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Maryland Center *of* Excellence *on* Problem Gambling

Crossing the Lines into Dangerous Times Gambling Stories of Then and Now……

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Excellence on Problem Gambling

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Today's Presenters:

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Learning Objectives
By the end of this training attendees should:

- *Have a better understanding of the nature of the calls for help we are receiving and how technological advances, instant access, and aggressive marketing pose greater risks.*
- *Have a better understanding of the rapid progression and the recent trends we are seeing with a younger demographic of problematic gambling.*
- *Be better able to recognize the signs, have a conversation, and offer help or education to someone who may be at risk or already struggling with a gambling disorder.*
- *Have an understanding of the screening assessments available for Problem Gambling and the resources available within the state of Maryland.*

Mission Statement

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling promotes **healthy and informed choices** regarding gambling and problem gambling through various key initiatives and partnerships.

The Center works closely with appropriate state stakeholders and brings together experts from a variety of disciplines including psychiatry, medicine, epidemiology, social work, and law.

Key Initiatives and Resources

- **Public Awareness:** Campaigns through social media, TV, radio, public service announcements, community outreach, public awareness materials and lending library
- **Prevention Programs:** Targeted to the full age continuum and to diverse populations and at-risk groups
- **Public Policy:** To provide information regarding strategies to address the impact of gambling on Public Health within Maryland
- **Research:** To provide evidence-based data on public health aspects of gambling disorders and evaluate and develop evidence-based strategies for prevention and intervention

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Key Initiatives and Resources

- Free Training: On problem gambling awareness, prevention and intervention strategies with CEUs
- Provider Referral Directory: To provide technical assistance to the health care and behavioral health care providers in Maryland to enhance capacity to address the issue of problem gambling amongst Maryland residents at No Cost.
- Peer Recovery Support: To assist individuals coping with at risk and problem gambling connect with recovery resources within Maryland and to remove any barriers to recovery
- Helpline: Maryland Problem Gambling Helpline 1-800-GAMBLER

Peer Support for Gambling

- Offer guidance and support to limit, stop or control gambling
- Connecting help seekers to no cost treatment, support groups, credit counseling, voluntary exclusion program, etc.
- Inspire hope and optimism navigating recovery goals
- Advocate that recovery is possible through lived experience

Meet the Center's
Certified Peer Recovery Specialists



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Defining Gambling



Risking money or something of value for an outcome that is not guaranteed.



There are several legal forms of gambling available within MD with the possibility of even more increased access.

Examples of the Types of Gambling:

- Lottery, Keno, Scratch offs
- Bingo
- Sports Betting
- Stock Market: Day Trading
- Cryptocurrency
- Racetracks, and Animal Wagering
- Casino (slot machines, table games)
- Loot Boxes or Skin Trading
- Card or Dice games, played for money
- Etc....

Recreational Gambling:

The ability to maintain control over amounts of time and money spent gambling without experiencing any adverse effects from gambling.

At-Risk Problem Gambling:

Characterized by difficulties in limiting money and/or time spent on gambling (impaired control) which leads to some adverse consequences for the gambler, others, or the community. (Neal, 2005). ***This has never been an official diagnostic category.***

