

# SHADOW'S EDGE TRAINER TRAINING

Webinar III  
Digital Mental Health and Shadow's Edge



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# A Brief History of Digital Mental Health



## **The 2000s: The First Digital Applications**

- e-Therapy and email/chat-based support began.

## **2010s: Online Therapy Platforms**

- BetterHelp, Talkspace, Skype → Accessibility of therapy increased.

## **2020 and Beyond: Digitalization Due to the Pandemic**

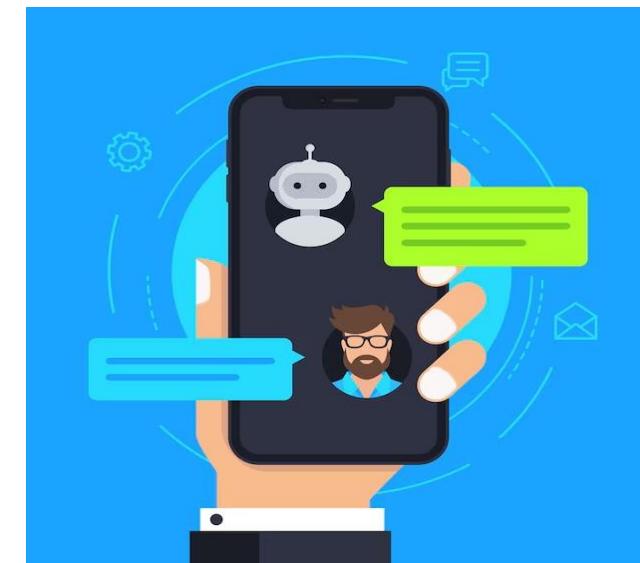
- Zoom therapy sessions and app-based solutions became widespread.
- Meditation and stress management apps (Headspace, Calm, Meditopia, etc.) gained prominence.

## 1) Therapist-Supported Online Platforms

- **BetterHelp:** 24/7 therapy via messaging and video
- **Talkspace:** Widely used in the US, licensed matching with therapists
- **Heltia / Hiwell:** Turkey-focused online therapy service
- **MindDoc:** Emotion tracking and professional recommendations

## 2) AI-powered chat therapists

- **Wysa:** AI recommendations for anxiety and depression, daily tracking
- **Woebot:** CBT-based emotional awareness and recommendations



## 3) Meditation and Mindfulness Apps 4) Gamified Approaches for Young People

- **Headspace, Meditopia:** Meditation, breathing exercises, sleep
- **Calm:** Guided meditations, relaxing stories
- **Shadow's Edge:** A game-based therapy app that helps young people process their emotions and heal.
- **Replika:** An AI-powered virtual friend app that can form emotional bonds



Validity, reliability?

# Games and Mental Health



## The Contributions of Games to Mental Health

### Reduces stress and anxiety:

- Provides relaxation by distracting the mind,
- Creates a feeling of happiness through increased serotonin and dopamine.

### Regulates emotions:

- Provides an opportunity to express challenging emotions ,
- Storytelling and art therapy-based games increase awareness.

### It strengthens social skills:

- Communication, empathy, and cooperation develop,
- Reduces social isolation.

### Develops problem-solving and creativity:

- Strategy, logic, and creativity develop,
- Encourages exploration of open-world and VR games.



## Games for Children: An Emotional and Social Development Tool *(Not just entertainment, but a space for healing and expression)*

|  Emotional Development                         |  Coping with Trauma   |  Social Skills  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expression of Emotions</li><li>• Symbolic play</li><li>• Emotional Regulation</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Play Therapy</li><li>• Digital games such as Shadow's Edge</li><li>• Art &amp; story-based games</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Role-playing (household chores, doctor's office)</li><li>• Cooperation &amp; team play</li><li>• Empathy development</li></ul> |

**"A child who plays expresses their inner world."**

— Donald Winnicott

**"Play helps children discover who they are."**

— Erik Erikson

## The Power of the Digital Domain in Identity, Relationships, and Emotional Regulation

### 1) Emotional Regulation & Stress Management

- Escaping Academic and Social Pressure offers a space.
- Mindfulness-based games like *Journey*, *Flower*, and *Gris* can be relaxing.

