



# GAMING ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

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# OBJECTIVES



- Outline Gaming Use Disorder Signs & Symptoms
- Discuss the Differing Motivations and Presentations of Gaming Use Disorder Across the Lifespan
- Demonstrate how gaming affects different age groups
- Treatment interventions tailored to the different populations

# SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

What to be looking for ?



A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide. It features a vertical strip with a woman's face in the center, looking slightly to the right. The background of this strip is dark with some blurred lights. To the left of the woman's face are several concentric white circles on a dark background. The entire graphic is set against a blue background with a subtle grid pattern.

# SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

## PRE-OCCUPATION

- Thinking about the game when they are not playing it

## WITHDRAWAL

- Becoming irritable or frustrated when not being allowed to play the game

## TOLERANCE

- Needing to spend more time or money in order to achieve the desire effect

## LOSS OF INTEREST IN HOBBIES OR OTHER PEOPLE

- Game begins to take over more and more





# SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

## CONTINUED USE DESPITE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

- Family members complain, restrict access, run out of money, grades begin to suffer, kids complain, relationship satisfaction declines

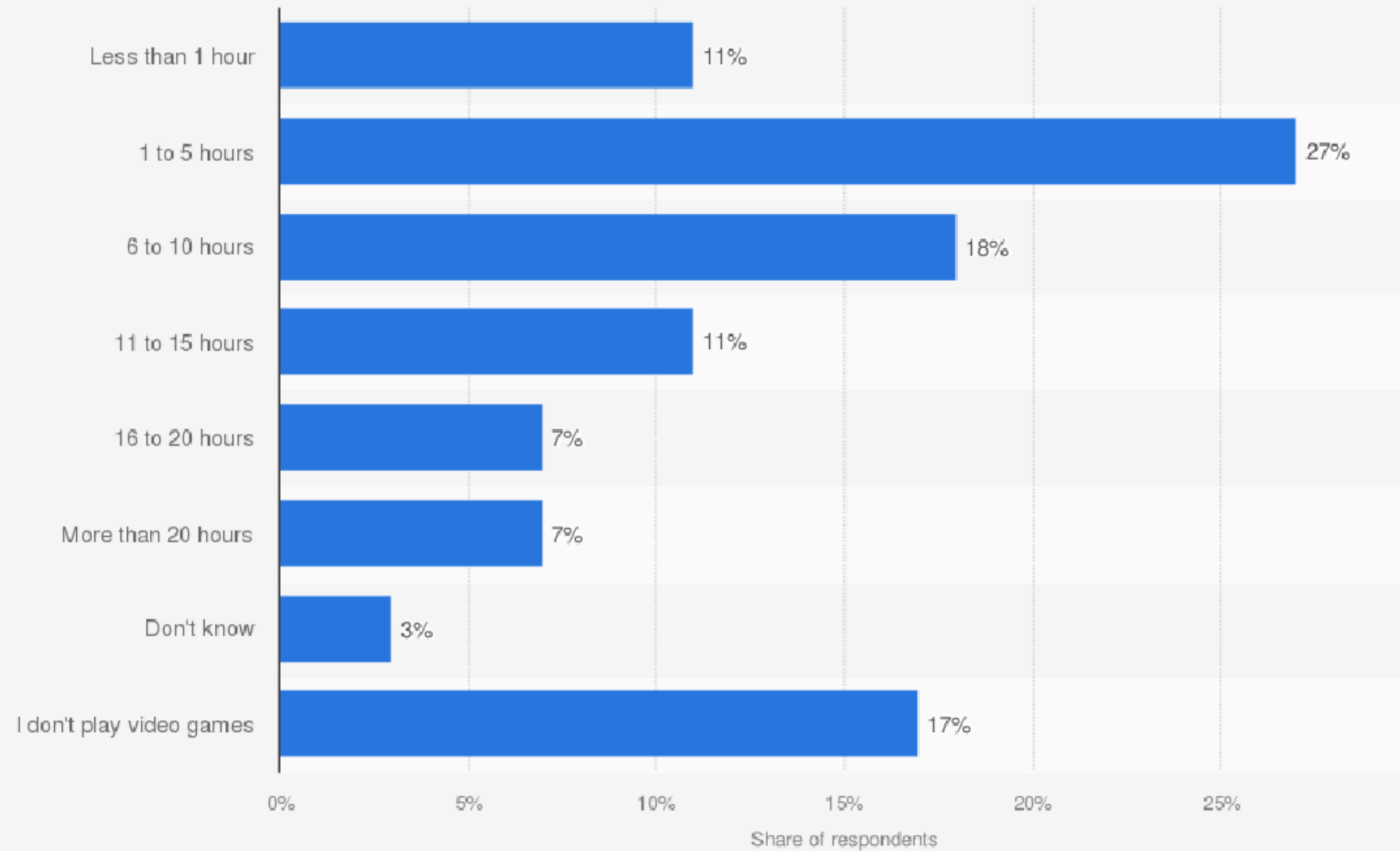
## LYING ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF TIME OR MONEY SPENT ON GAMING

