

CONSCIOUS YOUTH BEHAVIOURS
IN EMERGING REALITIES

Non-formal education practices:

Over-gaming or gaming addiction

R2 CYBER TOOLKIT



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#2	The game - does it control me, or do I control it?
Threat(s)	Over-gaming or gaming addiction
	Youth cyber-threat gaming addiction, often recognized as Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD), is defined as the excessive use of online gaming that leads to significant impairment or distress. The condition manifests through symptoms similar to other addictions, including a preoccupation with gaming, withdrawal symptoms when gaming is taken away, tolerance (the need to spend more time gaming to satisfy the urge), loss of interest in previous hobbies and entertainment, continued excessive use despite knowledge of psychosocial problems, deception regarding the amount of time spent gaming, use of gaming to relieve negative moods, and jeopardizing or losing relationships, jobs, or education or career opportunities because of gaming.
Typology	Group discussions and debates
Duration	180 minutes/3 hours (can be adjusted according to depth of activities)
Modality	In-presence [classroom setting]
Aim	This practice aims to equip participants with the skills and knowledge necessary to apply specific behavioural intervention techniques to prevent and combat over-gaming addiction. It focuses on identifying the best strategies to encourage resilience and manage psychological challenges in the context of excessive over-gaming, monitoring progress and implementing behavioural changes that encourage a healthy lifestyle. By critically evaluating the content of games students will be able to make the best choices about games improving their self-esteem and their ability to defend themselves from the challenges, on a personal and social level, posed by addiction/excessive play.
Learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop the ability to analyse a player's behaviour. ▪ Developing a behavioural self-regulation plan to avoid/quit over-gaming addiction. ▪ Improving the understanding of the need for analysis of content accessed on the internet. ▪ Identifying the best strategies for developing resilience to the psychological challenges associated with game addiction.
Trainee profile	Participants aged 13-18 years, with basic digital navigation skills. No specific prerequisites, but a curiosity about digital media and online interactions is beneficial.
n° participants	15-20 (ideal for facilitating group discussions and activities)
Materials	<p>Internet connected devices (laptops/tablets)</p> <p>Sheets with (appendix 1-6): (1) case study; (2) theoretical information about online game addiction; (3) steps to protect oneself from online addiction; (4) online game analysis structure, (5) critical analysis of game-theory, (6) critical analysis of the game-app.</p>

	<p>Model mind map (appendix 7).</p> <p>Cards with strategies for emotional and psychological well-being. (appendix 8).</p> <p>Flipcharts, markers and sticky notes.</p>
Preparation	<p>Prepare case study worksheets (See appendix: Case study) and worksheets with the theoretical and practical part the students have to work on (See appendix: "What is online game addiction", "How to overcome online addiction", "Critical engagement with game content", "Critical game analysis"), mind map model (See appendix "Mind Map"), cards with strategies for emotional and psychological well-being for each student.</p>
Implementation	<p>Session 1</p> <p>1. Introduction/energizing exercise (15 min): the „HOPA" game</p> <p>Divide students into groups of 4-6 players. Each group gets a balloon to inflate. Then, holding hands, members of the group form a circle and try to keep the balloon in the air kicking and holding it in the air with any part of their body without removing their hands. If the balloon hits the ground, the group "loses" their hands at first, i.e. they can no longer touch the balloon with their hands. Next, without taking their hands off, each time the balloon hits the ground, the players "lose" the right to use their elbows, shoulders, heads and feet.</p> <p>2. Debate: the "Corners" exercise (15 min)</p> <p>Display two flip chart sheets in opposite corners of the classroom. One says "Offline games" and the other "Online games". Students are invited to choose a type of game they prefer and move to that corner. If there are any students left in the desks, the other students will try to make arguments to persuade them to join their preference. If all the students have already chosen a game, they will bring arguments to convince their colleagues from the opposing team to join them. The teacher will suggest topics for discussion: game time, rules, socialisation, emotions experienced, knowledge/skills learned, money invested, dangers.</p> <p>3. Case study analysis (20 min)</p> <p>Divide students into small groups. Each group receives sheets with the same case study. Work together to identify the signs of over-gaming addiction and the impact on the person. At the end, students present and discuss their findings. Monitor and add to the students' conclusions. Introduce the concept of game addiction.</p> <p>Session 2</p> <p>1. Introduction (5 min): Do a quick recap of what was discussed in the previous session. Announce the students that they will be doing an interactive activity, in groups, where they will complete a mind map about game addiction.</p> <p>2. Group activity: "Mosaic" (45 min): First divide students into cooperative groups or "house" groups by counting students to 3. Each of them will be given a sheet</p>

about internet addiction and by the end of the lesson students will have to understand the content and make a mind map.