### 2) Identity Discovery & Self-Esteem

- Role-playing games provide an opportunity to explore different aspects.
- Overcoming challenges boosts the teenager's self-confidence.
- Examples: *Life is Strange*, *The Sims*, *Undertale*

### 3) Strengthening Social Bonds

- Multiplayer games support social relationships in a safe manner.
- They are particularly effective for introverted adolescents.
- Examples: *Minecraft*, *Fortnite*, *Among Us*

### 4) Cognitive and Strategic Skills

- Supports problem-solving, decision-making, and empathy. It supports the development of these skills.
- Examples: *Civilization*, *The Last of Us*, *Detroit: Become Human*



# Gaming and Mental Health in Adolescents

## Why do digital applications work for adolescents?

### 1) A Generation Intertwined with Technology

- Adolescents are growing up in the digital world.
- Mobile applications offer them a familiar and comfortable environment.
- *Example:* Shadow's Edge

### 2) Privacy and Security

- Allows them to express their feelings
- *Example:* Wysa, Woebot

### 3) Interactive and Gamified

- Mini tasks and leveling up attract adolescents.
- *Example:* Calm Harm

### 4) An Alternative for Resistance to Traditional Therapy

- The process of getting support becomes easier for teens who don't want to talk.
- *Example:* Replika

### 5) Accessibility and Flexibility

- Provides support whenever needed.
- *Example:* Headspace



# Gaming and Mental Health in Teens

**Game-based digital applications for adolescents offer an alternative or complementary approach to traditional psychosocial support methods.**

The table below summarizes the key differences between these two methods:

| Klasik PSS Oturumları                     | Dijital Müdahaleler (Oyunlar & Uygulamalar)    |
|---|--|
| Yüz yüze iletişim gerektirir              | Mahremiyet sunar, bireysel kullanım sağlar     |
| Belirli saatlerde yapılır                 | 7/24 erişim imkânı sunar                       |
| Terapist desteği zorunludur               | Yapay zeka veya rehberli içerik kullanılabilir |
| Katılım motivasyonu düşük olabilir        | Oyunlaştırma ile katılım artırılabilir         |
| Terapist ile birebir çalışmayı gerektirir | Kendi hızında ilerleme imkânı tanır            |

# Gaming and Mental Health in Adolescents

## The Contribution of Video Games to Post-Traumatic Recovery

Digital games can be a powerful tool for supporting mental well-being in adolescents. In particular, in post-traumatic processes, they can facilitate recovery through the following mechanisms:

- **Provides Attention and Engagement**

The naturally engaging and motivating nature of games increases interest in the therapeutic process.

- **Offers Active Interaction**

Players actively participate in the process. It provides a supportive environment for individuals who struggle to express themselves. Games offer a safe and supportive environment for individuals who struggle to express their emotions.

- **Provides Immediate Feedback**

Visual and auditory feedback reinforces behaviors and makes progress easier to notice.

- **Provides Accessibility**

The ability to play remotely offers an advantage for individuals with limited access to in-person services.



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# Games and the Nervous System & Brain

Games,

Teens find what they're looking for! ☺

## 1) Reduces the Stress Hormone Cortisol

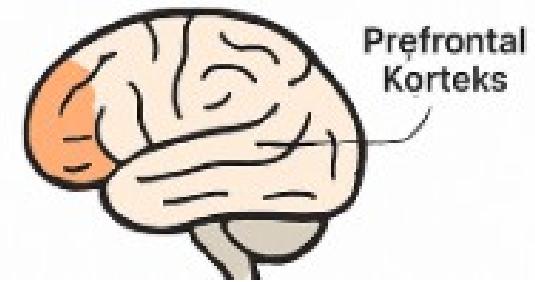
- Play helps reduce cortisol levels released during stressful moments. How?
- It helps distract from stressful thoughts through **mental focus and attention**.
- It triggers **positive emotions** through fun and a sense of achievement.
- Social games strengthen **feelings of belonging and support**.
- Games involving movement activate the parasympathetic system in a similar way to exercise.

