

YOUTH HAVE THE POWER

Facilitator's Guide



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*Advice on guiding young people through a gambling education program,
including discussion questions, additional information, tools, and resources*

Who and What Is This For?

This Facilitator's Guide is intended for teachers, parents, prevention professionals, youth leaders, guidance counselors, and any other adult who works with youth or is concerned about a young person's gambling exposure. You may use this guide in conjunction with the *Youth Have the Power* online program, found at YouthHaveThePower.org, to guide young participants through the educational curriculum and provide supplemental information for learning about problem gambling.

What's included

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About Us and How to Use this Guide

What is the Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling?

The Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing awareness of public health issues around problem gambling and gaming in diverse cultures, expanding the availability and integration of services, and supporting advocacy, research, and programs for education, prevention, treatment, recovery, and responsible gambling and gaming.

What is *Youth Have the Power*?

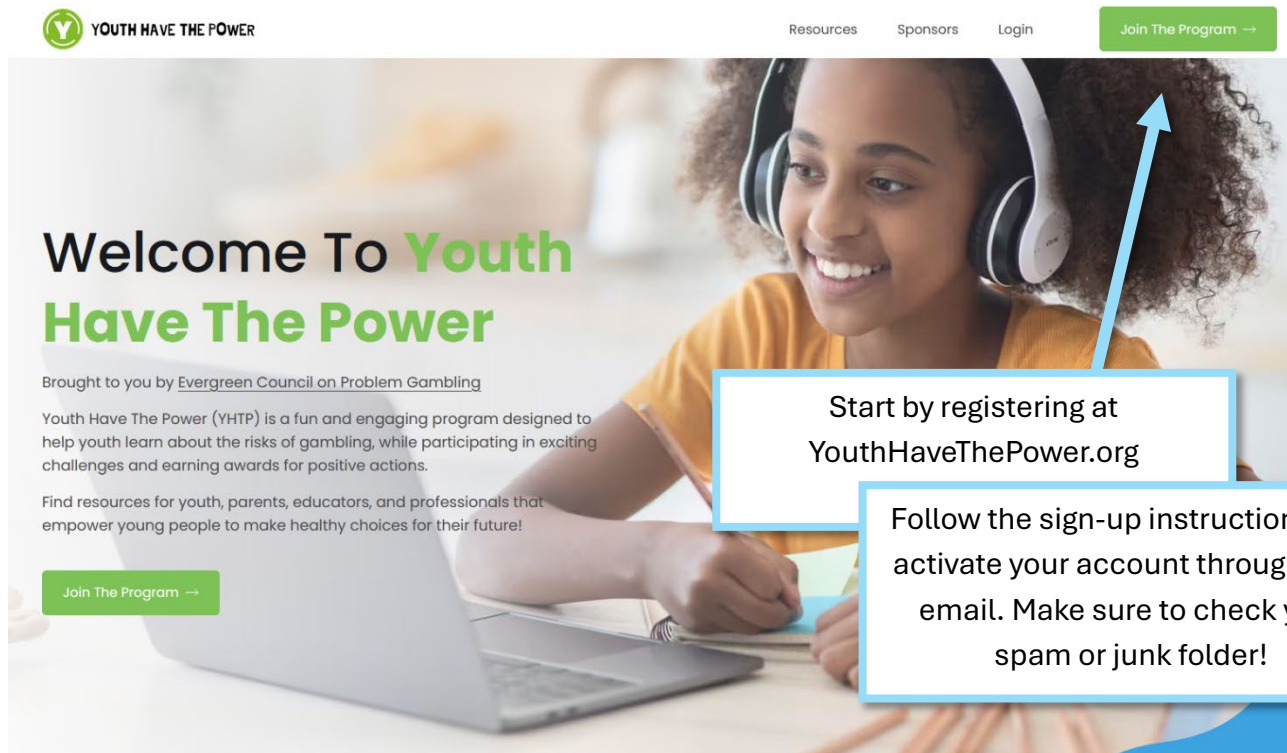
Youth Have the Power (YHTP) is an online resource for parents, educators, and young people to find high-quality information on gambling risks. On the main website you'll find tools and links to vetted resources on gambling, video gaming, and behavioral health. ***YHTP*** also introduces a dynamic, interactive program that awards youth for learning and engaging in their communities. Participants ages 9-24 have access to a self-guided Curriculum that explains what is gambling, what is addiction, how can someone be addicted to gambling, and what is the link between video gaming and gambling.