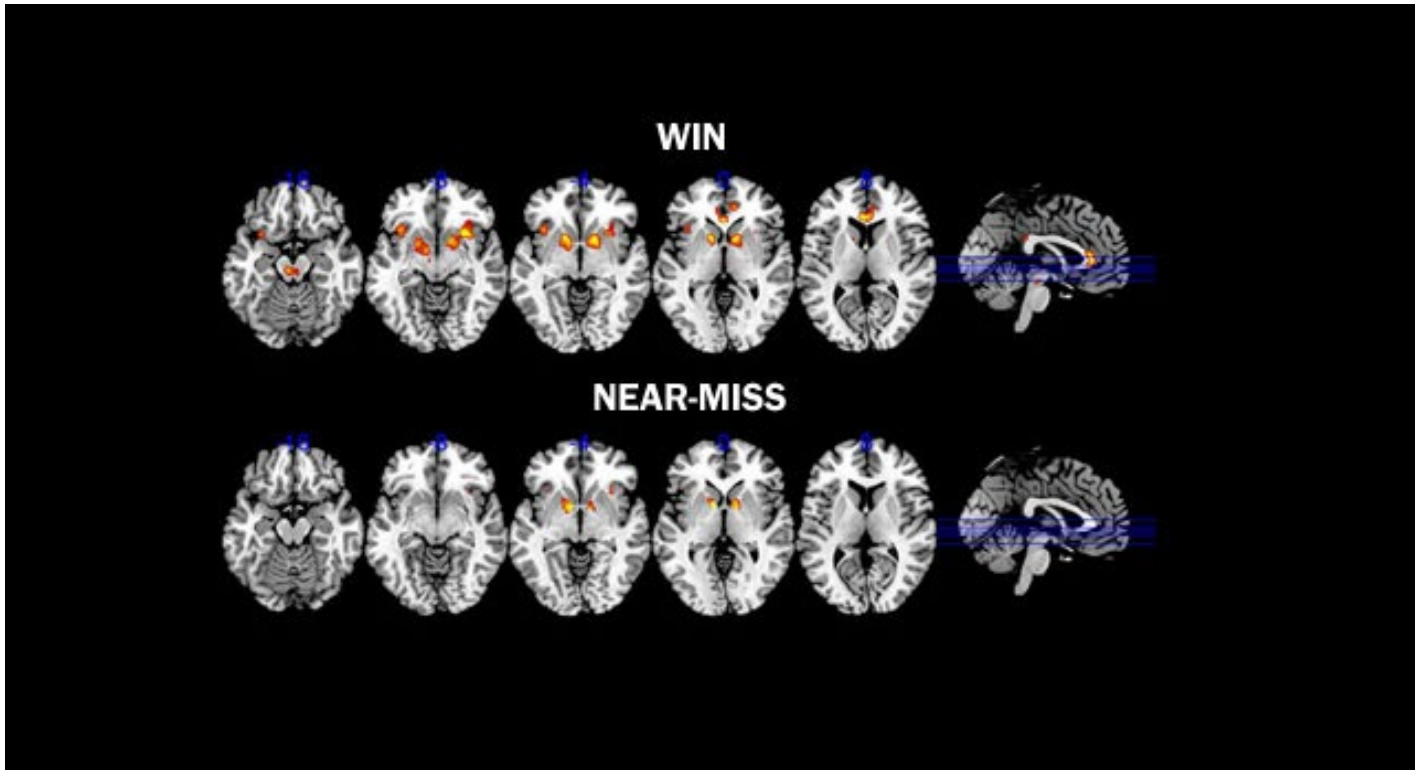
Disordered Gambling:

Has lost the ability to control their gambling causing severe adverse consequences as a result. Compulsive is the terminology used in Gamblers Anonymous and some non-clinical settings and contexts.



Gambling and the Brain

Courtesy, with permission: Luke Clark



Players who *almost* win a game of chance have similar brain activity in reward pathways to those who actually win.

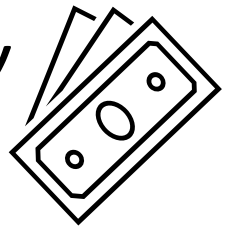
Why Do People Gamble?

- Excitement

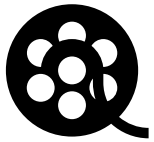


- Economics

  To win money



- Entertainment

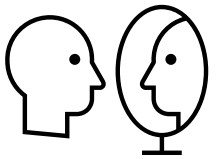


- Escape



A way to relieve stress, anxiety, boredom, grief etc. for a while

- Ego



The person's pride or reputation is on the line

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SHARING A LITTLE HISTORY ON GAMBLING & PERSONAL STORIES 80'S AND 90'S:



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Covering the Eastern Region of MD

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ROLL THEM BONES!





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Senet/Backgammon

Backgammon
https://share.google/4933Q0aUOVkwn6Bj9
backgammon has a long history of gambling and is one of the oldest games in the world, with roots in ancient Mesopotamia around 5,000 years ago. Early versions like the Roman Ludus Duodecim Scriptorum and its successor Tabula were played for high stakes by figures like Roman Emperor Claudius and Emperor Nero, and the church often attempted to ban the game due to its gambling element. Over the centuries, betting has remained a consistent feature, from its spread through European courts to modern-day tournaments with large cash prizes.

Ancient origins and gambling

Mesopotamia:

Archaeological discoveries in ancient Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq) provide the earliest evidence of backgammon-like games dating back to 3000 BCE.



Wild Bill Hickock

In 1876, Hickok was shot and killed while playing poker in a saloon in Deadwood, Dakota Territory (present-day South Dakota) by Jack McCall, an unsuccessful gambler. The hand of cards that he supposedly held at the time of his death has become known as the dead man's hand: two pairs; black aces and eights.