Thus, all students with number 1 will receive a worksheet containing information and work tasks related to game addiction (Appendix: What is game addiction?), those with number 2 will receive a worksheet containing information and work tasks related to how to protect ourselves from game addiction (Annex: "How to protect yourself from game addiction"), those with number 3 will receive a worksheet containing information and work tasks related to critical analysis of a game (Annex: "Critical engagement with online game content"). Each group will have to complete a part of the mind map.

Expert group activity (about 20 minutes). All those of the same number will form a group that will solve the indicated work tasks, clarify the issues, extract the essential ideas, think of effective ways of teaching the essential content and ways of checking the understanding of the knowledge by the colleagues in the "house" group. Each learner becomes an expert on the topic discussed in the expert group and becomes responsible for teaching the knowledge acquired to the other members of the cooperative group. If students in the expert groups have any difficulties, intervene to ensure that the topic is understood correctly.

Intercollegiate learning (15 min). Each pupil-expert then returns to the original group and presents what they have learnt to their peers. Peers can ask the expert questions for clarification. The expert in turn asks questions to make sure that everyone has understood the new content. The objective of the group is that all members learn the material presented and each expert is responsible for this.

Presentation of the material studied (10 min.): To ensure that the information is conveyed correctly and is understood by everyone, work together on the mind map about over-gaming addiction. Emphasise the importance of knowing the signs of game addiction and its consequences, behavioural intervention and game content analysis.

Session 3

Emotional well-being cards (40 min)

This exercise is important because young people, with the help of introspection and analysis of each proposed strategy, in pairs and in groups, will be able to choose the best strategies for maintaining emotional and psychological wellbeing (resilience) in the context of both over-gaming addiction and other stressful, problematic situations, in relation to cyber threats and beyond.

Step 1: Give each participant a set of cards with strategies for maintaining emotional and psychological well-being in the context of excessive gaming, with the task of choosing/prioritizing them according to the importance they attach to each strategy.

	<p>Step 2: Organise participants into pairs. The task is for each young person to present their chosen strategies to their activity partner, in order of priority, giving reasons for their choices. After discussion, each pair makes a new list of strategies, probably in a different order from the list made individually.</p> <p>The third step involves presenting and discussing the lists of strategies in step two in groups of four or six.</p> <p>The final task is to draw up a list of strategies reflecting the vision and priorities of the group that produced it. The lists will be presented to the plenary.</p> <p>Reflection/ Critical thinking (10 minutes):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide arguments supporting the need for resilience. ▪ In what other ways can we develop resilience? ▪ What recommendation would you make to those who are addicted to games for developing resilience? What about yourself? ▪ Given that in resilience the interpersonal side (encounters and bonds created) is very important, what methods do you suggest for improving social relationships?
<p>Tips and hints</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage participants to think critically after each proposed exercise, focusing on self-assessment and monitoring of their behaviour in relation to online games, checking their content. ▪ Enable group task solving in both offline and online formats by using applications that allow collaborative work (e.g. Google Education, Edmodo, etc.) ▪ Make sure that each pupil has access to the information as well as the model worksheets provided for monitoring their own behaviour and critical analysis of the game. ▪ Provide addresses of websites that talk about game addiction as well as those that support addicts. ▪ Facilitate broad discussions about each resilience-building strategy in relation to games. Encourage them to seek information, examples of application of each strategy.
<p>Safety measures</p>	<p>Ensuring internet safety during online activities.</p> <p>Create a respectful and non-judgmental space for discussion.</p>



