

# Recoded – Changing the way we game

A prevention program to support children and young people.

## Service Delivery

Presentation for

Gaming Addiction – Part II – TRI-PEAKS

12pm – 1.30pm, Wed 17th NOV 2021



# What we will be covered

- Recoded – Changing the way game – what does this mean?
- About Recoded's key focus: prevention first.
- Service Delivery: what that looks like within Recoded scope.
- Community voice: A summary of what consumers are saying.



## **The video gaming industry:**

One of the most profitable entertainment businesses in the world.

Is worth more globally than the music and movie industries combined and continues to grow.

# Recoded – Changing the way we game

Is an evidence-based prevention program, to lessen the stigma around gaming among young people and to elevate understanding across communities and professional services.

- **Prevention (Grade 4)**
- **Early intervention (Yr. 8/9)**
- **Parents**
- **Support services/teachers**

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## Support Services Outcomes



Support networks to have an increased understanding of **protective factors** and a clear understanding of **intervention approaches**



Support networks have an increased understanding of **referral pathways**



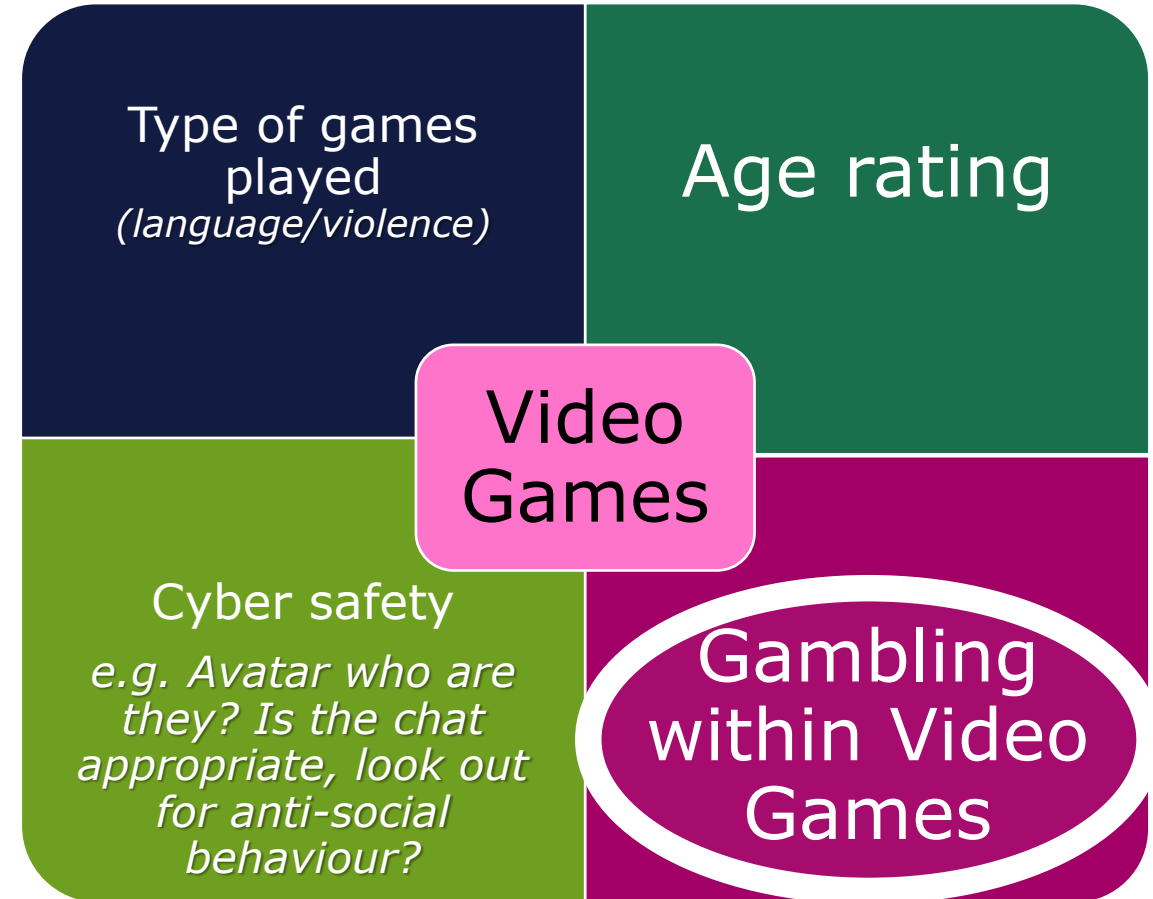
Children, young people and their support networks (e.g., parents), have an increased **understanding of gaming and gambling convergence**

# The Recoded current focus (in scope)

## Recoded focuses on

- the risk of gambling normalisation hidden inside some video games and the impacts of that.
- Strategies to promote healthy attitudes and positive behaviours around video gaming.

