

# Toxicity in Video Games at Northeastern University

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## Background

Toxicity is an ongoing problem in many communities, but especially in video games. Northeastern University is no exception to this. We decided to take a deep dive into the toxicity many Northeastern Students face when playing games and discover where this toxicity is more prevalent, in what forms, and why.

## Research question

In which types of games do Northeastern students face the most toxicity?

## Hypothesis

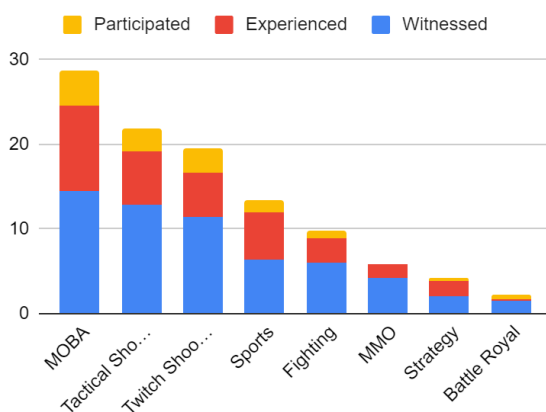
We hypothesize that of the Northeastern students who play competitive online games, MOBA players face the most toxicity

## Procedure

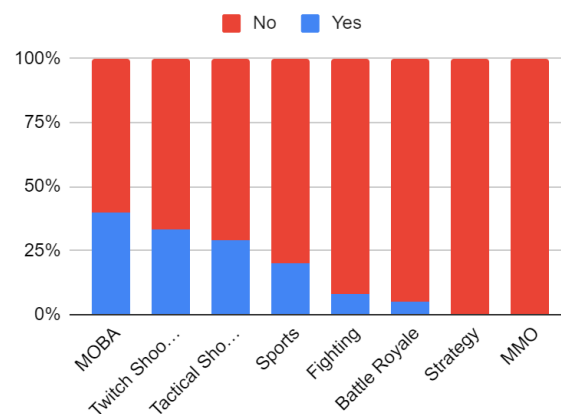
We wrote a survey on Google Forms asking about the respondent's experience with toxicity in games. Most of the questions were divided into sections based on 8 game types: Tactical Shooters, Twitch Shooters, Battle Royale, Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA), Strategy, Fighting, Sports, and Massive Multiplayer Online (MMO). Respondents were allowed to opt out of sections that were not relevant to them. Each section featured the same questions on the respondent's recent experience with toxicity. We asked respondents about toxicity they witnessed, were targeted by, and participated in. We also asked respondents for their opinion on each community as a whole, including online vs in-person, casual vs competitive, etc. This survey was sent to the Northeastern gaming community through various discord servers. Some were dedicated to specific games, others were general gaming communities, and some were not game-specific.

**The Results:** [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Sf23mDf2j4j58EaNqQz-xBZoYWEIC-0\\_y3tmRweWxHU/edit](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Sf23mDf2j4j58EaNqQz-xBZoYWEIC-0_y3tmRweWxHU/edit)

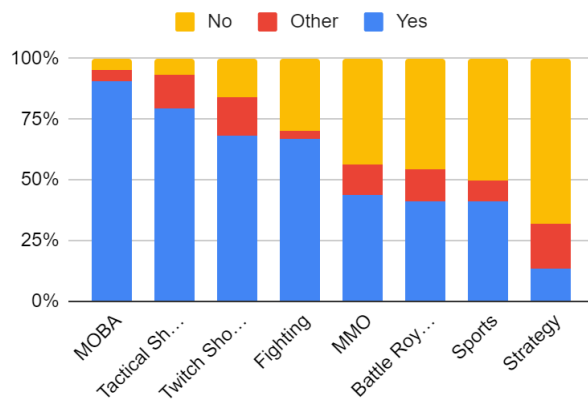
Toxicity per Type within Last 6 Months



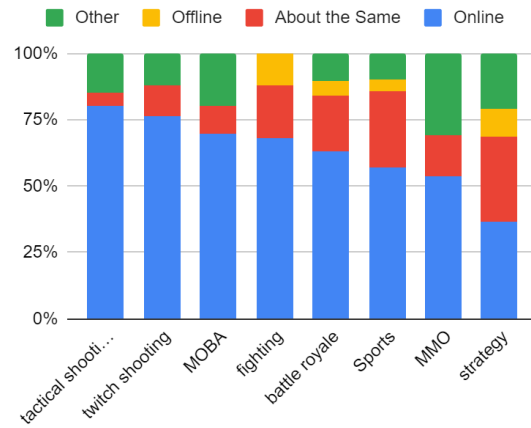
Did you feel encouraged to be toxic?



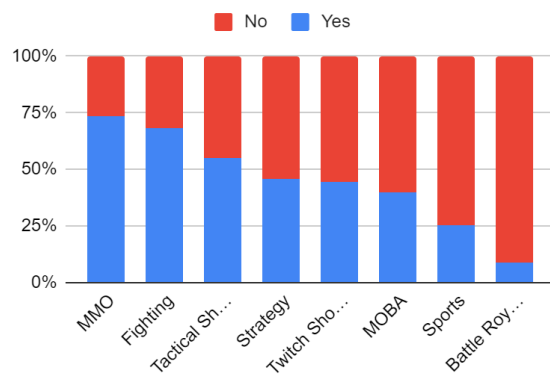
Do you feel that this game type has a problem with Toxicity?



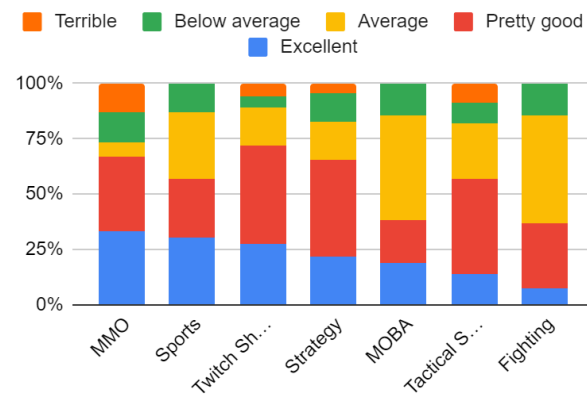
Do you feel this game type is more toxic online or offline?



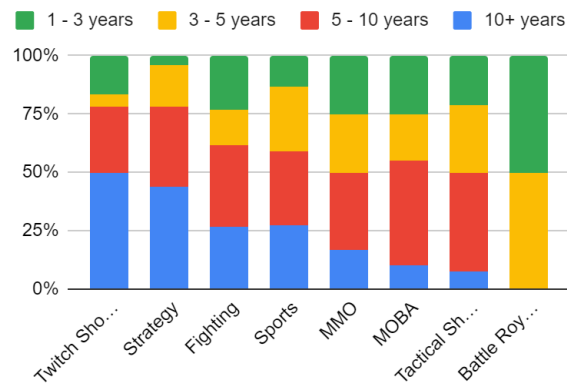
Are you a part of this game type's Community?



