



About Game to Grow

Game to Grow is a non-profit organization founded in 2017 on the belief that games of all kinds have the power to improve people's lives. Game to Grow's weekly therapeutic social skills groups help young people become more confident, creative, and socially capable using tabletop games, most notably Dungeons and Dragons. The founders and lead facilitators Adam Davis and Adam Johns use their years of experience in couple and family therapy, drama therapy, and education to promote social growth among youth in a fun, safe environment.

Game to Grow also works to spread the intentional application of games by traveling to speak at public conventions and academic conferences. The founders provide training and consultation services so that other therapists, educators, and community organizers can use the beneficial power of intentional gaming in their own communities, around the country and around the world.

Mission and Goals

Game to Grow has three main goals:

1. Provide therapeutic and educational gaming groups that contribute to the growth of communities
2. Promote an understanding of the power and benefit of games across the world
3. Train others to use game-based interventions intentionally to help youth and other populations

Game to Grow believes in the inherent benefits of games to those who play them, and understands these benefits are enhanced when games are intentionally facilitated by a trained professional.

It isn't just about roleplaying games! All games—board games, card games, and video games—provide opportunities to help players grow.

Population Served

Game to Grow runs five weekly game-based social skills groups and serves more than 30 youth between the ages of 9 and 25 in the greater Seattle area each week. Up to five players per group come together weekly for 90-minute sessions over a 10-week quarter. Sitting around a table, rolling dice, and role-playing, players overcome the challenges associated with social anxiety, high-functioning autism, Asperger's syndrome, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and forming meaningful, supportive friendships in a technologically immersed society..

Grants and individual donations enable Game to Grow to provide direct services, expand the service area of groups, improve the materials available to players, and provide scholarships that will lower or eliminate fees for families with greater financial need.

Impact

Current support for Game to Grow comes from parents who have witnessed the effectiveness of therapeutic gaming for their children in Johns' and Davis' weekly groups.

“Over a year later, and both kids are just as engaged as they were the first day! An added bonus is that they work together collaboratively. Wheelhouse has helped tremendously with our sibling struggles as well as how to work with people outside of our house.”

“My normally quiet and introverted son leaves this workshop smiling and excited to share out the adventures he just embarked upon. He sees how to better listen, interact, and help others. Thank you for this experience for him and our family.”

“Before these groups she was very introverted, afterwards, she has come out of her shell, she shines.”

“These groups have helped my family because my daughter has been able to express her feelings better, because she understands them.”

History

Game to Grow is an extension of the efforts of Wheelhouse Workshop, a Seattle-based company founded by Adam Davis and Adam Johns in 2013 to help youth build social skills through the

intentional and targeted use of tabletop role-playing games. Davis and Johns combined their training and expertise in family therapy, education, and drama therapy with years of experience as gamers and facilitators to harness the power of tabletop role-playing games to improve players' empathy, frustration tolerance, creative problem solving abilities, and leadership skills.

After more than six years of facilitating groups serving the greater Seattle community, Johns and Davis founded Game to Grow to promote the application of intentional gaming to more people with a greater scope of challenges. Using the Wheelhouse Workshop model of game-based interventions, Game to Grow has expanded to reach a broader audience of players with a larger range of therapeutic goals than was previously possible.

Vision

Game to Grow believes that games of all kinds can improve people's lives, and these benefits are not limited to helping youth. Intentionally facilitated games can provide support to adults struggling with anxiety and depression, improve cognitive functioning in the elderly, provide relief for veterans suffering from PTSD, and help many other individuals overcome serious challenges. In the years to come Game to Grow will expand to serve these populations through providing direct services and offering support and resources to other providers so that they can use the power of intentional gaming to provide individuals in their care lasting life-enriching benefits.

About the Founders

Adam Johns, LMFT earned his Master's degree in couple and family therapy at Antioch University after earning his Bachelor's in Psychology from the University of Arizona. In addition to his work with Game to Grow, Adam is a therapist in private practice. Adam Johns has been playing tabletop role-playing games for 20 years, and is very involved in the geek community.



Adam Davis, MEd earned a Master's degree in Education with a focus in drama therapy from Antioch University Seattle, and is a recognized member of the North American Drama Therapy Association. Adam is a contributing author to [The Walking Dead Psychology](#), and has also served as a public school teacher. In addition to working with Game to Grow, Adam is working to develop a therapeutic video game program with the Atlantic Street Center.

Davis and Johns have spoken around the country about their work, addressing audiences at the Penny Arcade Expos in Seattle, San Antonio, and Boston; Emerald City Comicon; OrcaCon; and Save Against Fear, a convention in Pennsylvania about the therapeutic use of gaming. They have appeared on podcasts and twitch streams, and their work has been covered by respected gaming and other news outlets, both nationwide and internationally. Johns and Davis also returned to their alma mater to teach a Masters workshop concerning the use role-playing games in clinical practice.

Press

“RPG Therapy for Kids is a Real Thing, and It Works.” *Geek and Sundry*. May 16, 2017

“Therapists are Using Dungeons and Dragons to Get Kids to Open Up.” *Kotaku*. May 1, 2017

“Wheelhouse Workshop Launches Third Social Skills Group Using Role-Playing Games for Seattle Youth” (press release). *PRWeb*. April 2016

Podcasts

“Ego Check with the Id DM - Episode 5 - Adam Davis and Adam Johns.” The Id DM. December 2016.

Appearances

“The Past, Present, and Future of Therapeutic Role-Playing Games.” PAX East 2017.

Contact

Thank you for your interest in Game to Grow. Please contact us for more information.

General Inquiries

contact@gametogrow.org
(425) 405-5316

Adam Johns

adamj@gametogrow.org

Adam Davis

adamd@gametogrow.org

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