

Gaming: Intervention and Treatment

Gaming disorder is a relatively new research area. Academics and service providers are still learning about the core issues of online gaming pathology so they can develop treatments [1]. Most interventions for gaming disorder are based on those interventions for substance abuse. These include psychotherapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and psychoeducational modalities. Psychotherapy for addiction and underlying mental health issues, and strategies for improving life areas affected by use are all currently considered best practice [2].

Intervention & Treatment

Inpatient residential treatment centres for youth gaming addiction have been expanding globally. The use of two other treatment methods in treating gaming addiction may also be promising:

1. Mindfulness: Youth are taught to focus their thoughts on the present moment instead of being distracted by gaming. Mindfulness may increase pleasure in life activities outside of gaming [3].
2. The six-module PIPATIC program (Programa Individualizado Psicoterapéutico para la Adicción a las Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación). This structured model for treating gaming disorder in youth ages 12 - 18 consists of:
 - Psychoeducational (individual and family motivational interviewing and setting goals).
 - Standard interventions (stimulus control, coping, cognitive restructuring, and problem solving).
 - Intrapersonal (identity, self-esteem, self-control, emotional intelligence, and anxiety control).
 - Interpersonal (communication and assertiveness).
 - Family focus (limits, affect, and communication).
 - New lifestyle (alternative activities and relapse prevention) [4].

Prevention

Preventing unhealthy gaming patterns in youth, which can be a precursor to gaming disorders, includes strategies for schools and public policy. School-based programs should include training for educators on healthy internet use habits [2]. Recommendations for screen time set by the Canadian Paediatric Society should be included in any educational material for child development [5].

References

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