## GAMING TO AVOID NEGATIVE MOODS OR DISTRESSING EMOTIONS

## JEOPARDIZING SCHOOL, WORK OR HOME RELATIONSHIPS

- Game begins to take over more and more

## Hours spent on playing video games per week in the U.S. as of December 2023



### Source

Statista Consumer Insights  
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### Additional Information:

United States; January to December 2023; 10,044 respondents; 18-64 years

# MOST POPULAR VIDEO GAME GENRES AMONG INTERNET USERS WORLDWIDE

Most popular video game genres worldwide Q3 2023, by age group

	16-24 years old	25-34 years old	35-44 years old	45-54 years old	55-64 years old
Shooter	62.4%	58.6%	50.5%	40.8%	29.3%
Action adventure	56.8%	53.5%	49.2%	39.7%	28.8%
Simulation	39.3%	36.5%	31.5%	24.4%	20.5%
Sports	37.8%	40.2%	36.3%	30%	22%
MOBA	36.8%	36.9%	30.3%	22.5%	16.6%
Racing	36.2%	37.8%	34.6%	28.3%	20.4%
Strategy	34%	35%	33.2%	27.1%	21.8%
Puzzle platform	32.9%	35.6%	34.7%	30.6%	28.9%
Action platform	30.7%	32.3%	30.2%	24%	17.6%
Fighting	%	32.8%	29.4%	22.1%	%
Battle royale	35.5%	%	%	%	%
Online board games	%	%	%	%	18.5%

