

GAMING KEY WORK SESSION:

GET TO KNOW YOUR GAMING EMOTIONS: WHAT TYPE OF GAMER ARE YOU?

We all have similar emotions when gaming but each of us tend to react to those emotions differently. Whether the quiz revealed you're a gamer for fun, a gamer first or a peacekeeper, you probably have features of each personality.

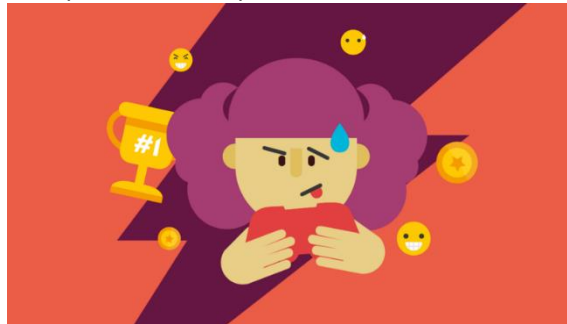
We've spoken with Dr. Aaron Balick to give us some top tips on how to deal with the challenging emotions that can come up while gaming online.

"Firstly, we should keep in mind that video games should be fun, challenging and a way to de-stress after a long day. So, when you are not enjoying the game or you find something unpleasant it's a good idea to stop for a second and try to understand why you're feeling upset," he explains.

By pausing occasionally, you can try and notice what feelings come up – and take a break if they are getting you down. If those emotions are confusing, or you don't understand what to do with them, talking them over with a trusted adult can help.

PRESS PAUSE, CHECK YOUR FEELINGS, AND CONSIDER OTHERS:

If you've found you are a "Gamer first", the most important thing is putting your games in perspective and setting some healthy boundaries – when you play, how long do you play for? We know it's hard to stop playing but taking some regular breaks can help you feel less nervous. "You are a very skilled player," says Dr. Aaron. "So why don't you use your expertise to build up those around you and be a respectful and helpful mentor?"



OPEN UP AND WORK IT OUT:

If you feel more like a peacekeeper, you might put some of your own needs aside for others. It's great to be considerate of your friends, but don't forget to believe in yourself too. "Games are an opportunity to develop your skills, not a measure of how good you are. The best thing you could do for yourself is to find a way to express your needs – there is always someone to talk to if you feel stuck," adds Dr. Aaron.



A GAME'S A GAME:

And lastly, if you are a gamer for fun, this means you really see a game as a game and don't get too hung up on what happens there. If you really want to up your game, Dr. Aaron suggests supporting others who might be struggling by giving them playing tips and moral support. Try not to be a bystander – you can become a model of good behaviour in the game by not tolerating nastiness and bullying.

Dr Aaron Balick is a psychotherapist, who helps people with their psychological and emotional wellbeing.

- **If you're worried about anything you see while gaming, your own behaviour or the behaviour of other gamers, then you can speak to a trusted adult.**

- **If someone in a game is acting in a way that upsets you, remember that you can block them and report their actions.**

5 TOP TIPS TO HELP LEAVE GAMING ARGUMENTS BEHIND

Headsets on, it's game time! You're up to date with your homework, so it's your chance to catch up with your mates after being in the classroom all day. The game starts and it's going well, but soon you and your friend are disagreeing about the 'right' way to take on a challenge. Uh-oh, it gets a bit heated.

Disagreements are normal, but this one seems a bit... different. It seems like they're pretty upset, and actually, you are too. And you're due to see them tomorrow in school, so you don't want things to be awkward.

How do you put things right?

TAKE A BREATH

Sometimes in the peak of an argument, your emotions can get in the way of reality. By taking a moment, you can put the argument into perspective. Let's look at the bigger picture here. Are you going to be worried about this next month? What about next year? Will you even remember it next week!?

When you've taken a step back, how do you bring yourself back to the present? Well, one way of doing so is by taking lots of deep, calming breaths. Focusing on the here and now through controlled breathing will help you to realise that you are in control of your emotions, and not the other way around.

LEAVE IT AT THE DOOR

Games can sometimes feel high-pressure, and things could get a bit intense.

However, when you're out of your room or in school, it's not cool to carry any negative energy from gaming, whether you've received bad comments or been frustrated at a friend's play. You're in the best place to learn in the day, so why not try finding ways in school that you can work well together? You may be able to bring those experiences into your gaming world, too!

REMEMBER WHAT MAKES THEM GREAT!

You and your friends are exactly that - friends! And you're mates for a reason, too.

If you're upset at someone in a game and you see them at school the next day, remind yourself what it is that you like about them. Maybe you could give them a compliment to break the ice, and you might even make their day!