## 2) Increases Reward and Bonding Chemicals

- The following neurotransmitters increase during play:
- **Dopamine**: Increases feelings of pleasure, reward, and motivation.
- **Oxytocin**: Strengthens bonding and trust (especially in multiplayer games).
- **GABA**: Calms the nervous system, reducing anxiety.

## 3) Supports Prefrontal Cortex Development

- Gaming stimulates the prefrontal cortex, the brain region responsible for executive functions.
- This area is critical for the development of skills such as planning, problem solving, emotion regulation, and goal-directed behavior.



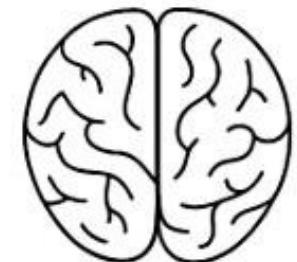
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# Play and the Nervous System & Brain

## How does play support brain integration?

- Play connects different areas of the brain through physical movement, creative expression, and emotional regulation.
- It promotes integration between the left brain (logic, analysis, language) and the right brain (senses, creativity, emotions).
- Especially in children, play allows them to temporarily step away from the verbal and analytical functions of the left brain, allowing them to express emotions associated with the right brain more freely.
- This process contributes to the interpretation of experiences, emotional regulation, and overall neurological balance.

Sol beyin  
yarımküresi      Sağ beyin  
yanmküresi



# Screen Addiction: Young People's Phone Use and Screen Time Management



# Screen Addiction

## What is Screen Addiction?

- ✓ It is the negative impact on daily life resulting from the **uncontrolled, prolonged** use of digital devices such as phones, tablets, computers, or televisions.

## Triggers

- Social media
- Digital games
- Video content

## Effects on Young People

- **Emotional:** Anxiety, restlessness, lack of concentration
- **Cognitive:** Decreased thinking and learning skills
- **Social:** Weakening of face-to-face communication
- **Physical:** Sleep disorders, poor posture, eye strain

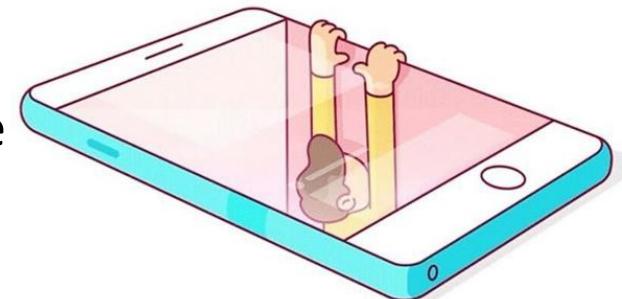


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## Neuropsychological Effects of Phone Use

- **Dopamine effect:** Phone notifications, social media likes, and rewards in games increase dopamine release in the brain. This strengthens the desire to use the phone repeatedly.
- **Shortened attention span:** Constant exposure to fast-paced and intense content can make it difficult for young people to focus their attention for long periods of time.
- **Disruption of sleep patterns:** Blue light emitted from screens reduces the release of the hormone melatonin, making it difficult to fall asleep.

While screen addiction is common among young people, is using digital tools contradictory to mental health?