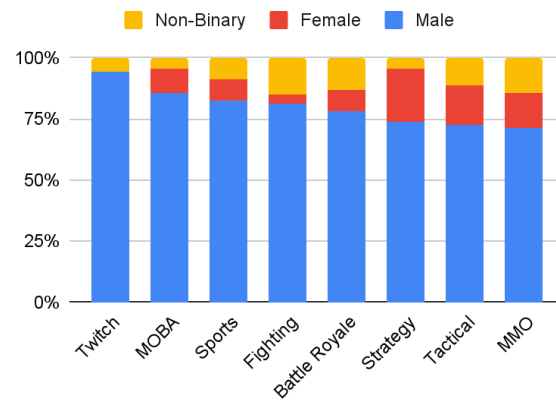
What would you consider you skill level to be at this game type?



How long have you been playing this game type?



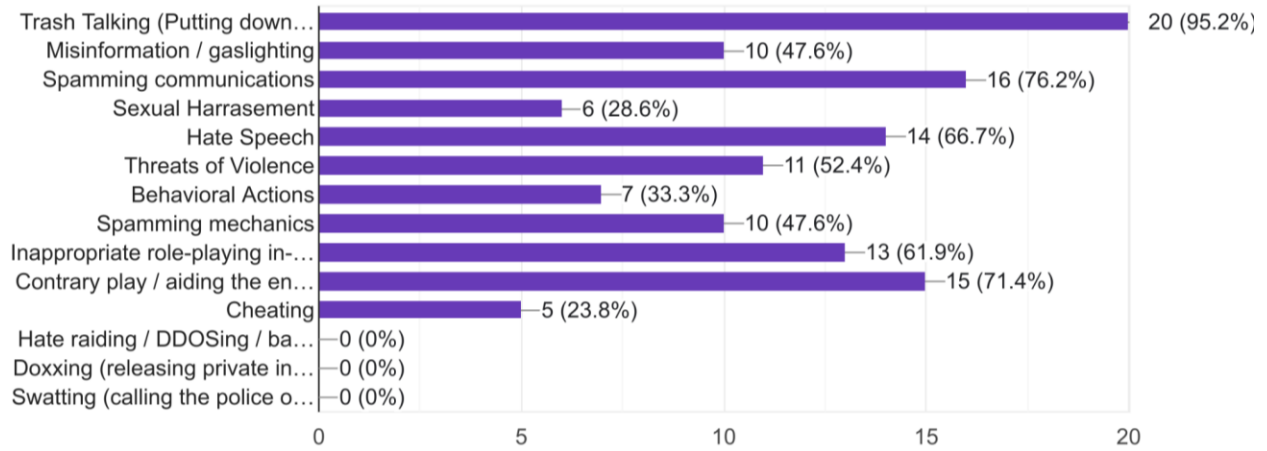
Gender by Game Type





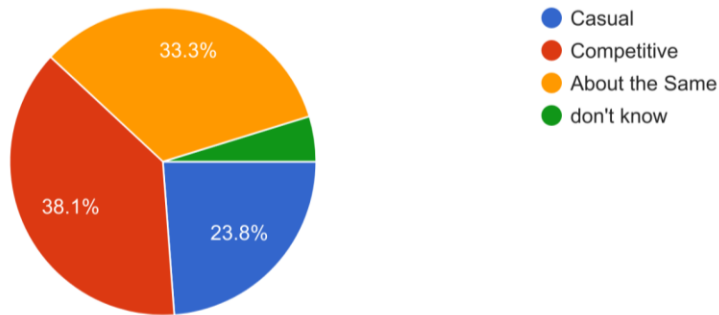
### What kind of toxic behavior did you experience when playing MOBA games?

21 responses



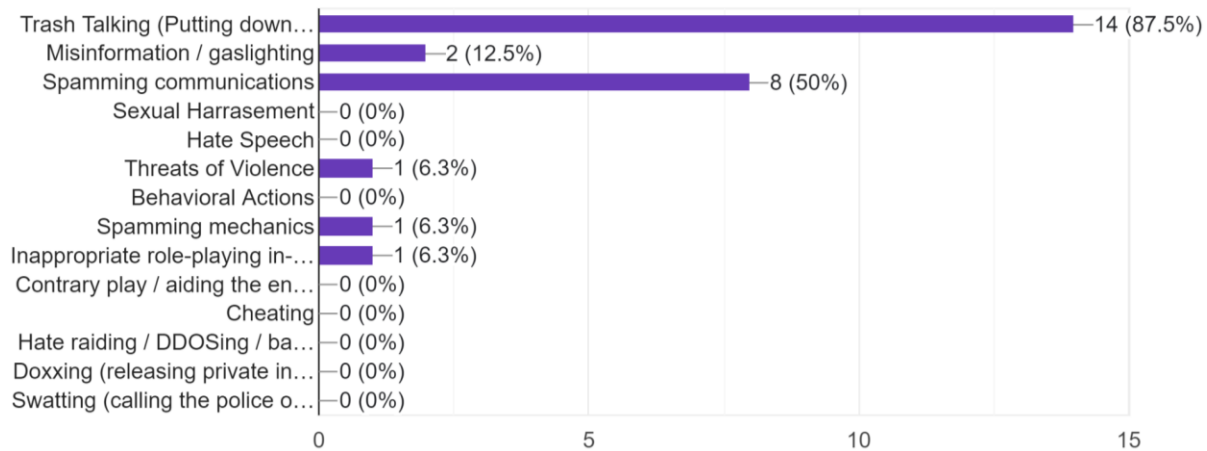
### Do you find that MOBA games are more toxic in casual or competitive circles?

21 responses



### What kind of toxic behavior have you engaged in when playing MOBA games?

16 responses



## Tactical Shooter

*Rainbow 6 Siege, Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, Valorant, Overwatch, Team Fortress 2*

“There are different roles in Overwatch: tank, DPS, and support. I often get toxic when there's a player who can't manage to play decently in any of these roles, especially in competitive mode.”

