

eSports games



Youth AOD Service
Bay of Plenty District Health Board



What are they?

eSports games are competitive online games. They can be shooter style games such as Call of Duty or Counterstrike, battle arena games such as League of Legends or strategy games like Starcraft II. eSports games can be played individually or in small teams against other players online. A key feature of eSports games are that they allow you to compete against other individuals or teams from all over the world and see at a glance how you rank compared to other players.

What's the appeal?



eSports games can be fast, furious and a real adrenalin rush. They are immersive and the games are impressive. eSports games demand a great deal of skill - this appeals to those who enjoy competition as well as the games themselves. Defeating other individuals, other teams and climbing rankings can be rewarding and reinforcing. The higher the rankings the greater the feeling of skill, achievement and esteem within the game, which can be reinforced by other players through praise and encouragement. The games are also immediate and accessible to novices, but also complicated enough to provide stimulation to advanced players who can perfect their tactics and performance.

eSports leagues and tournaments are increasingly being televised by major networks all over the world with players gaining celebrity status and millions of dollars through contracts, prize money and sponsorship. eSports is one of the fastest growing sports industries on the planet. This is a huge draw to young people and as with any sport there will be some with aspirations (realistic or not) regarding playing professionally.



Did You Know?

- 205 million viewers are watching eSports worldwide
- Considering the rapid development of eSports compared to traditional sports, annual sales within the next few years could exceed 1 billion USD.
- In 2016 for one eSports game, League of Legends (LOL), 36million people worldwide viewed the world championship final. This compared to 31 million who watched the NBA final. The same LOL final was viewed by 18million in 2013, twice the viewership in three years.
- The gaming industry earns more revenue than the movie and music industries.
- Professional eSports competitions and teams now attract sponsorship from major brands such as Coca Cola, Red Bull, Adidas and Samsung.
- In America, Colleges are now starting to offer scholarships for talented eSports players just as with traditional sports such as American football and basketball, and have their own eSports teams.





Stuff to know

The majority of young people will enjoy eSports games without any problems. For

some players who do not experience a sense of skill and mastery in other areas of their life, having this experience in the game can become increasingly important. For some the nature of competition can be intoxicating and the need to maintain their status within the game can lead to increased time gaming and avoiding other activities due to anxiety about decreasing their place in the rankings. These rankings are changeable 24-7 because the games are online- the game does not stop. For some who may have aspirations of playing professionally, significant amounts of time is required to be at this level (often 10-12 hours playing daily) and so whether realistic or not, other commitments or responsibilities will be hard for some to maintain.

Tips

- Be aware of what type of game your young person plays
- Talk about it- be interested, be curious, be non-judgemental
- See how they are emotionally during and after the game. Remember though, that eSports games can be fast and furious, with high levels of competitiveness. It can be normal for players to become quite animated during a game. It might be important then to negotiate and talk with your young person about how loud they are (especially if wearing headphones) or where



they play for example. Being animated during gaming does not necessarily mean there is a problem.

- Negotiate some limits (e.g. when they stop at night, how long a gaming session is for, where their gaming console or pc is in the house).
- Be aware that a gaming session can involve competition against other players they have arranged to meet or who are other gamers they don't know, but each game can take a period of time before it is over (think of a set in tennis or a hole in golf). Your young person might not be able to 'just pause it' or easily turn it off if in the middle of this. You may want to ask when is the next opportunity they will have to log off and try to negotiate from there.
- If you talk with them when they are in the middle of a game they could be quite distracted and even get agitated, ask them to let you know when they are between games or notice this if you can yourself. These games are immersive so anything said while playing is likely not to be heard. This isn't their fault necessarily, it is not dissimilar to trying to hold a conversation while also trying to watch a movie you are really interested in.
- Encourage other face to face activities and social connections outside of gaming. A first step might be to simply encourage more social gaming; gaming with a friend or friends in the same room is different to gaming alone with others online and may more naturally lead to other face to face activities.
- Talk with your young person and/or seek help if you notice the game becoming more important than relationships or commitments (such as school).
- Encourage other ways to cope with difficult thoughts and feelings so that they don't rely on escaping into the game.
- Checkout: <http://www.netaddiction.co.nz/>
www.reddit.com/r/stopgaming