# AGING GAMERS

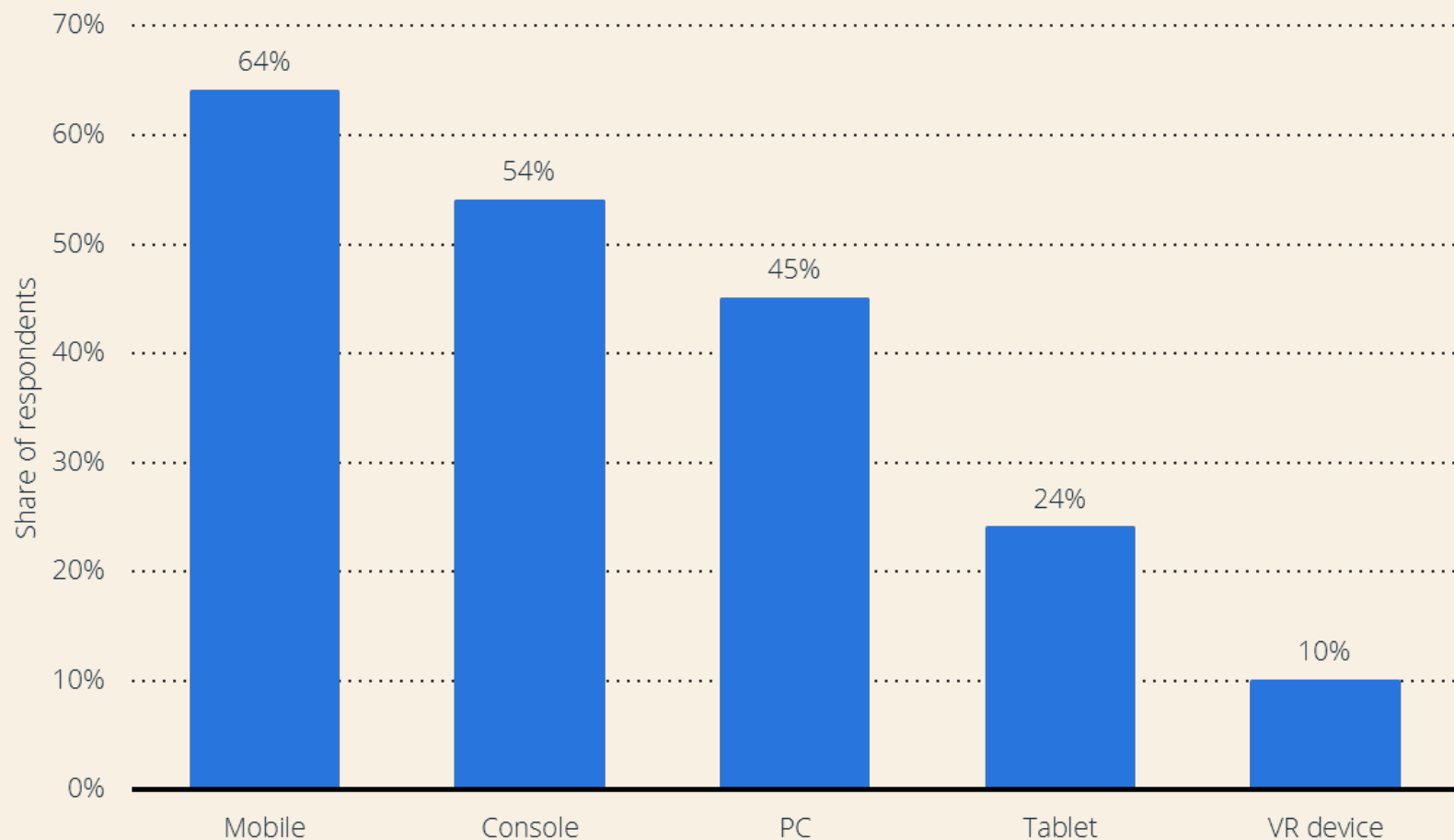
## A CLOSER LOOK

- According to a survey done by AARP in April 2023, 7 in 10 gamers are 50 and older
- In the US, the number of gamers who are senior adults increased from 40.2 million in 2016 to 50.6 million in 2019
  - Baby Boomer Population
    - Men 25%
    - Women 22%
- In 2020, people over 50 spent \$3.5 billion on video games and accessories from January to June. That is up from \$523 million during the same period in 2016



# LEADING VIDEO GAME DEVICES ACCORDING TO GAMERS IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2023

- Preferred video game devices in the U.S. 2023



Note(s): United States; April 2023; 4,000 respondents  
Further information regarding this statistic can be found on page 8.  
Source(s): Entertainment Software Association; ID 524172

# MOTIVATIONS FOR GAMING



SCARF Model

Erickson's Stage of  
Development

Escapism

Identity

S

- **STATUS** Relates to how we perceive our position in relation to others we have a relationship with such as our boss, peers, direct reports, friends and family. It can include job titles, public and private forms of recognition or criticism, salary and any other aspects associated with status.

C

- **CERTAINTY** Relates to how sure we feel about events/people/situations that affect us. The higher the level of uncertainty, the more likely a threat state will be created.

A

- **AUTONOMY** Relates to the level of control we have over the decisions that affect us. The more autonomous we feel, the more engaged, confident and satisfied we tend to be.

R

- **RELATEDNESS** Concerns the quality of our relationships with others/our sense of belonging. Generally speaking, people like to feel "part of the group".

F

- **FAIRNESS** Relates to our sense of justice and right and wrong. Our perception of whether we have been dealt with fairly can motivate and keep us engaged or it can move us towards a threat state where we are more likely to respond in a defensive way

# MOTIVATIONS FOR GAMING

## Status

- If I am good at the game, I am good at life
- Tangible signs of progress

## Relatedness

- Gives the illusion of connecting with peers my age and in some cases older
- MOBA games provide this

## Autonomy

- I am able to regulate my emotions with this
- Gives me a sense of control and independence

## Certainty

- The more I play the better I do
- The rules remain the same

## Fairness

- The game is a meritocracy
- There are understandable rules even within social constructs

# MOTIVATIONS FOR GAMING IN AGING PLAYERS

## Status

- If I am good at the game, I keep can maintain value
- My progress cannot be negated by my age

## Relatedness

- Gives the illusion of connecting with my age and in some cases younger
- MOBA Games

## Autonomy

- I still have a voice
- Gives me a sense of control and independence
- Reduces physical and emotional pain

## Certainty

- The harder I work the better I get
- The rules remain the same regardless of age

## Fairness

- The game doesn't lie
- Honor amongst Players

# ERIK ERIKSON'S STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT: DETERMINING OUR STARTING POINT



Stage	Crisis	Age	Value	Description
Stage 4	Industry vs Inferiority	5-12	Competency	Self-esteem
Stage 5	Identity vs. Role Confusion	12-18	Fidelity	Identity
Stage 6	Intimacy vs. Isolation	18-40	Love	Attachment
Stage 7	Generativity vs. Stagnation	40-64	Care	Legacy



# COMPETENCY

- Stage 4-Industry vs Inferiority
- Attempting to teach a sense of competency
- Ages 16-22
- Underemployed
- Can't drive
- Don't make their own doctor appointments etc.



