

grand theft auto

An Online Safety Shareable by INEQE Safeguarding Group

While most games focus on beating the 'baddies', this action-adventure game is all about acting out a life of crime yourself. But while playing high-speed chases and heists in a virtual city obviously has a lot less consequences than doing the same offline, many safeguarding experts question if it's truly 'risk free' for young players.

What is GTA?

Within the current series of games, users play characters completing criminal missions across cities, from stealing cars to drug smuggling. Players can also choose from a range of side quests or just explore without a set purpose.

! Potential Risks

GRAPHIC GAMEPLAY

GTA is known for its violent themes, sexual content, adult language and references to drugs and alcohol. And, of course, there is also the game's main storyline, criminality.

MISOGYNY AND SEXISM

The creators of Grand Theft Auto have previously come under criticism for the game's depiction of women, including how they're dressed and giving health 'boosts' to players who sleep with female characters and murder them to receive their money back.

SCREENTIME

Games like Grand Theft Auto can be immersive, and users may find it difficult to limit their screen time, particularly if they are free playing/exploring, rather than following storyline tasks and completing missions.

IN-GAME PURCHASES

Although players earn 'cash' through completing tasks in the game, virtual cash cards can also be purchased online for real money. This option may be tempting for young people so they can quickly buy their character in-game purchases, like vehicles and property.

TOP TIPS!

TALK ABOUT PEER PRESSURE

Half the appeal of playing GTA may be because their friends are! Talk to the young person in your care about what peer pressure is and what to do if they're being pressured or bullied.

TRUSTED ADULTS

Make sure they know who their trusted adults are so they know who to turn to if something is worrying or upsetting them.

DISCUSS AGE RATINGS

Have a conversation about what age ratings are and why they matter. Talk about how some content may be harmful to underage players. But remember, this isn't a lecture, it's a discussion!

FIND FUN GAMES

Research alternative, age-appropriate games together. Find out what type of game appeals to them and go from there!

Hype around GTA

Before the release of a new Grand Theft Auto game, there is usually much excitement and online speculation. This type of hype and anticipation can catch the attention of young people and make them eager to play both the new version and existing versions so it's important to be aware of previous and new content within the game.

Already played it?

If you find out the young person in your care has already played GTA or similar, it's important you stay calm. Getting angry or very upset brings the risk they won't come talk to you about their online experiences in the future. Instead, ask them what they thought of the game and if anything upset or shocked them. Give them plenty of space and time to talk!