**Everything in moderation!**



\*Gaming is the common theme and usually at front of mind for most people, this presentation highlights the gambling elements in video games.

## Recoded Aims

- ✓ To reduce the potential harms of excessive gaming and the effects gambling elements within video games have on young people.
- ✓ To guide children and young people to intentionally think about their gaming behaviours. : **"if the game is no longer fun, you're done"**
- ✓ To Educate on the links between gambling and video games. (Loot; Skin betting)
- ✓ Provide strategies around positive behaviour to support families.
- ✓ Improves help-seeking behaviour for children and young people and their peers.
- ✓ To embed a sustainable program in schools.  
\*Relevant Lesson plans have been designed to support this.

## Program Outcomes

There is greater community awareness of the links and harms between excessive gaming and gambling

There is an improved service response that identifies and addresses risk factors in children and young people

Communities and schools are equipped with a clear understanding on how to effectively intervene when gaming (gambling) is causing harm

- ✓ **Partnership – Working Together: Recoded program** will set up a 'train the trainer' model. Then supporting staff can deliver and 'champion' the program.

# Service delivery definition:

**The act of providing a service to customers (Cambridge dictionary)**

*“We are trying to restructure our service delivery system to better meet customers' needs”.*

[A national framework for recovery-oriented mental health services: guide for practitioners and providers](#)

9 Domains and capabilities of recovery-oriented practice and service delivery.

[Approaches to service delivery \(in AoD\) Working with young people](#)

The Department of Health says:

A **systems approach** is the most appropriate model to understand and work with young people. A systems approach assumes that no aspect of behaviour occurs in isolation, rather it occurs within a wider context.

# Common themes parents and professionals want to understand.

**The positives  
of Video  
Gaming.**

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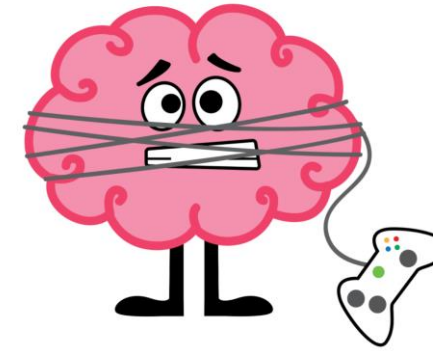
**How to help  
children and  
young people  
when their  
gaming habits  
seem  
excessive?**

**An  
understanding  
of Gambling  
within video  
games.  
What are the  
risks?**

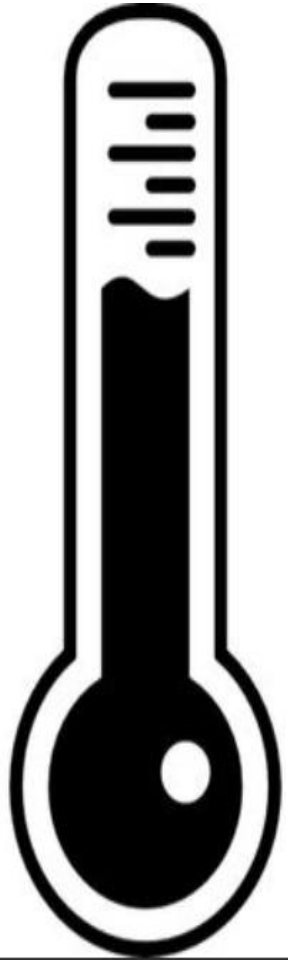
**Signs of  
harmful  
gaming  
behaviour;  
Addiction  
Early  
Intervention**

# The Game and brain - Behaviour

- As children and young people's brains are not fully developed until they are 25yrs of age, this impacts self regulation; rational thinking and processing emotions when in a heightened state of game play.
- Remember, the dopamine release that comes from gaming is so powerful, it shuts the prefrontal regions of the brain down.
- When a video game is turned off after gaming, children may be irritable and angry initially. Give them time to regulate and settle back to reality.



# What might be classified as Problematic gaming – what's behind the behaviour.



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I NEED to play

If many hours are spent gaming, this does not necessarily mean that they have gaming addiction. However, **it becomes a problem if gaming starts to interfere with daily life, if thoughts, feelings and behaviours shift.**

- Harmful video gaming-gambling is not a standalone issue.
- Harmful gaming or addiction is not the primary problem but a response to something else.
- Understanding the reason 'why' a child games is step 1 to addressing the behaviours.

But this holds true for any kind of addiction!

