

COLUMN

World Health Organization studies gaming disorder

By Taylor Rodriguez
Staff reporter

Fortnite, Call of Duty, League of Legends. What do these have in common? If you said they were video games, you'd be correct. If you said they were serious addictions, you would be right as well.

We are witnessing the era of "digital heroin" in the lives of adolescents and adults across the world. A study conducted by statista.com in 2015 recorded that teens, preteens, and children under the age of eighteen make up twenty-eight percent of the video game playing population in America. That's only one percent lower than the eighteen to thirty-five age range.

Schools across America are banning cellphones in class not because they are a distraction, but because students are playing Fortnite in class when they should be

taking notes. Students caught doing so are assigned detention and have to call home. Kids cannot seem to put down their phones, stand up from their desks or turn off their consoles long enough to prevent the dangers associated with video game addiction. Continuing to ignore these issues has and will continue to create problems in the future.

In June 2018, the World Health Organization, WHO, has labeled video gaming addiction as "gaming disorder," and is now considered a mental health condition. The WHO believes that separating it from normal addictions will help families identify and prevent future harm affecting those classified with gaming disorder.

However, not everyone who plays video games is an addict. Dr. Joan Harvey, a spokeswoman for the British Psychological Society, says that, "People need

to understand this doesn't mean every child who spends hours in their room playing games is an addict."

Although difficult to recognize, there is a list of symptoms to look for if you believe you know someone who has the gaming disorder.

There are two separate classifications of gaming disorder symptoms. Emotional, being the first, is centered around isolation, anxiety when away from the game, the anticipation of playing in the future and denying the time spent playing. Those are harder to pick up on if you do not pay close attention.

The second branch, physical, is easier to spot. Symptoms include fatigue, migraines due to extended periods of eye strain, carpal tunnel syndrome and the sudden depravity of personal hygiene. These can lead to more danger-

ous, even life-threatening symptoms if not dealt with. Not eating properly or maintaining a regular sleeping schedule can develop fatigue and hunger. In severe cases, it can cause diet-related issues, long-term sleep disorders, potentially even death.

In 2015, there was an incident where a Taiwanese man passed away after a three-day gaming binge. He developed a blood clot from sleeping on the counter of an internet cafe between daily gaming sessions.

Taiwan is no stranger to this kind of news. In January of the same year, a 38-year-old man was found dead at an internet cafe in Taipei. Recently here in America, there was a shooting at a Madden tournament in Florida. Three people were killed, including the gunman. Tragedies like these will persist to fester in our society if we sit around and do nothing.

What can you do to help? Similar to other serious addictions – drugs, sex, alcohol, et cetera, there are dozens of options for treatment. The American Addictions Center, AAC, offers their services to those who may be facing gaming or other addictions.

You can reach the AAC at 888-967-9449. If you believe that you or someone you know is going through gaming disorder, please try to reach out for help – it exists! The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, SAMHSA, offers their national hotline to anyone struggling or seeking help. You can call 1-800-662-HELP 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Don't let video gaming become more dangerous than it needs to be.

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EDITORIAL

In closing game lounge, administration displaces eSports team

By JC Fuentes
Staff reporter

Gaming is one of those activities that you either enjoy or despise. For those who enjoy it, it is their escape from reality. It is what helps them get through the day. For most, gaming is a way of life.

On campus, there used to be a location where people like this could go and be surrounded by other people with the same interests. The game lounge that was in the basement of Christy was a safe haven from the stresses of college and everyday life. For these people, these gamers, the game lounge was their home.

The game lounge was primarily used as a hub for the student organization known as eSports. This organization, consisted of students, plays a variety of games with their set teams. Before the lounge closed, these teams practiced their skills at gaming and also played casually. The lounge was used to host tournaments for popular games such as Mortal Kombat and Super Smash Bros.

The lounge opened in 2014 when the League of Legends,

LOL, team needed a place to hold meetings and practice their gaming. At the time, the lounge was strictly for the team and its members, and LOL was the only team that existed. After a while, their popularity grew and they began to have more people wanting to join. But, because of the way the rules of LOL work, there can only be five members per team.

This issue was quickly resolved when the decision was made to introduce more teams into the roster. Teams for games such as Smite and Super Smash Bros. were quickly formed and filled with members. This is when the LOL lounge turned into the game lounge, and also when Southwestern made its transition to have its own eSports team.

The game lounge would continue to be open to students until the end of the spring semester of 2018, when a certain issue would occur that would ruin the reputation of eSports.

A previous student who happened to be a part of the organization decided to break a vending machine in the basement of Christy over a weekend. This caused the Christy administration

to make the decision of taking the lounge away from the organization. So, as of now, eSports does not have a location to practice with its teams.

As most people would guess, this proves to be a big issue for the organization as a whole. It would be like taking the football field away from the football team for the same reason. Granted, both of these organizations are different in terms of popularity and impact in the school, but nonetheless it effects the organization as a whole because of one individual who doesn't even attend the college anymore.

Ross Peterson-Veach, vice president for academic affairs, and Jason Knowles, faculty advisor for eSports, have discussed the decision to remove the game lounge from Christy with myself, president of eSports, and Bryson Barrett, vice president of eSports. They both agreed that the organization has had some warnings in the past year about various issues regarding the lounge, such as cleanliness, volume and security.

In terms of cleanliness, the lounge had an agreement with Sodexo, the third-party organi-

zation hired by Southwestern to run maintenance around campus. This agreement was that every Monday they would come in and take out the trash. This sounds pretty simple – however, this went from every Monday, to every other Monday. The longest the lounge had to deal with overflowing trash cans was for three weeks. The lounge only had two trash cans and more than 20 people would come in throughout the week and leave trash.

This was especially worse on weekends, when the people in the lounge would eat there and couldn't throw away their trash because there was so much of it. The previous president at the time even told them that he would be more than happy to take care of the trash issue himself as long as they provided the tools and equipment as well as a dumpster to throw it out, but they refused his offer.

That's not very efficient for the organization, so of course, there was trash everywhere around the lounge. This wasn't an issue that we caused ourselves.

This is just one of the many issues that was brought up at our

meeting with the administration. The vending machine being broken by one of our members was what put the nail in the coffin for our organization and its space.

As of right now, eSports does not have a place to practice or compete, which raises serious problems with our teams that need to practice in order to prepare for the tournaments that go on throughout the year. The game lounge now sits unused with all of our equipment locked away. There has been talk of finding a new space, but because of the recent freshman class exceeding 130 students, "Rooms that were available are simply not available anymore," Peterson-Veach said in our meeting.

The game lounge was a hub for competitive and casual gamers alike. It was a place where people could go and relax to unwind from the stresses of college life. A place where you would not be judged but welcomed by other people who shared the same interests as you. The game lounge was our home, and now it's gone.

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