



- ✂ lose track of time while gaming or feel like you are losing control over the time you spend gaming
- ✂ feel physical pain or irritation because of gaming, for example you feel pain in your neck, wrists, thumbs, or back, or you have dry or red eyes
- ✂ eat meals while playing or skip meals altogether
- ✂ spend more money than you can afford on new games or in-game purchases
- ✂ use gaming as a way of avoiding the real world
- ✂ change your sleep patterns or have trouble going to bed or getting up on time because of gaming.

It's OK to feel frustrated from a loss or situation with other players, but gaming should be a positive experience. If it isn't, it could be a sign something is wrong.

You might also notice some other changes that don't seem like they are related to your gaming. For example, you might:

- ✂ lose interest in school, work, and other activities that you used to enjoy
- ✂ feel less confident and like you have less self-esteem
- ✂ form bad eating habits
- ✂ experience headaches or migraines
- ✂ not shower as often as you should or not taking good care of yourself
- ✂ not be doing as well at school or work.

Related problems

People who have problems with gaming might also be having trouble with their mental health in other ways. For example, they might be feeling really low or anxious, or be having trouble with their mood in other ways.



What can I do?

Now is a good time to pause and reflect on your gaming and Internet use. Is gaming a fun leisure activity that helps you to feel good? Is your gaming in balance with other activities that keep you healthy and well? Are you feeling more connected to other people or less connected?

There are lots of things you can do to help you keep your gaming in balance with other parts of your life. Here are some things that you could try:

- ✂ leave your Internet and gaming time for after your jobs are done. Treat gaming as a reward
- ✂ before you start gaming, decide how much time you want to spend online. Set a timer
- ✂ make time to “unplug” or even try a digital detox. The Mental Wealth website has 10 tips on how to [digital detox](#)
- ✂ make mealtimes screen free
- ✂ spend regular time on other hobbies, like seeing friends, listening to music or playing sport
- ✂ charge your devices outside of your bedroom or maybe keep them out of your bedroom altogether. This will make it easier to stay offline when it’s time to sleep
- ✂ get up and move regularly while you are gaming. Doing some simple stretches can really help
- ✂ pay attention to how you are sleeping. How much are you getting? Do you wake up feeling refreshed? Sleep should be a priority because it is important for our physical and mental health. Check out more info on [how to get a good night’s sleep](#) on the Mental Wealth website

Talk to someone

If you find that you are still gaming for the same amount of time, or even gaming more than before, perhaps it’s starting to affect your relationships or your mood. If it is having a negative impact on your life, it might help you to talk about your gaming with someone you trust.

You could talk with a parent, teacher, school counsellor, family member, or friend. A GP is another good place to start.

With the right support, most people can get back to enjoying the benefits that gaming and Internet use can contribute to their lives.

Where to get help

You GP or family doctor can help recommend an approach for you and might also suggest antidepressant medications. Psychological talking therapy may also be recommended for treating depression.

If you're at school or uni, you may also be able to access a counselling or student wellbeing service.

You can also text or freephone 1737, New Zealand's free support service with qualified and confidential counsellors. Let them know what's going on for you or the person you are concerned about, and they can support you.



Other free helplines

Youthline	0800 376 633, free text 234, webchat at www.youthline.co.nz .
What's UP	0800 942 8787 - Advice & counselling support for 5-18-year olds; 12pm to 11pm.
Kidsline	0800 54 37 54 (0800 KIDSLINE) - Advice & counselling support up to 14 years; 4pm to 9pm weekdays.
Youth Law	0800 884529 (0800 UTHLAW) - Free legal help for children and young people.
OUTLine NZ	0800 688 5463 - Support for sexuality or gender identity issues.
Safe to talk	text 4334 or online chat to someone www.safetotalk.nz - Confidential advice for sexual harm issues.
Samaritans	0800 726 666 - Counselling advice and support.
Healthline	0800 611 116 - General health advice and information from a registered nurse.
Lifeline	0800 543 354 or text 'Help' to 4357 - Counselling advice and support.

Free online tools & info

 <p>Education & support to look after your mental health, with free web-chat 24/7.</p>	 <p>For when life sux, Aunty Dee can help you solve your problems.</p>	 <p>E-therapy for young people who are feeling down, worried or stressed.</p>
 <p>Online community & support for young people.</p>	 <p>Culturally based tools to support Pacific young people to unleash their full potential.</p>	 <p>Support and advice for managing online safety.</p>
 <p>For whanau and friends to understand what young people go through.</p>	 <p>Support for young people experiencing depression or anxiety.</p>	 <p>A virtual distraction & self soothe kit.</p>
 <p>A step-by-step approach for working through anxiety & depression.</p>	 <p>Learn mindfulness to develop better wellbeing.</p>	 <p>Info & resources for queer & gender diverse youth.</p>

This factsheet was put together in collaboration with Headspace Australia (National Youth Mental Health Foundation Ltd).

Fact sheets are for general information only. They should not be a substitute for medical or health advice. While every effort is taken to ensure the information is accurate & up to date, Le Va gives no warranties that this information is correct, current, or suitable for any purpose. We disclaim all responsibility and liability for any direct or indirect loss, damage, cost or expense whatsoever in the use of or reliance upon this information.

© 2019 Pacific Inc Limited. All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978-0-9951015-0-0 (PDF)