

WHAT IS HEALTHY GAMING?

For most of us who play video games, gaming is a beneficial activity that supports

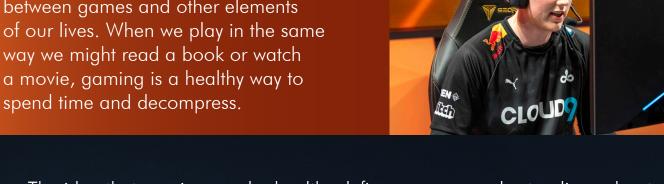
BACK FROM LOWS

our wellness, social connection, and creativity. Gaming increases: Sense of communitySelf-confidence

- Healthy gaming is all about
- maintaining balance and priorities between games and other elements

• Problem-solving skills

The idea that gaming can be healthy defies common understandings about gaming—or at least gamers' perceptions of what non-gamers may expect. A recent Active Minds survey of gamers¹ showed that:



18%

50%

87% of gamers believe 18% believe that that gaming is mostly beneficial to society. non-gamers would feel the same way.

This difference in perceptions can make it difficult for gamers to feel fully accepted.

BENEFITS OF HEALTHY GAMING

Gamers most want non-gamers to know that

healthy gaming provides the following benefits:

COMMUNITIES: Nearly **half** of gamers say

31%

A third of gamers

(31%) have made

24%

they have strong and positive communities due to gaming, both

online and IRL, that promote connectedness, a positive sense

Nearly **90%** report more than 10 new having made friends 90% friends through through gaming. gaming. **CONNECTION:** When asked about tough times, more than half (51%) of gamers report having felt supported always 51% or often by the gaming community

24% report having felt supported at times. These

another in substantive ways.

UR

CH.COM OR RT.COM/LCS

numbers indicate that gamers are connected to one

of self, and problem-solving.

FRIENDSHIPS:

Gamers have the following recommendations for maintaining positive gaming habits and practices:

it brings purpose, value, and/or joy.

schedules such as timers or alarms.

Consider why you're playing a game. Is it to relax? To explore a new challenge? To socialize? To avoid responsibilities? To escape? Pay attention to whether

If losing track of time when you're gaming is a challenge, consider setting schedules and using tools to keep to the

ADVICE FROM GAMERS

FOR STAYING HEALTHY

If you sense that you're playing games to procrastinate, consider examining your priorities to ensure that you're maintaining focus on what matters most to you.

If you find yourself tilting, "/mute all" can be your friend. Play for fun, play for the team, and know

your teammates can still ping you if needed.

Pay attention to your body's needs: sleep, eat,

exercise, social connection, etc.

When a game gets to be too much or is bringing negativity to your world, walk away or uninstall it.

change your sheets.

Take time to do something

physical well being—if you

Try to take care of your

that is going to bring you joy.

...it's much more beneficial to make it a consistent part of your routine.

Exercising a few

times a week

Any action you take to improve your emotional or physical health counts!

Eating healthfully

More than a third of gamers have experienced an emotional "low," specifically related to gaming.1 "Post-adrenaline blues," or an experience in which we feel sad or bummed after an emotional high can happen after a game or match (whether won or lost), after attending a convention, or any other conclusion

Gamers say that the following suggestions help them recover from

friends, family, and loved ones.

Lean on a supportive team, both online and IRL with

Step away from the game to spend time with

Remind yourself that it's a game, even if it sometimes feels like more than that. You can walk away, come

It's important to note that sadness,

life circumstances. Sadness can feel

The difference between a "low" and something more serious is that sadness fades with time, while depression and

Similarly, stress can come and go and is usually

prompted by something specific, such as an

However, anxiety is a sustained mental illness. While it can be triggered by stress, its effect is much more powerful, often impeding someone's

Perceptions

upcoming exam or presentation.

ability to carry out everyday activities.

Emotions

Thinking

long periods of time.

or a "low," while challenging, is often a natural response to upsetting or painful

all-consuming at times, and faint at others.

or similar, —if left untreated—can last for

back when you're feeling better, and try again.

Engage in some

physical activity.

Talk through it. Sometimes it's just some one-on-one time with someone that makes a difference.

IS IT MORE THAN JUST

A LOW OR STRESS?

PAY ATTENTION TO RED FLAGS

Understanding the difference between a low and depression, or stress

and anxiety is critical when responding to someone who you think is struggling so you can support them in appropriate ways without inadvertently minimizing their experience or causing them harm.

Depression and anxiety affect a person's thinking, emotions, perceptions, and behaviors in

ongoing and potentially chronic ways.

Mental illness doesn't discriminate based on any facet of one's identity.

It can impact anyone.

Playing more than usual and/or neglecting other

Pessimistic or negative towards others.

In rare cases, a gamer may engage in problematic gaming habits: • Lacks control over their gaming habits. • Continues gaming despite negative consequences.

For more information, visit activeminds.org/signs. If you're concerned about someone you know, reach out to the Crisis Text Line by texting "BRAVE" to 741-741 or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 for real-time support.

can't do anything else, take a shower, eat some food, and THOUGHTS FROM **ACTIVE MINDS**

In addition to these great tips from gamers, for healthy balance and mental wellness, Active Minds recommends thinking through what self-care means to you and incorporating positive self-care habits into your day. Caring for yourself promotes personal strength and resilience and will benefit not only you, but those around you as well. When we prioritize the health of our bodies and minds, we're helping ourselves and showing those we care about that it's important they put their own needs first, too. While short spurts of self-care can be valuable...



Consistently getting

at least seven hours

of sleep

What does self-care look like

for you? For info and ideas, visit

activeminds.org/selfcare.

or let-down.

feeling low:

Take a few deep

eyes closed.

breaths with your

NAVIGATING GAMING LOWS

Try switching from competitive games to single-player games for a little while.

people IRL.

Play a different game.

Depression is a mental illness that does not necessarily fade with time and is not necessarily linked to a painful event or circumstance.

If you think it might be more than stress or a low, it's important to pay attention. Tune in if you or a gamer in your life is:

More emotional than usual (i.e. getting abnormally angry

or upset when losing a match).

Disconnected, distracted, or less engaged

parts of their lives like sleep, food, work, attending

Seeming like they're not enjoying gaming, are just going through the motions, or are unusually

withdrawn from the game.

with the game or team.

to relationships, etc.

Unusually reckless or impulsive in and out of game. If they're attacking other players, being banned from games due to their behavior, etc.

 Prioritizes games over other people, interests, and/or responsibilities.

with each other online.

¹ Active Minds administered a survey online to 172 participants in October 2019. Questions explored perceptions about video games, the impact of video games on mental health, and how video game participants support and interact