

**REPORT TO THE  
DEPARTMENT OF ALASKA  
APRIL 25 – 26, 2025  
by the  
MORALE GAMING COMMITTEE  
MORALE GAMING GUIDEBOOK**



**Adopted by the  
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Department of Alaska



**MORALE**  
— **GAMING** —  
COMMITTEE  
**Guidebook**

## **Our Mission Statement**

Our mission is to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where veterans can connect, build meaningful relationships, and find strength through fellowship.

We are committed to using gaming as a platform for intervention—breaking down barriers of isolation, encouraging open conversations about mental health, and ultimately preventing suicide among our brothers and sisters in arms.

Through this shared passion, we aim to build a network of support that empowers every veteran to realize they are not alone.

# Core Values

## **Fellowship:**

We believe in the power of camaraderie and connection. Veteran Gaming Night is a space where friendships are formed, trust is built, and support is offered freely. We honor the bonds forged during service and strive to nurture them in our community.

## **Intervention:**

Recognizing the signs of mental distress is crucial. We are dedicated to creating an environment where veterans feel safe to share their struggles and seek help. We see gaming as a bridge—an accessible and engaging way to reach out, listen, and intervene when someone is hurting.

## **Relationship Building:**

Strong relationships are the foundation of resilience. Our goal is to foster genuine connections beyond the virtual realm—check-ins, conversations, and shared experiences that remind us we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

## **Battling Isolation:**

Isolation can be one of the greatest enemies after service. Our events aim to combat loneliness by providing consistent opportunities for engagement, ensuring no veteran feels forgotten or forgotten. We understand that connection saves lives.

## **Hope and Healing:**

We uphold the belief that healing comes through community, understanding, and compassion. Every game played, every laugh shared, and every conversation held is a step toward hope and recovery.

## **The Power of Gaming as a Tool**

**Why gaming? Because it's familiar, accessible, and engaging. It breaks down stigma and opens doors for honest conversations. Whether it's a team-based shooter, a cooperative adventure, or a casual chat over a shared game, these moments create pathways for connection and intervention. They become opportunities to notice when someone is struggling and to reach out with empathy.**

## **Our Role in Suicide Prevention**

**Veteran suicide is a tragic reality—an epidemic that demands our attention. But it's also a challenge we can face together. Prevention begins with relationship—trusting someone enough to share a burden, feeling confident that help is available, and knowing you're part of a community that cares.**

**Tonight, and every night we gather, we reaffirm our commitment: to be vigilant friends, attentive listeners, and unwavering supporters. We recognize that every veteran carries stories of hardship and resilience, and through our fellowship and shared experiences, we can help lighten those burdens.**

## **Call to Action**

**I urge each of you to embrace these values. Reach out to your fellow veterans—be it during a game, a conversation afterward, or simply through a message. Let's build a network rooted in understanding, compassion, and unwavering support.**

**Remember, no one is alone in this journey. Our community is a lifeline—an act of intervention, a testament to our brotherhood and sisterhood. Together, through fellowship and relationship-building, we can battle the shadows of isolation and foster a culture of hope, healing, and resilience.**

**Thank you for your service, your camaraderie, and your commitment to making Veteran Gaming Night a beacon of support and strength. Let's continue to stand together, to listen, to intervene, and to build a community where nobody feels they have to face their struggles alone.**

To host a successful family/moral gaming night at your post, plan games that encourage teamwork and positive interactions, set clear boundaries, provide snacks and drinks, and create a fun, inclusive atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable participating.



I strongly suggest when designing your dedicated night for gaming to look into **Mox Boarding House**. This is a company that has been very successful in incorporating games and food. Many of our post have a kitchen and/or the ability to take advantage of having some kind of food on those nights. Why not incorporate a fundraising meal at the same time? Gaming and food, with some monies from the proceeds going to Legion Programs.

**[moxboardinghouse.com](http://moxboardinghouse.com)**

**Mox Boarding House** is a board game café and restaurant chain that offers a unique gaming and dining experience. They have locations in Seattle, Bellevue, Portland, and Chandler. **Mox Boarding House** combines a restaurant with a game store and a free game library, where patrons can enjoy a meal and drinks while playing a variety of board games, tabletop games, and card games like Magic: The Gathering, Dungeons & Dragons and Warhammer 40k.

