

## **Learning Objectives for the Problematic Gaming Specialist Program**

### **LO 1**

Participants will demonstrate advanced proficiency in identifying the diagnostic criteria and clinical considerations involved with the experience of a game-related disorder. Through comprehensive analysis and case studies, participants will deepen their understanding of the nuanced presentation and assessment of gaming disorders, applying evidence-based diagnostic criteria and clinical guidelines to inform accurate diagnosis and treatment planning.

### **LO 2**

Participants will articulate a thorough understanding of problematic gaming and gaming disorder, synthesizing current research and clinical perspectives to define and differentiate these concepts. Through critical analysis and discussion, participants will explore the distinguishing features and diagnostic criteria of gaming disorder, while also examining the broader spectrum of problematic gaming behaviors within a biopsychosocial framework.

### **LO 3**

Participants will identify the neuroscience of addiction and gaming, and describe evidence-informed biopsychosocial factors associated with gaming. Drawing on neurobiological models of addiction and current research in the field of gaming psychology, participants will deepen their understanding of the neural mechanisms underlying gaming behaviors and addiction, as well as the complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors contributing to problematic gaming.

### **LO 4**

Participants will explain clinical factors and areas for convergence between gaming and gambling disorder. Through interdisciplinary exploration and case vignettes, participants will analyze the overlapping features and diagnostic criteria of gaming and gambling disorders, while also examining the unique clinical considerations and treatment approaches for each. Additionally, participants will explore potential areas of convergence and divergence in assessment and treatment strategies for gaming and gambling disorders within clinical practice.

### **LO 5**

Participants will list and describe online social interactions, identifying different models of human interaction within digital gaming environments. Through theoretical exploration and practical examples, participants will deepen their understanding of the diverse

range of social interactions facilitated by online gaming platforms, including cooperative play, competitive interactions, social networking, and virtual communities.

#### LO 6

Participants will list and contrast different genres of video games clearly and accurately, drawing on their knowledge of game design, mechanics, and thematic elements. Through detailed analysis and comparison, participants will develop a comprehensive understanding of the unique characteristics and player experiences associated with various video game genres, including action, adventure, role-playing, strategy, simulation, and more.

#### LO 7

Participants will identify the four structural elements required to classify a digital activity as a video game. Through systematic examination and classification, participants will learn to differentiate video games from other forms of digital media by identifying essential structural elements, including rules, goals, feedback systems, and player agency. By applying this knowledge, participants will enhance their ability to assess and analyze the interactive nature of digital activities within the context of gaming disorders and problematic gaming behaviors.

#### LO 8

Participants will list five ways about the purpose of gaming, the impact it has on wellbeing, and how this knowledge can be applied to working with clients. Through a comprehensive review of research literature and case studies, participants will explore the diverse motivations behind gaming behavior, the potential effects of gaming on mental health and wellbeing, and strategies for integrating gaming-related interventions into clinical practice to promote positive therapeutic outcomes.

#### LO 9

Participants will identify co-occurring mental health diagnoses to screen for during a clinical intake to identify therapeutic goals. Drawing on their knowledge of psychopathology and diagnostic assessment, participants will develop proficiency in recognizing common mental health disorders that may co-occur with gaming disorders, such as depression, anxiety, ADHD, and substance use disorders. Through case-based discussion and clinical scenarios, participants will learn to prioritize therapeutic goals and develop individualized treatment plans based on the unique needs of each client.

#### LO 10

Participants will identify the 10 player motivations as a concept which interacts with player personality and reward mechanisms involved in gameplay. Building on

psychological theories of motivation and personality, participants will explore the diverse motivations that drive individuals to engage in gaming activities, including achievement, socialization, immersion, competition, and exploration. Through case studies and empirical research, participants will deepen their understanding of how player motivations intersect with personality traits and reward mechanisms to influence gaming behavior and inform therapeutic interventions for gaming-related issues.