I WANT to play

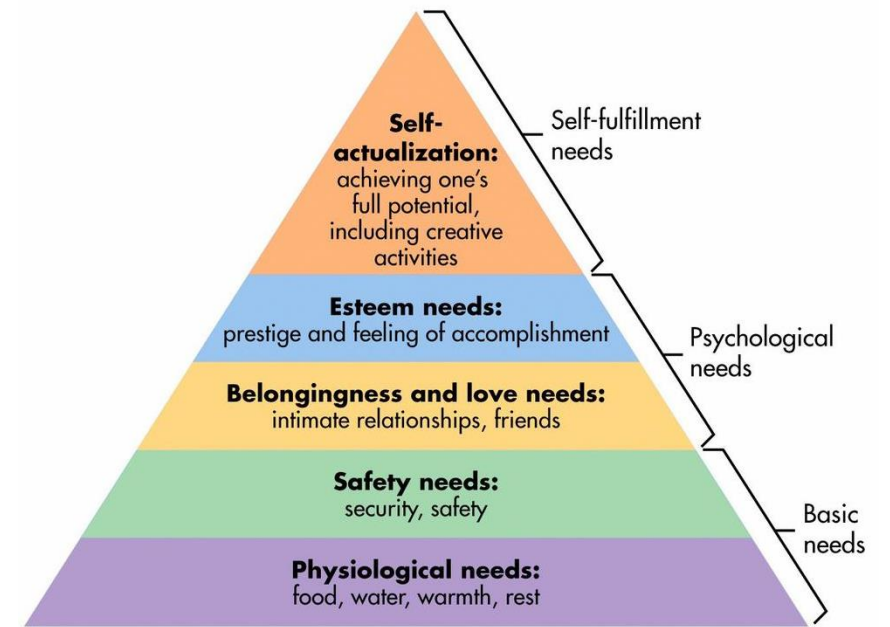
# Harmful / Problem gaming behavioural signs to look out for escape or avoidance. Using gaming-gambling as a coping strategy.

| Behaviour                            | Description                               | Behaviour  | Description   |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Maladaptive coping strategies</b> | Avoiding new situations/ avoiding issues. | • <b>Negative Impact on Other Areas of Life</b>                                | Other areas of life are neglected.  |
| <b>Health problems:</b>              | Increased anxiety                         | • <b>Hiding/avoiding from Negative or Uncomfortable Feelings or Situations</b> | Gaming to self-medicate.<br>Hiding from (e.g. poor grades; bullying; social; family)  |
| <b>Diet</b>                          | Missing meals; poor nutrition             |  |   |
| <b>A preference of solitude</b>      | Gaming behind closed doors                | • <b>Defensiveness</b>   | Denial regarding excessive gaming that may leave others neglected   |
| <b>Mood changes</b>                  | Negative emotions                         | • <b>Misuse of Money</b>   | Using parent/carer credit cards without asking.   |
|                                      |   | • <b>Loss of Time/Loss of sleep</b>  | Extreme example when games are played throughout the night, and it is only realised how much time has passed when the sun begins to rise. |

# Look behind the problem: Understanding the Why?

If game play is starting to interfere with daily life, thoughts, feelings and behaviours...

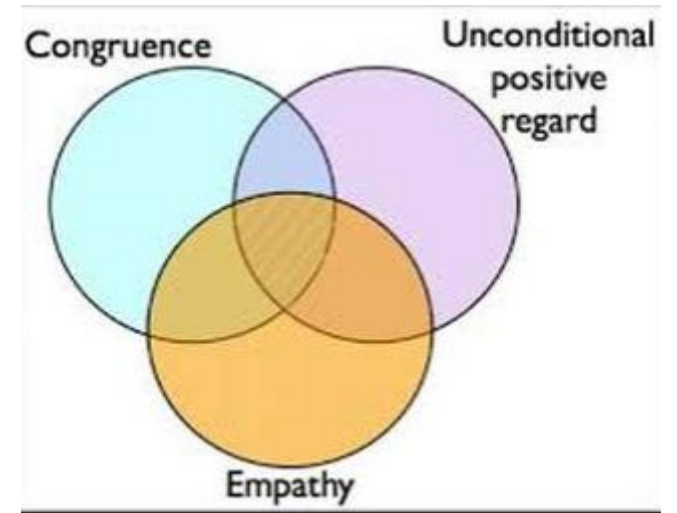
- Is the child or young person meeting these basic needs?
- Explore: What emotional need is gaming feeding?
- Then, look at ways to disengage them from unhealthy behaviours by working with them.
- If harmful behaviours are evident, before a child can create healthy gaming, they should be aware of it, accept it, and own it. Encourage their own voice of change.