# Let's talk about the needs of creating and hosting a successful Gaming night/event.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

## **1. Planning & Preparation:**

### **Choose Games Wisely:**

Select games that promote teamwork, problem-solving, and friendly competition, rather than those that focus solely on individual winning.

### **Set Clear Boundaries:**

Establish rules for behavior, including respecting others, taking turns, and being a good sport, both as a winner and a loser.

### **Prepare Snacks and Drinks:**

Offer a variety of options to keep everyone energized and happy throughout the evening.

### **Create a Relaxed Atmosphere:**

Set up the space with comfortable seating, lighting, and background music to foster a welcoming and enjoyable environment.

### **Consider a Theme:**

A theme can add extra fun and engagement, whether it's a specific genre of games or a holiday-themed event.

### **Plan for Breaks:**

Allow for breaks between games to prevent boredom and allow for socializing.

## **2. During the Gaming Night:**

### **Lead by Example:**

As the host, model good sportsmanship and encourage positive interactions among participants.

### **Be Flexible:**

Be prepared to adapt to the group's preferences and adjust the games or activities as needed.

### **Encourage Participation:**

Make sure everyone feels welcome and included, and encourage them to participate in the games.

### **Focus on Fun:**

Remember that the primary goal is to have a good time and create lasting memories.



### **Take Pictures:**

Capture the fun memories with photos and videos. Use these pictures on your Social Media to advertise and to give thanks. A thank you can go a long way to those that support your gaming night and when you request assistance from other vendors, when they see the shout outs you have done for others will be more at ease in supporting you.

### **3. Games to Consider:**

#### **Cooperative Games:**

Games where everyone works together to achieve a common goal, such as Ticket to Ride or Codenames.



#### **Family-Friendly Board Games:**

Classic board games like Monopoly, Risk, Axis and Allies, Clue, Scrabble, Chess/Checkers, Ticket to Ride, Catan, Trivial Pursuit or Candy Land.



### Card Games:

Card games like UNO, Cards Against Humanity (with appropriate age limits), Go Fish, Unstable Unicorns, Magic the Gathering, Mille Bornes, Water Works, Pokemon... to name just a few.



### Indoor Games:

Darts (electronic-talked about later/steel tip), Pool, Shuffle Board, Video Games (by support of consoles and/or PC).





### **Outdoor Games:**

If the weather permits, consider outdoor games like Horseshoes, Corn Hole, or Washers.



### **DIY Games:**

Create your own games or adapt existing ones to fit your group's interests and abilities.

## How to Successfully Include Video Games

In today's digital age, video games have become a significant part of many households. And while they often get a bad rap, integrating gaming into family life can actually offer numerous benefits. I am often asked how to include video games in life by people who struggle to see the value in what video games actually offer each player. The answer requires an active exploration from both those that question and the ones playing the games.

So, how can you successfully include digital play in your Gaming Night routine while ensuring a healthy balance? Let's learn how to play games together and dive in!



### The Benefits of Playing Games Together.

Playing video games together can be a fantastic way to bond. It offers a shared experience that can bring everyone closer. However, most people who would read a document like this one probably need a bit of convincing that online games are an interesting way to spend the afternoon.

Don't get me wrong, the goal is not to force people to do things that are boring. This discussion requires us to understand quite the opposite, in fact. Playing video games is exciting for those who are engaged by them. Virtual worlds that need saving with fascinating characters all ready for players to control them towards victory over and over is actually quite the imaginative past-time. This is why games have become a psychologically fascinating form of media over the past several decades.

While each generation has been exposed to a different dominant narrative on gaming, coming all the way from "moral panic" to "video games are a natural style of play," there is a lot of conflicting information available to

people who are hoping to schedule a successful Post activity. Gaming may not even be on the top of the list for many but it needs to be given the proper exposure as well.

To make this activity a worthy addition to a Gaming Night, a shift in mindset becomes necessary. When people play, they are connecting with a valid and required aspect of human growth and development. In fact, research consistently finds for children and adults who play games that they enhance many psychological experiences, ranging from feelings of competence, autonomy and relatedness to healthy risks, problem solving, creativity and mental flexibility. In other words, playing video games thoughtfully across different stages of development can actually have a positive impact on one's life.