Hickok remains a popular figure of frontier history. Many historic sites and monuments commemorate his life, and he has been depicted numerous times in literature, film, and television.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_Bill_Hickok



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AS THINGS PROGRESS 1992-2014:



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Covering the Southern Region of MD

High Risk: When can gambling be especially Risky?

People are encouraged **NOT** to gamble when:

- Suffering from loneliness, grief, or loss
- Having feelings of anger, depression or anxiety
- Going through a major life transition
- Under financial pressure or stress
- Recovering from a substance use or mental health disorder
- Under the influence of alcohol or other drugs
- Under the legal age

Where WE are NOW

JOSHAN BAJAJ
Counseling Graduate Student
Email: ***joshan.baj@gmail.com***

Sharing Personal Stories about what He and his Peers are facing NOW.



How Gaming can impact Mental Health?

- *Loss of interest in other activities.*
- *Not wanting to spend time with family and friends.*
- *Feeling that you can't control behavior.*
- *Feeling irritable when you can't gamble.*
- *Changes in mood such as feeling lonely, depressed, anxious, and/or stuck.*
- *Gambling/ Gaming addiction.*

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Addictive Nature of Gaming – Cam Adair

"What I discovered was that there were four main reasons why I played. It wasn't just because games were fun, but because of these specific reasons":

1. Temporary Escape

"With games I could escape. When I was feeling stressed out or needed a break from the day, I could just game and forget about the situation. And I certainly didn't have to deal with my depression or anxiety."

2. Social Connection

"Gaming is a community, and it's how you interact with a lot, if not all, of your friends. It's where you feel welcome and safe. It's where you feel accepted.

A lot of parents believe the relationships you have with your gamer friends are not real relationships — and this couldn't be further from the truth. The relationships gamers have online are real and meaningful relationships."

3. Constant Measurable Growth

"Games give you a feedback loop. You get to see growth and progress, and it happens immediately through instant gratification.

Today I DJ, and I surf, and both of these fulfill the same need for constant measurable growth, but it's much harder to see my progress. I don't have a scoreboard, a badge or a new level to achieve; I just fall on my face less."

4. Challenge (Sense of Purpose)

"Games give you a sense of purpose, a mission and a goal to work towards. And they are specifically designed this way. It's part of the invisible game design.

You always know what the next thing is that you need to do. You have to beat this boss, get this weapon, achieve this level. If you don't have a sense of purpose outside of games, they will provide it for you."

GAME QUITTERS

https://gamequitters.com/cam

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Gamblers Anonymous 20-Questions

