and conflict between child and parent.
- Instead, ask the child how much longer until they are at a stopping point, which you should then ensure they do not go over that amount of time.

Resources

- If you/your child's video gaming has gotten out of hand, there are many ways to seek help. Below are some resources and suggestions for addressing this issue.
- Consult with therapist or mental health professional regarding this form of addiction.
- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) has been shown to be effective when treating video game addiction.
- This is a website with great information, resources, and tips: video-game-addiction.org
- Any other additional questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to Matthew Stull via email to matthew@acs-teens.org or by phone to (650)-434-2443.

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