Think of it as the modern-day equivalent of a family board game night. Here are a few benefits:

### **Improved Communication:**

Engaging in cooperative games can enhance teamwork and communication skills. You'll find yourselves strategizing, solving puzzles, and working together toward a common goal.

### **Learning Opportunities:**

Many games are educational, teaching everything from problem-solving and critical thinking to historical facts and language skills.

### **Stress Relief:**

Gaming can be an excellent way to unwind and reduce stress. Imagine coming together after a long day, laughing, and enjoying a virtual adventure.

### **Building Resilience:**

Games often require players to overcome challenges and failures, fostering resilience and a growth mindset among family members.

## **Collaboration vs Competition: Finding the Right Balance**

When it comes to family gaming, there is often a debate between collaboration and competition. Some people may prefer cooperative gameplay where everyone works together towards a common goal, while others enjoy the thrill of competing against each other.

The key here is finding the right balance for your members. It's essential to communicate with each other and figure out what type of gameplay brings everyone joy. If one person is constantly dominating in competitive games and causing frustration for others, it may be time to switch it up and find something more collaborative.

Remember, the goal is to bond. It's not about winning or losing. Remember a gaming night is to help battle isolation, create relationships and build friendships among your membership. From your youngest member to your oldest.

If you're looking to dive into some cooperative gaming experiences, here are three fantastic options that encourage teamwork:



## 1. Overcooked! 2



In this chaotic cooking simulator, players must work together to prepare and serve meals under increasingly challenging conditions. Communication and coordination are key, as you'll navigate various kitchens, manage resources, and serve dishes while racing against the clock. It's perfect for family bonding and laughter!

## 2. Minecraft



This block-building sandbox game allows players to explore, create, and survive together. You can construct elaborate structures, embark on adventures, or simply enjoy the tranquility of mining and farming. The open-world nature encourages creativity and cooperation, making it an engaging experience for family members of all ages.

### 3. It Takes Two



This award-winning platformer is designed specifically for two players, making it a perfect choice for family gaming. In “It Takes Two,” you follow the journey of Cody and May, a couple going through a tough patch in their relationship. Transformed into dolls, they must work together to navigate a fantastical world filled with creative challenges and puzzles that require cooperation and communication. Each level introduces unique mechanics that emphasize teamwork, ensuring that both players are engaged and essential to progressing through the game. With its charming storyline, beautiful visuals, and emphasis on collaboration, “It Takes Two” is not just a game but an adventure that helps strengthen bonds and enhance family dynamics.

### 4. No Mans Sky (single player or in teams)





No Man's Sky allows players to explore planets with procedurally generated flora and fauna. No Man's Sky is an action-adventure survival game played from a first or third person perspective that allows players to engage in four principal activities: exploration, survival, combat, and trading.

## Competitive Games to Try Together

For those looking to embrace a bit of friendly rivalry while gaming, here are three competitive games that promise excitement and competition:

### 1. Mario Kart 8 Deluxe



A classic in competitive gaming, “Mario Kart 8 Deluxe” allows players to race against each other as beloved Nintendo characters. With vibrant tracks, creative power-ups, and unique vehicles, this game is a thrilling way to enjoy fast-paced races and unexpected twists.

### 2. Super Smash Bros. Ultimate





This beloved fighting game brings together characters from various franchises, offering a chaotic experience as player's battle it out in dynamic arenas. It's easy to pick up for newcomers, yet offers depth for seasoned players, making it perfect for family tournaments.

### 3. Halo



Combining soccer with rocket-powered cars, “Rocket League” is an exhilarating game that encourages competition and teamwork. Families can enjoy matches against each other or team up to take on other players online, providing plenty of opportunities for high-flying goals and epic saves!