# COMPETENCY

- Age-specific interventions
- Involves a great deal of skill building
  - Employment
  - School
  - Budgeting
- Utilize motivational interviewing skills to help individuals find benefits in changing
- Have been allowed to escape these responsibilities
- The status and competency have come from the game
- Goal-teach individuals they can “level up” in life



# COMPETENCY

- This age group gets their sense of competence from competition
- Goal-to assist individuals in finding new ways to compete
- Can be against self or others
  - Exercise
- Creating lists with tangible rewards
  - applying for jobs
  - interacting with 5 new people
  - daily hygiene
- Framing this as “lab work” allows skill building to have an aspect of achievement



# FIDELITY

## Stage 5-Identity vs Role Confusion

- The ability to know who you are and to be the same person everywhere
- Typically, a time where individuals are trying on new behaviors
- Traditionally occurred in high school or maybe even in college
  - now after the onset of college age
  - 22-28

As a result, many find themselves trying on new personas without a static sense of who they are

- Begin to adopt beliefs about their abilities or skills based on negative feedback loop
- Become more reluctant to take chances consequently spending more time isolated
- Goal-help individuals uncover an understanding of who they are



# FIDELITY

## Stage 5-Identity vs Role Confusion

- Creative stage where individuals are trying on new behaviors
- Goal-find new creative activities
- Coloring, drawing, journaling
- Writing creative fiction
- Reading
- Coding activities
- Dungeons & Dragons





# LOVE

## Stage 6-Intimacy vs. Isolation

Assisting individuals with resolving intimate relationship difficulties

- Gamers and porn
- Lack the confidence to initiate friendships or intimate relationships
- May turn to games and avatars
  - less chance of rejection
  - bolder online
- Role playing conversations
- Goal-point out the difference in personal narrative versus game narrative
- Parasocial relationships
- 28-34





# CARE

## Stage 7-Generativity vs. Stagnation

Contribute to society and be part of a family

- Retirement by choice or by force
- Beginning to attend more funerals than weddings
- Legacy
- Family has moved or busy
- Failing health
- Reduced independence
- Financial well-being



# ATTACHMENT AND DISCONNECTION



- More loneliness
  - Poor social interaction
  - More difficulty with relationships
    - My online relationships are more important than relationships IRL
- More anxiety and depression

# ATTACHMENT AND DISCONNECTION



Highly interactive

- Old Games vs new
- More options
- Even in low numbers we are spending approximately a part-time job on these activities
- Sends notifications to keep individuals away from feelings