# Trauma theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- Trauma Informed Care approach helps understand the motivation behind the behaviour, it is important to look at the complete picture in order to determine whether someone has a gaming problem or not.
- TIC principals: **Safety; Trust; Choice; Collaboration; Empowerment and Culture, historical and gender.**

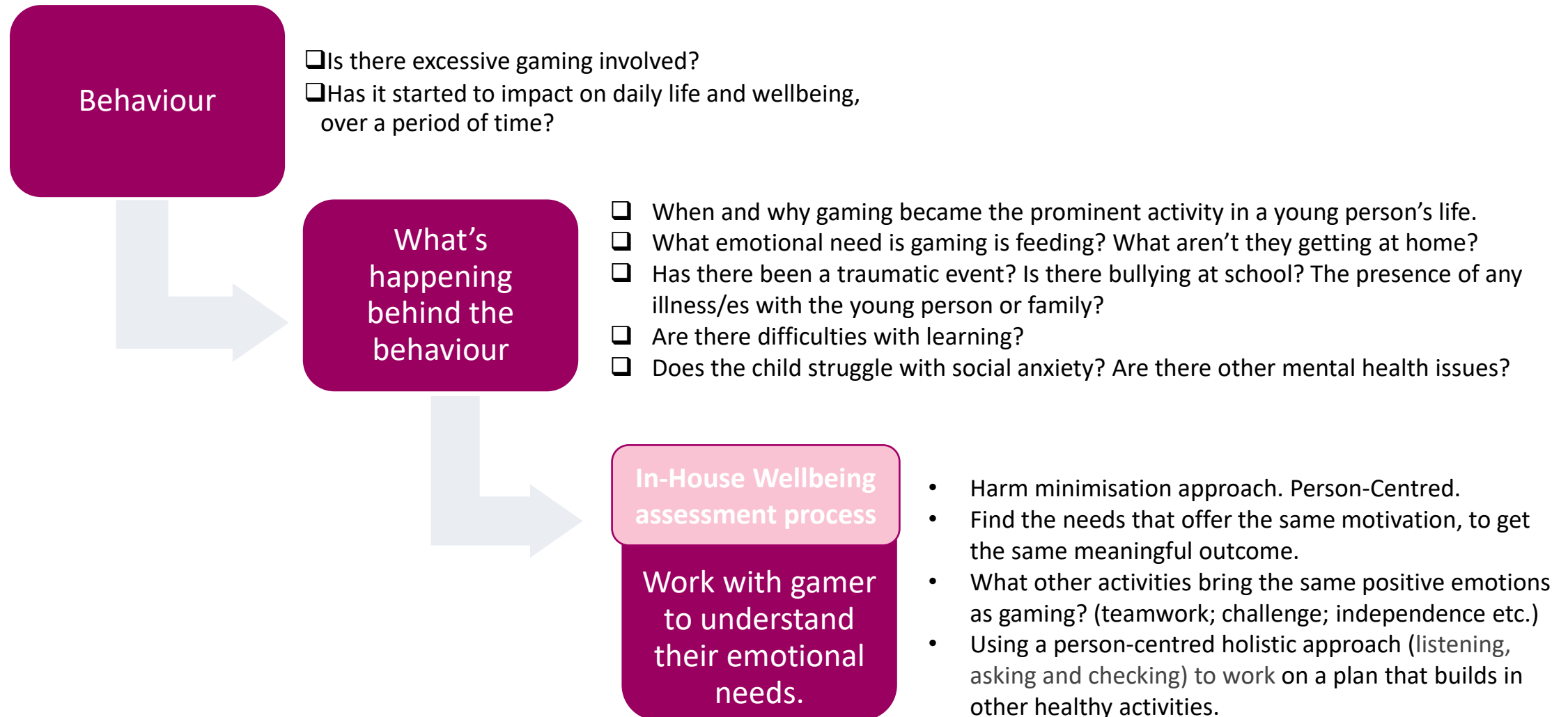
*Shouldn't these principals be applied regardless – Strength-based models!*



Excessive video game playing can suggest the presence of an underlying mental health issue.

# Assessment process for Wellbeing

Rather than looking at the video game as the problem, we should be asking what's happening behind the video game, let's not blame the game, using a holistic approach, let's explore.