Now that we’ve explored both collaborative and competitive gaming experiences, it’s clear that video games offer a range of opportunities for family bonding and skill-building. Whether you prefer working together in a chaotic kitchen or racing against each other on a vibrant racetrack, there’s a perfect game for every kind of family dynamic. As we continue, let’s delve into how these gaming experiences can be incorporated into your family’s routine, ensuring that the enjoyment and benefits of video gaming extend beyond individual sessions and become an enriching part of your lifestyle.

### **Supporting Conversations: Understanding the Gaming Experience**

Having supportive conversations about gaming can significantly influence your membership’s relationship with video games and foster an open dialogue that’s beneficial. Here are some tips for you to engage meaningfully:

### **Ask Open-Ended Questions:**

Encourage your members to share more about their gaming experiences by asking questions that require more than a simple “yes” or “no.” For example, ask, “What do you enjoy most about playing this game?” or “Can you tell me about a challenge you faced in the game and how you overcame it?” This not only shows your interest but also helps your players articulate their thoughts and feelings about the game. Remember conversations are important to those that suffer from PTSD and other challenges. These conversations can build up relationships while helping you #BeTheOne

### **Be Curious, Not Critical:**

Approach the conversation with curiosity. Instead of jumping to conclusions or making judgments, ask for details about the game’s story, characters, and objectives. This can help you understand why they find it engaging, and it provides a platform for discussing the underlying messages or skills the game may teach. It may even lead to other games that may fit the profile of your membership.

### **Share Your Own Experiences:**

Relating your own gaming experiences can create a bridge between generations. Sharing a game you enjoyed or expressing your thoughts about current trends in the gaming world can open up a more relaxed and relatable conversation, allowing your players to feel more comfortable sharing their perspectives.

### **Discuss Content and Themes:**

Some games can contain themes or content that may not be suitable for certain age ranges. Use the opportunity to discuss what they’re playing in context. Talk about any troubling themes and ask what they think about them. This helps to instill critical thinking and ensures you’re both on the same page about what’s appropriate.

### **Creating Life Balance:**

As you discuss their gaming habits, gently emphasize the importance of balance in their lives. Ask how they manage gaming time alongside other activities like schoolwork, sports, work, and “home” time. This helps your players reflect on their priorities while reinforcing the idea that gaming is just one part of a fulfilling routine.

By fostering these supportive conversations, you can build trust and understanding with your membership, ultimately promoting a healthy relationship with gaming. As you engage with them around their interests, you’ll not only strengthen your bond but also gain valuable insights into their world.

Remember, you probably have many hobbies your fellow members are not fascinated by, and you would expect them to have respectful and curious conversations whenever you have something exciting to share. If you take the time to listen to others and their interest in the activities that interest your players, going beyond games and including sports, music, and other social activities, imagine how much your connection with those who play’s games could become!

### **Setting Limits and Boundaries**

So, how much time is acceptable to play video games, and how often do we measure this? Ultimately, the answer will vary from Post to Post, and it is essential to find a balance that works for everyone.

As with any activity, it’s crucial to set time limits and boundaries when incorporating video games into the accepted household routine. This can help prevent excessive screen time and ensure that everyone is still engaging in other activities.

One approach could be setting a specific time for gaming each week, such as “Game Night Thursdays”.

It’s also essential to monitor the types of games being played and their content to ensure they align with our Legion’s values and beliefs. Parental controls are available on most gaming consoles and can help limit access to inappropriate material to our younger membership.

Selecting the right games is crucial to ensure that the gaming experience is positive and enriching. Here’s how to make informed choices:

**Read Reviews:** Online reviews and forums can provide valuable feedback from other parents and gamers. This can help you make well-rounded decisions.

### **Video Games and Suicide Prevention**

Connecting people to others who can provide mental health support and assistance with coping skills helps prevent suicide, and video games can play an important role by fostering connections and support.

Suicide is a growing public health problem and the second leading cause of death among young people in the US and worldwide. People may attempt suicide when they feel overwhelmed by problems, pain, and hopelessness but feel they lack the resources or support to cope. Connecting people to others who can provide mental health support and assistance with coping skills helps prevent suicide, and video games can play an important role by fostering connections and support. Whether through in-game interactions, membership on teams or guilds of players, or interactions on communication/media platforms such as Discord and Twitch, games offer many opportunities for players to communicate and connect. Recently, video game communities have been tackling the need for mental health support and suicide prevention for their members through a variety of innovative programs.