Youth Have the Power also aims to build protective factors in our participants' lives through Challenges. Challenges are opportunities for personal growth and community engagement. Each completed Challenge earns points, which then can be redeemed for family-friendly activities in the participant's community. There is NO randomization in this program.

How to Use this Guide

As the youth you support explore the curriculum, you can use the *Conversation Starters* to encourage a deeper understanding of the content and provoke thoughtful conversations. The *Underage Gambling Fact Sheet* is a brief introduction into the topic and may be printed and shared. The *Resources and Tools* list featured recommendations for further reading. If you are a behavioral health professional, the *Problem Gambling and Problem Gaming Screening Guide* provides guidance on when and how to incorporate screening in your work. And finally, *Treatment and Recovery Resources* provide options for anyone concerned about their own or a loved one's gambling.

How to Sign Up



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Youth Have The Power website. At the top left is the logo with a green 'Y' and the text 'YOUTH HAVE THE POWER'. To the right are links for 'Resources', 'Sponsors', and 'Login'. A green button labeled 'Join The Program →' is in the top right. The main heading is 'Welcome To Youth Have The Power', with 'Youth Have The Power' in green. Below it, text states it's brought to you by the Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling and describes the program's purpose. A green button 'Join The Program →' is at the bottom left. A blue arrow points from the 'Join The Program' button to a callout box. Another blue arrow points from the 'Join The Program' button to a second callout box.

Welcome To Youth Have The Power

Brought to you by Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling

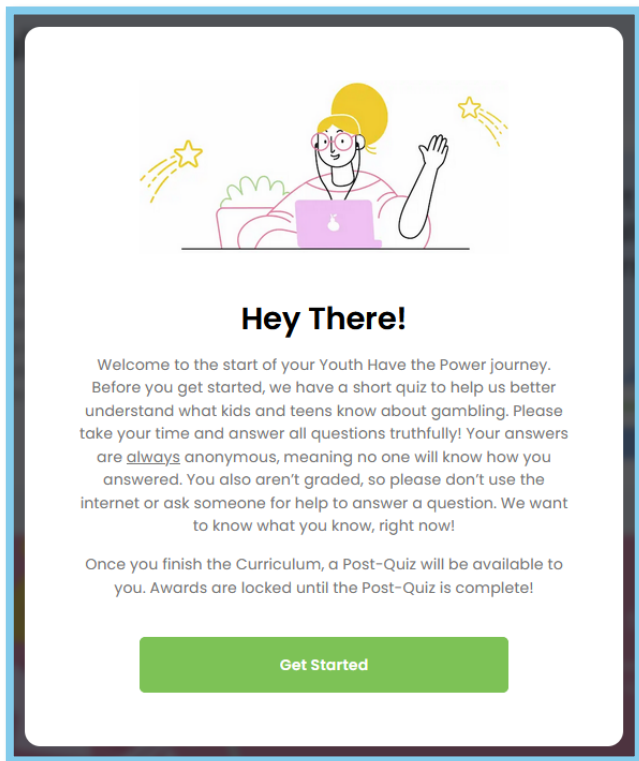
Youth Have The Power (YHTP) is a fun and engaging program designed to help youth learn about the risks of gambling, while participating in exciting challenges and earning awards for positive actions.

Find resources for youth, parents, educators, and professionals that empower young people to make healthy choices for their future!

Join The Program →

Start by registering at YouthHaveThePower.org

Follow the sign-up instructions and activate your account through your email. Make sure to check your spam or junk folder!



The screenshot shows a welcome screen with a cartoon illustration of a person with glasses and a yellow headband sitting at a desk with a laptop. The text says 'Hey There!' and welcomes the user to the start of their Youth Have the Power journey. It mentions a short quiz to help understand what kids and teens know about gambling, emphasizing that answers are always anonymous and not graded. It also mentions a Post-Quiz available after finishing the Curriculum, which unlocks awards. A green 'Get Started' button is at the bottom.