External reference and Resources	<p>Druga, Simona (2018), "The story of an internet-addicted teenager", Therapy and Counselling Centre for Children, Adolescents and Families. Available at: https://mindtherapycenter.ro/2018/08/13/povestea-unui-adolescent-dependent-de-internet/</p> <p>Cuzino, Oana "Video game addiction: signs, consequences & treatment". Available at : https://www.doc.ro/consum-responsabil-prevenirea-dependentei/dependenta-de-jocuri-video-semne-consecinte-tratament</p> <p>Costin, Oana (2019), "Addiction to video games - causes, symptoms, treatment", Medical advice.ro. Available at: https://sfaturimedicale.ro/dependenta-de-jocuri-video/</p> <p>Barca, Iulia (2019), " What hides computer game addiction ", PSYCHOLOGIES Romania magazine. Available at: https://www.psychologies.ro/dezvoltare-personala-cunoaste-te-2/cunoaste-te/ce-ascunde-dependenta-de-jocuri-pe-calculator-216999</p>
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Appendix 1: Case study for identifying signs of over-gaming addiction and its impact on individuals.

Story of a teenager

My name is Teo and I am 18 years old. It all started 2 years ago, as a fun activity for me and, in a way, to get rid of my boredom and to stop listening to my mother nagging me all the time. School was boring, not to mention my classmate..., so I found a game that "got me". On top of that, I was even better at it than the others who were still around, and I got to give them advice...I earned their respect!

From a simple game...to a passion...I thought! I couldn't wait to get out of school, get home, sit in my chair at the computer, my mom to finally bring me lunch and ...action! The best was when Mom worked the night shift, and I didn't have to sleep. Sometimes, I couldn't believe it was already morning, and I felt a little hungry. I never had enough time. I didn't care about anyone or anything.

Anyway... this cycle was pretty much the same until one day, I don't know what I did but something woke me up! Not that very day but after I saw myself on the rejection list. Then summer came, the lucky ones went off to have fun, I stayed. I tried not to care, to keep playing, but it didn't seem to taste the same. I felt like going out, getting away, talking to someone, anyone, just to forget about this futility that was all over me...

Now, I'm learning...to have a life, to reconnect to life! Now I can forget my phone at home without caring, I can read a book and find it interesting, I can listen to others and think they have something to say.

Case analysis:

1. Specify the stages an addict goes through.
2. Write down the signs that the young person should have realised that they had become addicted to online games.
3. What signs would have shown others (mother, peers, teachers, etc.) that Teo is addicted to games?
4. What is the impact of the addiction on Teo? Specify other types of consequences.
5. How does Teo struggle to overcome addiction?

Appendix 2: What is gaming addiction?

The theoretical part:

Definition: Youth gaming addiction, often recognized as internet gaming disorder (IGD), is defined as excessive use of online games that results in significant impairment or distress.

Video game addiction occurs when the individual plays such games abusively and this activity affects their quality of life. Social isolation, sudden mood swings and exhaustion are often associated with this addiction.

Causes of video game addiction:

- Video games are specifically designed to make you play as much as possible. Addiction occurs because during play the brain is stimulated to release large doses of dopamine. This long-term stimulation causes structural changes in the brain.
- The environment created by video games creates a comfortable context in which the player feels safe and in control of what happens. The game, unlike reality, is often predictable.
- There are two types of games, which create two different types of addictions.
 - Classic video games are designed so that there is only one player, who has a mission. Addiction arises, in this situation, from the desire to complete the mission and beat the previously set record.
 - Multi-player video games that can be played online, over a network, and are addictive because they have no end. Players who are addicted to such games tend to become temporarily confused with the character in the game. They often form relationships with other players online, feeling more comfortable in the virtual community than in the real one.

Characteristics of games with a high risk of addiction:

- Games that have no end.
- Video games that encourage social interactions with other players (multiple players).
- Which offer rewards at certain intervals.
- Which offer frequent rewards to the player at the beginning, only for rewards to become increasingly scarce and harder to obtain afterwards.

Risk factors:

- Psychological: impulsivity; low self-control; anxiety.
- Behavioural: spending a large amount of money on games, increasing time spent playing during the week, attending offline gaming community meetings. Children and teenagers who develop this addiction have something in common: they are intelligent, have a rich imagination, but at the same time have problems with self-esteem and are not very sociable.

Symptoms of video game addiction:

The amount of time spent playing video games is not as relevant as the impact games have on the quality of an individual's life.

