



GAME OFF

**Game-based approach towards
moderating screen time**

Guide for trainers

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/ Prepared by RightChallenge /

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1. Introduction

This document comprises a guide for youth trainers delivering a serious game and working with youngsters towards a balanced and intentional technology use, developed by the Game-OFF project. The game storyboard provides useful information and real-life scenarios about the Game-OFF topics and main learning

The topics covered are:

1. Online Time Management
2. Emotional Intelligence
3. Self-care
4. Social media and online chatting
5. Streaming and online consumption of video content
6. Online gambling and gaming
7. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)
8. Online detox

This guide contains instructions and activities to be used by youth trainers to educate young people on the project topics. Trainees will play the game in order to test and reinforce their knowledge. The aim of the game is to empower young trainees to deal with excessive Internet use. The game questions will test the trainees' knowledge on the above-mentioned topics.

2. Online behaviours of young people

The internet has become an integral part of children and young people's lives. However, the increased time spent online is prompting questions about whether they are in control of their internet usage and if they are aware of the side effects and the causes of the maladaptive behaviours related to excessive internet use. Even if youngsters are not addicted, recent European research has shown that it is not always or not only the time spent online that makes internet use problematic and 'excessive', but the impact of internet use on what might be called a 'balanced life'. Excessive online exposure may affect physical health, users'

ability to stay focused leading to poor school or academic performance, which negatively impacts their emotional well-being and it may also be related to lower empathy and social well-being or abstention from physical and offline social interactions. The role of youth workers is to encourage youth to become critical consumers of current information and content flood online.

Covid-19 brought attention to the importance of giving young people the tools to effectively manage their screen time, and reinforced the need to approach technology in an intentional and balanced manner.

3.Game Storyboard

In the serious game of the GAME-OFF project, learners will have the chance to virtually engage with real-life scenarios related to potential risks of excessive internet use, while making decisions within which they must use their critical thinking skills. The game can be played either as single-player or multiplayer, also promoting the sense of collaboration between young trainees. Most importantly, the game will provide quality, engaging, realistic training directly to the user who learns from real life situations, which can accelerate the learning process.

Using a motivational experience, the game will be able to teach youngsters techniques and strategies to reduce their screen time and regain a balanced life. The real-life questions/scenarios appear in the form of closed questions and in particular as:

- True/False questions.
- Multiple choice questions.
- Drag & Drop questions.

All answers are accompanied by useful feedback that will reveal information about the rationale behind the answer.

The pool of 90 questions will be mixed and picked randomly by the system.

4. The game

In this section you will find practical instructions on how the game and storyboard work.

Using the game with learners should be very intuitive, just as an online board game would be.

The game starts by presenting 4 possible players to choose from, each one with different characteristics:



Figure 1 - Picking a character

After picking the character he/she wants to play with (Fig.1), the learner should find the instructions to start playing.

The end prize of the game is the “Game-OFF Award”. The learner must answer questions correctly and collect all the stamps to get the Game-OFF Stamp Emblem. However, the “mysterious tiles” might have good or bad events that can help or hinder the gamer’s path. These tiles will randomly contain small lucky or unlucky outcomes throughout the game deck.

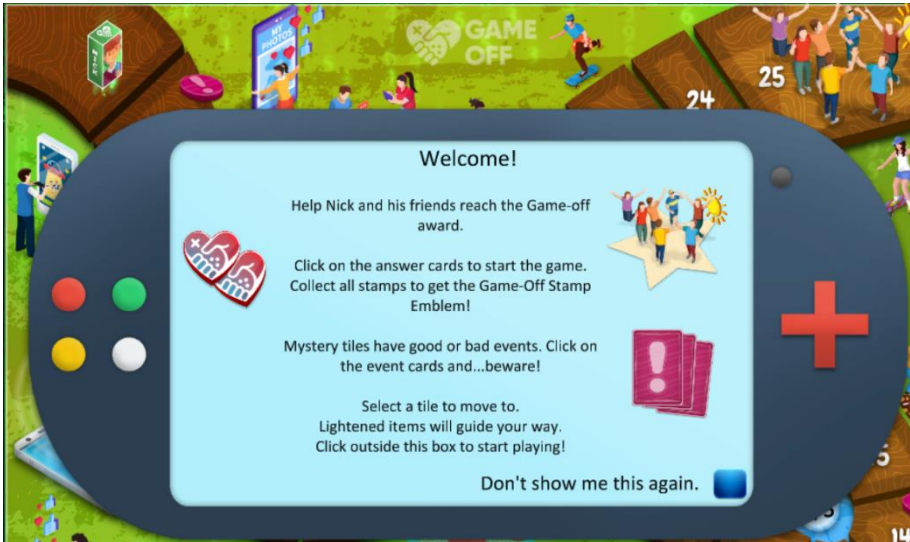


Figure 2 - Playing instructions

This is the Player Deck where the game starts. The learner picks a card, and a question follows. The player should have the answer right, and after he/she spins the wheel to find out how many times he/she will move.