# Services

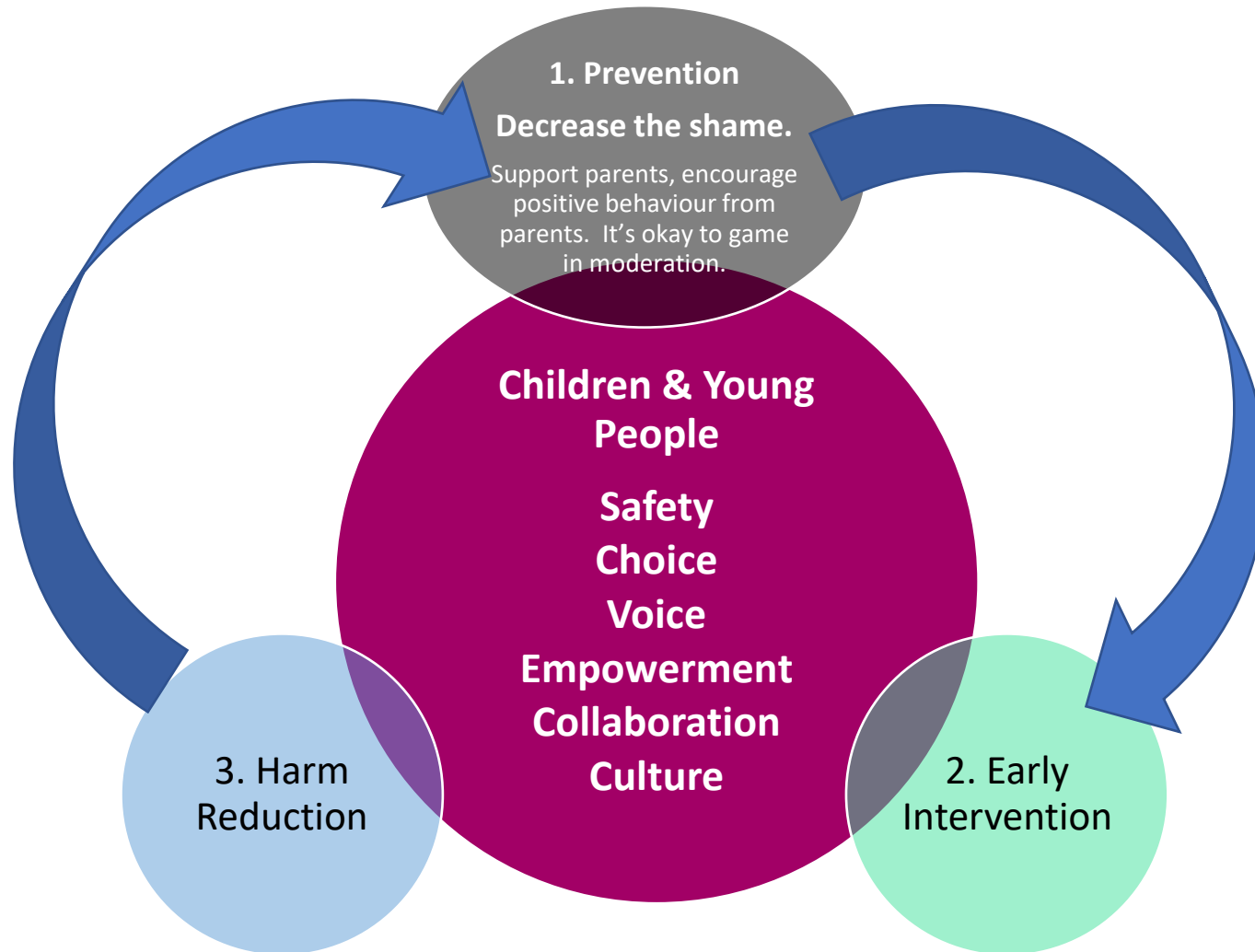
## More work to be done

It's important to ensure that children and young people are linked with appropriate support services where potential risks are identified.

- **GambleAware**  
1800 858 858  
[gambleaware.nsw.gov.au](http://gambleaware.nsw.gov.au)
- **headspace**  
[headspace.org.au](http://headspace.org.au)
- **Reach Out**  
[au.reachout.com](http://au.reachout.com)
- **Kids Helpline**  
[kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au)  
1800 55 1800
- **E-safety**  
For more information about online gaming, visit the eSafety Website: [esafety.gov.au/parents/big-issues/gaming](http://esafety.gov.au/parents/big-issues/gaming)

# Prevention; Early Intervention and Harm Reduction.

Aim: Building a more confident version of themselves; confidence; self-worth; recognising the benefits of video gaming (social connectiveness); safety through an avatar; being online.



## Harm Reduction (3)

- Self-Directed recovery (not one size fits all); strength-based – Curiosity stand-point “what’s gaming like for you?”
- Person-centred
- Motivational interviewing
- Responding positively to a young-persons story.
- Set up an individual support package.
- No scope currently
- K10
  - Work with a Youth Unit – Residential Facilities.
  - Behavioural agreement

**Avoid stigmatising: Don't use the word addiction/addict; dirty.**

# Prevention Factsheet for parents



With the growth of technology and the access to smartphones and other gaming devices, there is an increased exposure to gambling for our children.

Children and young people are at higher risk due to their cognitive and social development stages and are more likely to develop unhealthy behaviour if not managed.

#### Healthy gaming

When played in moderation, video gaming is a form of fun, entertainment and leisure.

Multi-player online games can provide children and young people with important social connection with their peers. Gaming can enhance problem solving and leadership skills and so much more.