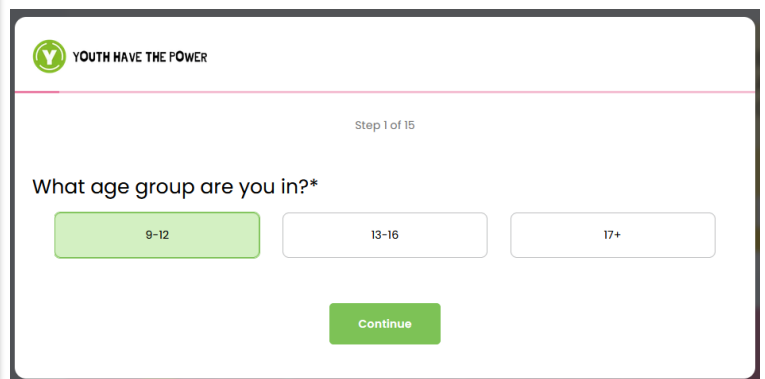
Hey There!

Welcome to the start of your Youth Have the Power journey. Before you get started, we have a short quiz to help us better understand what kids and teens know about gambling. Please take your time and answer all questions truthfully! Your answers are always anonymous, meaning no one will know how you answered. You also aren't graded, so please don't use the internet or ask someone for help to answer a question. We want to know what you know, right now!

Once you finish the Curriculum, a Post-Quiz will be available to you. Awards are locked until the Post-Quiz is complete!

Get Started

Once you've accessed your account, you'll be prompted to complete the entry survey



The screenshot shows a survey titled 'What age group are you in?*' with three radio button options: '9-12', '13-16', and '17+'. A green 'Continue' button is at the bottom. The top of the page shows the 'YOUTH HAVE THE POWER' logo and 'Step 1 of 15'.

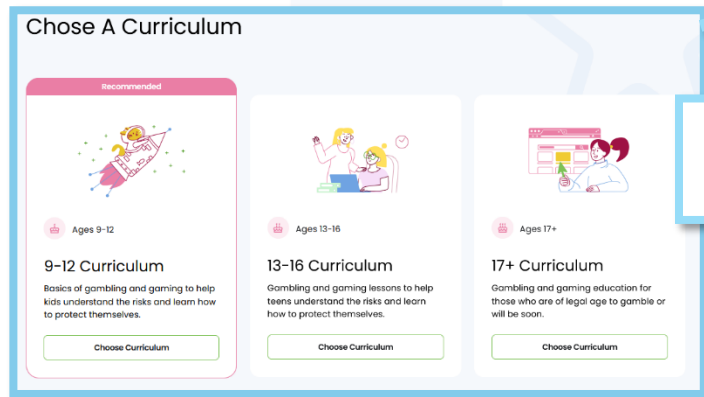
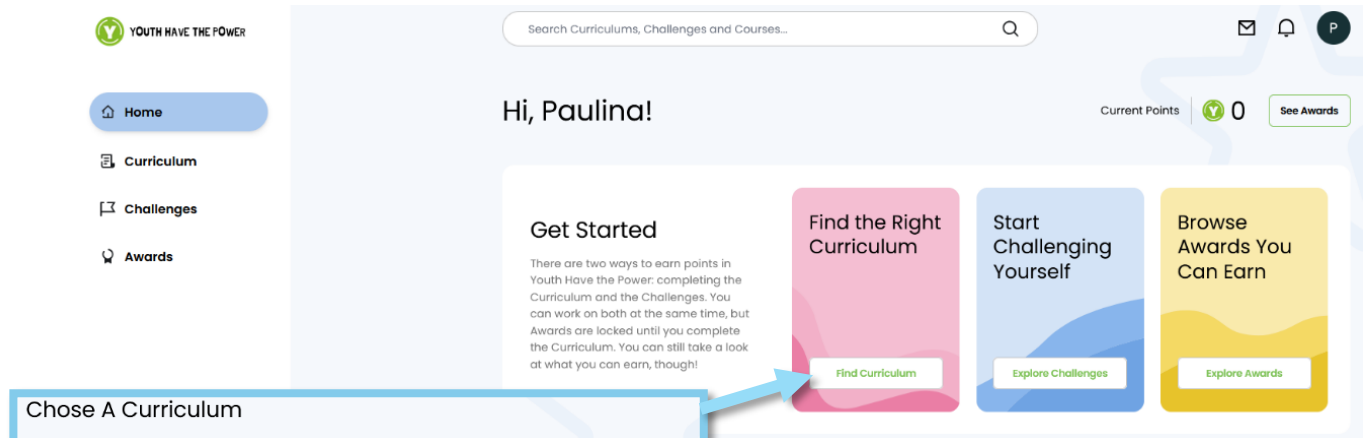
YOUTH HAVE THE POWER