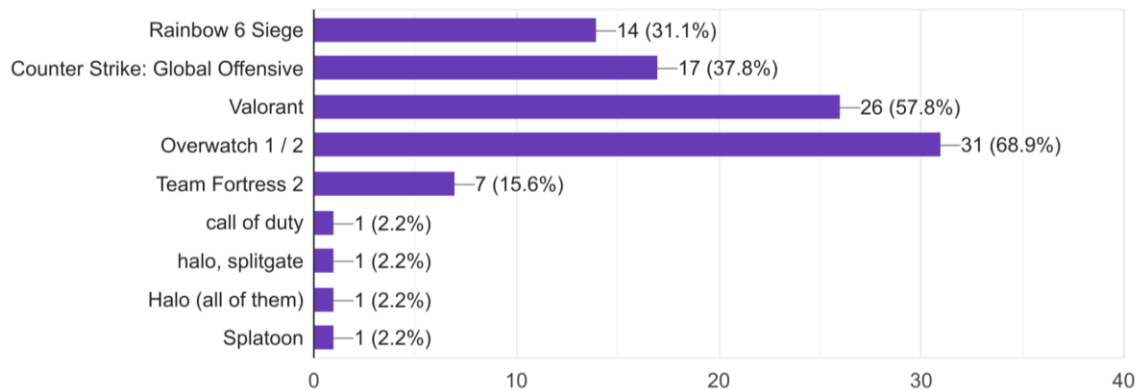
“I only act toxic in response to someone else acting toxic to piss them off.”

“If someone talks down to me for performing badly even though I am performing my role fine and they are in fact the one causing the issue, then I will get upset. Otherwise, I don't engage at all in voice chat for fear of harassment.”



Please select any games you play on this list.

45 responses



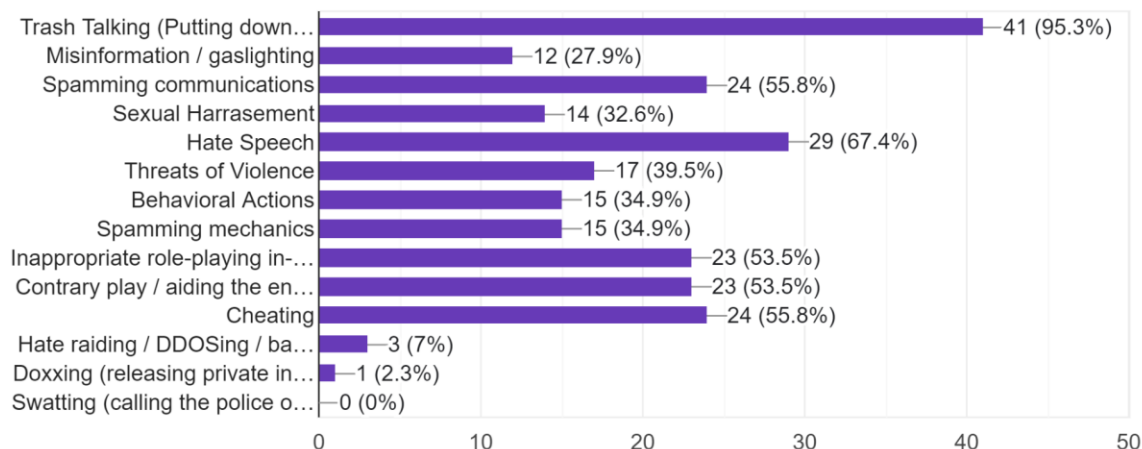
Do you find playing tactical shooter games makes you angry, impatient, frustrated, or otherwise upset?

44 responses



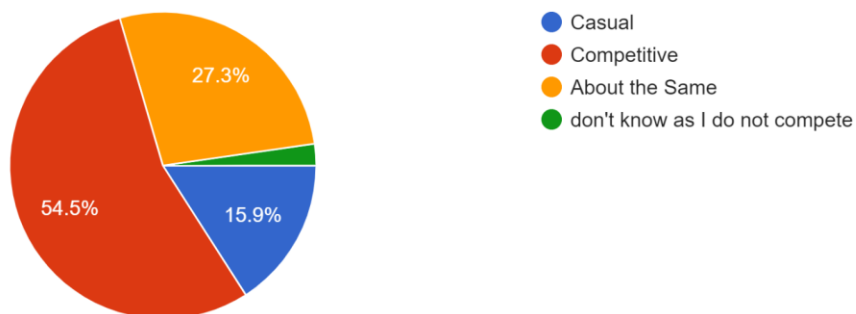
### What kind of toxic behavior did you experience when playing tactical shooter games?

43 responses



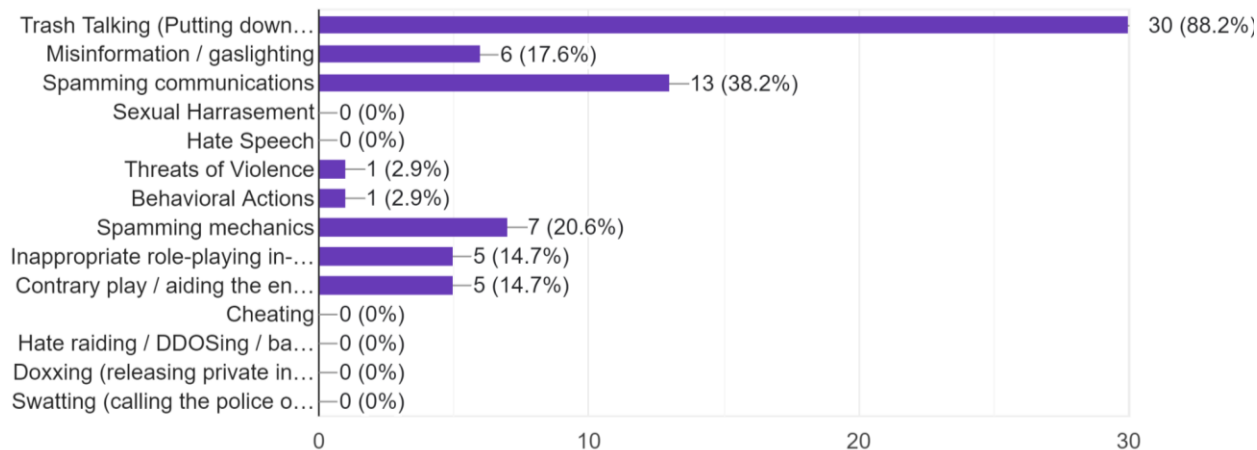
### Do you find that tactical shooter games are more toxic in casual or competitive circles?