It is important for parents to be aware and educate their children about online gambling in games.

#### What does gambling in games mean?

Put simply, gambling is traditionally an activity where someone risks money or belongings; where there is an element of randomness or chance involved; and the purpose is to win.

With the gaming industry now bigger than ever, there is increasing evidence that there is cross-over between gaming and gambling in many games played today by children and young people.

#### Where to go for help

**GambleAware**  
T 1800 858 858  
Website: [gambleaware.nsw.gov.au](http://gambleaware.nsw.gov.au)

**headspace**  
T 1800 880 218  
Website: [headspace.org.au](http://headspace.org.au)

**ReachOut**  
Website: [au.reachout.com](http://au.reachout.com)

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# Harmful signs and behaviours Prompting Tool (Early Intervention)

Recorded **Changing the way we game.**  
Harmful gaming-gambling is not a standalone issue.



**Look behind the problem:  
Understanding the Why?**

You may notice behaviours that are negatively affecting a child or young person's life.

By having a conversation that is non-judgemental, it will allow children and young people to feel they can open up and talk to you about 'why' they are gaming excessively. Are they avoiding something else?

The discussion you have may be a personal and confidential matter and will require you to follow the school's Wellbeing process.

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As a professional who works with children and young people you may notice signs or behaviours that are of concern.

#### Hiding/avoiding negative or uncomfortable feelings or situations

Gaming to self-medicate  
Hiding/avoiding from e.g. poor grades; bullying; social; family.

#### Defensiveness

Denial regarding excessive gaming-gambling that may leave others neglected.

#### Misuse of money

Using parent/carers credit cards without asking

#### Loss of time/Loss of sleep

Extreme example when games are played throughout the night and it's only realised how much time has passed when the sun begins to rise, and this happens often.

#### Maladaptive coping strategies

Avoiding new situations/avoiding issues

#### Health Problems

Anxiety, Depression

#### Poor Diet

Missing meals; poor nutrition

#### A preference of solitude

Gaming behind closed doors

#### Mood Changes

Negative emotions

\*This list is not an extensive list and offers a few behavioural signs. This list should not be used to diagnosis. Seek support from service professionals.

Supporting Material - Prompting conversation when harmful signs have been identified

Build a relationship to break down the barriers first.  
Then you may try:

I'm noticing...  
What's happening for you...  
Tell me about...

What have you been up to?

What do you like to play?

What do you enjoy doing on weekends/after school?

Ask about the game, the characters.

How much sleep do you get, what time did you go to sleep last night?

How are things at home?

Do you play games after school?

What do you like to do to relax in your spare time?

I've noticed your falling behind in your homework, how can I help?

[gambleaware.nsw.gov.au](http://gambleaware.nsw.gov.au)

[headspace.org.au](http://headspace.org.au)

[kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au)

[unitingvictas.org.au](http://unitingvictas.org.au)

Recorded Prevention Program

# A few points:

- Video Gaming is here to stay.
- The industry growth is rapid.
- Gaming is a community for many and sense of belonging.
- A large reason why kids game is due to the behavioral desire to connect.
- Healthy social connection is vital for a child's development.
- Path of least resistant, Gaming has made the perfect babysitter for parents and killed boredom.
- As parents and carers and professionals, we need to understand the gaming world, notice signs and support and encourage healthy balance in young peoples lives today.
- It is not the responsibility of children and young people to understand an industry that is much bigger than them, we as adults need to support them and set healthy boundaries for them.

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**End  
Thank You**

# Gambling in video games

## Loot box

In game box/crate, like a locked mystery "box" - sometimes earned through playing the game and sometimes paid for with real money. The element of surprise provides instant gratification.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfZ3iEJQoNA>

## Skin betting

A skin changes the appearance of characters to 'enhance the look'.

With the demand to have the best 'skin' came the demand to 'skin gamble' through unlicensed skin betting sites.

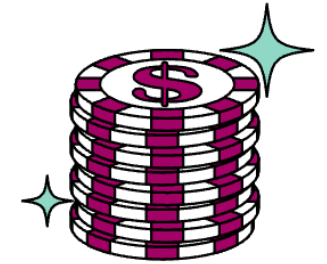
- **Simulation** - mimicking real-world gambling
- **Buying chance/Reward items** – using real world money (loot boxes/gatcha)
- **Gambling via games** – playing bets on the results of esports.
- **The 'slotification'** – Slot machine game design.



*"We're already at a point where the games have become extremely sophisticated, and in some ways, players are not always aware of how much the game is actually playing them."*

# The cross over of gambling in video games

- Gambling is an activity where someone risks money or belongings; where there is an element of randomness or chance involved; and the purpose is to win.
- Games are designed to keep players engaged for long periods using best practices of behavioural psychology, including randomised rewards with variable reinforcements (gambling elements).
- The reward mechanism is designed similar to a pokie machine which creates classical conditioning. This powerful behaviour response to chase the reward can become addictive, whether you have won or lost.



