



## Looking after your mental health during Coronavirus: Top Tips for making Resilient Moves when Computer Gaming

Some young people, parents, carers and professionals in the Resilience Revolution have been worried that during the lockdown young people might be spending more time on computer games and that this may affect their mental health and wellbeing. The Resilience Revolution is where anyone who lives, works or volunteers in Blackpool can play a part in making our town a more resilient place to grow up and live. In the Resilience Revolution we've been thinking about how the Resilience Framework (check out the last page) can help and have put together these useful tips to share some of the Resilient Moves we're making.

### SO, SOME FACTS ABOUT GAMING:

Lots of adults, young people and children as young as 5 spend time gaming. These games are online, interactive and often competitive and skill building. Research shows that young people spend on average between 13 and 20 hours a week gaming and girls generally spend less time than boys ([Ofcom, 2018](#)). We wonder if this average has increased during lockdown while we are spending more time at home.

Gaming can provide friendships, a release from daily stresses, can be exciting, challenging, raise self-esteem, develop team skills and status. Wes, in his YoungMinds blog, describes how gaming can help his mental health: <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/how-gaming-helped-my-mental-health/>

With school, clubs and going out with friends cancelled, it's possible that young people will spend more time gaming. This might lead to a few problems – a pre-occupation with gaming, withdrawal symptoms (anxiety, irritability, craving), the need to spend more and more time gaming, feeling out of control, a loss of interest in previous hobbies, excessive use, hiding the extent of gaming, using gaming to relieve bad moods, losing friends and withdrawing from education. Whilst gaming isn't considered a problem in medical terms until these problems have been ongoing for a year, it can be helpful to think about how much gaming we are doing and what Resilient Moves we can make to look after our mental health and wellbeing (<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/gaming-disorder>).

# RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

If you are concerned about gaming use, the Resilience Framework might help. You can see the Framework on the last page and can also download various versions from [www.boingboing.org.uk](http://www.boingboing.org.uk). The Resilience Framework is made up of 42 Resilient Moves. Let's look at which Resilient Moves can help manage gaming use:

## BEING SAFE

Games have age ratings to advise what is suitable for you. Cyberbullying can sometimes happen in gaming platforms. Childnet has really good advice to manage any cyberbullying:

<https://www.childnet.com/search-results/?keywords=gaming>



Gaming is popular in all age ranges and young people may be interacting with adults in a game. Childnet advise to stick to chatting about the game itself and avoid disclosing personal information.

## EXERCISE AND FRESH AIR

We are currently allowed to go outside for one piece of exercise a day – don't forget to use your daily allowance, it will give you an important break from gaming and fresh air will help clear your head.



## PLAY AND HOBBIES

Gaming might be one of your main hobbies and that's ok. You might have other hobbies and interests that are completely different. Perhaps create yourself a 'hobbies timetable' and allocate different times for each one.



## KEEP RELATIONSHIPS GOING

Stay connected with other people as well as gaming friends.



## HEALTHY DIET

When we are very focused on a game we may forget to eat or have a break - have regular breaks, keep to mealtime routines, and remember to eat healthily.



## ENOUGH SLEEP

You might be tempted to stay up late to play games with other people from across the world. Getting enough sleep and sticking to a day/night routine is vital for our emotional well-being.



## SOCIALISE WITH OTHERS

Even if we can't have physical contact with our friends and family at this time, we can still keep connected in other ways – phone calls and digitally. Tell your friends and family about the games you've been playing and also listen to what they have been doing.



## USE SCHOOL TO HELP YOU

Even though lots of young people aren't going into school at this time, try and keep a routine for your education at home. If you are going into school, use that time as a break from gaming.

## BE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOURSELF

We are responsible for our own actions. Keep an eye on how long you spend gaming and the impact it has on your emotional and physical health. One idea is to keep a journal to help monitor gaming use.



## PUTTING ON POSITIVITY GLASSES



If you are a parent/carer, notice achievements and how well you or your child has used resilient moves to manage gaming and offer lots of praise.

## FIND WAYS TO KEEP CALM



Some people might feel agitated or stressed when they spend a long time gaming. Have regular and planned breaks. If you are a parent/carer try and give lots of advance notice about breaks from gaming. Use gaming breaks to do something more relaxing – have a bath, listen to music, draw/colour, read, write a journal, get creative, watch tv or just chill for a while.

## USE EXISTING SOLUTIONS AND SERVICES

If you want to read more about what can help, have a look at these useful resources...



- Advice for parents/carers during corona: [https://emergingminds.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID19\\_advice-for-parents-and-carers\\_20.3\\_.pdf](https://emergingminds.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID19_advice-for-parents-and-carers_20.3_.pdf)
- For autistic children: <https://www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines/coronavirus/resources/tips.aspx>
- Protecting your child in a digital world: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/advice-for-consumers/television/protecting-children/advice-guides-for-parents>
- Cyberbullying and digital safety: <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/advice/advice-for-parents-and-carers/cyberbullying-and-digital-safety/>
- Gaming advice for parents: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/gaming/>
- Top tips for gaming safely: <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/online-gaming/>
- Internet safety: <https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/hot-topics/gaming>
- Myths about digital use blog: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/parenting4digitalfuture/2020/01/15/generations-and-the-digital-unveiled-dispelling-some-common-misconceptions/>
- Ofcom data on gaming use: [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0024/134907/children-and-parents-media-use-and-attitudes-2018.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/134907/children-and-parents-media-use-and-attitudes-2018.pdf)

# RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK



## Noble truths