**Recent example:** *iThrive Games to be talking about their efforts in an upcoming panel called Suicide Prevention in Video Game Communities to be held April 27 at the American Association of Suicidology annual conference in Denver, Colorado.*



Many different factors have been linked to suicide. According to one theory, individuals who die by suicide are driven by three factors: feeling that they are a burden to others, feeling frustrated in their efforts to make meaningful connections, and becoming numb to the pain and fear associated with the idea of dying. These, along with hopelessness and difficulty with solving problems, making decisions, or seeking help can drive suicide ideation and attempts. Addressing social isolation/loneliness and problems coping with life stresses can be important targets for suicide prevention programs. Although about half who die by suicide do not have a mental health diagnosis those who have a diagnosis are more likely to feel like they don't belong. Suicide is a particular risk for some groups such as adolescents, older adults, military veterans, the unemployed, or those with low socioeconomic status. Members of marginalized groups such as LGBTQI individuals, refugees and immigrants, and indigenous peoples also have higher suicide rates.

Preventing suicide is a challenge. Even though we know factors that are associated with more or fewer suicidal thoughts and behaviors, existing prevention programs have yet to make reduced rates of suicide worldwide. The American Legion has created our #BeTheOne efforts in suicide prevention, as we have been battling 22 a day for a very long time. But even our communities have now invested in programs to assist. One of the most common measures in prevention is Gatekeeper “QPR” training-teaching individuals who are not mental health specialists how to recognize the signs of suicide risk, ask questions about suicidal thoughts and plans and manage suicidal behavior. Crisis intervention services such as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and local call or text centers provide anonymous assessment and counseling by trained individuals who often volunteer from the local community. Other training you should invest time in are ZSA (Zero Suicide Alliance), VA S.A.V.E., ASIST as well as course offered by FEMA. There is no such thing as “too much training”, as we in the Legion say Be The One to save a life.

New approaches to suicide prevention are needed, and recent research has focused on the potential role of video games in suicide prevention. We know that video games help people connect and feel that they belong to a community. Joining teams or guilds, or even just hanging out with people in-game helps players bond through shared activities. In a recent study of veterans in treatment for mental health conditions, playing games with others was found to be an important source of social interaction that helped some veterans overcome isolation or assume leadership roles. Although taking a break from daily life through games or other entertainment media is a common method of recreation that can help people recharge this study found that some veterans used games to help ward off suicidal thoughts or substance cravings when other coping strategies didn't work. Of course, excessive use of games can lead to other problems, so therapists should work with clients to understand the role and uses of gameplay in dealing with life challenges.

Video game groups, researchers, clinicians, and nonprofits are now seeking ways to leverage these potential benefits of video games. Academic groups such as the *Games for Emotional and Mental Health Lab* at Radboud University work to develop and promote games that enhance social and emotional learning, reduce anxiety, and teach problem-solving through gameplay experiences. The organization *Stack Up* provides a host of grassroots, game-related programs that support positive well-being through games, but is best known for its unique online suicide prevention program. *STOP (the Stack Up Overwatch Program)*, which provides anonymous online crisis intervention services and referrals 24/7 for adult members of its Discord server.

Other organizations focus on education and messaging to reduce stigma—getting the word out about mental health problems and fostering healthy discussions about coping. The weekly Twitch broadcast *PsiStream*, led by a licensed mental health counselor, educates viewers about mental health problems and encourages them to ask questions about uncomfortable or challenging topics. The nonprofit organization *Take This* supports mental health in the game industry through initiatives such as the Ambassador program, which recognizes Twitch

streamers who promote positive mental health through their streams. These emerging efforts provide exciting new opportunities to make a difference in suicide prevention and mental health support in the games industry.

### **Inter-generational Games Night**

Just imagine playing board games, cards, and hanging out with seniors, neighbors, children, preteens, teens, and other adults. This scene is something that can happen anywhere in America.

