

Gaming: Prevalence and Trends

In this document, service providers will find some statistics and trends on problematic gaming.

The first games were developed as technological wonders; they were celebrated for their ability to move a ball from one area to another. It seems that every few years, a new form of gaming emerges to entertain, challenge, and engage our brain's pleasure system. Today's games are designed not just by coders and developers, but also by a network of neurologists, psychiatrists, marketers, and behavioural scientists. Money is made by designing games that trigger pleasure centres in the brain, and entice the user to play longer and more frequently [1].

The landscape of youth gaming evolves constantly. Fifteen years ago, the games geared toward youth were less violent and required less time and engagement [2].

Now:

- 29% of gamers are under the age of 18
- 3-12% of regular youth gamers display signs of addiction [3, 4]
- first-person shooter gamers are more likely to be male and under the age of 24
- girls and women are more likely to play games like puzzles [5]
- a growing subgroup of young female gamers play aggressive games traditionally thought attractive only to male gamers [5]
- addicted gamers are generally from families with lower academic achievement
- addicted gamers tend to use video games as a way to cope with negative moods [3]

In summary, some aspects around gamers that come from families with lower academic achievement, experience relationship difficulties, and have underlying mental health issues tend to be at greater risk for problematic gaming.

References

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