Step 1 of 15

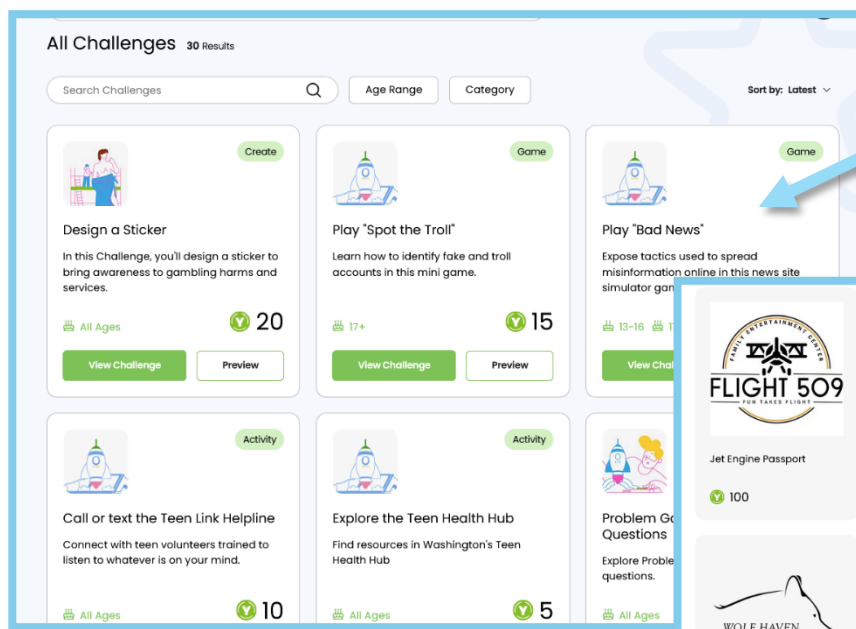
What age group are you in?*

☐ 9-12 ☐ 13-16 ☐ 17+

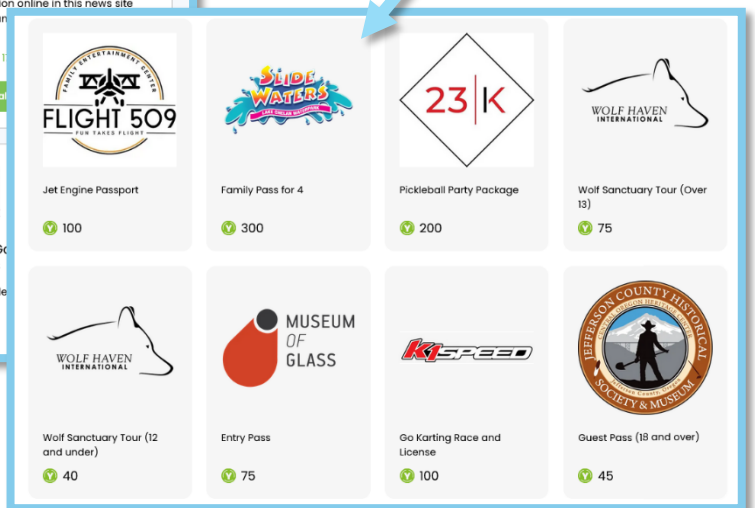
Continue



Select the appropriate curriculum for your age range



Complete challenges to earn points to redeem for awards!



Note: Available awards are subject to change

Conversation Starters for the *YHTP* curriculum

Youth Have The Power is an online resource for parents, educators, and young people to find high-quality information on gambling risks. **YHTP** also awards youth for learning and engaging in their communities. Participants ages 9-24 can earn awards (no randomization) by completing Challenges and learning about gambling, addiction, help resources, and the link between video gaming and gambling.



Find it [here](#) or scan

The following is a breakdown of the **YHTP** curriculum chapters with suggested topics of conversation to assist understanding and learning. The curriculum itself can be fully self-guided by the youth, or an adult can support or co-pilot the curriculum with them. The conversation starters listed below **are not** required, but **can** enhance learning, retention, application, and communication between the participant and their supportive adult(s).

Reminder: Approach these conversations from a place of non-judgement! The aim isn't to scare or shame young people, but to encourage open conversations about their gambling exposure and experiences and to address misinformed ideas about gambling.

