FALSE DISORDER: VIDEO GAME ADDICTION AMONGST YOUTH

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As the digital gaming community—which are mostly school-age folk—and the industry continues to achieve growth in numbers, they are now facing a serious “game over” situation.

One of the increasing industries in arts and entertainment is the video game industry. However, the said industry was bombed with disrepute when the World Health Organization (WHO) classified “gaming addiction” as a mental disorder. To add insult to injury, they also claimed that the youth are the population with the highest tendency to acquire it; thus, alarming parents all over the globe.

This brought hate to video game developers, gamers, and even video games itself for all the wrong reasons. Not only does the information set out into the public premature, but it was also misguided and outrageously beefed up.

Moreover, despite the objection of the gaming community and many other scholars who have studied the issue, the WHO pursued to declare gaming disorder as a new mental disorder. In fact, Christopher Ferguson, PhD who co-authored a journal article opposing the American Psychological Association (APA) and the WHO’s proposal of including video game addiction as a disorder, said in an interview that the diagnosis was nothing but trash.

Furthermore, Ferguson even stated that the WHO hastily made the decision. It was as if they did not think it through. He added that WHO didn’t put in the effort on listening to a various array of scholars and studies regarding the subject at hand.
In addition, the information that shows up all over the internet about gaming addiction was fallacious. Some neuroscientists—Dr. Peter Whybrow and Andre Doan—even referred to video games as “digital heroin” or “digital pharmakeia”, claiming that being addicted to video games is similar to being addicted to such substances. Yet, the only similarity of playing video games to engaging with an addictive substance such as heroin is that it triggers a part in the brain that causes the release of a hormone that enables a person to feel pleasure. The same exact hormone—dopamine—is being released whenever a person is having sex, eating delicious food, or having a good laugh.

As a further matter, the amount of “pleasure hormone” that is being released when using addictive substances is not the same as the amount of hormone being induced while playing video games. As a matter of fact, according to an article by The New York Times, there is a larger amount of dopamine that is being released whenever one eats pizza than playing video games or watching online videos.

These misguided information circulating in online sources prove that gaming addiction was beefed up and was forcefully intensified to create a sense of danger or threat to readers. As a result, the gaming community and industry were being hurt for all the wrong reasons due to the outrageous measures practiced by the people concerned about the issue.

Although it’s true that every addiction—whatever kind—has its share of negative effects on its victims, it is also dangerous to let out rushed, misguided, and intensified information to the public. It does absolutely no good to anyone and may harm huge private sectors and social communities.

In conclusion, even though gaming addiction is not as serious as other addiction, it is still important to balance the use of video games and gaming devices with other personal priorities and responsibilities. Another thing that is important is assessing every
information that we get before jumping into conclusions rather than repeatedly pressing the “a button” without thinking.

References:
