



Technology Use & Gaming During COVID and Supporting the Return-to-Learning

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Agenda:



- Technology/gaming use and COVID
- Reasons for technology/gaming use
- Impacts of technology/gaming
- Signs and symptoms of problematic use
- Communicating with your children
- Recommended guidelines
- Seeking support



Technology/Gaming Use during COVID



- How has our own technology use changed?
 - Work
 - Communication with friends/family
 - Leisure/Entertainment
 - Shopping
 - Relationships
 - Mental wellness

Technology/Gaming Use during COVID

(credit: YGAP – Gambling and Gaming During COVID-19: Prevalence, Implications, and Strategies to Stay Safe)



- From a public health perspective, staying indoors and playing video games was encouraged in a campaign involving the WHO, in order to practice social distancing and hand hygiene.
- Compared with "traditional"/physical sports, E-sports (competitive video gaming) have remained unimpacted.
- This has led to an increased opportunity for E-sports gambling.
- A Canadian poll in May 2020 revealed that 40% of adults and 52% of children have increased their time playing video games since lockdown procedures began.

Reasons for Technology/Gaming Use



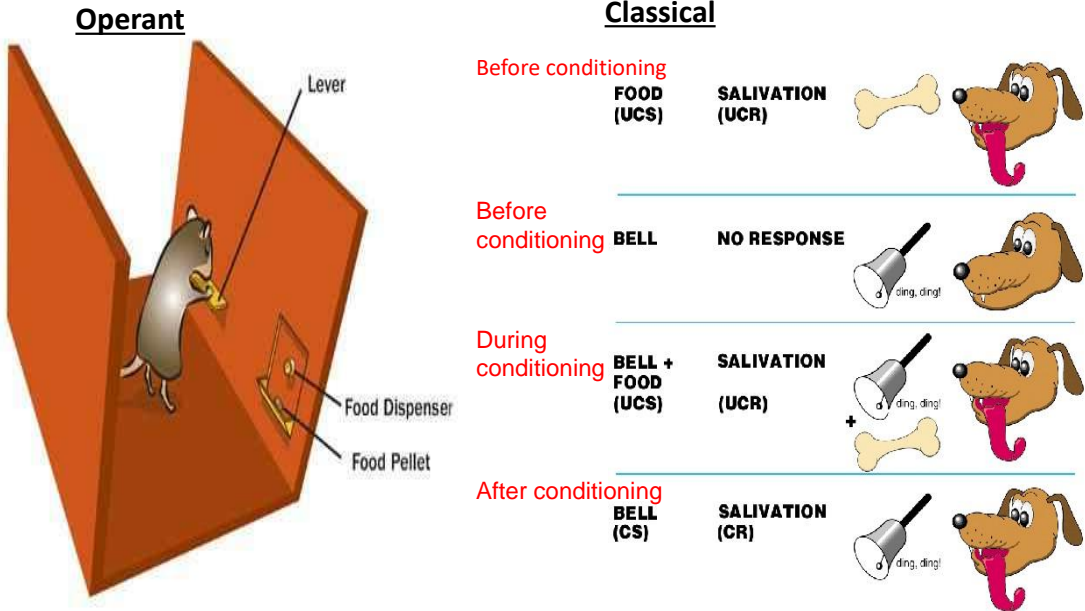
- Youth's technology use and video game playing are not "all bad".
- What makes technology use, especially video games, so attractive?
- How does one become habitual/dependent on this?

What motivates game(s) of choice?

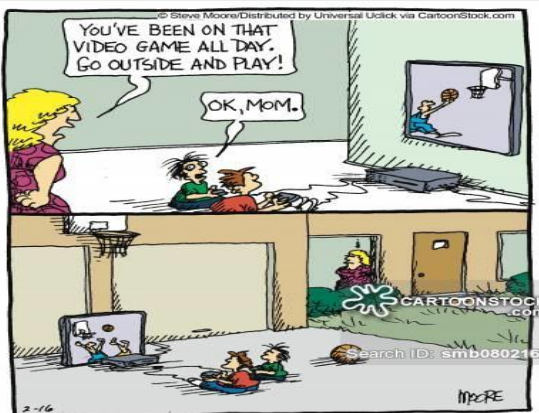


| Action "Boom!" | Social "Let's Play Together" | Mastery "Let Me Think" | Achievement "I Want More" | Immersion "Once Upon a Time" | Creativity "What If?" |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| Destruction Guns. Explosives. Chaos. Mayhem. | Competition Duels. Matches. High on Ranking. | Challenge Practice. High Difficulty. Challenges. | Completion Get All Collectibles. Complete All Missions. | Fantasy Being someone else, somewhere else. | Design Expression. Customization. |
| Excitement Fast-Paced. Action. Surprises. Thrills. | Community Being on Team. Chatting. Interacting. | Strategy Thinking Ahead. Making Decisions. | Power Powerful Character. Powerful Equipment. | Story Elaborate plots. Interesting characters. | Discovery Explore. Tinker. Experiment. |

Two Types of Behavioural Conditioning



Video Game Intermittent Rewards (Operant Conditioning)