CHAPTER 1: What is gambling and how does it work?

*This chapter explains that gambling is when someone takes a **chance** with money or something of value in hopes of winning a prize. It also identifies common forms of gambling, explains slot machine odds, and emphasizes how to stay safe while gambling.*

- a. Where have you seen gambling before? Did it make you feel any emotions about gambling, or change your opinion about gambling?
- b. What is one new form of gambling you learned about in this chapter? Were you surprised to learn it can be considered gambling?

CHAPTER 2: Problem gambling

1. What is gambling addiction?

This section covers the symptoms of Gambling Disorder.

- a. Have you ever heard of anyone having a gambling addiction or Gambling Disorder? How do you think this may impact a person or their relationships?

2. Language matters

This section explains person-first language and how stigma can prevent someone from seeking out help for addiction.

- a. Have you ever heard examples of people using person-first language in real life? Are there any identities you hold that you would prefer to be referred to using person-first language?

Hint: Person-first language is used to describe a condition that a person *has* instead of what a person *is*. Ex.

Diabetic -> **Person with diabetes**

Problem gambler -> **Person experiencing gambling harms**

Schizophrenic -> **Person with schizophrenia**

Addict -> **Person with addiction**

- b. Can you identify two potentially harmful or stigmatizing thoughts someone may have about a person experiencing Gambling Disorder? Why may someone have these ideas (what influenced these thoughts)?

3. Dopamine and addiction

This section links the relationship between reward pathways in our brains to addiction.

- a. When we say something is “addictive”, what qualities make a substance, food, beverage, or behavior addicting? What kind of sensations or emotions does it make us feel?
- b. What is our brain telling us when it releases dopamine?
- c. What are some activities you do that may release higher-than-average dopamine levels? How does it feel when you try to avoid that activity or stop doing it?

4. Gambling harms

This section highlights signs and symptoms of problem gambling.

- a. Compared to a drug or alcohol addiction, do you think a gambling addiction is easier or harder to hide from others? Why?
- b. Why could it be a problem to hide or keep an addiction a secret?
- c. Who do you turn to for help when you need it?

5. Gambling myths

This section challenges participants to identify myths and false ideas about problem gambling and gambling in general.

- a. What do you think is the most common gambling myth that young people believe?
- b. How might different forms of media—such as film, music, books, or social media—shape beliefs about gambling?

CHAPTER 3: Responsible Gambling (Additional content appears in the age 17+ curriculum)

For anyone planning to gamble legally for the first time, it's important to understand how gambling and odds work, how to reduce the risk of problems, and to only use entertainment money they can afford to lose. This chapter discusses how risk and protective factors in each person's life influence their ability to live a healthy life.

- a. What is one protective factor in your life, and why is it protective?
- b. What are some risk factors for problem gambling that you can avoid in your life?
- c. What is a protective factor that you want to try to add to your life?
 - a. Are there any **YHTP** challenges you saw that might help achieve this and earn some points in the program?

CHAPTER 4: Getting Help

This chapter describes treatment, recovery, and support options for people struggling with gambling harms. It also explores why some people may be hesitant to seek help.

- a. If someone you know believes their gambling is becoming harmful, where could they get support?
- b. What are some reasons that a person may feel hesitant or afraid to ask for help? What would you say to that person?

CHAPTER 5: Gaming

This chapter covers gambling in video games, microtransactions, and loot boxes.

- a. Have you ever paid for things in a video game but you didn't know exactly what you would end up with, like spinning a wheel, opening a loot box, or pressing a button?
 - a. If you have, what kind of feelings did you experience before, during, and after winning the prize? Do you think these emotions are similar for someone who gambles on legal games? (Slots, card games, sports, etc.)
- b. If you spend money in video games, how do you make sure you're spending money responsibly?

Gambling – A Growing Concern for Youth

Underage Gambling Fact Sheet

Parents and involved adults face many obstacles in raising healthy children. Some believe it unnecessary to educate youth about gambling harms if they can't legally gamble. In reality, gambling is present in video games and other unregulated or even illegal forms, and risk factors can begin very early in life.

How big of an issue is underage gambling, really?

The gambling industry is rapidly expanding, and an increase in youth gambling rates has raised concerns among public health professionals.

