

# TIPS FOR A SMART ONLINE EXPERIENCE



be SMART!  
**ONLINE!**

## THE GOOD USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Social media is a fantastic tool for networking, communication, awareness raising and marketing. We use it widely and we are constantly in contact with others, be it friends or relatives and also people we do not know. However, even social media has a risky side which is important that we are aware of. Here are some top tips for safe social media use:

1. **Be careful who you friend** – don't automatically trust friend requests from strangers, you can never be sure what their intentions are.
2. **Be careful what you post** – remember that almost anything you post can be re-posted, saved or edited and it will stay online for a very long time.
3. **Manage your profile** – only include the things you really want others to know.
4. **Consider your security settings thoughtfully** – what controls will you put in place?
5. **Think before posting images** – do you want your relatives or employer to see them?
6. **Think before tagging others** – did you ask whether they would like to be tagged?
7. **Don't trust every link that you see** – the internet is being invaded by fake news, check your sources.



## GAMING AND EXCESSIVE ONLINE USE

Does your video gaming interfere with other important things in your life, like your relationships, your job, or going to school? Do you feel like you have crossed the line between loving to play and having to play? Are you constantly gaming to avoid thinking about other problem situations happening around you or to deal with a deeper problem, such as depression?

These are some alert signs to look out for if you feel that gaming is getting problematic:

- **Thinking about gaming all or a lot of the time**
- **Feeling bad when you can't play**
- **Wanting and feeling the need to spend more and more time playing to feel good**
- **Finding it very hard to quit or to play less**
- **Not wanting to do other things that you used to like**
- **Having problems at work, school, or home because of your gaming**
- **Playing despite these problems**
- **Lying to people close to you about how much time you spend playing**
- **Using gaming to ease bad moods and feelings**

It can be hard to see a problem in yourself. The amount of time you spend gaming might seem fine to you. But if people close to you say it's too much, it might be time to think about cutting back.

There are also health concerns related to excessive gaming which need to be taken care of such as lack of physical activity due to the long hours spent seated or lying down, an unhealthy diet consisting of junk food and snacks, problems with eyesight and hearing, musculoskeletal problems, sleep deprivation and psychosocial functioning.

## **WHAT IS GAMING DISORDER?**

The World Health Organization (WHO) added “gaming disorder” to the 2018 version of its medical reference book, *International Classification of Diseases*.

Gaming disorder is defined in the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as a pattern of gaming behavior (“digital-gaming” or “video-gaming”) characterized by impaired control over gaming, increasing priority given to gaming over other activities to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other interests and daily activities, and continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences.

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



Foundation for Social Welfare Services  
Here for you



## GETTING HELP

If you are concerned about gaming time getting out of hand, look out for help. You can either get in touch with the BeSmartOnline! Team through their website ([www.besmartonline.org.mt](http://www.besmartonline.org.mt)) or call Supportline 179 and you will be directed by the operators to make contact with a therapist or consult with your doctor. Don't leave it until it is too late.

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