

How to support a child with

GAMING NEGATIVELY AFFECTING LIFE

Useful Apps:

Unless stated otherwise, apps are not supplied by the NHS and the NHS is not liable for their use.



SAM



FearTools



MindShift



Fabulous - Daily
Routine Planner



Stop, Breathe and
Think Kids



WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE?

- Constantly thinking about or wanting to play the game.
- Feeling irritable and restless (fidgety) when not playing.
- Underreporting or lying about how much time is spent playing or playing in secret (such as in the middle of the night).
- Tiredness, headaches or hand pain from too much screen time and use of controllers.
- Not wanting to pay attention to things like their personal hygiene (e.g., washing) or eating.
- Not seeing friends as often or doing other things they used to enjoy doing as all their time is spent gaming.

Mental health and wellbeing cards

<https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk>

WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE?

- Not wanting to go to school so that they can game.
- Becoming verbally or physically aggressive in response to boundaries being put in place / being told to stop gaming.
- Generalised anxiety and low mood.
- Declining grades and a lack of interest in school.
- Running up debts or spending money they don't have / that is not theirs in order to pay for apps or gaming extras.

It is important to recognise when gaming can also be useful for neurodivergent young people, some games are useful for regulation, find out more at **www.spectrumgaming.net**

WHEN SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

- Lots of people like to play video or online games and many spend many hours of their spare time gaming.
- For most people this is ok and they are able to have other hobbies and interests, see friends and they can still get on with their everyday life.
- For others this love of gaming can tip into being unhelpful and impact on their life in a damaging way.
- If gaming impacts on their ability to cope with everyday life such as going to or coping at school, seeing friends or taking part in leisure activities - this may be a sign your child is struggling.

WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT MY CHILD?

- Check and ensure games being played are age appropriate. Age restrictions on games and phone apps are there for a good reason.
- Aim to reduce the amount of time spent gaming. Set clear expectations and boundaries and be consistent with applying these. You may need to reduce time spent gaming in stages depending on how long your child is gaming for to help them adjust.
- Help your young person to recognise the impact on other areas of their life caused by excessive gaming. Help them to identify things they miss out on and find ways together to build in time for other activities.
- Where possible, keep bedrooms free of gaming devices and the internet. Switch the internet off at an agreed time.
- Role model; try not to spend excessive time gaming or on your phone, particularly during family time.
- Find alternative hobbies and interests. Whilst these may not produce the same level of excitement or distraction, it is important to have a range of hobbies and interests.

There is a lot of information on the Hampshire CAMHS website

<https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk>