

GAMBLING AND GAMING USE DURING A PANDEMIC: THE MORE THINGS CHANGE THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME

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1

GAMING USE DISORDER

- Background
 - In 2007 a study from Stanford determined 8% of youth could be determined to be gaming addicts
 - By 2018 that number had risen to 16% of youth
 - In 2017 \$36 billion was spent on gaming, by 2018 this number had risen to \$135 billion
 - In 2020 \$179.7 billion was spent on gaming, which was more than professional sports and the movie industry combined
 - \$56.9 billion was spent in the United States

2

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Pre-occupation
 - Thinking about the game even when they aren't playing it
- Withdrawal
 - Becoming irritable or frustrated when not being allowed to play the game
- Tolerance
 - Needing to spend more and more time or money to get the same effect
- Loss of interest in other hobbies or people
 - Game begins to take over more of their focus

3

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS (CONTINUED)

- Continued use despite negative consequences
 - Family members complain, restrict gaming, running out of money, grades begin to suffer
- Lying about the amount of time or money spent on gaming
 - Moral lie vs Unintentional lie
- Gaming to escape negative moods or distressing situations
- Jeopardizing school, work, or home relationships
- Need 5 or more criteria in order to be considered having the disorder

4

INCENTIVES TO PLAY MICROTRANSACTIONS & LOOTCRATES

- Allows video game users to purchase virtual goods or upgrades for a small fee
 - Designed to keep the user playing
 - Buy more lives or more credits
 - Shorten length of time it takes to get an upgrade
 - Buy weapon camos
 - Better weapons

5

INCENTIVES TO PLAY MICROTRANSACTIONS & LOOTCRATES CONT.

- Those who purchase Lootboxes are more likely to engage in gambling behavior later in life
 - More money spent on lootboxes, generally the more difficulty with gambling behavior
 - 5% of the top lootbox purchasers:
 - 45% of these individuals have problems with gambling currently
- Games use the principle of random reinforcement
 - Most difficult to extinguish
 - Also utilized by casinos/internet gambling platforms

6

RANDOM REINFORCEMENT EXPANDED

Often called "The Hook"

- Dopamine rush to the brain
- Fulfills a need
 - Consciously
 - Unconsciously
- Games now are designed with random reinforcement
 - Historical Games vs. Games Today
 - Lootboxes may be in the same spot, but the prizes vary
 - Follows our evolutionary imperative to hunt for food

7

E-SPORTS

- Popular video games played competitively
 - Gaining in popularity as a sport
 - Don't have to be an "athlete" to play
- Many colleges are offering scholarships for careers in E-sports
- Predominantly male, but 38% are female (1 in 20 women) and growing
 - Offered on websites in order to gamble on others gaming on
 - DraftKings
 - Fan Duel

8

E-SPORTS (CONTINUED)

- In 2015, more people viewed e-sports on YouTube than movies, news, and education combined
- Most popular esports title to bet on was CS:GO
- Larger and larger prize pools in 2020
 - In the United States there was \$14 billion gambled on E-Sports
 - 67% increase in betting volumes and 58% increase in users
 - Most "lucky;" countries were the Ukraine, Sweden and Hungary

9

STREAMING

- Streaming: recording a live event and "streaming" it over the internet for viewers to watch
- Streaming hours
 - Facebook Gaming reported an increase of 80%, while Twitch reported an increase of 82%
 - Twitch is the largest video game streaming platform and averages at about 30 million visitors daily
 - YouTube Gaming is an extension on the YouTube brand. It works very much like Twitch but can play back while the live stream is happening
 - In February and March of 2020 estimated 1 billion hours of video games watched
 - By April of 2020 that number had reached 1.6 billion hours
 - Projected April of 2021 2.1 billion hours

10

HARMFUL EFFECTS OF GAMING

- Increased risk of ADD or ADHD due to highly interactivity of video games
- Lowered metabolism/Increased weight gain
 - Players are eating more while gaming, whether they are hungry or not. This is due to 1 of 2 reasons
 - 1) the part of the brain that says we are full is impaired
 - 2) the reward center is activated to make us eat more
- Musculoskeletal disorders of upper body due to sitting for prolonged periods of time
 - "Gamers Thumb" happens when thumb tendons become inflamed, swell and cause limited movement
 - "Trigger Finger" when finger gets stuck in the bent position due to repeated stress
 - "Tennis Elbow" painful inflammation of tendons in the elbow

11

HARMFUL EFFECTS OF GAMING

- Higher unemployment rates amongst males in their 20's
- Can cause problems in college or high school
- Aggressive thoughts and behaviors especially present who excessively play video games when they are under 10 years old
- Poor social interaction
 - Poor cooperative interaction
- More difficulty with relationships
 - Gamers appear to have lower sex drive than other peers their age

12

HARMFUL EFFECTS OF GAMING

- Increased Photosensitivity
 - No clear evidence gaming causes seizures
- There are various factors, even in people who are predisposed to seizures, that contribute to the seizure activity triggered by lights. The Epilepsy Foundation stresses that the frequency or the speed of flashing lights most likely to cause seizures can vary from person to person.
- It's not clear what percentage of people has this particular vulnerability
- Past studies of healthy children have shown that 4% to 9% of the general public is sensitive to light. An even smaller number is highly sensitive to light, and a fraction of that group may have seizures from rapidly flashing lights or fast-changing colors on a screen.

