

Am I a video game addict?

Only you can decide. We use the term 'gaming addict' to describe our compulsion to game and our inability to limit our gaming despite all the trouble it causes.

This self-test should help you.

- Do you set rules or limits with gaming and then break them, playing longer or more frequently than intended?
- Do you lose hours of sleep to gaming?
- Do you often neglect or skip self-care (cooking, eating, bathing, cleaning, shopping, exercise, etc) in order to game more?
- Do you find yourself gaming whenever you have free time?
- Have you ever sworn off a game, uninstalled it, and later returned to it?
- Do you often re-live gaming experiences or think about future ones?
- Have you ever used sick days or vacation days or skipped work or class just for gaming?
- Has gaming taken the place of any hobbies or sports you used to enjoy?
- Has your contact with in-person friends and family declined significantly since gaming?
- Have you ever taken a break from gaming and binged uncontrollably upon your return?
- Do you feel irritable and restless when away from games for some time?
- Do you forget or neglect appointments, responsibilities or deadlines in work, school, or family when gaming?
- When anxious, depressed or upset, do you soothe yourself with games or plans to game?
- Have you ever skipped real-world social plans that you were looking forward to in order to game more?
- Have you ever gamed in unsafe or inappropriate situations (while driving, in class, at work)?
- Do you get very angry when someone or something interrupts a game?
- Have you ever felt regret after a gaming binge?
- Do you hide or lie about your gaming?
- Have you ever had a moment when you really wanted to stop gaming to do something else, but just could not?
- Do you feel guilt and shame around your gaming?

What is CGAA?

Computer Gaming Addicts Anonymous is a fellowship of people who support each other in recovering from the problems resulting from excessive game playing. CGAA is not affiliated with any political agenda, religion, or outside interests. Our single purpose is to abstain from gaming and to help others find freedom from the effects of gaming addiction. We have no membership requirements beyond the desire to stop gaming.

Our groups share their collective experience and the principles that helped them. Each of us is free to try out or disregard the suggestions of the program and other members. We have no professionals and no affiliation with any professional or government services. Our groups are financed by voluntary contributions from members and accept no outside funding.

Withdrawal Symptoms

When we stop gaming, it's often unpleasant for a while. No one experiences withdrawal in the same way; but there are some common symptoms:

- Feeling empty, sad or lonely
- Anxiety
- Lack of motivation/direction; life seems flat
- Lack of interest in most of life's activities, whether work or play
- Difficulty with focus, concentration, and completing complex tasks
- Irritability or restlessness
- Desperate attempts to rationalize gaming
- Depression (crying, etc.)
- Uncontrollable or variable feelings, mood swings
- Problems with social interactions and facing obligations
- Sleep changes: much more or much less
- Feeling intensely drawn to other electronic entertainment
- Obsessive thoughts about in-game friends
- Fantasies and dreams about the game or about being in the game.

What can I do?

Here are some things we did which helped us:

Abstinence, One Day At a Time

We reviewed our attempts at moderation and accepted that they had not worked. Thus, we accepted abstinence as the basis of our solution, one day at a time, or one hour at a time. Our number one priority is to not start that first game between now and the end of the day. We remember that there's no problem we face that can't be made worse by returning to gaming.

Meetings

Meetings, and the fellowship they create, are the lifeblood of our recovery. In meetings, we typically share our experience, encouragement, accountability, successes, solutions and hope. We don't judge each other or compare ourselves; we just listen for anything that might help us.

Meetings are where we find people we can relate to and ask for help. We encourage you to come to meetings, introduce yourself, and share your struggles and successes. Anyone who has had a problem with compulsive gaming is welcome in a CGAA meeting.

Connecting with others

Connecting with others ends the terrible isolation that was a hallmark of our addiction. We have found that extending and deepening our connections beyond going to meetings has been vital to our recovery. There are many ways to connect with others. Staying after meetings to talk with people, exchanging contact information and calling each other on the phone has helped us. We even found that, no matter how new we were, we could help others, not just ourselves, by connecting with them.

Sponsorship

When you attend meetings, you will probably be encouraged to talk to others about sponsorship, an informal and voluntary relationship where two members talk regularly. We recommend finding a sponsor who has more time and experience in recovery so that they can help us navigate the

challenges of getting and staying free from video games. In return, we are actually helping them stay off of games, too. If you like what someone shares in the meeting, consider asking them to be your sponsor.

Staying Off Games

Because of the variety of ways our members experience their addiction, CGAA has no formal definition of what it means to stay off games. We have found some common threads in our collective experience, however. Based on this experience, we strongly encourage those who want to stay away from addictive gaming to avoid all continuously interactive forms of electronic entertainment. Whether the game is primitive or complex and whether the device is new or old doesn't seem to make a difference. Any game on any platform seems to inevitably restart the destructive cycle of our addiction. In addition to this, we encourage you to be very cautious about watching gaming videos or watching others play, as such activities frequently have led us back to playing games ourselves.

Lastly, we also encourage you to honestly discuss your boundaries with others in the program, especially in any and all cases about which you are uncertain. We find that while our addiction thrives in secrecy, it weakens when we honestly expose the truth about our behaviors to our fellow recovering gaming addicts.

A word of hope

When we first sought help we were desperate for a solution. Many of us had lost relationships, money, educational opportunities, hobbies, social skills and friends. Some of us had lost jobs or marriages. We had all lost some confidence and self-esteem. We were often isolated and alone.

Those of us who are working on recovery have found a new life. Our situation improved as we moved forward, one small step at a time. We gradually found ourselves able to return to school or work; make new friends; reconnect with our families; engage in new activities; and find fulfilling careers. Changes started happening that we didn't think were possible. Since

these changes have happened for hopelessly compulsive gamers like us, we believe they can happen for you.

Hope to see you at a meeting! ☺☎

We have online meetings! Go to:

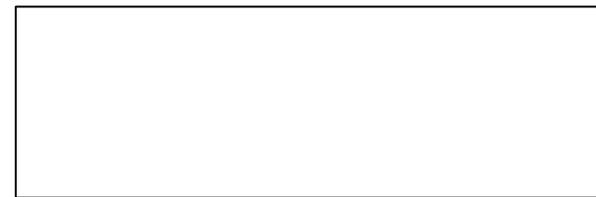
cгаа.info/online-meetings/

Your local CGAA meeting/contacts:



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Resources and a schedule of daily online meetings can be found at:

<http://cгаа.info>