44 responses



### What kind of toxic behavior have you engaged in when playing tactical shooter games?

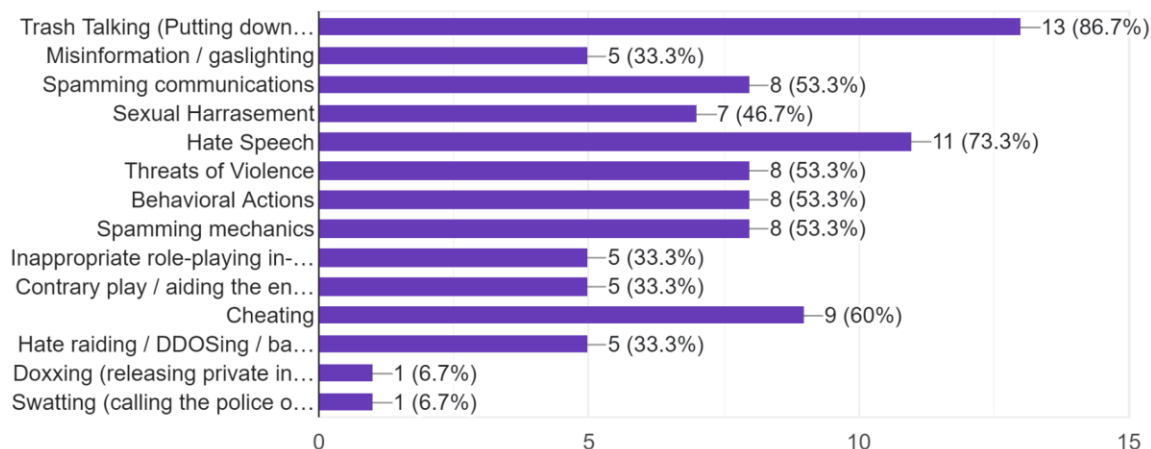
34 responses





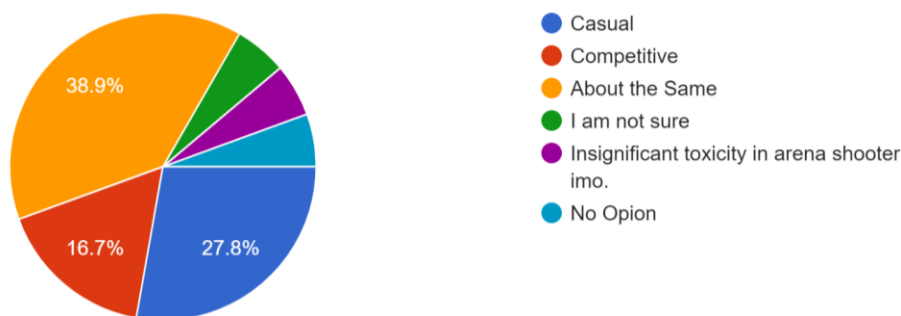
### What kind of toxic behavior did you experience when playing twitch shooter games?

15 responses



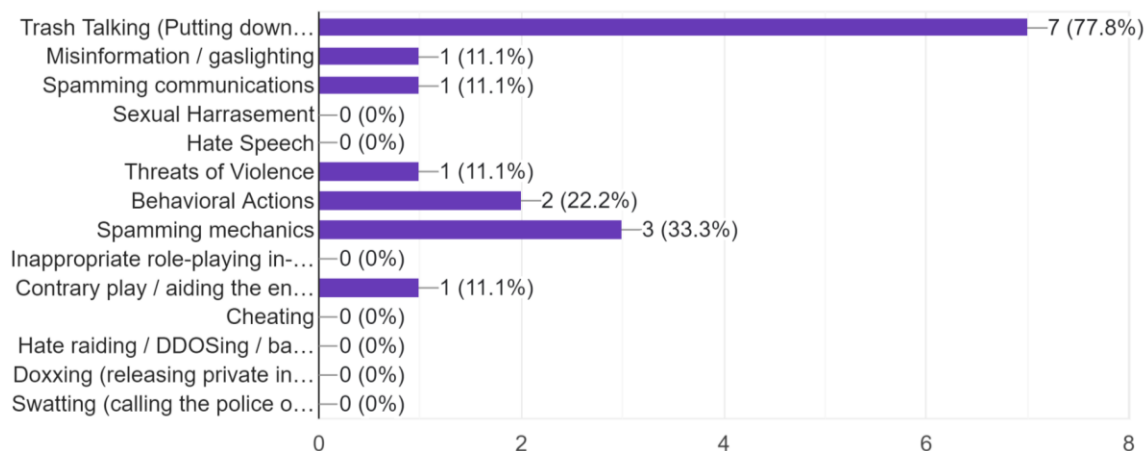
### Do you find that twitch shooter games are more toxic in casual or competitive circles?

18 responses



### What kind of toxic behavior have you engaged in when playing twitch shooter games?

9 responses



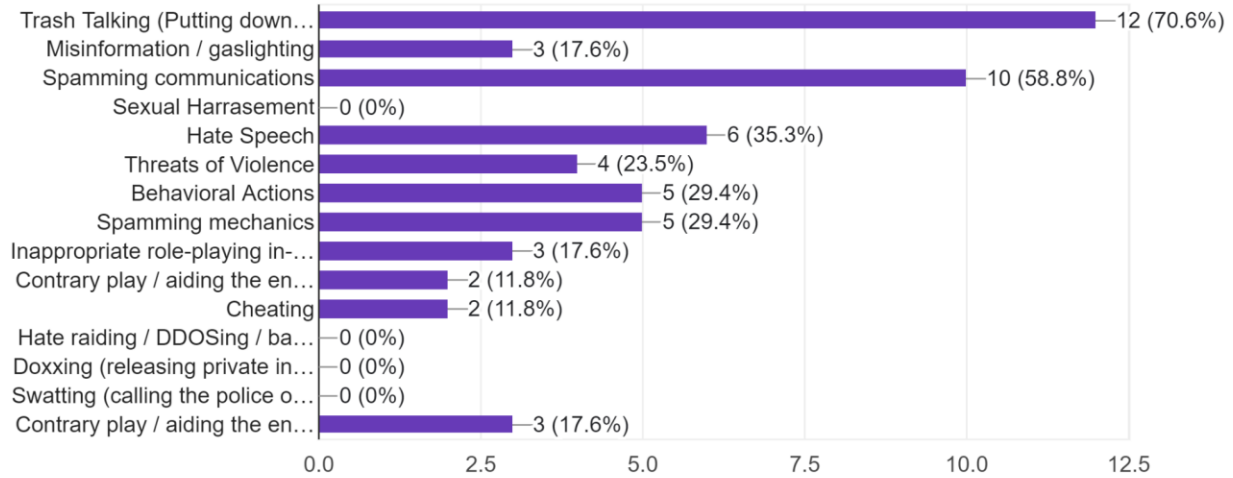
## Sports Games





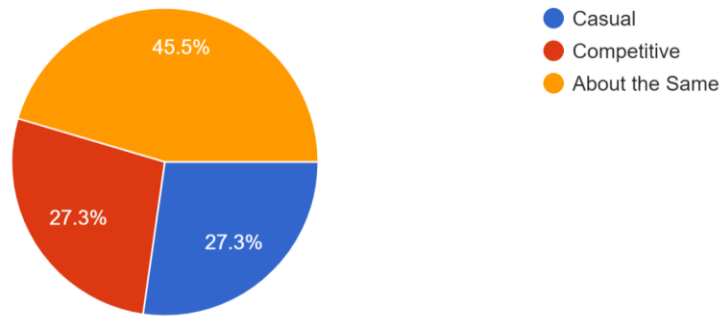
### What kind of toxic behavior did you experience when playing Sports games?