Figure 3 - Game deck

The **Player Deck** is the place where question and event cards are primarily placed (back-side turned). It is also the place where the players' pawns reside. The game has 25 tiles in total.

The **Player Hand** is the place where characters cards are placed (turned upwards).

The **Turn Counter** counts the time, i.e. the remaining rounds until the game is over.

The **Stamp Counter** counts how many stamps the player has collected.

When clicking on a question card, the question is displayed.

Answers will be:

- True/False questions
- Multiple choice questions (up to 3 answers provided – 1 is correct)
- Drag & Drop questions (up to 3 pairs)

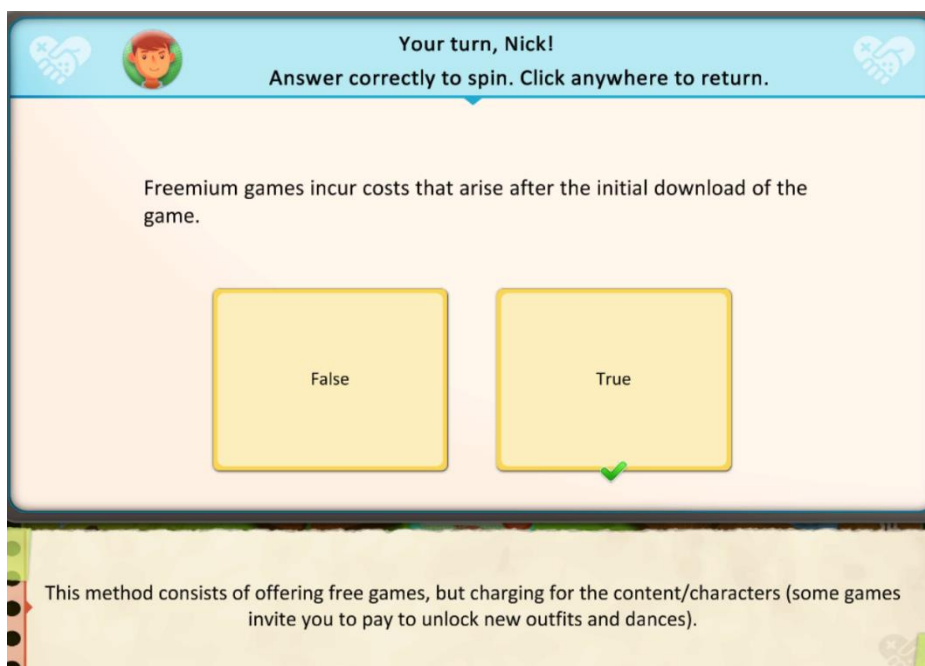


Figure 4 - Question and training content (example)

After answering the question, the learner will immediately be provided with an additional explanation/information regarding that topic. The player will keep moving forward and collecting stamps as long as the answers given are correct.

5. Training Content

The Game-OFF training content reflects on 8 main topics, with real life scenarios and relatable situations for young people. These questions and real-life scenarios are important to provide practical and interactive training for youngsters, who, when learning with gamified content are able to better retain short strains of information.

The eight covered topics were selected as the most important to address from the results of the Game-OFF Survey, in order to identify their young people's training needs and validate their profile. The questions were based around the general use of Internet applications, such as the how much time they are spending online, if this has caused them negative consequences and finally how they perceive themselves in terms of five personality traits: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness.

The results were subsequently analysed to develop bespoke training content. This allows a more precise approach to young people's needs as well as youth workers' in helping them adopt a balanced and approach to technology use.

The topics mainly focus on areas to support young people gaining tools to manage their time online, emotional intelligence when dealing with online confrontations or social problems, online chatting and social media, streaming, gaming, FOMO and online detox. Being approached in challenge-based learning with small bits of information provides an efficient and effective framework for learning while solving situations relatable to their day-to-day context.

1. Online Time Management

Technology and internet usage have evaded every aspect of everyday life in modern societies. Unlimited access to high technology devices and the internet leads to

countless hours spent in front of screens and transform the way people work, learn, and communicate. This often results in dysfunctional behaviours and, therefore, needs to be regulated through online time management tools and strategies.