https://www.gamblersanonymous.org/ga/content/20-questions

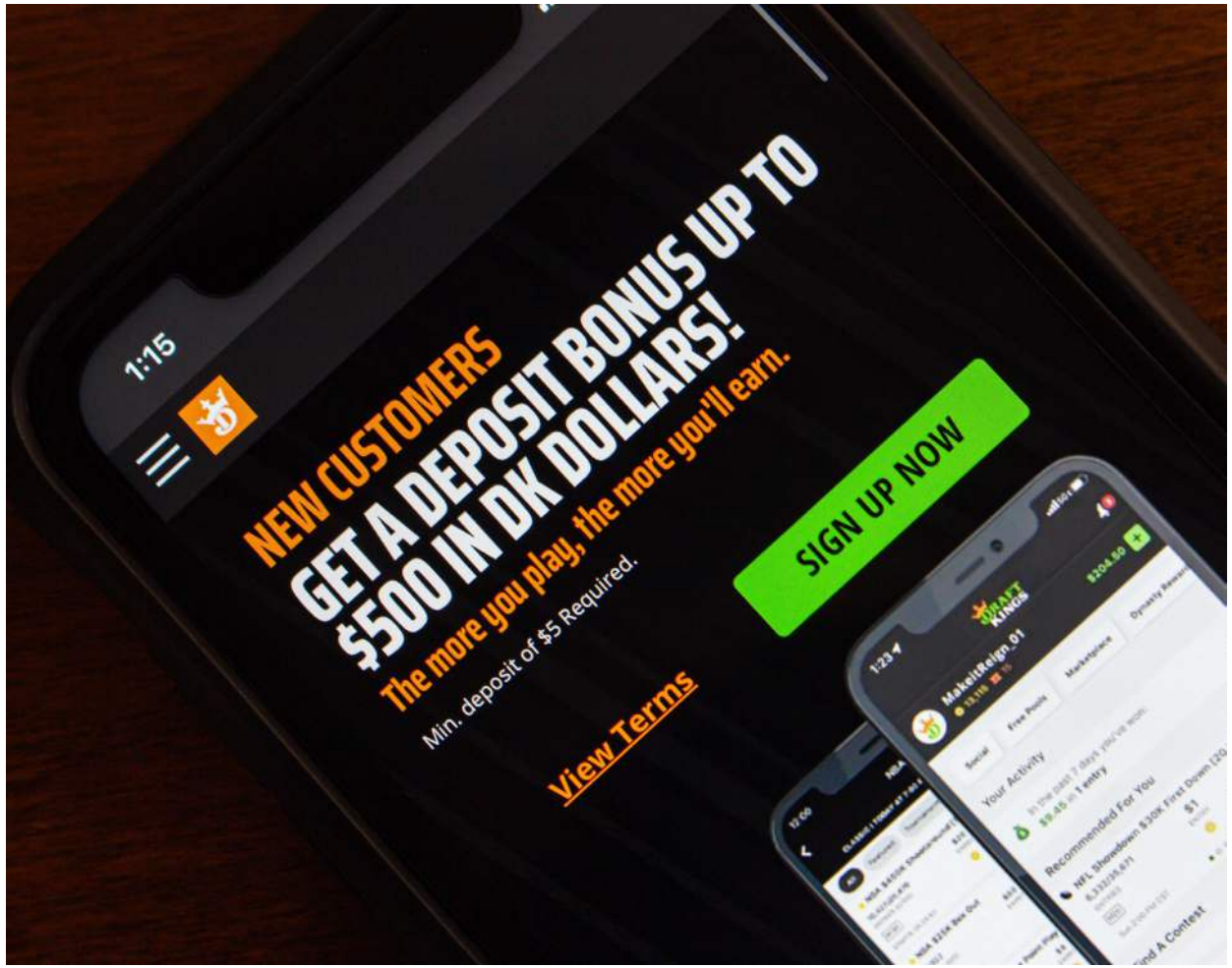
- Did you ever lose time from work or school due to gambling?
- Has gambling ever made your home life unhappy?
- Did gambling affect your reputation?
- Have you ever felt remorse after gambling?
- Did you ever gamble to get money with which to pay debts or otherwise solve financial difficulties?
- Did gambling cause a decrease in your ambition or efficiency?
- After losing did you feel you must return as soon as possible and win back your losses?
- After a win did you have a strong urge to return and win more?
- Did you often gamble until all your money was gone?
- Did you ever borrow to finance your gambling?
- Have you ever sold anything to finance gambling?
- Were you reluctant to use "gambling money" for normal expenditures?
- Did gambling make you careless of the welfare of yourself or your family?
- Did you ever gamble longer than you had planned?
- Have you ever gambled to escape worry, trouble, boredom, loneliness, grief or loss?
- Have you ever committed, or considered committing, an illegal act to finance gambling?
- Did gambling cause you to have difficulty in sleeping?
- Do arguments, disappointments or frustrations create within you an urge to gamble?
- Did you ever have an urge to celebrate any good fortune by a few hours of gambling?
- Have you ever considered self-destruction or suicide as a result of your gambling?

DECEMBER 2021 SPORTS BETTING LAUNCHES IN MD

Legal sports gambling was approved by Maryland voters through a ballot referendum in November 2020.

Following the voter approval:

- ***Governor Larry Hogan signed the enabling legislation into law in May 2021.***
- ***In-person (retail) sports betting launched in December 2021.***
- ***Mobile sports betting, which accounts for the vast majority of wagering, officially launched in November 2022.***



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Recognizing the Signs, Screening, and How to Have the Conversation

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PHONES AND PADS

We already know that phones and other electronic devices are becoming extremely addictive at an earlier age. Add money to the equation and you've just injected steroids into an already primed brain.



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When Might Gambling be Becoming or Already a Problem?

- ✓ Preoccupied with gambling
  - Reliving past gambling experiences
  - Planning the next activity
  - Thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble
- ✓ Increasing betting amounts to achieve the same desired excitement
- ✓ Secretive about his/her gambling habits/behavior, and defensive when confronted
- ✓ Unaccounted for mood changes



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Other Signs Gambling may be Becoming or Already a Problem?