In Takoma Park, Maryland on every Tuesday evening from 7-9pm at Victory Towers an apartment building on Carroll Avenue you can find anywhere from twenty to fifty people of all ages playing games. As you approach the room you can hear laughter and people enjoying each other's company. Victory Towers is an assisted living complex, but on Tuesday nights it is game night for all. Many school students and local community members come down for the event and spend time as one family, with one common goal; to have fun.

Wouldn't this be a great if you can say this was your post? What great energy that your post will bring to its members while getting to know your community and future leaders.

### **Magic: the Gathering**



Playing Magic: The Gathering (MtG) can offer numerous benefits, including improved strategic thinking, problem-solving skills, and even enhanced memory and math skills, while also being a fun and social activity. Here's a more detailed look at the benefits:

#### **Strategic Thinking and Problem-Solving:**

MtG requires players to constantly analyze their hand, the board state, and their opponent's potential actions, fostering strategic thinking and problem-solving skills.

#### **Mental Agility and Quick Thinking:**

The fast-paced nature of the game and the need to make quick decisions under pressure can improve mental agility and quick thinking abilities.

#### **Memory and Math Skills:**

Players need to remember card effects, mana costs, and game mechanics, which can improve memory and math skills.

#### **Social Interaction and Community:**

MtG is a social game that allows players to interact with others, build friendships, and participate in a vibrant community.

**Learning and Adaptability:**

The game's complexity and ever-evolving meta-game encourage players to learn new strategies, adapt to different opponents, and stay current with the latest cards and rules.

**Resource Management:**

The game teaches players to manage resources effectively, which can be applied to real-life situations.

**Patience and Perseverance:**

MtG can teach players to be patient and persevere even when facing setbacks or difficult situations.

**Creativity and Expression:**

The vast card pool and diverse deck-building options allow players to express their creativity and build unique decks that reflect their individual style.

**Learning about different cultures and history:**

The game has a rich lore and history, which can be a good way to learn about different cultures and historical period.

**Where to get support for your younger/new players?**

[magikids.org](http://magikids.org)



MagiKids Turns Unused Magic Cards into Learning and Fun for Kids across the US

**Sort. Build. Play.**

MagiKids has developed an effective and easy process to get kids started with Magic: The Gathering, in a way that fosters learning, engagement, and creativity.

## **Our Process**

### Turning Unused Cards into Opportunities

Our MagiKids mission began with an idea- what if we took some of the unused cards Magic players have, and used them to teach kids Magic?

### **Supporting Teachers and Mentors**

We ship kits to teachers and mentors across the US to help them teach kids through teaching Magic. Our kits include not only cards, but also instructional materials and various Magic gear like deck boxes, sleeves, and dice.

Also ensure you have a few people in your group that can be mentors and make sure they are identifiable as many new players may come with their guardians and it will be easier to identify these experts to ensure people know to who to reach out to.



There is even an online platform so many can play miles away and can interact while playing on platforms like Discord.



## The Game of Darts - Electronic vs Steel Tip:



**Electronic dartboards** offer benefits like automatic scoring, increased accuracy, and reduced injury risk compared to traditional boards, while online play adds social interaction and the ability to compete with players globally.

**Benefits of Electronic Dartboards:** Automatic Scoring, Increased Accuracy, Safer for Children, Less Physical Space, Customization Options, additional revenue for your Post.

**Benefits of Online Dart Play:** Social Interaction, Global Competition, *(Online play allows you to connect with and compete against players from different cities, States or countries.)* Convenience, Variety of Games, Leagues and Tournaments, Improved Concentration, Enhanced Cognitive Function, Stress Relief, Social Interaction, and Physical Self-Control.





## Bullshooter.com

Bull Shooter Live: Is played on an Arachnid Board. This is the most common electronic board in Alaska



Tony (907) 617-2879 covers the SE Alaska (Ketchikan, Wrangle and Sitka) region. If you have a different owner please share their information to get an interstate Veteran online league. We can invite VFW and AmVets that have the same boards as well. We can also have a handicap setting set so everyone is on even ground playing in which makes it more fun.

**Steel Tip gameplay** is a more traditional game play. While mostly it is a free to play option, scoring is manually done. Also steel tips present a more dangerous setting for our younger players, and even our seasoned players especially when alcohol is introduced to the setting.