# Let's discuss!

## Screen Use for Mental Health

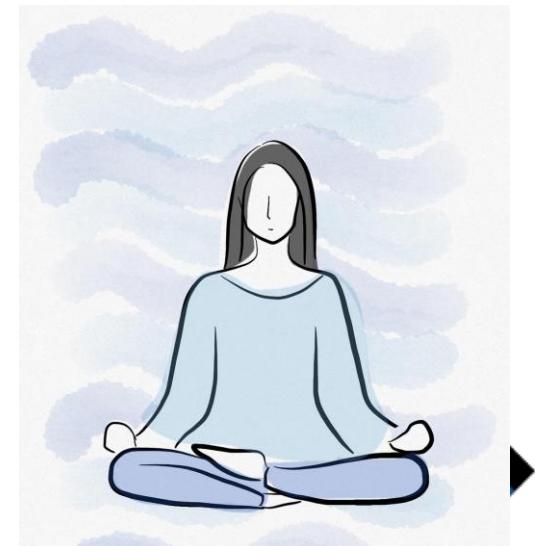
**The problem:** Screen addiction can lead to reduced attention span, sleep disorders, and social isolation.

So, is it appropriate to use digital tools for mental health while recommending screen time restrictions?

**Two different approaches:**

- **Mindless use:** Getting lost in social media, excessive gaming, staying up late in front of screens, disrupting sleep schedules.
- **Mindful use:** Therapy-focused games, guided meditations, mental health apps.

**Conclusion:** When used correctly and mindfully, screens can support young people's mental health.



Let's discuss!

## Digital Interventions for Young People: An Alternative for Youth?

Some young people find it difficult to participate in traditional psychotherapy or may resist face-to-face therapy.

So, can digital tools be a solution at this point?

**Potential advantages:**

- **Accessibility:** Anyone with internet access can use them.
- **Anonymity:** Reduces the fear of judgment.
- **Progress at their own pace:** Young people can use it when they are ready.
- **Gamification:** Can make therapy more engaging.



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# How Should Digital Mental Health Interventions Be Used Effectively?

## 1. Purposeful Use

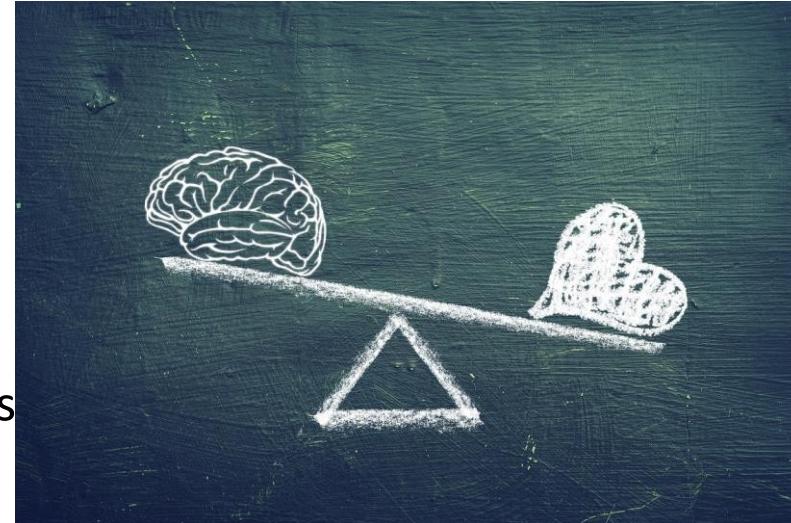
- Not random, but planned and limited use.
- Brain: Plan, limit, time management
- Example: Setting usage time limits, in-app reminders.

## 2. Interactive

- Applications that encourage active participation rather than just pass
- Both the prefrontal cortex and limbic system are active
- Ex: Journaling, meditation, therapy-supporting games.

## 3. Should Support Real Life

- Digital tools should not replace social life. They should be a part of it.
- Examples: Headspace (meditation), Shadow's Edge (therapy support support).