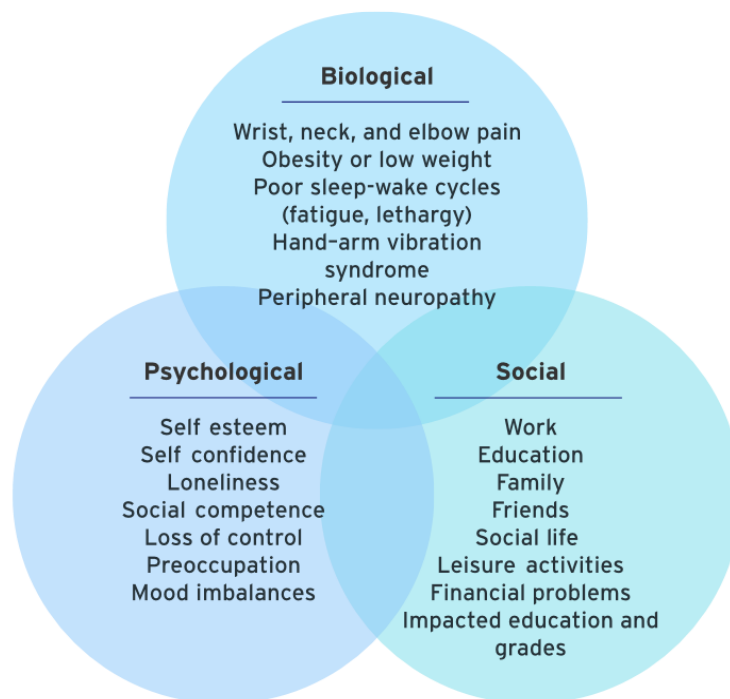
- Gaming outcomes are based on a **variable ratio schedule of reinforcement**, meaning rewards occur after an unpredictable number of responses
- **Variable ratio reinforcement** produces both the highest rate of responding (keeping a person engaged in a behaviour) and the greatest resistance to extinction (stopping)
- The influence of **variable ratio reinforcement** contributes to persistence in gaming

Impacts of Technology/Gaming on a Developing Brain



- Brain development
 - Pleasure centre/pathways
 - Emotional, cognitive, behavioural development
 - Attention span, decision making

- Positive brain impacts:
 - e.g. Visual perception, Information processing



Impacts during COVID

(credit: YGAP – Gambling and Gaming During COVID-19: Prevalence, Implications, and Strategies to Stay Safe)



- Choices of coping skills may be limited due to public health guidelines.
- The virtual/online world vs. The real world
 - Uncertainties
 - Sense of control
- Impacts may be amplified due to increased access and use, as well as related to the issues that are already emerging from COVID, e.g. strained relationship and financial stress.
- The extent of impacts may not be fully manifested/studied until the lockdowns or social distancing practices are no longer in place.

Signs and Symptoms of Problematic Use



- Preoccupation
- Inability to control
- Unsuccessful attempts to reduce
- Isolation
- Emotional Outburst
- Hygiene
- Tolerance
- Withdrawal

Mental Wellness and Transition



- What are some concerns you have with your child's return to school?
- What are some of your child's concerns with returning to school?
- It is important to recognize and explore together anxieties and concerns

Mindful Communication



- **Stress** → **Communication** → **Autopilot**

What is your desired outcome when communicating?

- “wanting”

Mindful Communication



- Can help to expand options for how we respond
- Acknowledgement of own feelings and listen to what the other is trying to communicate
- Mindful listening: commitment and awareness
- Own response and beliefs and understanding of others' perceptions and feelings

Communicating with Your Children



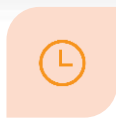
- More/increased use ≠ Problematic/"Addiction"
- Focus on the relationships with technology (How > What)
 - Is "abstinence" possible?
- Tailor your approach to your children/family
- Iceberg/Bullseye theory
- Acknowledge the "normalcy" of the current abnormality
- Don't overlook the positives and the "controllables"

Communicating with your children

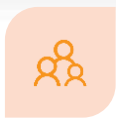


- Be curious
 - WHAT do you like so much about playing games? (less judgmental) VS.
 - WHY do you like playing games so much? (sounds more blaming)
- Overnight change vs. Gradual Reduction (to prepare for back to learning)
- Harm reduction strategies
 - Sleep hygiene
 - Compromises; "bottom lines"
- Working together with your children
 - Express each other's feelings – a two-way communication
 - Collaborative plans
- Your own self-care as parents/caregivers

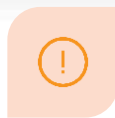
Recommended Screen Guidelines for Adolescents:



•MODERATION: 2-4 HOURS PER DAY



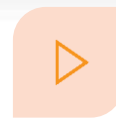
•PARENTS PRESENT AND AWARE OF WHAT TEEN IS ACCESSING ONLINE



•EMPHASIS PLACED ON NON-SCREEN TIME



•NO M RATED GAMES-AGE APPROPRIATE CONTENT



•NO GAMES THAT INVOLVE MORAL INVERSION



•NO DEVICES IN BEDROOMS



•PARENTAL ROLE MODELING

Cautions around Technology/Gaming Use

(credit: YGAP – Gambling and Gaming During COVID-19: Prevalence, Implications, and Strategies to Stay Safe)



- Setting time and money limit
- Be mindful of privacy conditions, for example, and how to protect your banking and personal information
- Online ≠ Video Games --> Explore other online activities

Seeking support



- No help needed
- Self-help
- Outpatient/community/family & friends support
- “Detox”
- Residential
- Integrated/holistic approach

Pinewood Centre Contact Info



- 95 Bayly Street West Suite 406, Ajax 905-721-4747 ext. 6
- 200 King Street East Suite 206, Bowmanville 905-721-4747 ext. 3
- 419 King Street West Suite 125, Oshawa 905-721-4747 ext. 2
- 180 Mary Street, 3rd Floor, Port Perry 905-721-4747 ext. 4

- **TollFree 1-888-881-8878 (all sites)**

Questions?