Like Electronic, leagues and tournaments can form however will not be open to those that cannot physically attend. With Electronics darts you can actually have an interstate league that only requires an internet connection linking our Post together even though there are miles of land, water and air between us. A great way to keep Post connected.

Other bar games that you can support are;

Inside: Pool, Shuffle Board and even host a Trivia Night

Outside: Horseshoes, Corn Hole, Badminton and Washers

## **Using Gaming to assist in Suicide Prevention**



## **The Positive Effects of Games on Mental Health**

Games can provide a sense of accomplishment, stimulate creativity, and offer a means of escape from the challenges of daily life. Completing a challenging level or achieving a high score can boost self-esteem and provide a sense of achievement. The immersive nature of games can also provide a form of escapism, allowing players to take a break from their daily challenges and immerse themselves in a different world.

Role-playing games, for instance, allow players to explore different identities and experiences, which can be therapeutic. They provide a safe space for self-expression and exploration, allowing players to step into the shoes of different characters and explore different narratives. This can provide a valuable outlet and can also help players to develop empathy and understanding.

Another one of the key mental health benefits of games is the opportunity they provide for social connection. Many video games feature multiplayer modes, allowing players to connect with others around the world. For people with disabilities, these connections can be particularly significant, providing a sense of community and belonging that can be difficult to find elsewhere. These games allow players to collaborate with others, work toward common goals, and build relationships. This can help to reduce feelings of isolation and improve mental

health outcomes. A gaming night allows players to fellowship and talk in person. Either gaming platform is acceptable to battle mental health trips and falls.

## **The Intersection of Mental Health and Video Games**

People with disabilities can be as much as five times more likely to suffer from issues with mental health than individuals without disabilities. Factors such as social isolation, lack of accessibility, and societal stigma can contribute to increased rates of depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions. The experience of living with a disability can often be isolating, leading to feelings of loneliness and disconnection from others. This isolation can be exacerbated by physical barriers and societal attitudes, leading to a higher risk of mental health issues.

However, video games can offer mental health benefits that are particularly potent for this population. They provide an accessible, inclusive space where people with disabilities can engage with others and experience a sense of belonging. This sense of community can help to mitigate feelings of isolation and improve mental health outcomes. Let's look at these benefits in greater detail.

## **Gaming, Mental Health, and Suicide Prevention**

Games can play a role in suicide prevention by providing a sense of community, offering a means of escape, and helping players develop resilience. The sense of community provided by online gaming can provide a valuable source of support, while the escapism offered by games can provide a temporary respite from stress and anxiety. The challenges presented by games can also help players develop resilience and coping strategies, which can be valuable in managing mental health. With our Be The One initiative, we are trained to identify those that are in need and a gaming night you can see the tell tales of those that are to be identified and you can start that conversation.

## Vendors to reach out to:

These are just a few companies we have been successful in getting donations of games for our night. We can add to this list with every successful donation we receive. We need to share with each other so we can all get the benefits for our membership.



**[stonemaiergames.com](http://stonemaiergames.com)**

**Stonemaier Games, aims to create games that appeal to a broad audience, including both experienced and new gamers, and encourages community involvement through various events and online platforms.**

If you're looking for donated games to directly serve students and marginalized youth, family, and communities. These games cannot be used for giveaways, raffles, auctions, or contests; rather, we contribute the games to be played with and by the people we're looking to support. We have contributed hundreds of games to low-income after-school programs, community centers, and nonprofits.

On 4/11/2025 Stonemaier Games donated 5 board games for our gaming nights (Post 13). Once received we will create game mentors for these games and used them as well and give them Social Media Kudos. (A \$180 value)



**[Tabletoptycoon.com](http://Tabletoptycoon.com)**

**Tabletop Tycoon is an independent game company based in New Hampshire. They are a publisher, seller, and distributor of tabletop games, including board games, dice, and more. They also engage in giving initiatives, donating games to organizations like Toys for Tots**



**[tabletopalliance.org](http://tabletopalliance.org)**

**Tabletop Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that promotes the use of games in education and community programs. They send out free game kits to educators, librarians, and community leaders to help them incorporate games into their work, according to their website. The organization was founded in 2020 and is based in Texas.**