- ✓ Trying to win back losses by more gambling
- ✓ Lying about the extent of gambling
- ✓ Gambling to escape problems
- ✓ Isolation and withdrawal from family and friends
- ✓ Missing personal items such as jewelry, other valuables
- ✓ Trying to unsuccessfully control, cut back, or stop gambling behavior
- ✓ Restless or irritable when not gambling
- ✓ Looking for bailouts to resolve financial problems



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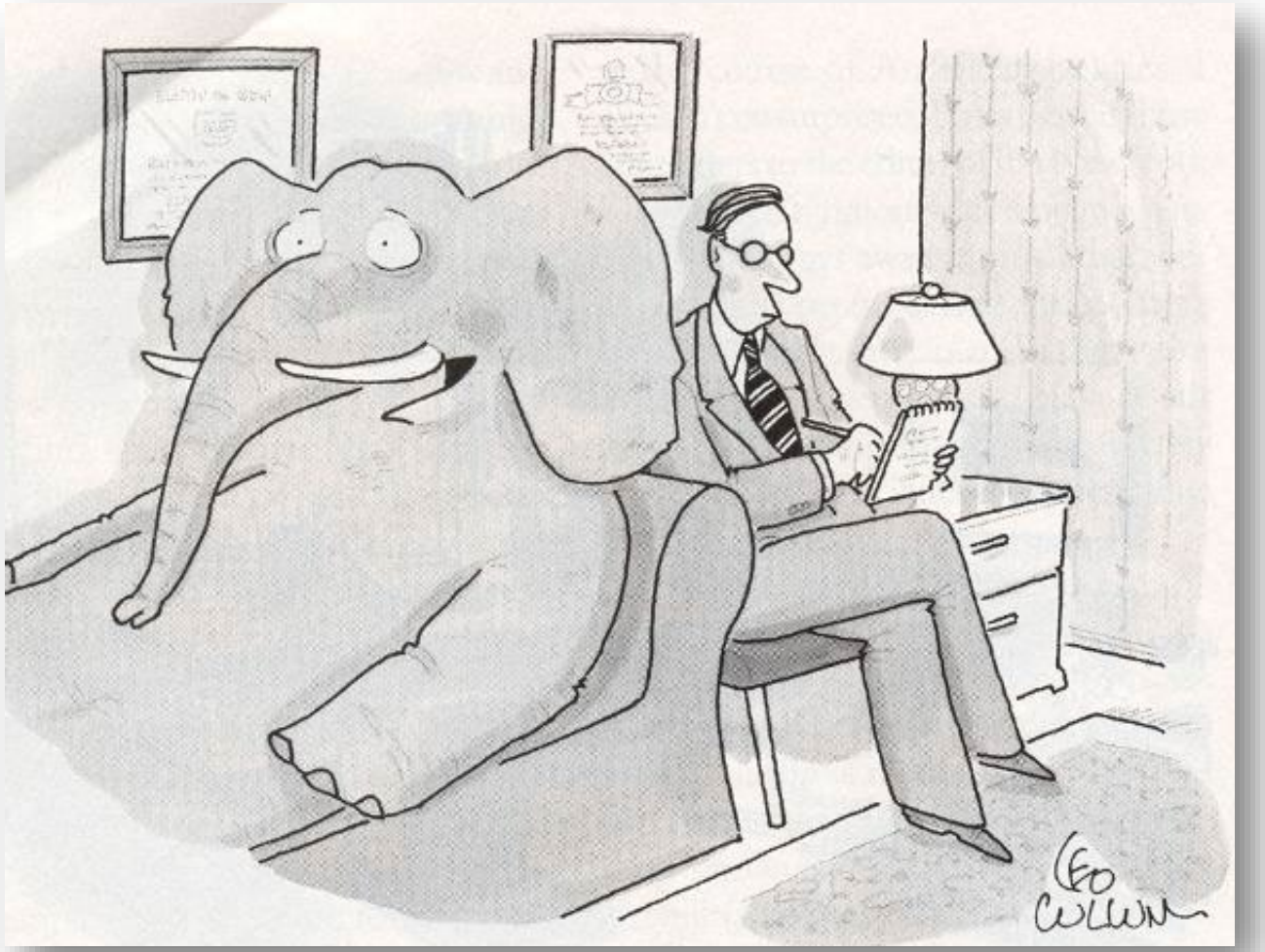
Why Screen for Gambling?

Screening can help identify individuals who need further assessment, are impacted financially, emotionally, socially, and may even be experiencing thoughts of suicide related to gambling.