13

GAMING INTO ADULTHOOD

- Lack of motivation at work
- Predicating potential employment
- Time vs Money
 - Shift work
 - Promotions
- Relationships become more transactional instead of mutually fulfilling
 - "I'd like a girlfriend for the status of having one."
 - For men it appears the relationship fulfills the need to be protected from their addiction

14

GAMBLING PREVALENCE

- New Jersey
 - Casinos were down 32% from previous numbers of February of 2020
 - Internet gambling increased by 80% from January of 2020
 - Golden Nugget Casino was down 43% in on-site gambling, but was up 43% in online gambling
- New Hampshire
 - Watched their online lottery games increase significantly
 - Online sales increased 167%, but overall, their lottery sales increased 27%
 - Also noticed an increase in calls to their helpline
 - 443 calls to the helpline which is an increase of 24%

15

GAMBLING PREVALENCE DURING THE PANDEMIC

- Iowa
 - Experienced a 20% loss of revenue according to Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission
 - Iowa does not have online lottery, but they do have online sports betting
- Nebraska
 - Lottery sales were down 5%
 - Nebraska has no casinos yet and no online lottery although they did allow mobile ticket scanning to reduce exposure
 - Did vote for casinos
 - War Horse scheduled to open in 2022

16

GAMBLING PREVALENCE DURING THE PANDEMIC

- Globally
 - Found online games were more prevalent than onsite games
 - Online games most played in the past 30 days
 - Online poker 74%
 - Online bingo 72%
 - Gambling within video games 86%
 - Sports betting was down 58% but those who did gamble on sports had more problems
 - 25% women
 - 17% were moderate risk gamblers, while 20% were problem gamblers
 - 75% men
 - 15% were moderate risk gamblers while 6% were problem gamblers

17

GAMBLING PREVALENCE DURING THE PANDEMIC

- Globally
 - Hankanson
 - Noted only a small minority of individuals experienced higher gambling, but those who did had a higher number of problems with their gambling
 - In some of the higher risk gamblers, the amount of money gambled reportedly decreased
 - Problem here was this was a self-report study which often underestimates losses and overestimates wins or has a "socially acceptable" response factor
 - Other explanations could be there was less money to gamble with or gamblers were uncomfortable gambling in front of their family members
 - As pandemic went on, more and more people began to engage in online gambling

18

WHERE DID ALL THE SPORTS GAMBLERS GO DURING THE PANDEMIC

- Other activities Gamblers became involved in:
 - Gambling within video games
 - Esports-Up 1050% on Draft:Kings regarding LOL unique games
- Alternative Gambling Platforms
 - Weather
 - Pandemic numbers
 - Television Broadcasts
 - "Survivor"
 - Presidential election outcomes

19

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE 2 DISORDERS

- Preoccupation
- Tolerance
- Withdrawal
- Loss of control
- Escaping distressing situations or moods
- Lying about the extent of play
- Jeopardizing relationships, jobs or school

20

DIFFERENCES

- Gambling has 2 criteria based on money whereas Gaming does not
 - Relying on others for a bailout and chasing losses
 - Who pays the bill?
- Money is not the motive with gamblers or gamers
- In either disorder money is the tool, not the drug
- In recovery, money can be a trigger

21

HOW IS THIS DISORDER IS TREATED HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

Erickson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

Stage	Psychosocial Crisis	Basic Virtue	Age
1	Trust vs. Mistrust	Hope	0 - 1 ½
2	Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt	Will	1 ½ - 3
3	Initiative vs. Guilt	Purpose	3 - 5
4	Industry vs. Inferiority	Competency	5 - 12

22

HOW IS THIS DISORDER IS TREATED HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES (CONT.)

Stage	Psychosocial Crisis	Basic Virtue	Age
• 5	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Fidelity	12 - 18
• 6	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love	18 - 40
• 7	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Care	40 - 65
• 8	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom	65 +

23

HOW THIS DISORDER IS TREATED

Gamequitters reports the highest percentage of individuals they work with range between 21-35 years old.

