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An Ecological Gaming Disorder Intervention: a Humanistic Framework of Holism and Eclectic Interactionism

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Gaming disorder is an emergent mental health condition and an increasingly acknowledged social problem of conspicuous cross-cultural relevance, the condition has correspondingly attracted greater attention from scholars, the mass media, and the general public alike. In accordance to the public health concerns elicited by gaming disorder, considerable efforts have been devoted to developing interventions for the condition. Whilst prevailing gaming disorder interventions have predominantly focused on treating the condition at the individual level, there has been scant investments in intervention efforts targeting at the complex interplay between intrapersonal and interpersonal problems pertinent to the development of the condition.

To address this notable gap in gaming disorder intervention, it is imperative to develop a holistic intervention based on the principles of eclectic interactionism. Our previous program evaluation studies have demonstrated the empirical efficacy of a parent-based program and a universal preventive intervention for curbing the incidence of gaming disorder, with both approaches having adopted Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory, attending to interactions between the individual and their surrounding environment. To further develop this integrative intervention framework, it is essential that future gaming disorder interventions concurrently attend to the temporally relevant socio-cultural influences on the development of the condition. Namely, to tackle gaming disorder with dedicated attention to the interactions between the developing individual and the concomitant microsystemic, mesosystemic, exosystemic, macrosystemic, and chronosystemic influences.

As a core principle of the intervention framework, it is of paramount importance to acknowledge the interactions between the developing individual, the changing parental attitudes, the mass media's depictions of gaming disorder, as well as broader socio-cultural beliefs toward gaming disorder over time. In particular, psychoeducation components should collectively aim to cultivate self-compassion and empathetic understanding from others, as well as (a) endowing adolescents with an array of adaptive coping strategies to combat gaming disorder, (b) fostering parent's knowledge of gaming disorder and encourage the adoption of empathetic parenting practices, (c) remediating some of the prominently inaccurate and sensationalized mass media reports on gaming disorder, which often lead to misconceptions about the condition, and (d) attenuating the stigmatization of gamers and mitigating the marginalization of individuals with gaming disorder (e.g., excessive ascription of individual culpability).

Through synthesizing a humanistic framework of eclectic interactionism, a holistic gaming disorder intervention can promote adaptive psychological functioning, as well as the developing individual's attainment of innate psychological needs as proposed by the Self-determination theory, which encompasses a sense of autonomy, relatedness, and competence.