

## FACTSHEET

# Is there a relationship between playing video games and ADHD?

### Do video games 'give' ADHD?

It is no wonder that the myths that games make players violent and addicted are even more highlighted when players have attention disorders with or without hyperactivity (ADHD), as people with ADHD can react more impulsively and can have more difficulty managing their reactions and emotions. The use of screens, in general, suffers from a negative image regarding its impact on ADHD, even though research and practice have proven it can have beneficial uses.

But what is ADHD? First, it is a disorder: it means that 'ADHD is not a disease but a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by a set of symptoms (...). As such, people do not "catch" ADHD, and it does not get "cured"' (Empower Me, 2020). It is characterised by an attention deficit, with or without hyperactivity and impulsivity.

Therefore, as per the definition, video games cannot "cause" ADHD since it is a disorder, not an illness.

### How can games contribute to a better sense of wellbeing?

Games are leisure, and as such, they can contribute to a greater sense of wellbeing. Playing games can also be a good way to take breaks, and to canalise and evacuate negative emotions. They can absorb us into their world and make us release some steam by allowing us to focus on the challenges they offer. This can be a good tool for those who have difficulties in focusing and in managing their emotions, such as people with ADHD. Using a timer can be a good way not to end up playing longer than

planned for those who might lose track of time.

Of course, stressful or frustrating gaming sessions can make the player more stressed than before. It depends on the players, on the game, and everybody's experience and tastes.

Generally, playing games has a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing because it allows us to take breaks and rewards us for completing challenges without any strings attached (Hern, 2020).



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## REFERENCES

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Hern, A. (2020, November 16<sup>th</sup>) 'Video gaming can benefit mental health, find Oxford academics', The Guardian.com. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/games/2020/nov/16/video-gaming-can-benefit-mental-health-find-oxford-academics>

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