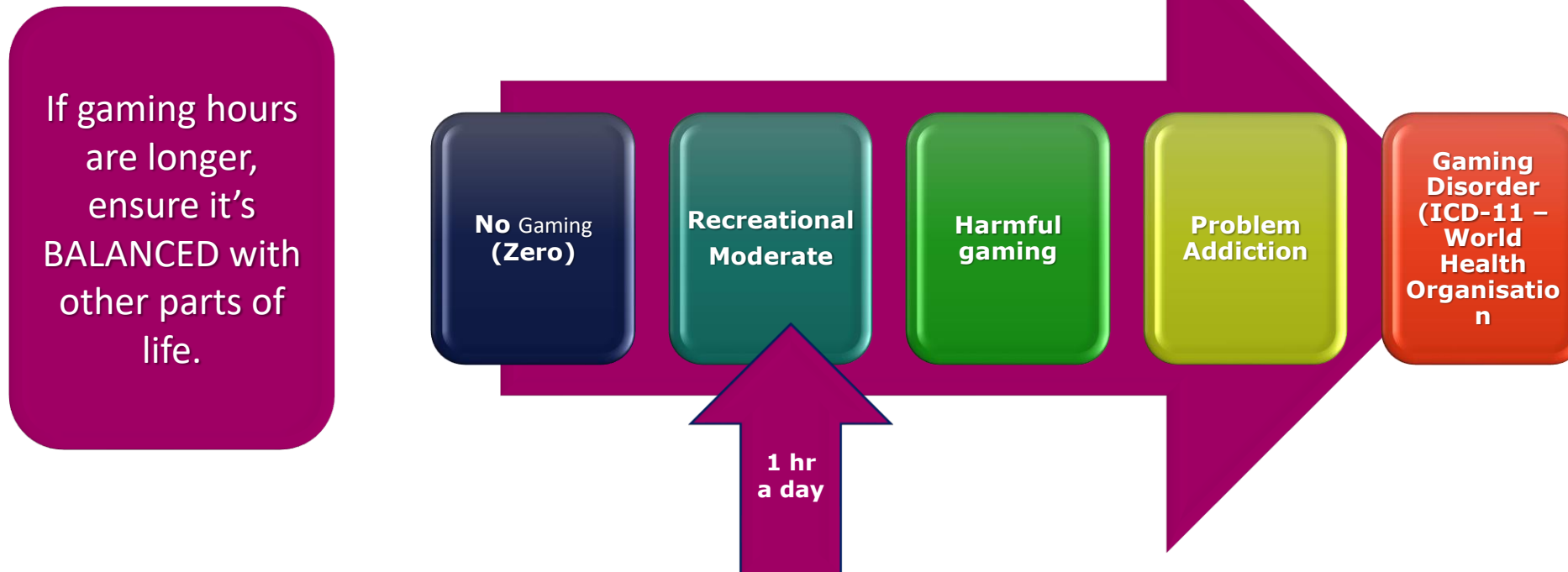
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# Why this prevention program in schools: More Stats:

- A recent study of 22 games that were rated as suitable for 13 years or younger, found that 10 met the criteria of gambling
- Children as young as 11 are gambling for money and playing video games and apps that simulate betting – and parents are most often funding and enabling them.
- Traditional forms of gambling are already normalised amongst young people with almost a third of secondary students gambling and one in every classroom developing a problem with gambling and experiencing high levels of harm
- Despite attempts to protect minors from harm it is the creation and acceptance of gambling in society and gambling **advertisements** which have become increasingly prominent.