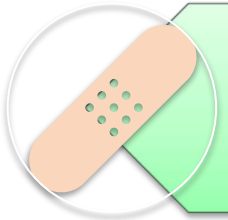


"I'm right there in the room, and no one even acknowledges me."

Why screen for gambling disorder?



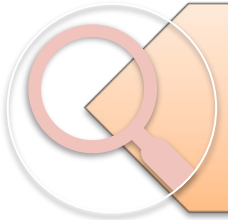
Evidence of high-risk of gambling harms among individuals diagnosed with substance use and mental health disorders.



Gambling disorder may lead to financial, emotional, social, occupational, and physical harms.



Individuals diagnosed with substance use or other mental disorders are at higher risk for developing a Gambling Disorder.



Many cases of gambling disorder go undetected, because of limited assessment for this concern.

Early intervention and treatment work!

Evidenced Based Gambling Screening Tools

Lie/Bet

SOGS and SOGS-RA:

- South Oaks Gambling Screen (and Revised Adolescent)

BBGS:

- Brief Biopsychosocial Gambling Screen

PGSI:

- Problem Gambling Severity Index

NODS:

- National Opinion Research Center – Diagnostic Screen for Gambling
  - NODS-CLIP
  - NODS-PERC

What are the key elements for a successful SBIRT intervention?

Screening Questionnaire

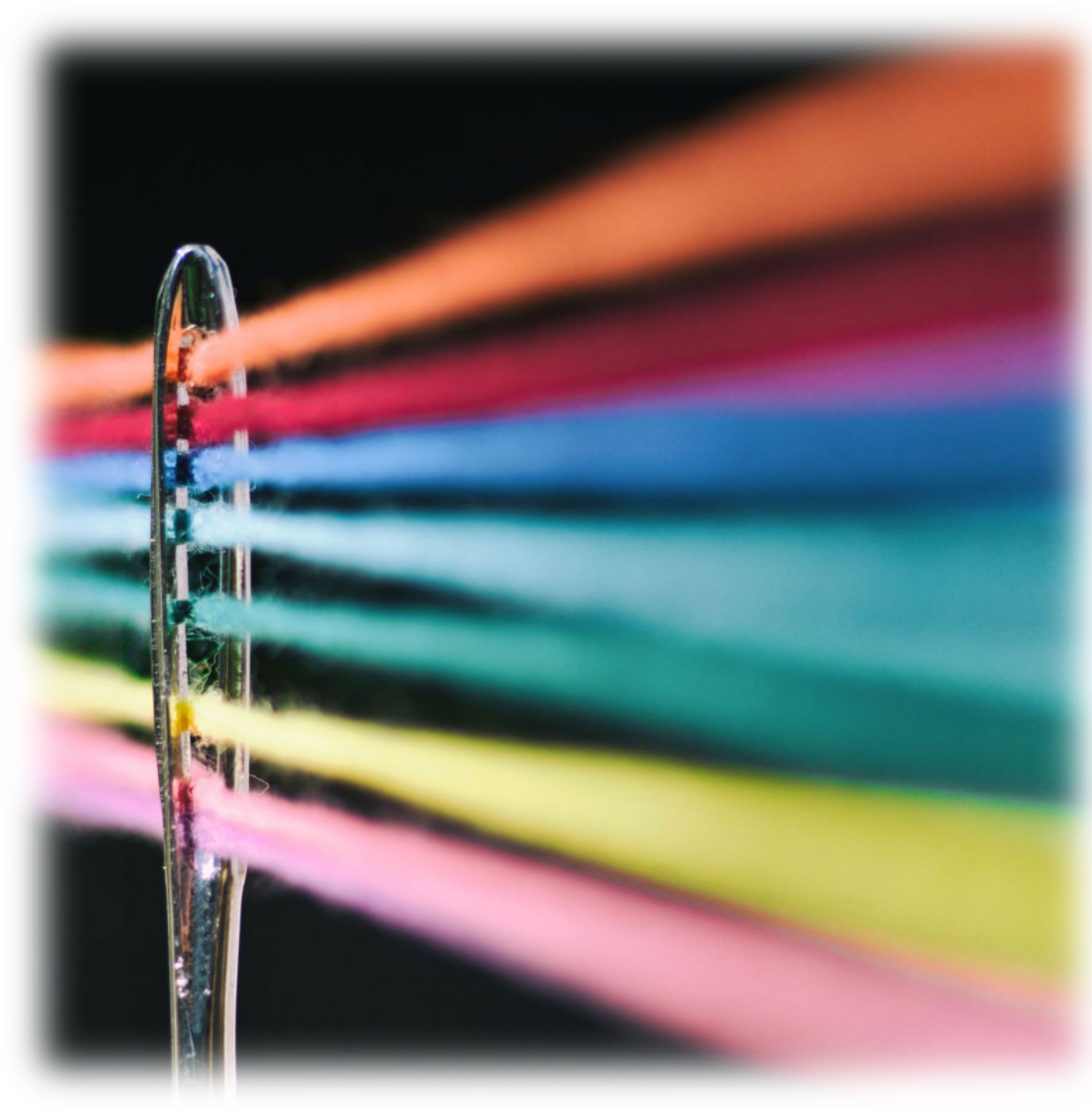
- Short
- Reliable
- Valid
- Interpretable

