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WHO classifies video game addiction as a disorder

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By Samantha Day CONNECT

MONTGOMERY, AL (WSFA) - Are you concerned that your child might be addicted to video games? Well, you could be right. The World Health Organization now classifies 'gaming disorder' as a mental health condition.

This doesn't mean that every child who spends hours a day playing video games is an addict. Doctors say it only becomes a problem if video games start interfering with a person's daily life. For example, if they stop socializing with people or going to work.

"Being involved with playing video games on a regular basis, on a daily basis for hours and hours can certainly become problematic," said Dr. Walter White, executive director of the Family Guidance Center of Alabama. "I think it is because not only because of that activity but also because of the things you're not doing."

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Maria Smith said her sons play video games on a daily basis.

"Every day they get a chance to play they come home from work, you know, they relax for a little bit, eat dinner, and then they're on their video games," Smith said.


But just because they play video games regularly doesn't mean they have a problem. According to the World Health Organization, the disorder is rare. In fact, only two to three percent of gamers have 'gaming disorder,' and most of the time, those with the disorder have other problems like depression, bipolar disorder or autism.

"Depression can be present, you know, when that type of addiction is at play in a person's life to a large degree," White said.

Still, doctors are urging parents to be on the lookout for symptoms of the disorder, and if you think there might be a problem, seek medical attention.

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