# Risks and Opportunities in the Digital World

| Negatif Etkiler (Kötü Kullanım)  | Pozitif Etkiler (Bilinçli Kullanım)                        |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Aşırı ekran süresi ve bağımlılık | Zihinsel sağlık destek uygulamaları                        |
| Sosyal izolasyon                 | Sosyal kaygıyı azaltan dijital terapiler                   |
| Uyku düzensizliği                | Uyku düzenleyici uygulamalar                               |
| Dikkat eksikliği                 | Odaklanmayı artıran araçlar (örn. meditasyon uygulamaları) |



# Introduction to Shadow's Edge and Its Psychological Background



Inter



# Shadow's Edge Workbook and Activity Book



# Application Books



**DIGGING DEEP**

Eğitim ortamlarında ergenler ve gençlerle ruh sağlığı yönetimi için pedagojik öneri

**Yazarlar:**

- Kevyn Eva Norton – Direktör (The Digging Deep Project)
- Juliana Santacoloma Alvarán – Araştırma ve geliştirme uzmanı (Cinde Vakfı)
- Simón Velásquez Matijasevic – Araştırma ve geliştirme uzmanı (Cinde Vakfı)
- Cristhian Torres Pachón – Araştırma ve geliştirme uzmanı (Cinde Vakfı)
- Leydi Johana Marín López - Araştırma ve geliştirme uzmanı (Cinde Vakfı)
- Yuri Andrea Soto Ramírez - "Soacha ve Pereira'daki ergenlerin ve gençlerin ruh sağlığı yönetimi için güçlendirilmesi" Projesinin uygulayıcısı
- Orlando Scopetta - Soacha ve Pereira'daki ergenlerin ve gençlerin ruh sağlığı yönetimi için güçlendirilmesi Projesi Koordinatörü

**Sunum**

Bu kitapçıkta sunulan öneri öğretmenlere, okul danışmanlarına ve sağlık profesyonellerine yönelik. Ruh sağlığının geliştirilmesi, ruh sağlığı sorunlarının önlenmesi ve tedavisine yönelik kaynaklara erişimin zorluğu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, bu rehber ergenlere ve gençlere yönelik kurumsal teklifi tamamlayan bir seansenktr.

Kitapçığın amacı, ruh sağlığının geliştirilmesinde dijital bir yardım ve öz farkındalık geliştirilmesine yönelik bir rehberin kullanımını bütünlüştiren pedagojik bir öneri yapılmıştır bir şekilde sunmaktadır. Öyküsel terapiye dayanan bu araçlar, bilimsel çalışmalarla doğrulanmış ve 2021-2023 yılları arasında ergenlerin ve gençlerin ruh sağlıklarını yönetmeleri için güçlendirilmelerini amaçlayan bir projede Kolombiya'da uygulanmıştır.

Dijital yardım, mobil cihazlar aracılığıyla ücretsiz olarak edinilebilen bir uygulama olan Shadow's Edge olarak adlandırılmalıdır ve öz farkındalık kılavuzu, kullanımından en büyük faydayı elde etmek için dijital uygulamaya dayalı etkinlikler öneren bir metindir. Bu primerdeki töleye çalışmalar, grup faaliyetlerinden yararlanarak, ortak düşünmeyi teşvik ederek ve her katılımcının bireysel çalışmalarını tamamlayarak her iki araci dört oturumda entegre etme imkânı sunmaktadır.

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# Original Application Method and Maya Foundation Application Methods





## Materials:

Notebook or paper and pen for journaling

White screen  
for projection

Multiple phones or a separate session for each group One psychologist +  
one interpreter

Art therapy activities before and after the session

Activity book → We created a session flow from activities corresponding to the  
Maya Foundation SPR skills.



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Group session

Parent sessions

Adolescents 10-12 and 13-15

Post parents' comments here: "Children's tendency toward violence has decreased."

Drawbacks: Since the game isn't a full-fledged game, they might get bored, and they couldn't continue playing on their own phones at home.

Advantages: Children in disadvantaged areas without access to technology were able to access this application and play the game in a group setting.



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