



Video Game Addiction in Today's Society

A video game addiction is the same as any other addiction that involves a person having a problem with an impulse control disorder (Rauh, 2006). The main difference between a video game addiction and a drug addiction is that there is no intoxication whatsoever involved, but it is more like a gambling addiction because of the compulsive and excessive activity (Adams). A video game addiction is often seen as something as simple as the constant playing of video games on consoles or computers. There are some things to look out for when questioning whether an individual has a video game addiction that are similar to other addictions, such as: low self-control, escaping reality, a dysphoric mood reliever, long usage, risking relationships or jobs, and even lying to family and friends. This report will discuss details with video game addictions that should be known in order to have a better understanding on the problem.

This addiction is most common on players that play games that require Internet to play, to be more specific, the massively multi-player online role-playing games, or MMORPGs for short. These games contain a large network of other players who can speak to each other and do activities together to achieve goals within the game. A big and common problem with these types of games is that some players use the virtual fantasy world within the game as a means of connecting with real people as a substitution for the connection they should be getting in real life. It is also not uncommon for some individuals suffering from video game addictions to develop an emotional attachment to the new online friends they make within the game. Some like-minded video game addicts in the MMORPG world may even form deeper relationships within the game with each other, which eventually leads some emotional trouble or real life struggles. Another common problem worth mentioning is the instant gratification the game

offers for completing missions and quests to the player, when compared to real life it makes a huge difference and people may become addicted to this as well. (Daria, 2013)

Generally speaking, an addiction involves an individual who feels like they need more and more of a substance or form of activity as a means of keeping themselves motivated. Without this substance or activity, they become very irritable, miserable, or even angry. Video game addiction is very similar to gambling addiction, especially because there is a major psychological component where the consumer escapes reality or feels good about themselves while possibly feeling an elevation on dopamine levels. An appeal for video games is that one unpopular individual can become strong within the game, and being able to control a fictional character and interact with other people can easily be more appealing than dealing with real life for those individuals. People with a low self-esteem are much more likely to enjoy being more popular and strong in a video game than putting in the work in real life (Rauh, 2006).

At first glance, it is easy to think of a video game addiction as harmless, especially when you compare it to all the other addictions such as drugs and alcohol. While that is true, there is still much danger that could involve children or even adults with gaming addictions. It is possible for a child to not experience a normal social development, which may cause a late emotional development and have people in their 20s barely able to speak to members of the opposite sex or play sports. An adult may jeopardize their jobs or relationships by prioritizing their video games over responsibilities and friends. Both children and adults may even put off eating or sleeping because they are too absorbed in the game to take care of simple daily necessities. The most common unseen effect that video game addicts have is that they become socially isolated and eventually give up on hobbies all just to further their gaming habit.



There are a few ways to help reduce the risks of succumbing to a gaming addiction, although they are mostly precautions to prevention an addiction. It is especially important to pay attention to a child's development with video games in order to prevent a possible addiction. As with television, children are very much capable of sitting in front of a screen playing video games until the day is over, therefore a limit should be placed on their play time in order to prevent them from feeling like they need it. If they are showing signs of addiction, however, then it might be a good idea to take that child to a cognitive therapy in order to increase productive thoughts and activity instead of having constant video game cravings. The most extreme form of stopping the addiction would be with a wilderness therapy, in which an individual is forced into an outdoor treatment program to focus on survival, social skills, common goals, and developing confidence (Rauh, 2006)

One simple way of lowering the risk of a possible addiction is simply to play video games in moderation. Many consider video games to be a casual form of entertainment, only to be used as a way to relax and socialize with friends. Massively multiplayer online (MMO) games should be avoided because those involve a higher risk of an addiction, even if they can be thought of as fun and relaxing games in their own way. MMOs are the easiest way to escape from responsibilities and reality, which is a lot easier to do when life is at a difficult or stressful point. The small constant rewards are especially guilty of keeping a player enticed with the game. Video game addiction is mostly an impulse control based problem involving a psychological addiction, therefore a moderation or limit is the safest and most normal way to prevent an addiction (Conrad).

Any gamer is at risk to becoming addicted to video games, but it really just takes having the right sense of priorities, responsibilities, and a satisfying social life to stop it from happening.



Those are the main factors that contribute to the video game addiction trend. The easiest targets for a video game addiction are people with a serious condition such as depression, because it lets them escape from their real world problems that they feel like they are unable to fix themselves. It is understandable for one with depression to want to escape reality, however, the continuous usage of video games in order to escape a problem is basically the same as consuming drugs to relieve stress and escape from reality. The longer people game because it is an efficient means of escaping, the more they will come to rely on it and think of it as a necessity to their daily lives (Kem, 2005).

Video game addictions are related to several emotional, financial, health, social, and family problems. There are many emotional problems such as depression, loneliness, anxiety, anger, and so on that result in the need to play video games. Financial problems are not too common with children, however an adult may plan their finances poorly buying new video games or even lose their motivation to work, thus losing their jobs. Health problems and video game addictions are a very common issue, because the addict is very likely to not exercise at all and eat the most convenient and unhealthy foods. That is one contribution to childhood obesity. The social life of a video game addict becomes completely abnormal, to the point where they can only interact with other games and have the most trouble speaking to non-gamers. A poor family relationship also increases the likelihood of children and teenagers to become addicted to video games, because they use it as a way to avoid trouble.

Being a gamer and having a lot of free time also has a risk for video game addiction. It is more common for students in high school and beyond to be online gamers, which easily eat up a lot of free time (Kem, 2005). Most online games do not have any real ending, so having no clear signal to show the end makes it more difficult to move on for some gamers. Some online



games even have frequent small rewards simply for logging onto the game every day. That reward temptation is simple to have control over, since it is possible to simply: log into the game, get the reward, and log out. However, the fact that the bonus requires a game log in also creates a temptation to play the game anyways. One suggestion to help lower the risk of video game addiction is to add a sort of notification on screen or a sound that signifies how long the player has been playing a game. After hearing it so many times, the gamer may feel like they have played for far too long and find it in themselves to stop playing.



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