Brief Intervention

- Awareness raising
- Motivational
- Implementable

Referral to Treatment

- Specialty treatment available
- Further assessment



Problem Gambling Screening Guide

Guidelines for Integrating Gambling Screening and Assessment into Current Practice

A Toolkit for Behavioral Health Providers and Medical Professionals

https://www.mdproblemgambling.com/for-treatment-providers

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Gambling Self-Assessments

- ✓ Center's Help Seeker Website – Self Assessment: https://helpmygamblingproblem.org/gambling-problems/self-assessment/
- ✓ Gamblers Anonymous 20 Questions: https://www.gamblersanonymous.org/ga/content/20-questions
- ✓ GAM-ANON 20 Questions *and a* Self-Test for Financial Troubles: https://www.mdproblemgambling.com/self-evaluation/


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Gambling: A Progressive Disease
Over any considerable period of time it gets worse requiring more money and more time to experience the same desired affect.
Tips for Starting the Conversation
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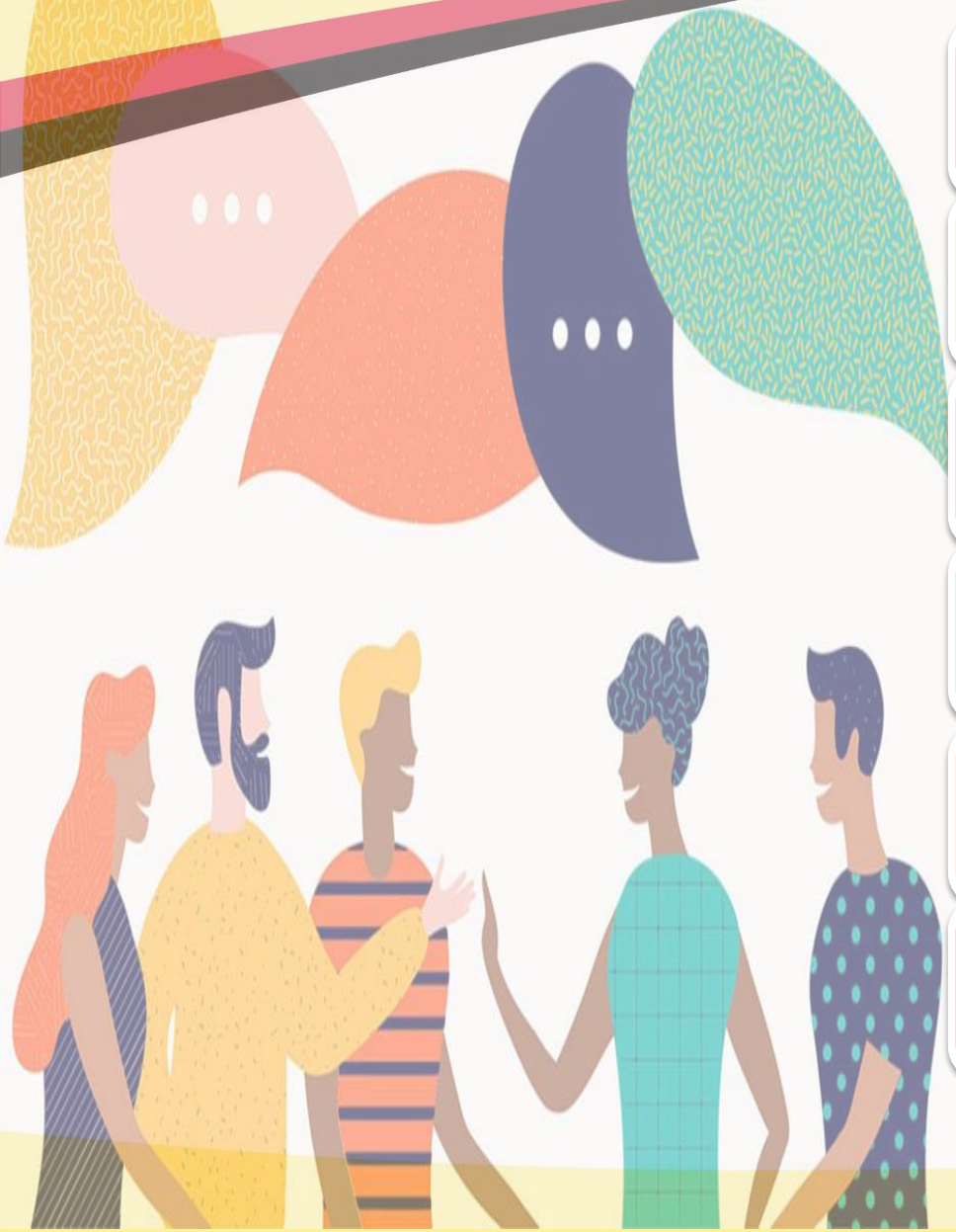

