



# Video Games

## Definitions & Discussion Questions

**Video Games** can be fun and enjoyable but pose certain dangers important to be aware of. Many popular video games contain frequent depictions of violence, substance use, sexual and antisocial content. In addition, video game designers hire addiction scientists to create games that keep players plugged in longer, thus raising the chances of addiction.

### Video Games Can Help:

- Hand-eye coordination
- Problem solving
- Emotional regulation
- Team play & Prosocial behavior
- Learning & Cognitive development
- Fine motor skills
- Strengthen social connection
- Enhance personal identity

### Video Games Can Harm:

- Exposure to violence and aggression
- Risky and delinquent behavior
- Associated with substance use and exposure to substance use
- Decreased empathy
- Decreases in prosocial behavior such as physical activity

## Critical Thinking Section

### Students:

- What are your favorite video games? Why do you like to play?
- Have you been concerned about becoming addicted to video games or technology?
- Does your family have a rule about how much time you can play and what types of games you can play? Do you agree with it? Why or why not?
- How does the violence, substance use, or sexual content in video games affect you?
- Do you notice a difference in how much empathy you experience when playing first-person shooter games?
- What are the positive effects of your video game play? What are the negative effects?
- Do you know someone who is addicted to gaming? How is their addiction affecting their life?



### Beware of Violent & Sexual Content:

Decades of research has demonstrated a link between violent video games and aggressive attitudes and behavior in children at home and in the classroom, as well as decreases in empathy and prosocial behavior. Youth who display high initial levels of aggression or difficulty managing anger may show even higher levels of aggression after playing violent or competitive video games.

Playing violent and sexist video games may desensitize players or reduce their emotional reactions, and are associated with increased sexism and increases in attitudes that lead to violence against women.

### Staff & Family:

- What are your family's rules about violent or sexualized video games?
- What are your concerns about youth video game play?
- Is anyone addicted to video games in your home? How does it affect the family?
- What does the sexualized content in video games teach youth about women and gender roles?
- What are the positive effects of video game play?
- Do any of your children or students have techno-tantrums when they cannot play video games? What is it like to be around them when it happens?
- How much time is healthy to be on video games? How can youth keep themselves safe on community video games?