17 responses



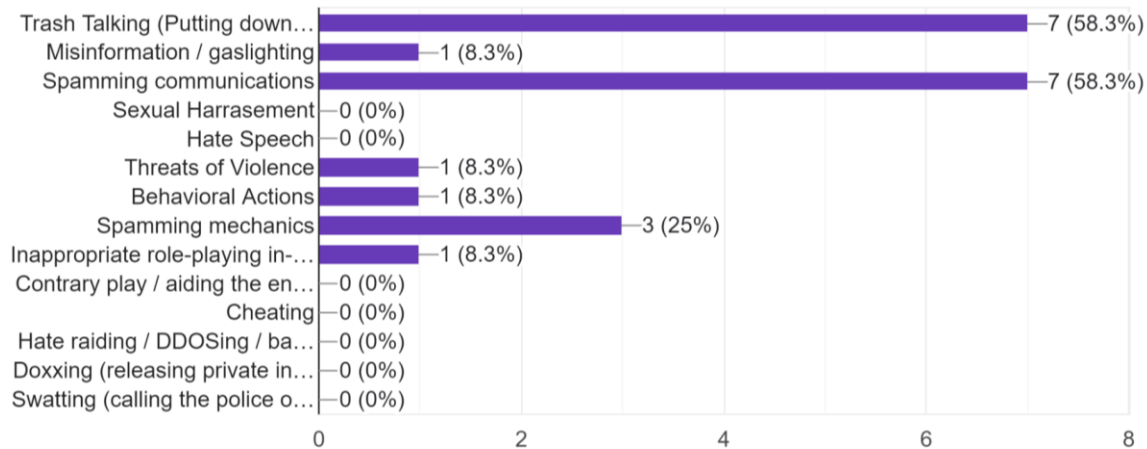
### Do you find that Sports games are more toxic in casual or competitive circles?

22 responses



### What kind of toxic behavior have you engaged in when playing Sports games?

12 responses

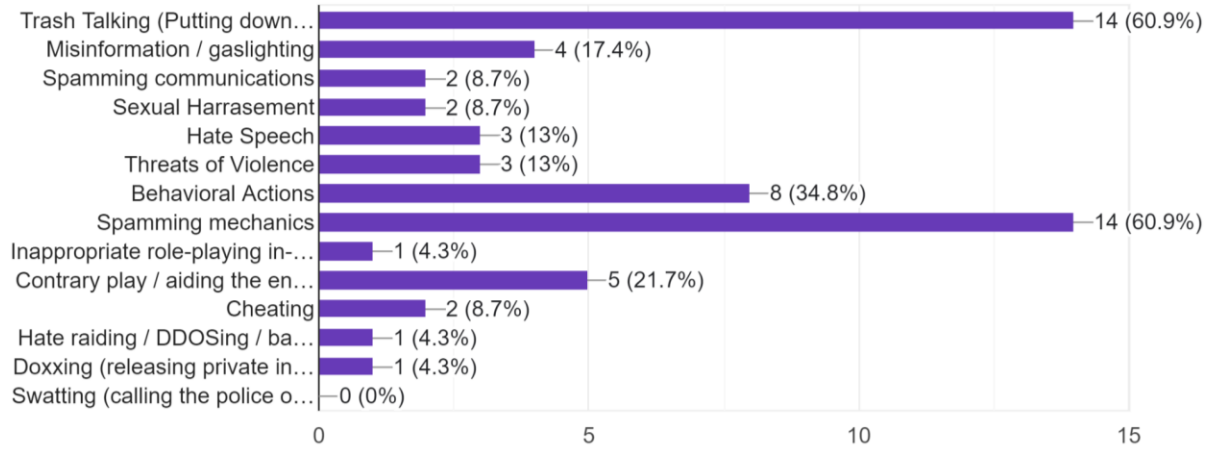


## Fighting Games



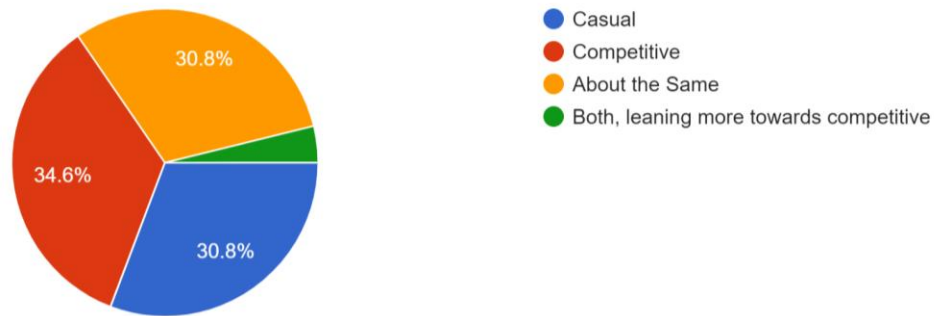
### What kind of toxic behavior did you experience when playing fighting games?

