Presence of Mind: Healthy Gaming vs. Gaming Overload

Visual: Presence Of Mind brought to you by Cloud 9 and Kaiser Permanente.

Visual: Healthy Gaming vs. Gaming Overload. Keara Please is a content creator, producer, host, voice-over actress, cosplayer, and entertainer.

Keara Please: Hey everybody this is Keara Please. I am an artist, content creator and streamer. Now, gaming will always have a special place in my heart. Because I'm just able to bond with the friends that I love and meet new people that I would otherwise never even meet. You might think I game 24/7, but newsflash, I don't. Sometimes it gets a little too much and I don't want to miss out on real life. Now, you may be worry that you or a loved one might be gaming a little too much. Let me tell you about a story when it personally affected me. Now, there was a time where I wanted to stream every single day of the month, which included a variety of different games. Now, while this was fun and invigorating and exciting, I noticed I stopped taking care of myself and I stopped doing my natural self-care routine. So I had to take a step back and really find that balance to make sure I'm living a healthy lifestyle. You know, if you are taking care of yourself, you're making sure you're taking breaks and you're being healthy with it. Don't let anyone judge you for your gaming, regardless of what others think. It's not the amount of hours that you game, but when you can't stop and you stop participating in real life. Watch this video and learn the many benefits of gaming and when gaming can be harmful, and how to receive help. As a community, we want to make sure we keep all the fun aspects of the things that we love, but we want to be aware of the potential harm it may cause us as well. Take a look at this video series, share it with your friends and family and I'll see you here at the end.

Visual: This training will answer the following questions.

Narrator: This video focuses on helping you understand video gaming's impact on your mind and body. It will help answer the following questions. What are the good things about being a gamer? Why are video games so appealing? How can you tell if your gaming is becoming a problem? What can you do if you're worried about the gaming habits of a friend or your

own? Playing games is both entertaining and fun. It provides a way for people to interact with each other in a virtual community as they work together towards completing a common goal, or teaming together in a competition. Gaming can also introduce us to new worlds, cultures and concepts. There are over 227 million gamers in the United States, with over half of those players being female. Why is gaming so popular? Games meet three basic psychological needs a desire to be good at something to see a challenge, and a way to tackle it. In games, we can overcome adversity and go on adventures otherwise not possible. A need to express our ideal cells in games we can take on a new identity, gender or sexuality in a safe, anonymous environment and take risks without real world consequences. A longing to build relationships with other people. To connect and belong. Online gaming communities offer the ability to find a place where you belong, and where you can be yourself, without the fear of rejection or embarrassment. Let's listen to John talk about how he found community in gaming.

Visual: John's story.

John: Gaming, especially esports, is a perfect place for building and participating in a community of like-minded people. There's something surreal about knowing that someone from across the world they may never have had a chance to meet before, is connecting directly with you through their headset or their keyboard to accomplish shared goal in a game. Cloud9 seems like the perfect example of this. Gamers and viewers from across the world are coming together to support the same team and the same goals and a healthy, open environment. And that creates this kind of unfettered interpersonal understanding and growth between people that I've never seen before. Sometimes this comes in the form of discussing drama or something less than savory, but that healthy growth that everyone's yearning for still accompanies it. And more importantly, these relationships that are being formed are always based in a source of pure enjoyment and love. I began working on Cloud9's Superfan subscription service while still in college as an intern. At first, it seemed like facilitating this community of people would be just another task I'd have to grudgingly complete. But as I eased my way into it, I came to see that it wasn't like that at all. It was really fun. We'd spend all night talking about movies, music, gaming, the organization in general, and a host of other topics like we'd been friends for years. I learned from many of them later down the line that when they joined the community that I was building, they were just

as scared as I was to interact and be themselves. But, setting up those boundaries allowed them to be themselves without fear of being judged and they seized that opportunity to make friends, and it really did pay off.

Visual: Emotional Benefits of Gaming.

Narrator: You heard from John what drew him to gaming. In games, you can enjoy a sense of accomplishment. You get to be your true self and build strong relationships with other like-minded gamers.

Visual: Physical Benefits of Gaming.

Narrator: There are also physical benefits to gaming. Research has shown playing action games can lead to improved alertness while boosting hand-eye coordination. It's even been shown to improve your memory.

Visual: When is gaming a problem?

Narrator: John's story talked about how he found a community in gaming. But, when is gaming a problem? Games are designed to keep things interesting and to keep us playing. With practice and skill building, we can master new challenges, garnering trophies and achievements in a new world. That's a good thing, but the reward system in games makes it easy to develop a daily habit that uses up our time, money, and pulls us from real life activities. Missions with promises of loot or mystery boxes entice gamers. With so much drawing a gamer in, how do you know if gaming is a problem for the user? Sometimes it can be hard to tell. Let's listen to Avril talk about when gaming became an issue for her.

Visual: Avril's Story.

Avril: Hello, it's Siena Avril and I'm here to share a little story about my relationship over the years with gaming. I've been gaming since I was little from Halo Split-Screen Campaign with my brother to now being an aspiring pro-league player, gaming only became an unhealthy coping mechanism when I started high school. Not only was I dealing with all the emotions that most high school kids go through, but I was doing this immense weight on myself that I was not the gender that I wanted to be externally. Being 14, I coped horribly with these emotions and I fought my mother daily so I didn't have to go to school. There were there were some days that I won, but she

didn't let off easy. I looked on my report card and saw I had 100, almost 100 unexcused absences that year. Surprised, I even passed. My mom handled the situation very well and put me into online school. Now I have my diploma and I think I've had a pretty good experience of life. But I do sometimes daydream about what my life could have been if I had a high school experience. Obviously, I have no regrets now because I'm part of Cloud9, but moving forward, I make sure that I'm gaming out of passion and that I'm enjoying myself from it and not because I'm escaping reality and missing out on all the experiences of life. Obviously, I have no regrets now because I'm part of cloud nine, but moving forward, I make sure that I'm gaming out of passion and that I'm enjoying myself from it and not because I'm escaping reality and missing out on all the experiences of life. Gaming is not necessarily a problem, simply based on how many hours played. But when gaming begins to interfere with the person's life, that can be a sign of a more serious issue.