Specifically, if the gamer neglects personal hygiene, rest, or activities that they used to enjoy, they may be addicted to video games, even if they don't play very many hours a day. Signs and symptoms that betray gaming addiction are both physical and emotional.

According to the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), the warning signs that should be considered are at least 5 from the list below, over a period of 1 year:

- the person thinks about video games all or most of the time.
- feels sick when not playing.
- needs to play more and more to feel good.
- can't stop playing games or play less.
- doesn't want to do other things he used to do before video games.

Negative impact on health: Excessive gaming can have detrimental effects on physical health, contributing to sedentary behaviour, poor posture, musculoskeletal problems (e.g. repetitive strain injuries), obesity and sleep disorders. Prolonged gaming sessions can lead to irregular eating habits, inadequate

nutrition and neglect of personal hygiene, exacerbating the risk of physical health problems and compromising overall well-being. Other effects: social isolation, conflicts with loved ones, poor school performance, concentration and attention deficit disorders, disruption of relationships with others, depression, anxiety, specific phobias (especially agoraphobia, as the individual becomes afraid to leave the house, feeling in the comfort zone only in the virtual environment), development of aggressive behaviour, substance abuse.

Task: Complete the proposed mind map with the information learned.

Appendix 3: How to protect yourself from over-gaming addiction?

The theoretical part:

Behavioural self-regulation is essential for maintaining a healthy balance in playing habits. Here are some practices individuals can adopt to prevent excessive over-gaming and promote a healthy lifestyle:

- 1. Set clear boundaries:** Define certain hours of play: allocate dedicated time for play and stick to those hours. Avoid late night gaming: late night sessions can disrupt sleep patterns and affect overall well-being.
- 2. Monitor screen time:** Use screen time tracking apps: track how much time you spend playing each day. Set daily limits: limit your gaming time to prevent excessive gaming.
- 3. Prioritise other activities:** Balance leisure activities: engage in a variety of hobbies, exercise, socialize and read. Schedule non-game activities: allocate time for family, work and personal development.
- 4. Practice mindfulness:** Check in with yourself: reflect on how games make you feel physically and emotionally. Take breaks: pause during gaming sessions to stretch, hydrate and rest your eyes.
- 5. Socialise offline:** Meet with friends in person: balance online interactions with face-to-face connections. Join clubs or groups: participate in diverse activities (no games) with like-minded people.
- 6. Educate yourself:** Learn more about gaming addiction: Understand the signs and risks associated with excessive gaming. Seek professional help if needed: If you find it difficult to self-regulate, consider counselling or therapy. Remember, moderation is key. Enjoy the games, but also prioritise your general well-being and maintain a balanced lifestyle.

Task:

Fill in your mind map with the information you receive.

Practise by completing the first two headings of the behavioural self-regulation sheet.

Appendix 4: Behavioural self-report sheet

Behaviour	Limits	Monitoring						
		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Appendix 5: Critical engagement with game content

The theoretical part:

Critical engagement with game content is essential to maintaining a healthy gaming experience. Here are some steps to help you evaluate your habits and make informed choices:

1. Self-reflection:

Assess your gaming habits: Reflect on how much time you spend on games each day. Consider whether it aligns with your overall well-being and other responsibilities.

Evaluate game content: Check the game's ESRB (Entertainment Software Rating Board) rating. This gives you information about the recommended minimum age to play the game and its content (violence, language, themes, etc.). It is important to make sure that the game is suitable for your age.

Analyse the games you play: Are they enjoyable, educational or simply for entertainment? Consider their impact on your mood and mindset.

2. Set intentions:

Games with purpose: Define why you are playing games. Is it for relaxation, social interaction, or skill development?

Avoid mindless games: Be intentional about your gaming sessions. Avoid playing out of habit or boredom.

3. Content analysis:

Game themes and values: Consider the themes and values presented in the games you interact with. Do they align with your personal beliefs?

Violence: Check if the game contains violent scenes or fights.

Language: Some games may have inappropriate language.

Sexual content: Check if the game contains sexual scenes or references.

Drugs and alcohol: Some games may contain drugs or alcohol use.

Sensitive themes: Some games deal with sensitive themes such as death, depression or trauma.

Assess how all these themes in games affect your emotions and behaviour.

4. Microtransactions:

Check if the game has microtransactions (in-game purchases with real money). These can affect the game experience and may be important for some players.