23 responses



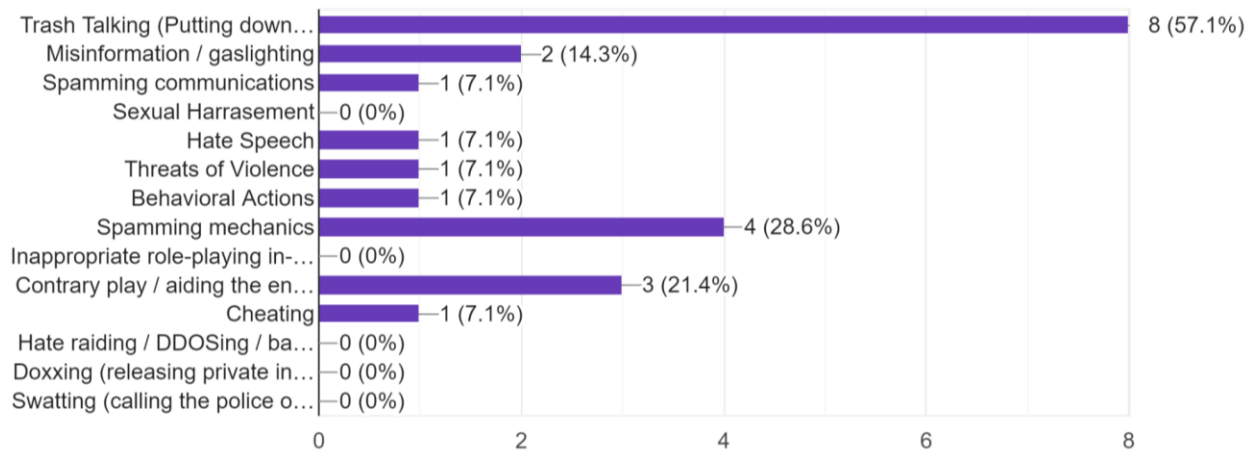
### Do you find that fighting games are more toxic in casual or competitive circles?

26 responses



### What kind of toxic behavior have you engaged in when playing fighting games?

14 responses



## Massive Multiplayer Online (MMO)

*World of Warcraft, Runescape, Lost Ark, Destiny, Final Fantasy 14, Star Wars: The Old Republic*

“People on Star Wars: The Old Republic are so nice.”

“Toxicity comes primarily from gatekeeping, but it's generally avoidable.”

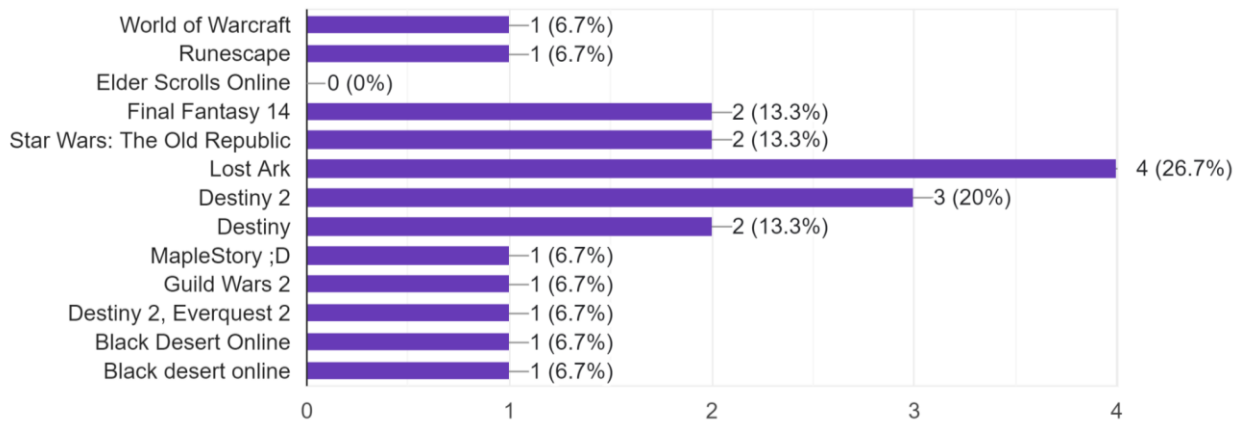
“Someone wasting time by joining a raid they don't know how to clear when we are in a party designated for expert clearers of said raid.”

“Some content requiring a major reliance on teammate, and when a teammate refuses to communicate or change their wrong actions”



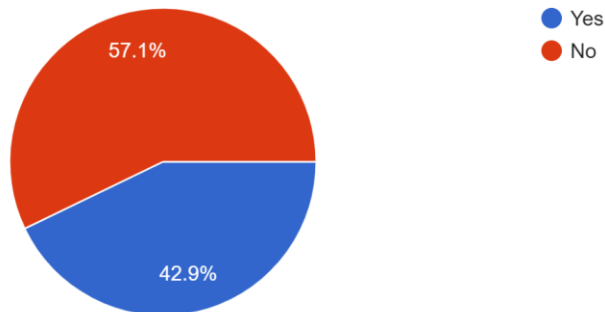
Please select any games you play on this list.

15 responses



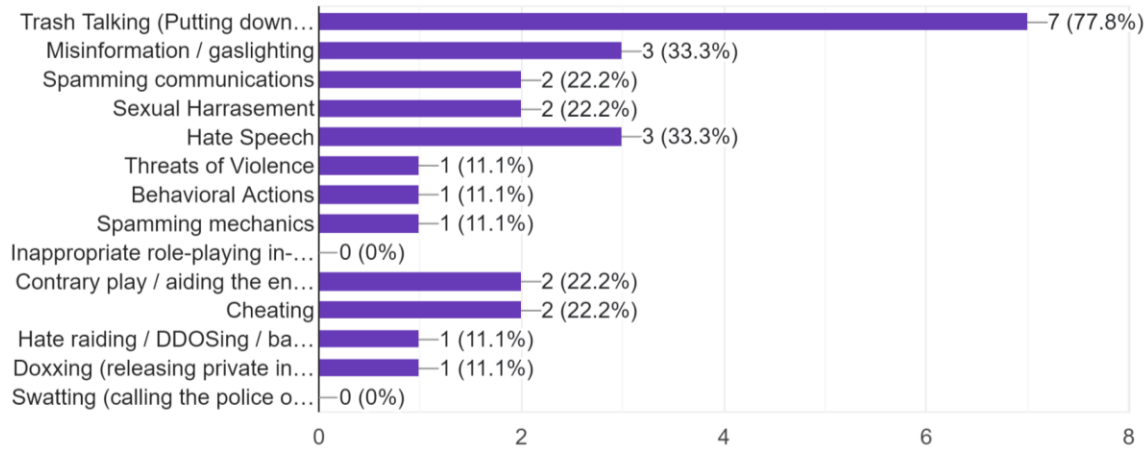
Do you find playing MMO games makes you angry, impatient, frustrated, or otherwise upset?

14 responses



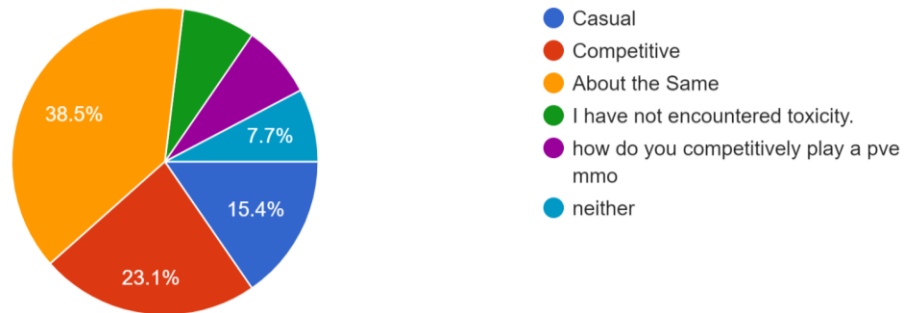
### What kind of toxic behavior did you experience when playing MMO games?