IT'S JUST A GAME!

While it's great fun to play with your mates online, remember that it is only a game. People have different skills in different areas, and it's OKAY to be different.

In fact, some games even require you and your friends to combine your skills and work together - let your differences pull you together and remember that what really counts is the real-life connection between you



THINK, DON'T FIGHT!

When you're in your lessons together after an online argument, it's a time to be in the moment and cool off. Try and focus on the work you're doing, and you might find that by break time, you're actually not as angry as you were before.

Resources collected from CBeebies

Think about whether it's time to apologise to your friend for your part in the fallout too – chances are you might have upset them and it's a great chance to smooth things over.

Remember, you can always talk to a trusted adult if you're unsure how to solve things. Gaming is meant to be fun, so go out there and just remember to enjoy it.

TIPS FROM TOP GAMERS ON HOW TO OWN YOUR GAMING LIFE:

Ever felt gaming wasn't quite as fun as it should be? Maybe you were upset by other players' comments, felt disappointed at not being able to level up, or ashamed of liking a particular game?

It happens to all of us. But video games are meant to be enjoyable and relationships online' and is all about being kind to one another in games and other online spaces.

We spoke to 6 streamers, who gave us some top tips on how to make the most out of your gaming experience!

BE YOURSELF:

Video games are a place for you to express your creativity and live amazing adventures and experiences. Don't try to be someone else and don't feel pressured to play certain games. Just do what makes you happy!

PROTECT YOUR SAFE SPACE:

Remember that this is your space, not anyone else's. You are in control of it and if someone makes you feel uncomfortable, there are ways to block, remove and report them.

BE KIND:

Whether you're playing with your best friend or your new classmate, try to be nice and patient with them. Be the type of person you would like to meet online.

TAKE BREAKS:

There is more to life than just gaming, so if you feel stressed or upset it's always good to take a break.

ASK FOR HELP:

Together we're stronger. So, if someone is bugging you, don't be afraid to talk to a trusted adult about it. Gaming should always be fun and safe and if it isn't feeling like that, there is help out there.

DECIDING IF A GAME IS APPROPRIATE

There are four main things that you can consider helping you decide if a game's appropriate for your child to play:

CHECK THE CONTENT OF THE GAME AND ANY CHAT FUNCTION:

Content within games is regulated and rated into age groups based on elements within the game such as sex, violence, gambling, drugs, in-app purchases etc. There are lots of different age ratings around the world, such as PEGI used in the UK. Always check the age rating to help you decide to allow your child to download or play a game - this is normally visible next to the game title within gaming and app stores.

CONSIDER WHO YOUR CHILD COULD HAVE CONTACT WITH WHILST USING THE GAME:

Consider any communication channels and if there are settings to turn off or limit chat functions. There can be different types of communications, e.g. group chat or private chat.

Communication in a game can increase the risk of bullying (sometimes referred to as being 'griefed' within gaming), being contacted by people they don't know and potentially groomed or exploited. Many games have a means of communication which includes private messaging and private chat. Look out for:

- words like 'whisper' or 'private' next to messages if your child is playing in multiplayer games (especially if they are playing with people they don't know offline)
- and any suggestion of taking the conversation to other messaging platforms.

DOES THE GAME AFFECT YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR?

The behaviour of your child could be affected by some games, it can include bullying or 'griefing' others, trolling or other inappropriate behaviour. Very intensive games can result in short-term bad behaviour such as poor temper or 'ragequitting', which is getting so upset they stop playing immediately. Ensuring a game's suitability can help, as can limiting playing time.

DOES THE GAME HAVE IN-APP PURCHASING?

In-app purchases normally enhance the game or gameplay, for example skins (design of the character or weapon) or loot boxes (treasure chests, but you don't always know what is in them). There can often be considerable pressure on children to be unique within their games (new skins) or to be better than others (purchasing power-ups). You should consider settings to turn off in-app purchases, or set a spending limit on the device or app.

Children need to be aware of scams involving free in-game currency (e.g. V-Bucks in Fortnite, or Robux in Roblox). Scam text messages, forum posts and videos may have content advertising free in-game currency. But they're often scams, designed to coax the player into revealing their gamer tag (username) and password in return for currency. This is known as a 'phishing' scam.

AGE CLASSIFICATIONS FOR POPULAR GAMES IN THE UK



Call of Duty®: Modern Warfare® III
PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, PC, Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One



Fortnite Battle Royale
Fortnite



Grand Theft Auto V
Xbox Series X|S, PlayStation 5



League of Legends
PC



TEKKEN 8
PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X|S, PC



Honkai: Star Rail
PC, PlayStation 5

