

HIKIKOMORI: HIDEAWAY

AN ALTERNATIVE ROOM BREAK GAME

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Hikikomori (引き籠もり) refers to the people who shut themselves off from society, often staying in their houses for months on end.

Young adults or even older populations (15-59) who cannot take social and cultural pressure. They refuse to leave their rooms and usually rely on their middle-class parents to take care of them.

There are at least half a million of them in Japan.

"I spent all my waking hours criticizing myself... All I did was get up afternooon, eat, excrete, and breathe. I was like a living corpse. I couldn't find the tiniest bit of worth in myself. I thought my life was meaningless."



HIKIKOMORI

When you Suck at Everything in Life, just Retreat to your bedroom & never come out!

POLEMICAL POINT OF VIEW

Hikikomoris are considered redundant and shameful by mainstream society because they have zero productivity and have to rely on their family or state support. No one cares about their well-being except for their parents, if they are still alive and love their kids.

People forget that hikikomoris are also human and they shut themselves in due to mental suffering. Among those hikikomoris, some are the most talented people on earth but cannot share their talents to the world because they feel disconnected.

The game asks the player to experience and try understanding the state of mind of a modern hermit through interacting with the space that he/she is the most familiar with, his/her own room.

POLEMICAL POINT OF VIEW

Create a game based off of mechanics of room-break games, with the “room” as a metaphor for one’s psychological state

Hikikomoris feel safe within their own rooms, just like how ordinary people feel safe in their private space. Thus, successfully breaking the room means that the room dwellers have taken the steps to open up themselves and rejoin the society.

Paint the virtual world vs. the real world: to discover the dark, messy room (reality) underneath the skin of a zen, tranquil room (delusion)

“They rarely leave their rooms or their homes, and reportedly live in and limit interactions to the virtual world.”



GAME MECHANICS

You are a hikikomori person. You feel tranquil and safe in your room until hunger strikes and you start to realize this is not the perfect world...

“A clean zen room, just like how placid my state of mind is. Nothing will ever disturb me.”

Search for secret items hidden in different parts of the room. Some triggers sweet memories about social relationships (family, friends/love interests, career); Some triggers traumatizing events regarding those aspects.

GAME MECHANICS

If all despair triggers were found before the hope triggers

—> The protagonist feels disillusioned with reality and choose to go back to hikikomori

“Congrats! You have successfully avoided reality and continued to live your dream life, in a dream...” A month later, you were found dead on your apartment floor. Your face was serene and your body showed no sign of distress. Seems like you have had the best dream before you entered your eternal rest.

GAME MECHANICS

If all hope triggers were found before the despair triggers

—> The protagonist feels the urge to rebuild his/her social relationships. Wants to revisit parents / friends / go back to work because he/she misses those people and events in life

“Congrats! You have successfully overcome your fears and delusions.” You chose to confront reality and reintegrate back into the society. Even though you continue to suffer from reality, you’ve got enough hope in you that nothing can stop you from moving forward.

WORK CITED

<https://www.businessinsider.com/hikikomori-worrying-mental-health-problem-traps-japanese-at-home-2018-1>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hikikomori#Hypotheses_on_cause