# ATTACHMENT AND DISCONNECTION

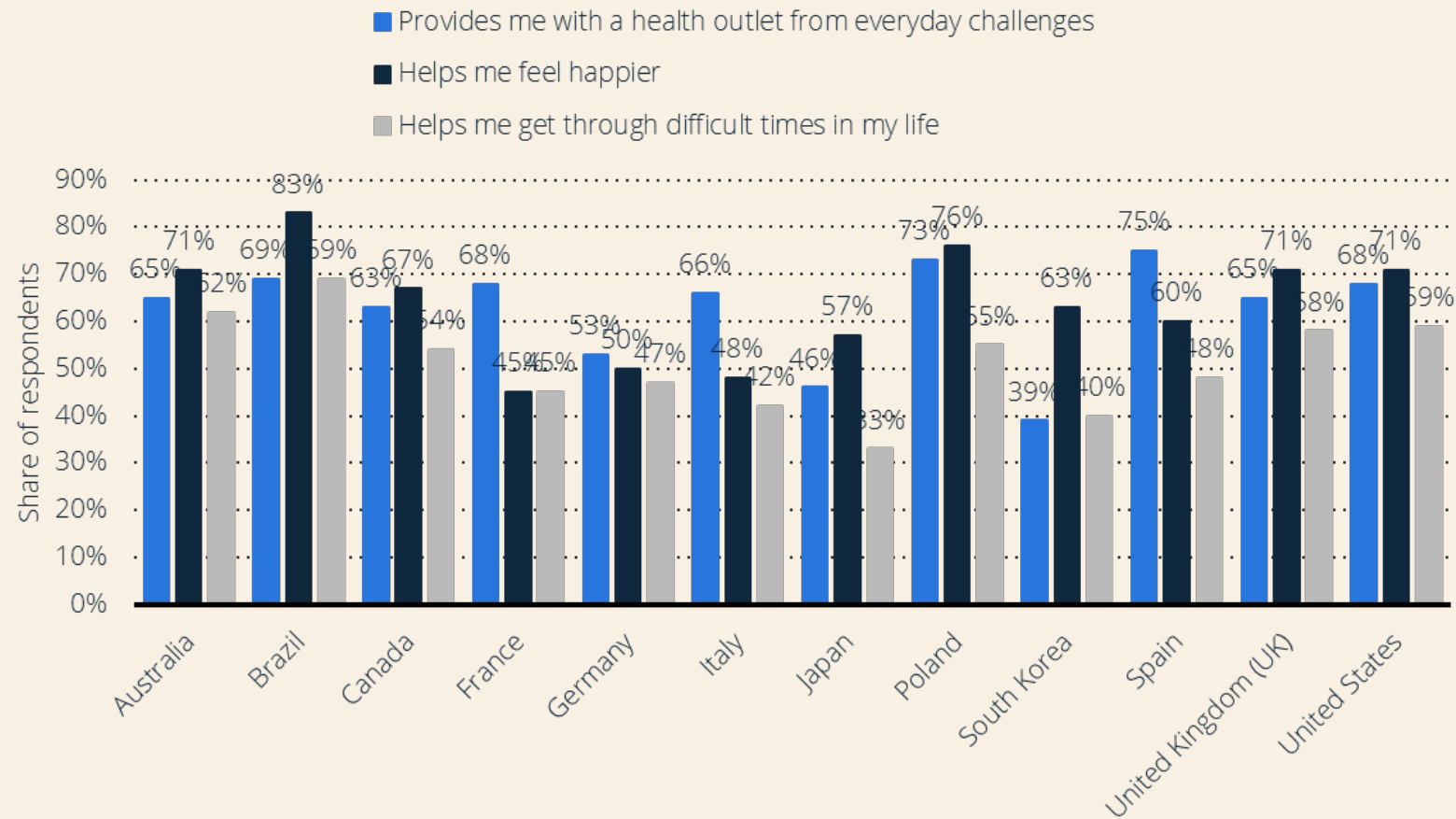


Belief of social

- Mirror neurons
- FOMO
- Easy sense of status
- Artificial connectedness
- Never shut off
- Allow us to escape

# SHARE OF GAMERS IN SELECT COUNTRIES WHO PLAY VIDEO GAMES TO FEEL HAPPIER AND GET THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES IN LIFE IN 2023

Gamers who play video games to feel happier 2023, by country



**Note(s):** Worldwide; 2023; 16 years and older; 12,847 respondents; weekly gamers

Further information regarding this statistic can be found on [page 8](#).

**Source(s):** Video Games Europe; Audiencenet; [ID 1461783](#)

# GAMING GRANDPA

<https://youtu.be/GkVj2aAFcRc>







# ESCAPISM

Designed for Older Adults

- Easy to play
- Vivid colors
- Bold graphics
- 80% of all gamers 50-plus play video games alone
- Don't necessarily play game with family members
- Grandkids, however, are primary source of information about new games



# GAMES DESIGNED FOR OLDER ADULTS

- Neuroracer
- Wordscapes
- Guitar Hero
- World of Warcraft
- Flight Simulator Extreme
- Plants vs. Zombies
- Candy Crush
- Minecraft
  - Build a house, an automobile, make your own story line with soothing background music
- Animal Crossing: New Horizons
  - Player customizes different character's appearance and purchases items such as furniture, and furnish your in-game home



# TREATMENT

**CAN HAPPEN AT ANY AGE BUT THE MOTIVATIONS MAY BE  
DIFFERENT**

- Escapism is not addressed in SCARF model or Erikson Model
  - Very important factor
  - Accounts for significant portion of the reason we are playing games
  - Because the motivations are different, we need different motivations to change



# TREATMENT

## ESCAPISM BEFORE AGE OF 30

- Avoiding responsibilities
- Avoiding boredom or distressing emotions
- More likely to have parasocial relationships and virtual relationships
- More likely to be involved in fantasy games

# TREATMENT

## ESCAPISM AFTER AGE OF 30

- Used to escape distressing emotions
- Boredom
- Unwind after a difficult day
- Typically involves fantasy games, puzzle games, matching games, social casinos
- Procrastinating from adult responsibilities
- Escape from pain and loss
- Maintain independence

# REFERENCES



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# THANK YOU

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