- In Washington State, *1 in 10 high school sophomores* reported gambling in the past 12 months in 2023. 1.4% of sophomores acknowledged that they have experienced harm due to their gambling.¹
- Gambling can be considered by teens and parents to be “safe” compared to drugs and alcohol. However, gambling can be as addictive as drugs and/or alcohol and as devastating to one’s life.
- Positive gambling experiences, whether in media, online, at home, or at school, increase the risk of future problems and can make youth more likely to believe gambling (including sports betting) is a good way to make money.²
- Young men are at highest risk of underage gambling and problem gambling. Risky gambling decisions are associated with having a higher risk tolerance, increased impulsivity, and sensation seeking behaviors.^{3,4}

Some ways children can be exposed to gambling include:

- Gambling and gambling-like elements within video games
- Being given scratch-off or lottery tickets
- Seeing family members place bets at home (such as sports betting)
- Making wagers/bets with friends
- Investing in cryptocurrency or day-trading
- At events where betting is taking place, such as a horse racetrack, bingo, raffles, etc.
- Being taken to child-friendly sections of casinos, such as restaurants or arcades
- Advertising, media, social media, and influencers

Be aware of the following signs that may indicate a problem with gambling⁵

- **Hiding or lying about gambling:** They are secretive about the time or money spent gambling and may actively conceal the truth. Denying that their bets “count” as gambling.
- **Emotional distress:** The stress from gambling can lead to anxiety, guilt, irritability, depression, and suicidal ideation.
- **Financial:** Household cash goes missing, parents’ credit cards are charged, or they “lose” money that was allocated for something else, like school lunch money.
- **Neglecting other parts of life:** Gambling becomes a priority in life, while relationships, family, work, school, and hobbies are neglected.



For a full list of Diagnostic Criteria of a Gambling Disorder, [click here](#) or scan the QR code.

What adults can do

- Use **Youth Have The Power** as a free resource for information and engagement
 - o **Youth Have The Power** is an online resource for parents, educators, and young people to find high-quality information on gambling risks. **YHTP** also awards youth for learning and engaging in their communities. Participants ages 9-24 can earn awards (no randomization, all earned as a job and store model) by completing Challenges and learning about gambling, addiction, help resources, and the link between video gaming and gambling.



Visit YouthHaveThePower.org or scan the QR code.

- Talk about gambling
 - o Avoid scaring, punishing, or shaming youth when talking about gambling. Have open conversations about their gambling exposure and attitudes, address misinformed ideas about gambling odds, and explain why it is important to not spend more money in games than one can afford to lose. If your child plays video games (including mobile app games), discuss how spending money (real or in-game currency) for the chance to win a prize is similar to gambling. This includes spinning a wheel, pressing a button, or opening a loot box. Rule of thumb: don't purchase anything if you don't know exactly what you're paying for.
- Model healthy gambling behaviors
 - o Avoid gifting lottery tickets or scratch cards to youth, keep gambling games at home (i.e. sports betting, card games, mahjong) for adults only, and be a good example of setting and following limits.
- Provide education and prevention practices
 - o If you work with youth, display ECPG's Youth Prevention brochures and posters.
 - o Know where to find a screening tool for youth problem gambling and gaming. Find yours [here](#):

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Visit ECPG's [Resources and Downloads](#) page or scan the QR code.

Resources and Tools

We recommend the following resources to gain more general information about problem gambling and problem video gaming.

Topic	Name	Description
Gambling	ResponsibleGambling.org	Information for learning about gambling addiction.
Gaming and tech	ChildrenandScreens.org	The <i>Children and Screens: Institute of Digital Media and Child Development</i> website hosts parent fact sheets, webinars with experts, and articles regarding media's impact on child development.
Youth gambling	Let's Talk Risk – Massachusetts Office of Problem Gambling Services	Guide on discussing gambling risks with youth. Includes activities and conversation starters.
Youth gambling	PauseBeforeYouPlay.org	Public awareness campaign with digital outreach assets including posters, video PSAs, and informational handouts.
Gambling and gaming	Adolescent Gambling and Gaming Series	Developed by the Behavioral Health Springboard, this free course for behavioral health clinicians explains psychoeducation, evidence-based treatment modalities, screening tools, and evidence-based prevention tools and strategies.
Video game addiction	GameQuitters.com	Game Quitters provides educational YouTube videos and articles on gaming addiction and internet culture. It also offers a free support community for gamers and parents.
Various	ECPG website and training opportunities	ECPG provides information and resources on the main website and offers multiple training opportunities throughout the year (in-person, webinar, and on-demand).
Various	ECPG videos and podcasts	ECPG has a library of videos and podcasts that feature gambling and gaming experts talking about recovery, the latest research, the gambling industry, and prevention.
Video Gaming Addiction	Foundations in Gaming Disorder	This online, self-directed training program is designed for parents, guardians, and professionals who wish to best understand gaming and Gaming Disorder. The content includes youth and adult focused information.