Online time management is the ability to regulate online digital activity through conscious and sensible usage. This entails planning, informed decisions and choices, as well as avoiding distractions and irrelevant time-wasting activities.

Without online time management, people tend to lose focus and stop prioritizing and even get addicted to their digital activities. As a result, their performance is impaired, and they manifest dysfunctional behaviours in every aspect of their life.

Role of youth workers and trainers

Youth workers and trainers need to guide learners into recognising the advantages of online time management. First, they need to provide basic knowledge of useful tools and practices for managing screen time, and then make sure that learners can utilize all available sources. Subsequently, youth workers and trainers should transmit the importance of metacognition and effort regulation in order to help individuals restore all lost agency through self-judgement and critical thinking. Through this strategy, learners will understand how their internet usage affects their lives, why it is important to keep track of online activity, and how to avoid unhealthy tendencies.

Further resources for trainers:

- 9 Practical Ways to Cut Down on Your Screen Time Every Day
- <https://www.bustle.com/p/9-ways-to-reduce-screen-time-fight-the-urge-to-check-your-phone-18841370>
- Fear and Missing Out: Youth Anxiety and Functional Outcomes
- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309438606_Fear_and_Missing_Out_Youth_Anxiety_and_Functional_Outcomes
- Learning to look up again – controlling your smartphone addiction | Ross Sleight | TEDxLeamingtonSpa
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1_QIV6XCNs
- Internet addiction
- <https://link.springer.com/article/10.2165%2F00023210-200822050-00001>

2. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (also known as emotional quotient or EQ) is the ability to understand, use, and manage your own emotions as well as effectively understand the emotions of others. EQ helps in building relationships, managing stress, and making difficult decisions. Which EQ is actually considered more important than IQ in achieving success in life since it helps you understand yourself better, and use that information to guide thinking and behaviour. IQ instead just focuses on skills based on managing ideas and knowledge.

Moreover, with social media, emotional intelligence is needed even more. Social media's purpose is to get our attention, nudge our emotions, and keep us engaged. The engineering of social media is designed to keep you away from logical thinking and keep us clicking. As well, the loads of misinformation that's out there can be overwhelming, making it important to know how to have control over your emotions and be aware that your decision-making process is altered when you are on your phone.

Role of youth workers and trainers

In spite the fact that emotional intelligence is crucial in life, it is not always addressed to its full importance. Young adults and kids are still in the process of developing their pre-frontal cortex, the part of the brain that controls logic and reason. Therefore, it is important for youth workers and trainers to educate and support young ones into becoming emotionally aware so they can make better relationships, have healthier responses to life, be assertive, be empathetic, etc. Teaching them to become emotionally intelligent will allow them to bring those skills into adulthood and live a more content life.

Further resources for trainers:

- Paradigm Treatment | 7 Ways to Teach Teens Emotional Intelligence: <https://paradigmtreatment.com/7-teach-teens-emotional-intelligence/>
- People for Success | Emotional Intelligence in The Age of Social Media: <http://p4s.pt/en/eq-in-the-age-of-social-media/>

- Hey Sigmund | 19 Practical, Powerful Ways to Build Social-Emotional Intelligence in Kids & Teens: <https://www.heysigmund.com/social-emotional-intelligence/>
- Positive Psychology | How To Improve Emotional Intelligence Through Training: <https://positivepsychology.com/emotional-intelligence-training/>

3. Self-care

Self-care is an activity fundamental for human mental health and wellbeing. Self-care integrates self-compassion, time for the things and people you love, and the freedom from distraction. There are a number of things you can do to work on your self-care. Lee H. Baucom (2017) refers to 15 strategies to help you thrive. First, understand that a thought is a thought, is not set in stone, and is transient. Second, accept what is, rather than fighting it. Third, forgive quickly and move forward. Don't waste your time and energy on resentments. Fourth, assume 100% responsibility for your actions and live your life with integrity. Fifth, show up in life and be mindful. Sixth, practice gratitude, which has been shown to be fundamental for happiness and contentment. Seventh, practice everyday spirituality. This can take the form of practicing kindness and changing perspective on your priorities. Eighth, maintain boundaries because they are necessary to thrive. Ninth, raise your standards. Tenth, care for yourself, engage the mind and body in healthy and beneficial tasks and activities. Eleventh, find and live your purpose. Twelfth, act on your convictions and live by your values. Thirteenth, be courageous and be all you can be. Fourteenth, impact your world by being kind. Fifteenth, grow by staying open to all possibilities and being curious. Taken together, the thrive principles can help to bolster your self-care and consequently your life.