Avoid games with many microtransactions: they can lead to high spending and encourage addiction.

5. Community and social interaction:

Online communities: If the game has an online component, consider interacting with other players. Online communities can vary depending on the game and may include chats, forums or other forms of communication. Make sure you are comfortable with this. Interact with gaming communities that promote positive interactions.

Multiplayer games: Use multiplayer games to connect with friends and build relationships.

6. Stay informed:

Research game content: Read reviews, watch videos about the game, and understand game mechanics before playing.

Updates and fixes: stay informed about updates and changes to the game.

Remember, games can be a rewarding and enriched experience when approached with care. Make choices that enhance your well-being and align with your values!

Task:

Complete the mind map with the information you receive.

Think about the online games you play most often and complete the critical game.

Appendix 6: Critical analysis of the online game

Task: Provide brief, pointed responses to the following:

Criteria	Analysis carried out		
How much time do you spend on games each day?			
What is the mood (emotion) you experience after playing for a longer time?			
Did you manage to fulfil your other responsibilities?	Yes	Partially	No



If you did, how well did you do?	Very good Not so good With many mistakes
Did you check the age and ESRB rating of the game? Is the game appropriate for your age?	
Have you read reviews, watched videos about the game and understood how the game works before playing?	
Have you been keeping track of updates and changes to the game?	
Are the games you play enjoyable, educational or simply for entertainment?	
Specify why you play games. Is it for relaxation, social interaction or skill development?	
To what extent do the themes and values presented in the games you interact with align with your personal beliefs?	
How does violence and aggression (inappropriate language/sexual content/drugs and alcohol/sensitive themes) in games affect your emotions and behaviour?	
Does the game include microtransactions? If so, how does it affect you?	
What kind of gaming communities do you interact with?	
Are these interactions more positive or negative?	
Conclusion:	

Appendix 7: Mind Map

A mind map is a graphical tool used to organize and visualize information. It consists of a diagram that starts from a central idea or concept and extends to related topics and subtopics.

An essential aspect of making mind maps is their non-linear character, which means that they do not follow a rigid hierarchical structure. This approach allows for a more flexible and creative organization of information, thus facilitating the establishment of links and associations between various concepts.

Structure of a Mind Map:

- Central node
- Links are tagged
- Branches with sub-nodes

It can be done either manually or through software applications.

Uses of Mind Maps:

- Organizing knowledge and classifying information for a better understanding and memorization of the main ideas;
- Learning and retention;
- Planning activities;
- Problem solving by improving cognitive thinking;
- Brainstorming – stimulating creativity;
- Notation and synthesis of a text or presentation;
- The decision-making process.

There are traditional mind maps, which are created manually on paper or whiteboard and have a more static character, and digital ones that offer flexibility and advanced features, such as easy editing, online sharing and the ability to edit with other collaborators.

Here are the steps to create a mind map quickly and efficiently:

Step 1: Place a main idea or topic in the center of the page.

Step 2: Identify the main ideas and arrange them evenly around the topic, in a circle.