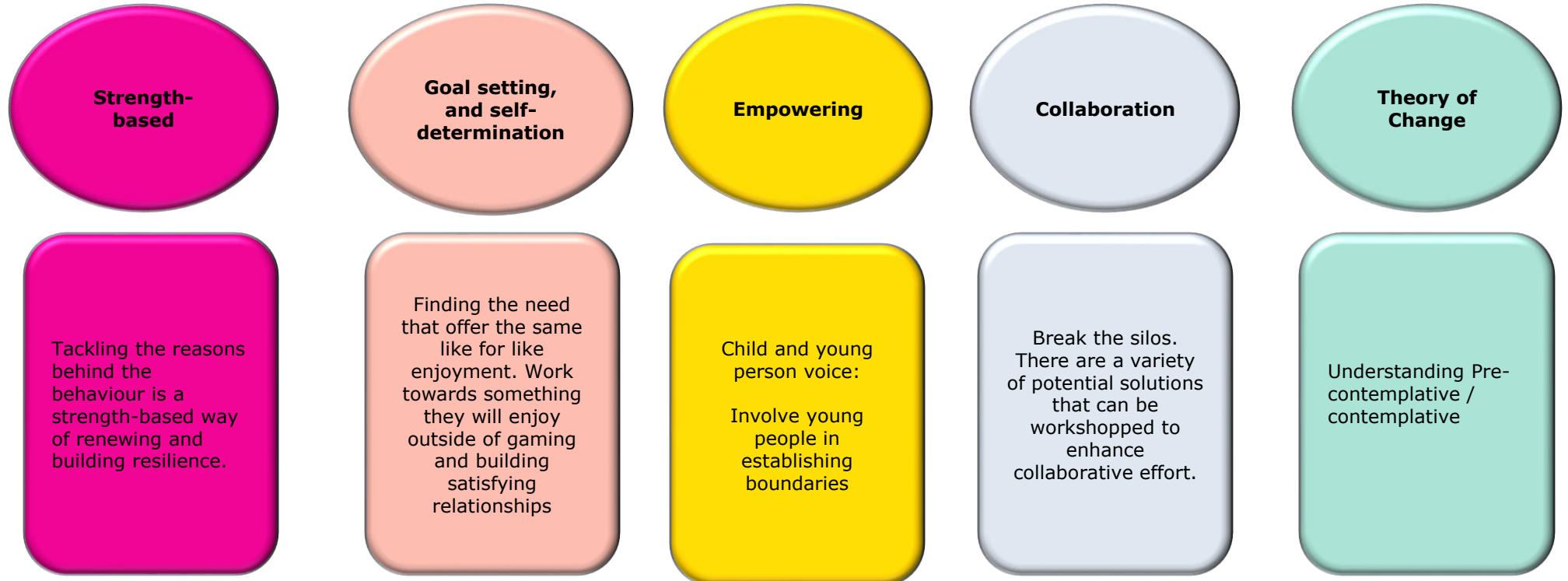
## Gaming 'disorder' in DSM IV

For gaming disorder to be diagnosed, the behaviour pattern must be of sufficient severity to result in significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, or other important areas of a person's life and would normally have been evident for at least 12 months.



## Holistic Approach (evidence-based support models):

- Strengths-based approach that recognises the strengths and values of both the children and young people and gaming. This positive approach will ensure that children and young people who game do not feel ostracised or targeted by the process.
- Having an attitude that the young person is doing their best and that every choice they make, is their best choice at the time based on their circumstances.
- If harmful behaviours are evident, before a child can create healthy gaming, they should be aware of it, accept it, and own it. Encourage their own voice of change.(theory of change model)



# The key Recoded principles:

- **Person-centred approach:** **The young person is at the centre** they are the consumer – their narrative is to be heard and respected (and challenged respectfully where appropriate).
- **Empowerment:** We recognise risk but work to support and **empower** and not **dominate** (young person's voice).
- **The entire picture:** Recognition of eco systems and an understanding that eco-systems can be both a protective and contributing factors to excessive gaming and **consider all aspects of a person's life**
- **The gaming is not the problem:** The young person is engaged with and supported through a trauma lens.
- Working with the young person to tailor to **their needs and goals**
- **Unconditional Positive Regard (UPR):** Approach children and young people with UPR, with the attitude that they are making the best choices that could have, based on-their circumstances and if expectations/healthy choice are not being met ask 'why'.

# The Recoded program aims to:

Create a sustainable framework that is embedded into schools.

Implementing a program that is agile, i.e. changes with new evidence; continues to be delivered through a train-the-trainer model and has measured results. (Survey's)

**Sustainability Values – Building a Whole School Approach – see document for more details.**

**Uniting Recoded are committed to provide education and capacity building (cross-skilling) on the emergence of gambling within online games.**

## **Adoption, Not Roll Out**

- Uniting will work with schools to get gradual buy-in from interested staff (Wellbeing ; leadership; student champions).
- The Recoded framework will get buy-in from the school administration to create a streamlined approach
- and buy-in from other school stakeholders.

## **Create a team of teachers and communicate highlights**

Working with key teachers that are committed champions: Responsibilities include:

- Attend PD training (1-Day session)
- Spreading awareness and build interest (collaboration)
- Use tools provided by Recoded trainers.
- Follow processes and use positive (TIC) language when potential harm is being identified. As word spreads of these teachers' efforts and impact, a gradually generated interest amongst others in the school community will form.

## **Identify the Right Training and Implementation Route**

Each school is unique and the Recoded approach to training and implementation will adopt an understand to:

- What awareness is already evident and what supports support exists?
- Being aware and considerate of time; capacity and school processes;
- Understanding school size and demographics;
- Understanding culture and diversity and being considerate to everyone's needs.

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