Role of youth workers and trainers

Youth workers and trainers have an important role in supporting young people through the increasingly growing concern of disconnection and technological distraction. The most effective approaches for how to deal with it involve self-care. Youth workers and trainers should help young people increase their well-being through effective techniques, such as, self-care, compassion and teaching them

the skills necessary to thrive. These strategies support young people in coping with the stresses of everyday life, enabling a shift of mindset towards a more positive approach to technology use.

Further resources for trainers:

- Thrive principles: 15 strategies for building your thriving life. Lee H. Baucom. 2017. Morgan James Publishing.
- Morning motivation – The power of positive energy. Practice positive thinking every day.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxU30JMf8mq>
- Good vibes, good life – How self-love is the key to unlocking your greatness. Vex King. London: Hay House.

4. Social media and online chatting

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, SnapChat, WhatsApp... Everyone has heard about these platforms at least once as they play an important role in today's life. They allow people to connect, to interact, to chat, to learn new information, to share ideas, pictures, videos, etc. More than 4.5 billion people use social media, as of October 2021.

Social media's strength is the ability to connect and share information with anyone in the world or with many people at the same time. For example, it gives the opportunity to stay in touch with long-distance friends or family, to network career opportunities, to find people across the globe that share the same interest as you.

Although social media offers great opportunities, it also has some downside. Several studies show that excessive use of social media can cause stress and negative mental health, in some cases even leading to depression. It can also cause stress, jealousy, bring people to compare themselves to others, etc.

Role of youth workers and trainers

It is important that youth workers and trainers alert and raise awareness among young people about the downside of social media. There is no need to completely forbid social media, but there are some ways of limiting it and using it in a

balanced way. For example, it is possible to disable certain notifications, to limit screen time, to control the time slots for WIFI access. The best way to support youngsters is to talk freely about their online practices, friends and interactions. By initiating a dialogue without any judgement, youngsters feel more confident with sharing their online activities. This allows trainers to notice unusual behaviours.

Further resources for trainers:

- Social Media and Adolescents and Young Adults' Mental Health. National Center for Health Research.
<https://www.center4research.org/social-media-affects-mental-health/>
- Anxiety, loneliness and Fear of Missing Out: The impact of social media on young people's mental health. Center for Mental Health.
<https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/blogs/anxiety-loneliness-and-fear-missing-out-impact-social-media-young-peoples-mental-health>
- The Pros and Cons of Social Media for Youth. Psychology Today.
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/evidence-based->

5. Streaming and online consumption of video content

Online consumption of video content is currently one of the most prevalent internet activities throughout the world. People spend almost one billion hours every day on YouTube, with an average watching session of more than 40 minutes. This has been the result of the advancements in mobile technology and broadband networks. Similar is the case for the video consumed via streaming services, as the total video streaming consumption is rising more than 74% each year. Individuals in streaming-capable households now spend one-fourth of their time watching video material on their TV screens. Nowadays, viewing videos online or via streaming services is a huge part of people's online experience. People are increasingly accessing live broadcasts and recorded video material via the internet and mobile devices. However, the amount of time individuals spend watching internet videos has aroused some worries as the phenomenon of binge watching has been significantly increased. Binge-watching is a relatively recent emerging behaviour pattern, which corresponds to watching multiple episodes of a television show in a single session and it is now associated with online streaming services such as Netflix, Hulu, IFlix and Viu. Binge-watching is

one of the most popular, preferable ways to pass the time among young people. Excessive binge-watching has been associated with several risks for individuals, the major one being the likelihood of acquiring symptoms of behavioural addiction. Other binge-watching-associated impacts that have been detected through research include mood disorders, sleep difficulties, fatigue, a lack of self-control, as well as unhealthy food consumption, and low physical activity, especially among young individuals.

Role of youth workers and trainers

The role of youth workers and trainers in the context of informing and educating young people about risks that are relevant to the excessive streaming and online consumption of video content is crucial. As moderation is essential in preserving young people's health, youth trainers and workers should support them to manage their time spent in video consumption through practical and useful strategies.