Screening for Problem Gambling and Problem Video Gaming in Youth

What is screening?

A health screen is a brief questionnaire used for the early identification of individuals at potentially high risk for a specific condition or disorder. A positive screen indicates a need for further assessment by a specialist but is not a diagnosis.

What is problem gambling and gaming?

“Problem gambling” is a broad term used to describe a range of harms that may be experienced from gambling. “Gambling Disorder”, or gambling addiction, is the DSM-5 diagnosis used when at least 4 out of 9 diagnostic criteria are met when evaluated by a professional.⁴ A 2021 adult problem gambling prevalence study found that 9% of adults in Washington state reported experiencing gambling-related harms¹⁰, and 1.4% of Washington state Sophomores indicated experiencing gambling problems on the 2023 Healthy Youth Survey.²

“Problem gaming” is used to describe a range of harms that may be experienced from video gaming. The World Health Organization has classified “Gaming Disorder” as a diagnosable addiction in the ICD-11.¹¹ “Internet Gaming Disorder” was proposed in the DSM-5 as a “condition of further study.”⁴ While in this context we’re talking specifically about playing video games, there is further evidence that general internet use, including social media, can have an addictive impact. A global meta-analysis in 2024 found that 8.6% of adolescents presented with gaming disorder.⁸

Why screen for problem gambling and gaming?

A national survey found that of individuals experiencing gambling-related problems, while receiving treatment for one or more mental health concerns, 49% did not receive treatment for gambling.³ Individuals experiencing problems from gambling are less likely to seek treatment or resources, are at increased risk for suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and mortality, and for having substance use or other mental health problems.³ Screening for problem gambling is unfortunately not commonplace in many behavioral health or healthcare clinics, and many individuals don’t readily discuss problems with gambling unless asked. Many factors can discourage someone from sharing this information, particularly youth who may fear punishment, consequences, or shame.

Research has consistently shown a positive relationship between Gaming Disorder and depression, anxiety, ADHD, co-occurring substance use, autism, and suicidal ideation.^{1, 6, 7} Video gaming itself may lead to negative mental health impacts, may be the result of coping with said issues, or be a combination of both relationships.⁶

This screening guide is designed for use by a behavioral health specialist	
Brief Adolescent Gambling Screen (BAGS) ⁹	Game Addiction Scale (GAS-7) ⁵
<p>Read: “The questions below are about your gambling activity during the past year (last 12 months). By gambling, I mean risking money or something of value on a game of chance, with hopes of winning something of greater value. For example, gambling at a casino or online, playing cards or dice for money, buying lottery or scratch-off tickets, betting on sports, playing bingo or keno, buying loot boxes or similar mystery prizes, and short-term day trading.”</p>	<p>Read: “The questions below are about your gaming activity during the past year (last 12 months). By gaming, I mean any game played from a laptop, computer, console, mobile phone, tablet, or any other device both online and/or offline.”</p>
<p>Response options: 0 (not in the past 12 months), 1 (sometimes), 2 (many times), 3 (all the time)</p> <p>How often during the last twelve months:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have you skipped hanging out with friends who do not gamble/bet to hang out with friends who do gamble/bet? 2. Have you felt that you might have a problem with gambling/betting? 3. Have you hidden your gambling/betting from your parents, other family members or teachers? 	<p>Response options: 1 (never), 2 (rarely), 3 (sometimes), 4 (often), 5 (very often)</p> <p>How often during the last twelve months:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did you think about playing a game all day long? 2. Did you spend increasing amounts of time on games? 3. Did you play games to forget about real life? 4. Have others unsuccessfully tried to reduce your game use? 5. Have you felt bad when you were unable to play? 6. Did you have fights with others (e.g., family, friends) over your time spent on games? 7. Have you neglected other important activities (e.g., school, work, sports) to play games?
<p>Scoring: Add up the score, 0-3 for each question, for a total possible score range of 0-9.</p> <p>Cut-off score: Score of 4 or higher.</p> <p>If cut-off is met: Explain the results and refer to a Gambling Disorder specialist.</p> <p>Sample brief intervention: “Gambling should remain a recreational or entertainment activity and only use funds from that area of a person’s budget. Ideally, gambling never causes any guilt, stress, financial issues, arguments, or other problems, but sometimes it does. Anyone experiencing a degree of harm from gambling has the right to access services to address their concerns and prevent any more problems from occurring, as early as possible. Early detection and intervention can prevent future harms.”</p>	<p>Scoring: An item is met if the patient indicates at least 3 (‘sometimes’) out of 5 on the scale.</p> <p>Cut-off score: 4 out of 7 items met</p> <p>If cut-off is met: Explain results and refer to a Gaming Disorder specialist.</p> <p>Sample brief intervention: “Gaming should remain a recreational or entertainment activity. Ideally, gaming shouldn’t cause any guilt, stress, physical and mental health issues, financial issues, or other problems, but sometimes it does. Anyone experiencing a degree of harm from gaming has the right to access services to address their concerns and prevent any more problems from occurring, as early as possible. Early detection and intervention can prevent future harms.”</p>