- These individuals appear to be somewhat more motivated and are wanting to address their gaming problems
- Motivational Interviewing Techniques & Principles
- Clients will present in various stages of change
 - Outside pressure/low motivation-Pre-Contemplation
 - Ambivalent/Some internal pressure-Contemplation
 - Motivated-Seeking change-Preparation

24

HOW THIS DISORDER IS TREATED

When client is in Pre-contemplation:

- Goal is to build therapeutic rapport
 - Motivation for therapy is most often due to external entities
 - Important to neutralize suspicion and identify power
 - Begin asking what the client wants to achieve
 - Explore barriers and help develop treatment plans for these barriers
 - Introduce and begin offering alternative activities
 - Build confidence in client's ability to be a change agent in their own life

25

HOW THIS DISORDER IS TREATED

When client is in Contemplation:

- Goal is to eliminate ambivalence
 - Client is able to see their gaming is causing some issues in their lives
 - May still want to keep gaming but also want the emotional problems to end
 - Help them explore possible solutions
 - Pros/Cons list
 - Rebuild or "level up" in the areas where skills are lacking
 - Identify and determine emotional/physical balance
 - Find loopholes in treatment plans and address them
 - Pomodoro technique-30 minutes on 5 off
 - Continue to identify alternative activities as physical/emotional connection is important for change

26

HOW THIS DISORDER IS TREATED

When a client is in Preparation:

- Goal is to increase motivation to address behavior
 - 90-day detox-assists clients in reassessing what is fun and what they enjoy
 - Utilize this time to develop new hobbies
 - Log productivity
 - Optimal for all clients, but historically can be difficult for clients in pre-contemplation or contemplation to attempt/commit
 - Reassess throughout treatment
 - Help clients pass through developmental stages 4, 5, 6
 - Continue to identify alternative activities that don't include gaming/gambling

27

HOW THIS DISORDER IS TREATED

- When the client is in Action Stage
 - After assisting client process through the stumbling blocks of developmental stages 4,5,6 client begins to take action in these directions
 - Group activities to practice and utilize social skills
 - Client will participate in activities which they find meaningful
 - Employment
 - Social activities
 - Limiting time on the internet after selecting what legitimate uses client has for games
 - Good time to use productivity logs in order to maximize applications which are productive for the client

28

HOW THIS DISORDER IS TREATED

- When the client is in Maintenance stage
 - Review Relapse Prevention materials, helping client look for possible holes in their recovery plan
 - Review what is working in the recovery plan and begin to broaden it into other areas of life
 - Helping client see the progress made and reinforce confidence gained

29

HOW THIS DISORDER IS TREATED

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
 - Purpose of this is to retrain the brain to seek out other possibilities to cope with boredom outside of video games
- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy
 - Diary Cards
 - Prosocial List
- Developing a support system
 - Focus is on person-to-person relationships
- Spending time outside
 - Wilderness retreats
 - Kids are taken to a retreat and participate in outdoor activities
 - Not allowed to take any electronics or technology with them
 - Duration is for a month or few weeks
 - Can be highly effective for this reason

30

HOW THIS DISORDER IS TREATED

- Play (Mildred Parten)
 - Onlooker behavior—Playing passively by watching or conversing with other children engaged in play activities.
 - Solitary independent—Playing by oneself.
 - Parallel—Playing, even in the middle of a group, while remaining engrossed in one's own activity. Children playing parallel to each other sometimes use each other's toys, but always maintain their independence.
 - Associative—When children share materials and talk to each other, but do not coordinate play objectives or interests.
 - Cooperative—When children organize themselves into roles with specific goals in mind (e.g., to assign the roles of doctor, nurse, and patient and play hospital).

31

HOW THIS DISORDER IS TREATED

- Taking breaks
 - Indoor breaks
 - Jumping jacks, burpees, high knees, jump rope, hop, creative jumps
 - Hula Hoop
 - "Keep It Up" with a beach ball, balloon, volleyball
 - Shadowbox
 - Run, skip, or grapevine down the hallway (or combination of all)
 - Shoot Nerf Baskets
 - Push Ups, Planks, Bridges

32

HOW THIS DISORDER IS TREATED

- Indoor breaks continued
 - Yoga Poses and/or Stretches
 - Bear Crawl/Crab Walk around the house
 - Ping Pong (don't need a table for this)
 - Golf (ball into a cup or box)
 - Dance
 - Balance Test (put a book on your head and walk around-great for posture)

33

HOW THIS DISORDER IS TREATED

- Outdoor Breaks
 - Go for a walk (go for distance or go for time)
 - Take a Bike or Scooter Ride
 - Go Skating (in-line or traditional)
 - Play catch with your kids or dog
 - Shoot Baskets
 - Dribble a Soccer Ball

34

HOW THIS IS DISORDER

- Outdoor Breaks (Continued)
 - Hacky Sack
 - Play on a swing set, monkey bars, slides, climbing wall
 - Loft a volleyball with a friend/parent/neighbor, or play against a wall
 - Build a Snow Man
 - Work in the lawn
 - Garden

35

HOW THIS DISORDER IS TREATED

- Family therapy
 - Often gaming addiction can result when there is an absence of family time or quality time
 - Want to teach parents this is not a matter of fault; it is a matter of finding ways to increase positive family time
- Factors which can negatively impact family time
 - Schedules
 - Finances
 - Multiple children

36

HOW THIS DISORDER IS TREATED

- Monitor use
 - Talk and Listen to teens about what they are experiencing online
 - Highlight reel phenomenon
 - Snapchat Dysmorphia
- Set rules and boundaries
 - Follow user agreements
 - Most suggest age of 13
 - Have consequences when they break the boundaries
 - Model appropriate screen time
 - Draft a contract about acceptable use of technology
 - Let them know the monitoring you will be doing as well

37

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38

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39

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