Public Health | Life Balance

Don’t Starve: PLAYER IMPACT GUIDE

14+ | 1-2 Hours

“Don’t Starve drives me mad like few games ever do. It provided me with dozens of exhilarating brushes with death, but padded those unforgettable moments with long stretches of tedious busy work. It’s the type of game where you can spend hours mining the environment, outfitting your character, and fortifying your home base, only to have your slice of paradise shattered by a terrifying, nearly-unstoppable shadow beast invasion. It’s rogue-like at heart, meaning that death is inevitable, and once you die, it’s truly game over.”

--Marty Sliva, IGN

ABOUT Don’t Starve

Don’t Starve drops the player into a wilderness with nothing. Players take on the role of a scientist named Wilson who is trapped in a strange world by a demon. The parting words from the capturer are, “Find food before dark.” Wilson is then sent on his way to brave the wilderness and survive dangers like monsters, the dark, starving and staying sane. There is no “winning” in this game – there is just surviving, and of course, not starving. For more information, visit: http://www.dontstarvegame.com/

THEME FOR THIS GUIDE: Life Balance

Life balance is about managing personal wants and needs balanced with demands from external forces, sometimes related to friends, family, work, or school. While Don’t Starve is a fictional world with extreme and fantastic survival requirements, players can think about the various parts of life they manage and relate “not starving” to having a strategy for personal success and creating a balanced experience for daily life.

WHY USE THIS GUIDE?

In this guide, we invite you to think about how Don’t Starve might serve as a metaphor for balancing real life, considering personal needs and environmental demands. In the game, players might collect the things needed to make a science machine but neglect hunger in the process and end up starving. How is this like focusing on one area of your own life at the potential expense of another?

Answer the questions below and record your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

GAME BASICS

- Eat a berry. What happens? What if you cook it first?
- Walk around when it starts to get dark. What are the consequences?
- Create a straw roll and sleep in it. What does this help and at what cost?
- Kill a monster such as a spider and collect the meat. What if you attempt to eat it? What does this affect?

THEME INSIGHTS

- What is the cost of eating spoiled food? Is being less hungry worth the negative effects?
- When you start to get hungry in the game would you rather take the time to cook food or eat it raw? Why?
- What were the advantages of staying up at night? How does this compare to the advantages/disadvantages of sleeping at night?
- There are many foods that have negative effects on your sanity. Would you rather be hungry or insane? Why?

WORLD CONNECTIONS

- Think about your needs, wants, and the external demands of your own life. How do you balance personal time, family, and work or school?
- Are there areas of your life that you focus more on than others? Does this work well for you?
- What would it do to your day to shift your priorities and make decisions differently?
- What would happen if you completely neglected one important aspect of you life for a month?

Bonus Challenge: Play Don’t Starve with a friend and talk about the choices each of you might make during game play. How are your approaches similar or different? Make a short web video or social media post sharing your insights and share the link on the Center for Games & Impact Facebook page at http://facebook.com/gamesandimpact.