#### LO 11

Participants will describe the play and reward experiences of at least two different styles of games currently on the market for consumption by game players. Through detailed analysis and comparison, participants will explore the unique gameplay mechanics, narrative structures, and reward systems inherent in different game genres, such as role-playing games, first-person shooters, puzzle games, and multiplayer online battle arenas. By examining the distinctive play experiences offered by each genre, participants will gain insights into the diverse appeals and potential addictive qualities of various types of video games.

#### LO 12

Participants will describe positive psychology as a working paradigm for engaging problematic gaming. Drawing on principles of positive psychology and strengths-based approaches, participants will explore strategies for promoting resilience, self-efficacy, and psychological well-being among individuals struggling with problematic gaming behaviors. Through case-based discussion and clinical examples, participants will learn to apply positive psychology interventions to address underlying psychological needs and enhance positive coping mechanisms in clients with gaming-related issues.

#### LO 13

Participants will identify two ways parasocial relationships form and are reinforced in the play of common online video games. Through analysis of game mechanics, social interaction features, and player behaviors, participants will explore how virtual environments facilitate the development of parasocial relationships between players and fictional characters, avatars, or other players. By understanding the dynamics of parasocial relationships in gaming contexts, participants will gain insights into the social and emotional motivations driving gaming behavior and potential implications for mental health and well-being.

#### LO 14

Participants will discuss three ways in which socialization motivations combine to enhance the positive experiences in gameplay. Through examination of social interaction features, community-building mechanisms, and cooperative gameplay

dynamics, participants will explore how socialization motivations contribute to positive gaming experiences, such as increased sense of belonging, social support, and enjoyment. By understanding the role of socialization in gaming contexts, participants will gain insights into the potential therapeutic benefits of social gaming interventions and strategies for fostering positive social interactions among individuals with gaming-related issues.

#### LO 15

Participants will connect two cultural or identity-bound connections players experience through video games and explore how these interactions enhance the person's sense of belongingness and life satisfaction. Through examination of cultural representation, identity expression, and community dynamics within gaming communities, participants will analyze how video games serve as platforms for cultural exchange, identity exploration, and social connection. By understanding the role of cultural and identity-bound connections in gaming contexts, participants will gain insights into the potential psychological benefits of belongingness and life satisfaction for individuals with gaming-related issues.

#### LO 16

Participants will identify specific strategies for applying counselor approaches to game motivation understandings in a clinical setting. Drawing on principles of counseling psychology and motivational interviewing, participants will explore strategies for engaging clients in reflective exploration of their gaming motivations, values, and goals. Through case-based discussion and clinical examples, participants will learn to integrate client-centered approaches and motivational enhancement techniques into therapeutic interventions for gaming-related issues, fostering collaboration, self-awareness, and behavioral change.

#### LO 17

Participants will identify three existing implications from research on applying counseling theory and intervention processes to players of playing multiple types of online video games. Through critical analysis of empirical research and theoretical frameworks, participants will explore the potential applications of counseling theory and intervention processes to individuals engaging in diverse types of online video games. By understanding the unique characteristics and psychological needs of players across different gaming contexts, participants will gain insights into the development of tailored counseling approaches and evidence-based interventions for addressing gaming-related issues in clinical practice.

#### LO 18

Participants will explain the dual-factor model of mental health, articulate the key elements of the acronym letters of the PERMA model (Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment), and apply gaming to a strength and weakness profile through RPG trait development (e.g., Dark Souls). Through a comprehensive review of positive psychology principles and role-playing game mechanics, participants will explore how video games can facilitate character development, skill acquisition, and personal growth. By applying the PERMA model to gaming experiences, participants will gain insights into how gaming can promote mental health and well-being through the cultivation of positive emotions, engagement, social connections, meaning-making, and achievement.

#### LO 19

Participants will discuss the importance of well-being-focused interventions as it relates to therapeutic efficacy. Drawing on research evidence and clinical practice guidelines, participants will explore the role of well-being-focused interventions in enhancing therapeutic outcomes and promoting long-term recovery for individuals with gaming-related issues. Through case-based discussion and clinical examples, participants will learn to integrate well-being-focused approaches, such as mindfulness-based interventions, positive psychology techniques, and strengths-based assessments, into their therapeutic repertoire to address underlying psychological needs and promote holistic well-being.