Treatment and Recovery Resources

Helplines

Calling, texting, or chatting with a state or national problem gambling helpline will connect you with a real person, not a bot. They can let you know what certified gambling counselors are nearby, local support groups, what options are available for treatment, where to find support online, and much more. Helplines are confidential and you can call for yourself or for another person.

In Washington State, you can contact the Washington State Problem Gambling Helpline at:

Call: [1-800-547-6133](tel:1-800-547-6133)

Text: [1-800-547-6133](tel:1-800-547-6133)

Chat: evergreencpg.org

From another state, you can contact the National Problem Gambling Helpline at:

Call: [1-800-522-4700](tel:1-800-522-4700)

Text: [800GAM](tel:800GAM)

Chat: <http://www.ncpgambling.org/chat/>

(Note: The National Helpline is available for Washington residents as well)

Communities

Online or in-person networks of people that share their experiences and find support from one another. Some are groups that meet, and others are forums for chatting.

Gamtalk - Online anonymous chat room and community story wall.

Gamblers Anonymous - A 12-step support group program that meets virtually or in-person for *people who wish to stop gambling*.

Gam-Anon - A support group program that meets virtually or in-person for *loved ones affected by someone else's gambling*.

SMART Recovery - An evidence-informed recovery method for those affected by addiction. Offers support meetings, a self-guided handbook with tools and exercises, and worksheets.

SMART Recovery Family and Friends - Support network for loved ones of someone struggling with addiction. Offers support meetings, a self-guided handbook with tools and exercises, and worksheets.

Reddit r/problemgambling

Reddit r/stopgaming

Voluntary Self-Exclusion Tools

Voluntary self-exclusion is when a person voluntarily chooses to restrict their access to gambling for themselves through a ban and accepts consequence for violating their terms. A person can ban themselves from casinos, internet gambling, state lotteries, card rooms, and sports betting. Depending on the platform/venue, method, state, tribe, and terms of self-exclusion, it can last from a few days to a lifetime. For example, if a person enters a casino or card room that they are voluntarily self-excluded from, the establishment may remove the person from the premises, will not pay any winnings, and will confiscate any chips.

While online casinos also have self-exclusion policies, it can be tricky to self-exclude completely from the endless amount of online gambling websites and apps available. Instead, there are apps and browser extensions that work to block all access to gambling across all devices.

Depending on the program, online gambling blockers can block: sports betting, casinos, slots, poker, bingo, lotteries, social casinos, NFTs, cryptocurrency, trading platforms, esports gambling, skins gambling, and table games. Generally, they do not block gambling advertisements, investment websites, sports information sites, and loot boxes.

[Gamban](#) - One account blocks gambling across multiple devices. 35\$ a year.

[BetBlocker](#) - Free, anonymous program that blocks over 84,500 gambling websites. Can also be used to install Parental Controls.

Gambling and Gaming Counselor Directories

[National Counselor/Service Directory](#)

International: The International Problem Gambling and Gaming Certification Organization (IPGGC) also keeps an [online directory of certified specialists](#).

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