Start the Conversation

- Choose the right time to start the Conversation
- Let the person know you are concerned for them in a caring manner
- Be specific about the behaviors you have observed
- Listen non-judgmentally to how they respond and what they are saying
- Increase their curiosity about recovery and help reduce associated stigma
- Reassure them you are willing to help

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Resources for Help



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Maryland's No Cost Treatment

Treatment is available at no cost for any MD Resident who has been negatively impacted by gambling regardless of insurance coverage or ability to pay. This includes the person engaging in the problematic gambling and anyone associated with them that their gambling has negatively impacted.

- Maryland Residents can access No Cost Treatment:
  - https://www.mdproblemgambling.com/find-a-counselor
  - Over 100 Behavioral Health Providers offering outpatient, intensive outpatient, and residential treatment at no cost for MD residents negatively impacted by harmful gambling.

Deterrents/Roadblocks

- Voluntary Exclusion Program via Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency allows you to Ban yourself for 2-years or lifetime from any of the legal gambling activities in MD.
  - https://www.mdgamblinghelp.org/problem-gambling-info/voluntary-exclusion-program
  - Exclude/Ban yourself from Casino, Lottery, Bingo Halls, Fantasy and Sports betting for 2 years or lifetime.
  - May experience an increased sense of control if unable to gamble legally



GAMBLING RESOURCES

GAMBLING HELPLINE: 1-800-GAMBLER

Gam-Ban
https://gamban.com/

Bet Blocker:
https://betblocker.org/

True Link:
https://www.truelinkfinancial.com/

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
https://988lifeline.org/
1-800-273-8255 or **988**

National Council on Problem Gambling
https://www.ncpgambling.org/

Gamblers Anonymous
https://www.gamblersanonymous.org/ga/locations

Gam-Anon
https://gam-anon.org/

SMART Recovery
https://www.smartrecovery.org/gambling-addiction/

MARYLAND RESOURCES



*Gambling Helpline: **1-800-GAMBLER***

Maryland Center *of* Excellence *on* Problem Gambling:

- mdproblemgambling.com
- helpmygamblingproblem.org

The Parents Place of MD:
https://www.ppmd.org/contact/

The Maryland Council on Problem Gambling:
https://www.marylandproblemgambling.org

Local GA Meetings:
http://dmvgamblinghelp.org

Maryland Legal Aid:
https://www.mdlab.org

Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service
https://mvlslaw.org

Consumer Credit Counseling:
www.moneymanagement.org

CASH Campaign of Maryland *(Creating Assets, Savings and Hope):*
https://cashmd.org



MCPG

Maryland Council on Problem Gambling

Affiliate of the National Council on Problem Gambling

Our key partner in Maryland advocating for support to reduce the harms associated with problematic gambling and serves Maryland's faith-based communities.

Website: https://www.marylandproblemgambling.org

Email: MarylandCouncilPG@yahoo.com

Ways the Center Provides Support



- Free Gambling Related Trainings now with Peer CEU's
- Free Case Consultation Calls 4xs a month on Zoom
- Free Peer Support: *1:1 and Group Presentations*
- Free Treatment for Maryland Residents
- Free Awareness Materials for your lobby or offices
- **Free Helpline 1-800-GAMBLER**
  - call, text, or chat confidentially with a professional 24/7


Questions
or
Comments