9 responses



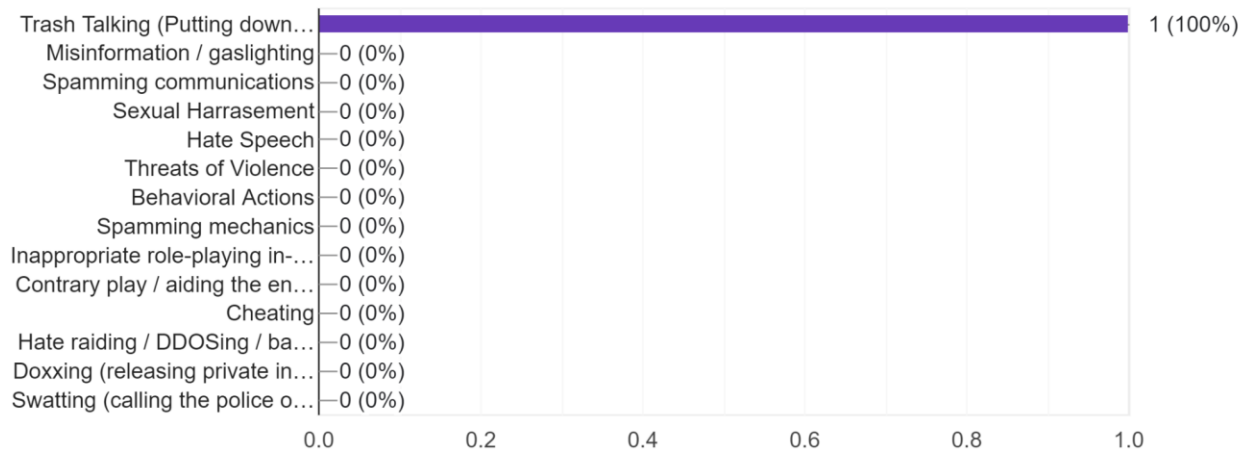
### Do you find that MMO games are more toxic in casual or competitive circles?

13 responses



### What kind of toxic behavior have you engaged in when playing MMO games?

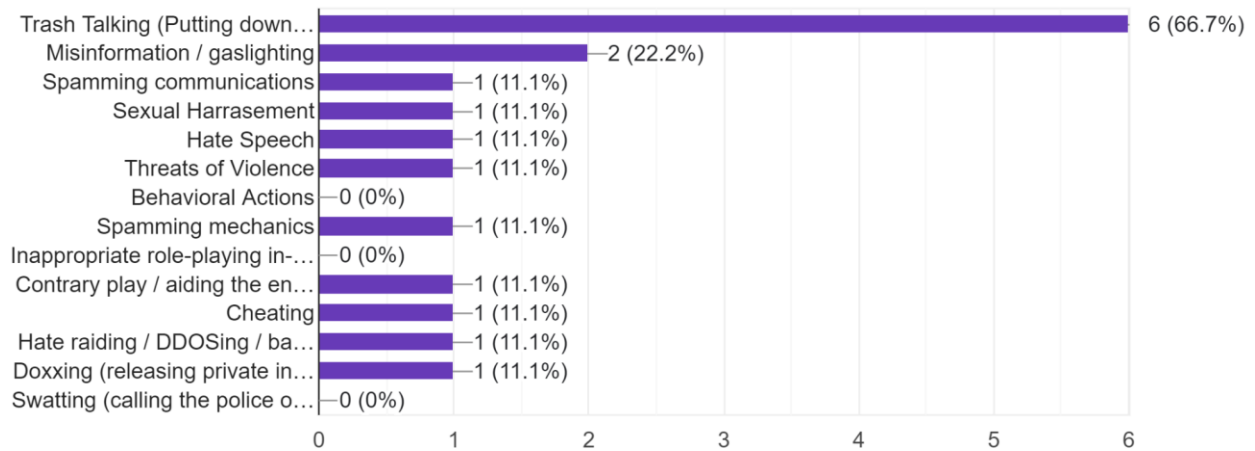
1 response





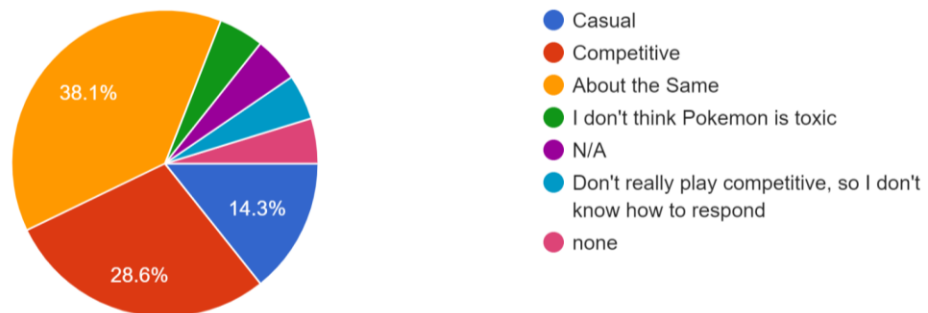
### What kind of toxic behavior did you experience when playing strategy games?

9 responses



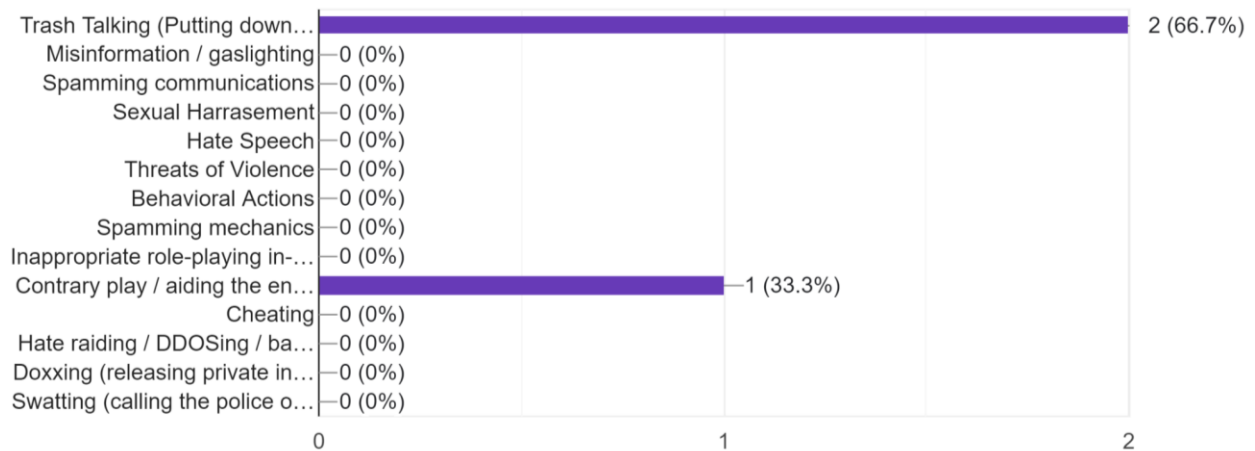
### Do you find that strategy games are more toxic in casual or competitive circles?