#### LO 20

Participants will identify evidence-based ways that video games can increase positive emotions, life engagement, and personal relationships. Through analysis of empirical research and theoretical frameworks, participants will explore the potential benefits of video games for promoting positive psychological outcomes, including increased happiness, satisfaction, and social connectedness. By examining the mechanisms underlying these effects, participants will gain insights into how specific game features, gameplay mechanics, and social interactions contribute to enhancing well-being and fostering resilience in players.

#### LO 21

Participants will analyze Jungian and archetypal clinical case studies for transformative content played, the video gamer's identity, and clinical applicability. Through in-depth examination of clinical case studies and theoretical frameworks rooted in Jungian psychology and archetypal theory, participants will explore the symbolic meanings, narrative themes, and psychological dynamics present in video game experiences. By applying Jungian and archetypal perspectives to gaming contexts, participants will gain insights into the potential for video games to serve as vehicles for personal growth,

self-discovery, and therapeutic transformation. Through case-based discussion and clinical examples, participants will learn to integrate Jungian and archetypal principles into their therapeutic practice, facilitating deeper exploration of clients' gaming experiences and their implications for psychological well-being and personal development.

#### LO 22

Participants will describe facts and clinical features of gaming disorder, including cognitive, emotional, temperament, and personality correlates related to the impacts of trauma. Through comprehensive analysis and discussion, participants will explore the intersection of gaming disorder and trauma, identifying key factors that influence individuals' experiences and responses. By examining the effects of trauma on gaming behavior, participants will gain insights into how trauma-informed approaches can enhance understanding and treatment planning for clients with gaming-related issues.

#### LO 23

Participants will identify the biological, physiological, social, and environmental issues and beliefs associated with gaming and trauma. Through a holistic examination of gaming and trauma, participants will explore how these two aspects interact to influence clients' mental health and overall well-being. By evaluating the various domains affected by gaming and trauma, participants will develop a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities for intervention in this complex area of clinical practice.

#### LO 24

Participants will assess the effectiveness of a universal trauma-informed approach and the inclusion of evidence-based treatments. Through critical analysis of empirical research and clinical case studies, participants will evaluate the benefits and limitations of adopting a trauma-informed framework in treating gaming-related issues. By exploring evidence-based treatments, participants will develop skills in integrating trauma-informed care into their therapeutic practice, enhancing the quality of care and outcomes for clients experiencing gaming disorders and related trauma.

#### LO 25

Participants will demonstrate the effectiveness of a universal trauma-informed approach with gaming disorder. Through clinical application and case study analysis, participants will explore how trauma-informed care can be effectively integrated into the assessment and treatment of gaming disorders. By evaluating therapeutic outcomes and client experiences, participants will gain insights into best practices for adopting a trauma-informed approach to address the complex needs of clients with gaming-related issues.

#### LO 26

Participants will describe the foundations of mindfulness in different therapeutic models and how it can assist in managing symptoms and presentations of problematic gaming. Through a review of evidence-based mindfulness practices across various therapeutic modalities, participants will explore the potential benefits of mindfulness for enhancing self-regulation, emotional awareness, and cognitive flexibility in clients struggling with problematic gaming behaviors.

#### LO 27

Participants will prepare mindfulness techniques that can assist both clinicians and clients in building rapport, attention, insight, and awareness. Through guided practice and case-based discussion, participants will develop practical skills in implementing mindfulness exercises and strategies within clinical settings. By fostering a therapeutic environment of presence and attunement, participants will learn to support clients in developing greater self-awareness and emotional regulation.

#### LO 28

Participants will create a plan on how to therapeutically work with video gamers within clinical practice. Through case conceptualization and treatment planning, participants will integrate their knowledge of gaming behavior, therapeutic models, and client-centered approaches to formulate effective interventions. By designing tailored treatment plans that address clients' specific gaming-related needs and challenges, participants will enhance their clinical efficacy and promote positive therapeutic outcomes for video gamers.