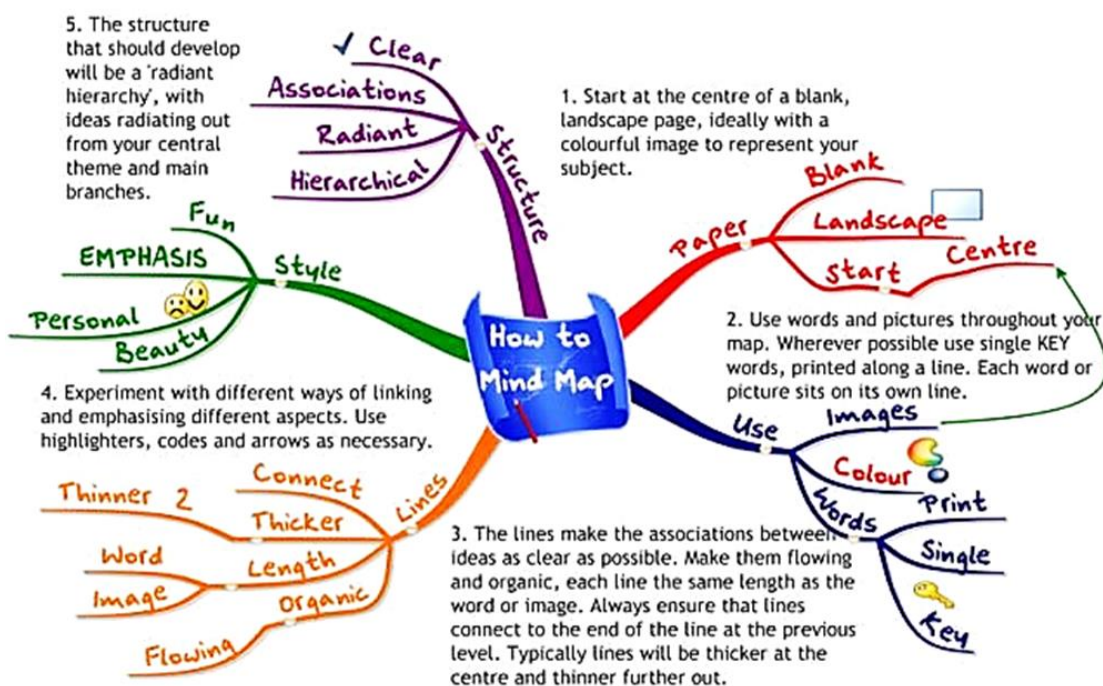
Step 3: Use different lines, arrows, speech bubbles, and colors to highlight the connections between the central theme, main ideas, and subtopics. *Tip:* Apply distinct colors to represent various categories, which will make the map more appealing and easier to interpret.

Step 4: Keep in mind that mind maps are flexible and non-linear; don't look for a perfect structure. *Tip:* Allow ideas to flow freely and make connections between concepts throughout the process.

Step 5: Consider using images instead of text.

Step 6: Review the mind map, adding or removing branches, reorganizing ideas, or refining the wording of the main topic and subtopics.

Example of a mind map:














References:

- [What is a Mind Map \(explainwell.org\);](https://www.explainwell.org/what-is-a-mind-map)
- [Cognitive maps, mind maps and concept maps: definitions \(nngroup.com\)](https://nngroup.com/cognitive-maps-mind-maps-and-concept-maps-definitions/)












Appendix 7: Emotional Well-being Cards

<p>AWARENESS</p> <p>Recognise emotions</p>  <p>CYBER</p>	<p>AWARENESS</p> <p>Recognise triggers</p>  <p>CYBER</p>	<p>HEALTHY COPING MECHANISM</p> <p>Mindfulness and breathing</p>  <p>CYBER</p>
<p>HEALTHY COPING MECHANISM</p> <p>Physical Activity</p>  <p>CYBER</p>	<p>HEALTHY COPING MECHANISM</p> <p>Creative Activities</p>  <p>CYBER</p>	<p>HEALTHY COPING MECHANISM</p> <p>Social Support</p>  <p>CYBER</p>
<p>HEALTHY COPING MECHANISM</p> <p>Limit time of the game</p>  <p>CYBER</p>	<p>POSITIVE MENTALITY</p> <p>Change negative thoughts</p>  <p>CYBER</p>	<p>POSITIVE MENTALITY</p> <p>Acknowledgement</p>  <p>CYBER</p>




<p>SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP</p> <p>Therapy</p>  <p>CYBER</p>	<p>SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP</p> <p>Support groups</p>  <p>CYBER</p>	<p>POSITIVE MENTALITY</p> <p>Make positive statements</p>  <p>CYBER</p>
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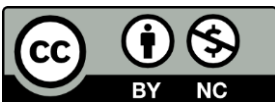
The face of the playing cards The reverse side of the playing cards



<p>Practice deep breathing exercises to reduce stress and stay present.</p> 	<p>Identify what causes these emotions during games.</p> 	<p>Be aware of your feelings, whether it's stress, anxiety or mood swings.</p> 
<p>Connect with friends and family to share experiences and emotions.</p> 	<p>Get involved in hobbies such as drawing, writing or playing an instrument.</p> 	<p>Regular exercise helps manage mood swings and releases endorphins.</p> 
<p>Reflect on what you are grateful for to increase your resilience.</p> 	<p>Replace self-critical thoughts with positive affirmations.</p> 	<p>Set limits to prevent excessive stress related to gambling.</p> 