21 responses



### What kind of toxic behavior have you engaged in when playing strategy games?

3 responses





# Battle Royale

Fortnite, Player Unknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG), Apex Legends, CoD: Warzone

"Battle royale games can be very slow at times, and luck overpowers skills in many situations."

"Hard to see toxicity when there is no way to communicate with other players."

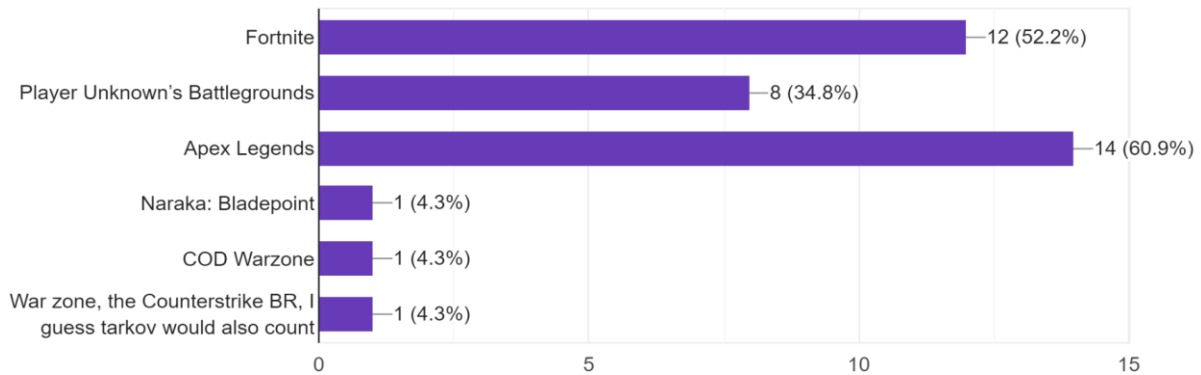
"If the teammate starts toxic talk first."

"Getting third partied."



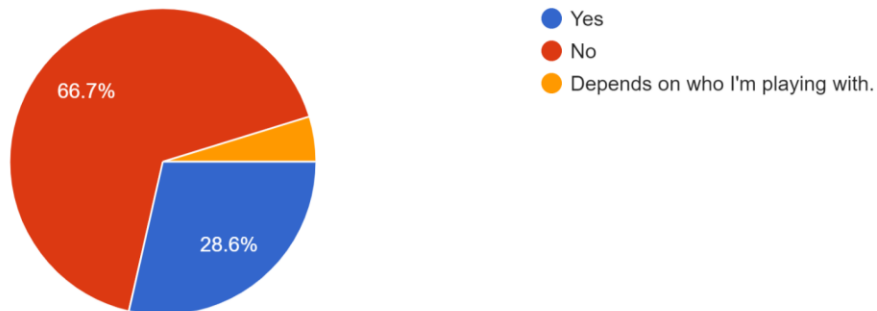
Please select any games you play on this list.

23 responses



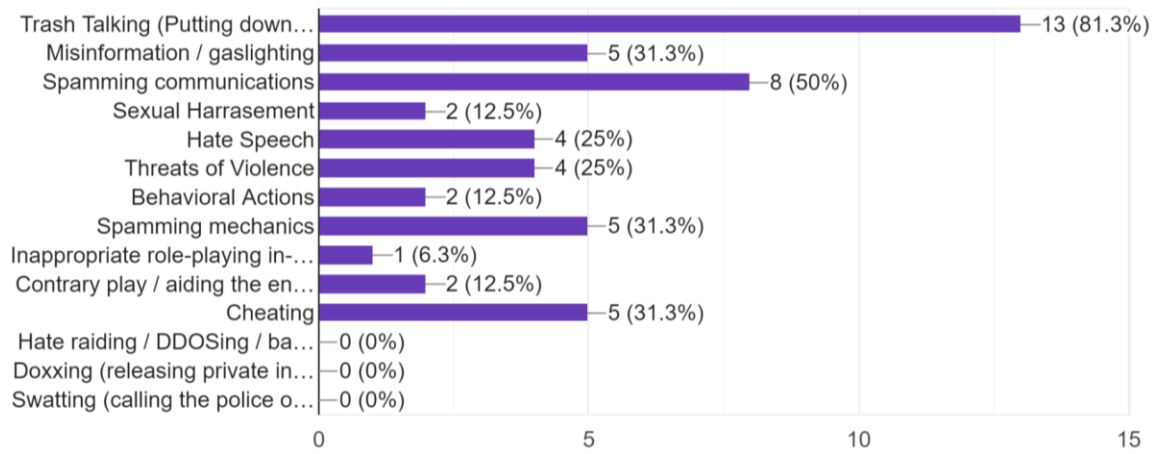
Do you find playing battle royale games makes you angry, impatient, frustrated, or otherwise upset?

21 responses



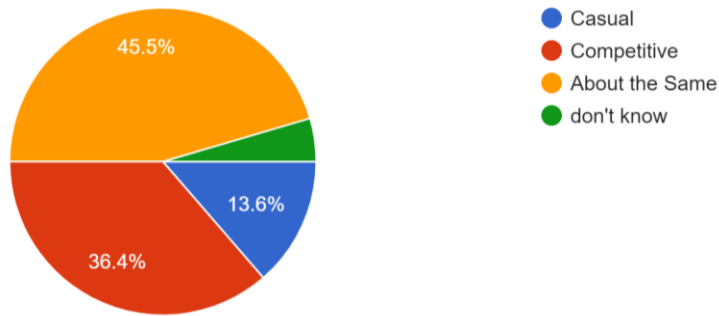
### What kind of toxic behavior did you experience when playing battle royale games?

16 responses



### Do you find that battle royale games are more toxic in casual or competitive circles?

22 responses



### What kind of toxic behavior have you engaged in when playing battle royale games?

9 responses