Visual: Impacts of Gaming.

Narrator: Gaming is not necessarily a problem, simply based on how many hours played. But when gaming begins to interfere with the person's life, that can be a sign of a more serious issue. Does the player feel like they have crossed the line between loving the play and needing to play? Is the player using games to distract themselves from other aspects of their life, such as family, friends, school, work, or other commitments? Or is the player neglecting physical needs such as not eating, sleeping or exercising to game?

Visual: Mental Health.

Narrator: A person who has feelings of anxiety or depression may find themselves drawn to games as a distraction and a way to suppress negative feelings. But, video games can make those issues worse by making someone anxious about the things they aren't addressing in real life. Unhealthy gaming can impact sleep, appetite, mood, and energy.

Visual: Physical Health.

Narrator: While some video games encourage physical exercise, most do not. In fact, video game play is associated with increased food intake

regardless of appetite, stress, injuries, and arms and hands and vision problems can also occur.

Visual: Relationships.

Narrator: For many, gaming communities, provide a social outlet. Though these connections are valid and important, real-life social connections are necessary and can help ease anxiety and depression, reduce stress, and improve self-esteem.

Visual: Financial.

Narrator: Though many games are marketed as free to play, they often require or offer in-app purchases or microtransactions. These can quickly add up as those extra lives, coins, weapons, or unlocking levels cost real money. While children, teenagers, and people who have issues with gambling are most vulnerable, anyone who plays video games is a target. The American Psychiatric Association has nine signs that gaming may be a problem. Meeting five or more consistently over the course of several months may indicate a serious problem that should be evaluated by a healthcare professional. But meeting any of them could suggest the need to take action now so that a modest problem does not become worse.

Visual: Nine signs that gaming may be a problem.

Visual: #1

Narrator: Is the gamer preoccupied or obsessed with games?

Visual: #2

Narrator: Are they irritable or anxious when not playing? Spending time thinking about gaming and how to get back to it when not playing?

Visual: #3

Narrator: Does the time spent playing continue to increase?

Visual: #4

Narrator: Are they unable to quit or reduce the time playing?

Visual: #5

Narrator: Have they given up other hobbies or life outside the game?

Visual: #6

Narrator: Are they continuing to gain despite problems?

Visual: #7

Narrator: Do they deceive others about their playing time?

Visual: #8

Narrator: Is the gaming used to relieve negative moods such as guilt or hopelessness?

Visual: #9

Narrator: Are they risking their jobs, relationship, or other aspects of their life to be gaming?

Visual: Feeling Concerned?

Narrator: If you're concerned about your own gaming and feel a loss of control, consider speaking with a health care professional. A professional can help with anxiety or depression or contributing to a gaming problem. You don't have to completely give up the fun and community of gaming to discover more control while addressing mental health concerns. A therapist can guide you in using your gaming interest in the real world to encourage socializing. Many popular games have conventions and places to play together. A professional may encourage you to pursue positive options for managing excessive gaming to make sure a time spent with both online and in-person relationships is equally rewarding. If gaming becomes a financial burden, there are steps you can take to avoid impulsive, unplanned, or unauthorized in-game purchases. Set a gaming budget. Remove credit card information from devices used for gaming. Watch out for confusing interfaces that can trick you into making a purchase with real

money. If you're still struggling to resist the urge to make purchases, consider having someone else set the account password to a code you don't know or can't access.

Visual: What can you do it you're concerned about someone's gaming?

Narrator: What can you do if you're concerned about someone's gaming? Here's a model used previously to help others: Notice, Engage, Support. Are you noticing the person is absent from events? Are they using gaming as an excuse to avoid others? Do you see changes in their appearance, manner or interests? When you have time with them, ask the person how they're doing. Ask, is there anything you're not doing much of lately? Repeating or rephrasing what they say will help show that you're really listening. Use phrases like, "so you feel", "it sounds like" "you're wondering if." Even if they don't see a problem, let them know you're concerned about their mental health, physical health, relationships, and finances. Use "I" statements such as "I feel sad we don't do activities together outside of gaming." Suggest activities that you can do together, like sharing a hobby or finding a new one. You want to be spending time in real-life away from screens.

Visual: Montage of crowds of gamers at conventions playing and cheering.

Narrator: When fitting your video game use into your life, think about your whole body health and the need to keep everything in balance. Playing video games can be an entertaining and social activity. It's best when integrated into a healthy lifestyle that includes community involvement and plenty of sleep, exercise, and a healthy diet.

Visual: Wrapping it up. Thanks for taking the time to about how to keep gaming a healthy activity.

Keara Please: Thank you so much for taking the time to watch this video. I love being a part of the gaming space, and I am so lucky to have a career that allows gaming to be a part of it. But, we need to watch out for each other when it comes to unhealthy gaming. There is a wonderful life outside of gaming too. You don't want to miss out on building deeper relationships, exploring new places in even finding true love! Which tends to best be experienced in real-life. But most importantly, use what you learned in this

video to not only help yourself, but to help others as well. So have some positive vibes. Happy positive gaming vibes and take care.

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