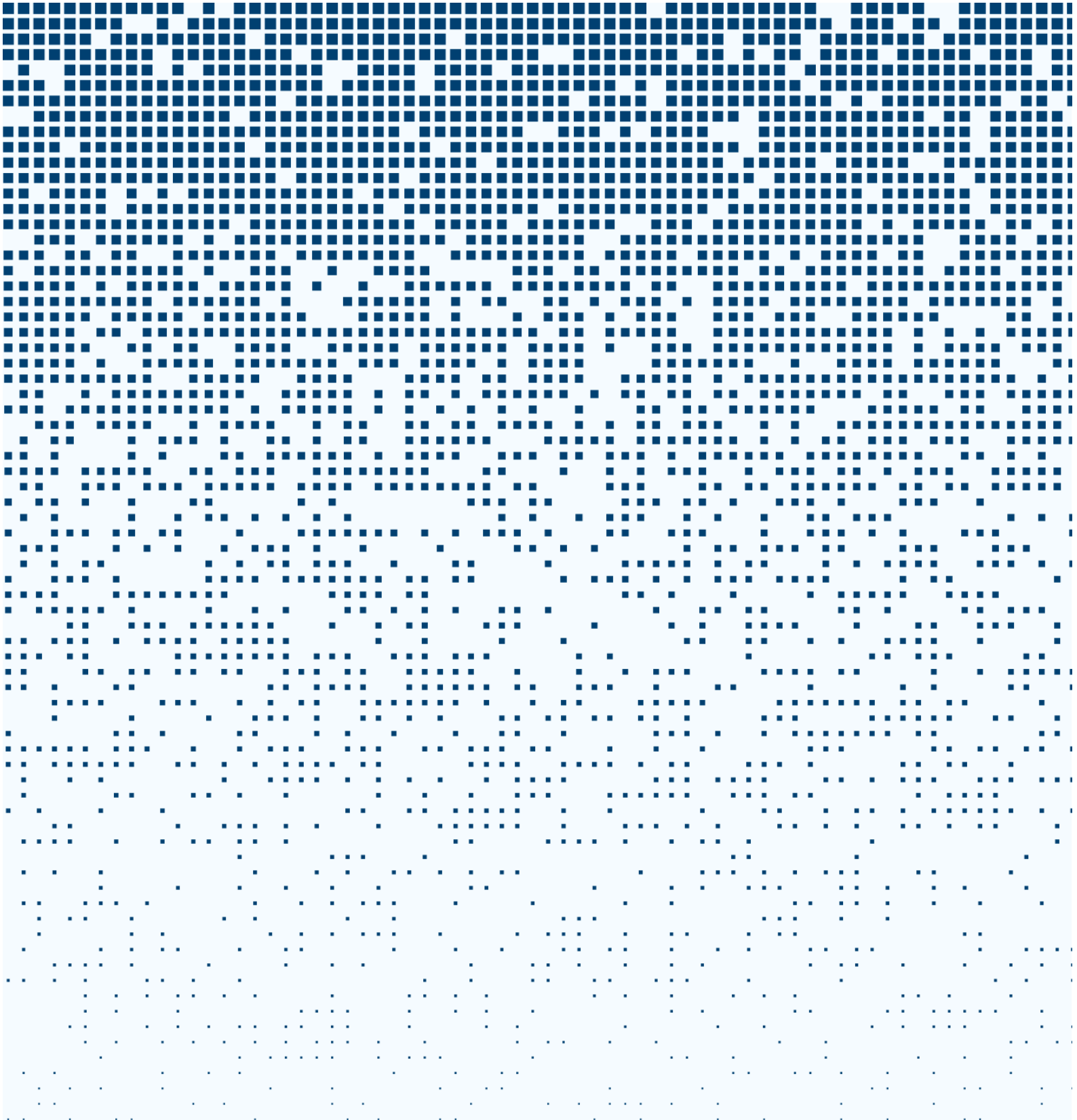


<p>Actively say positive things about yourself. These statements can help boost self-confidence and develop a positive mindset.</p> 	<p>Join the support groups to connect with others who are facing similar challenges.</p> 	<p>Consider counseling or therapy to address underlying problems.</p> 
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