Further resources for trainers:

- Binge-watching.org. (n.d.). Binge-watching.org. Excessive Media Use in Times of Netflix - "Binge-Watching": Motives, Experiences, and Effects on Sleep. Retrieved December 13, 2021, from <https://binge-watching.org/?lang=en>.
- Celeste, N. (2020, August 31). The psychology behind binge-watching. Psychreg. Retrieved December 13, 2021, from <https://www.psychreg.org/the-psychology-behind-binge-watching/>
- Firstpost. (2020, January 6). Binge-watching may be fun, but here are five reasons why it can be utterly harmful for health as well-Health News , Firstpost. Retrieved December 13, 2021, from <https://www.firstpost.com/health/binge-watching-may-be-fun-but-here-are-five-reasons-why-it-can-be-utterly-harmful-for-health-as-well-7855261.html> .
- Internet and Technology Addicts Anonymous. (2021, June 28). Streaming addiction. Retrieved December 13, 2021, from <https://internetaddictsanonymous.org/streaming-addiction/>
- STAROSTA, J. A., & IZYDORCZYK, B. (2020). Understanding the phenomenon of binge-watching—a systematic review. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7344932/>
- Northwestern Medicine. (n.d.). Binge watching. Northwestern Medicine. Retrieved December 13, 2021, from

<https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/emotional-health/bingewatching>

6. Online gambling and gaming

Gambling opportunities are facilitated by the growth of the Internet and social media platforms. Digital games also increasingly include monetary features, such as microtransactions, blurring the line between gambling and gaming. Online gaming and online gambling can be considered to be similar activities but when it comes to online gambling, the outcome is achieved by chance, not skill. However, in the case of online gaming, precisely the opposite happens. Some gambling activities include gaming features and vice versa.

Games can offer young people a sense of escape from the reality of the world and the social aspect of some games can help children feel part of a community. However, without the right guidance on what games to play or when to play, children can be exposed to certain risks such as in-game bullying, online grooming or in some extreme cases gaming addiction. Even simulated, online gaming and gambling have risks. While youth may not be playing for money, they can lose time. Games are built for addiction and game developers commonly use principles of psychology to make their game as addictive as possible

Role of youth workers and trainers

Prevention can consist of increasing knowledge and awareness of the risk of gambling (including on-line gambling on practice sites) among youth, parents, and professionals. There is a need to develop in-service training on youth gambling for professionals working with youth in order to establish communication and warn them about the benefits and risks of online gaming and gambling. The following resources can help to address this specific need.

Further resources for trainers:

- Expert advice on gaming addiction in young people and children: <https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/news-blogs/expert-advice-on-gaming-addiction-in-young-people-and-children/>
- Youth and online gaming: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/about->

[us/research/youth-online-gaming-state-of-play/youth-online-gaming](https://www.responsiblegambling.nsw.gov.au/about-gambling/how-gambling-and-gaming-impacts-children)

- How gambling and gaming impacts children: <https://www.responsiblegambling.nsw.gov.au/about-gambling/how-gambling-and-gaming-impacts-children>
- Online gambling addictions: Sally M. Gainsbury (2015). *Online Gambling Addiction: The Relationship Between Internet Gambling and Disordered Gambling*.
- Online gambling and gaming behaviour: Anu Sirola, Nina Savela (2021), *The Role of Virtual Communities in Gambling and Gaming Behaviors: A Systematic Review*
- Carmen Messerlian (2004), *Gambling, Youth and the Internet: Should We Be Concerned?*

To go further:

- <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/>
- <https://blog.nationalonlinesafety.com/>
- <https://www.responsiblegambling.nsw.gov.au/>
- <https://www.getsafeonline.org/>

7. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

The Fear of Missing Out, or FoMO, is the anxiety or motivation social media users feel when they want to belong to some group, event, or even a moment that others are posting about. It arises from feelings of social exclusion, isolation, or anxiety, and it has become a significant issue among young people.

Due to the importance and impact of social media and the “always on” culture, young people have been increasingly dealing with negative feelings, and while FoMO is not a mental health condition, it can still or exacerbate anxiety and depression.

FOMO leads youngsters to spend large amounts of time on social media (and in particular Instagram) in an attempt to reduce to the likelihood of “missing out”. Social media also facilitates comparison to others, triggering negative feelings and low self-esteem.

Role of youth workers and trainers

Youth workers and trainers have an important role alerting and understanding young people through this increasingly growing concern. The most effective approaches for how to deal with involve addressing the root causes. Youth workers and trainers should help youngsters increase their well-being through effective techniques, such as, confronting their anxiety, limiting time spent on social media, engage in mindfulness, gratitude and seeking out real connections. These strategies support young people in coping with anxiety, enabling a shift of mindset towards a more positive approach to technology.

Further resources for trainers:

- Anxiety, loneliness and Fear of Missing Out: The impact of social media on young people's mental health. Central for Mental Health.
<https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/blogs/anxiety-loneliness-and-fear-missing-out-impact-social-media-young-peoples-mental-health>
- Fear and Missing Out: Youth Anxiety and Functional Outcomes
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309438606_Fear_and_Missing_Out_Youth_Anxiety_and_Functional_Outcomes
- How FOMO Impacts Teens and Young Adults
<https://www.verywellfamily.com/how-fomo-impacts-teens-and-young-adults-4174625>

8. Online detox

Social Media apps: TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter—among other social media applications—all permeate many teens' daily lives and shape their routine habits. Young people's constant connectivity to smartphones and social media might even cause difficulties disconnecting from technologies. This is where the online detox comes in: For young people, the “always on” pressure can get overwhelming at times, when all their time is flying through scrolling and online consumption. A digital detox refers to a period of time during which a young person (or anyone) refrains from using electronic devices or social media. Moreover, a digital detox is an opportunity to reduce stress and focus more on interaction with others, also helping to help prevent social media and internet addiction. This can include reducing the amount of time spent on social media or disconnecting completely. Unplugging on a regular basis helps all of us maintain a healthy balance between IRL (“in real life”) activities and the digital world. Connected to an online detox is outdoor time, breaking bad habits that could improve social and emotional management.

Role of youth workers and trainers

Youth workers and trainers have an important role in supporting and encouraging young people in regulating their online consumption. Providing youngsters with strategies to regulate their online time, control and reduce the impact social media has on their lives has become an important role for youth workers to assume and take on. Youth workers should identify and alert to the health signs that indicate the need to consider an online detox in youngsters. In addition, youth worker's and trainers should focus on building supporting strategies to encourage and support young people in effectively "detox" in a sustainable way to improve their well-being and mental health. These strategies support young people in coping with anxiety, enabling a shift of mindset towards a more positive approach to technology.

Further resources for trainers:

- Teens and Technology: A Guide to Digital 'Detoxing', Psychology Today
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/being-your-selfie/202105/teens-and-technology-guide-digital-detoxing>
- Digital detox is the new self-care, Family Consumer Sciences, Eastern Illinois University
<https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/family-files/2020-06-16-digital-detox-new-self-care>
- Digital detox workshops and mindfulness courses
<https://www.itstimetologoff.com/digital-detox-days/>

6. Using the game in different educational contexts

Game-based learning is an umbrella term that can describe many different ways to use games as a tool for education. Learning and teaching with games is an important and motivating strategy to reach young people more effectively and make learning more approachable. Digital technologies, including virtual games, allow youth trainers to bring even more engaging learning experiences into the classroom.

Research suggests that game-based learning encourages participation and learning in STEM subjects (Jackson, 2014). Furthermore, research indicates that 'games enhance a range of cognitive functions and generate responses in the brain associated with attention and learning'. (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2016).

The serious game developed by Game-OFF can be used in several environments, both in a training session as an interactive activity for trainees, a challenge, or a group activity; in blended learning environments, where combining face-to-face training activities followed by online coursework provide a richer educational experience; and as an activity in the form of self-directed learning.

7. Further Resources on game-based learning

- Australian Council for Educational Research (2016). Video games and STEM. (ACER Research Developments). Online: <https://www.stemgames.org.au/teachers-and-parents>
- Digital Citizenship: Teaching and learning with games: <https://www.digitalcitizenship.nsw.edu.au/articles/teaching-and-learning-with-games>
- Digital Technology Hub: Game based Learning: <https://www.digitaltechnologieshub.edu.au/teachers/topics/game-based-learning>
- Gaming can make a better world, Jane McGonigal (TED2010): https://www.ted.com/talks/jane_mcgonigal_gaming_can_make_a_better_world/transcript?language=en
- Game On: Teachers Should Continue to Gamify Classrooms <https://edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2018/09/game-teachers-should-continue-gamify-classrooms>
- Teens in quarantine: Mental health, screen time, and family connection: <https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/teens-in-quarantine-mental-health-screen-time-and-family-connection/>
- Video games have winning impact in classrooms: Deakin University research (2017): <https://www.deakin.edu.au/about-deakin/news-and-media-releases/articles/video-games-have-winning-impact-in-classrooms-deakin-research>
- Youth Work and You: Youth Work in the Digital World, HUMAK University of Applied Sciences, Finland: <https://www.youthworkandyou.org/ywelp-module-five/>



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