

Understanding gambling risk-taking behaviour in young people – Facilitator pack

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Introduction

Gambling in Australia is strictly regulated by age. A person must be 18 years of age to gamble in hotel or club venues, casinos, TABs, to buy lottery products, and to legally access online gambling services.

However, research shows that young people are increasingly exposed to gambling at an early age (Griffiths, 2018). The way they are engaging with gambling is changing, driven by rapid technological changes and their high-level of engagement with mobile technology (Hing et al., 2020). Young people are now more exposed to gambling advertising through digital platforms, and have greater access to simulated gambling through mobile technology and video games.



Increased exposure and engagement can lead to young people experiencing gambling harm, such as poor academic performance, moodiness, interpersonal conflict, and uptake of other behaviours detrimental to their health (Warren & Yu, 2019; McBride & Derevensky, 2016). Young people (aged 18 to 24) experience higher rates of gambling harm compared to the general NSW community (Hing et al., 2020).

Despite this, gambling is often seen by teachers and parents as a low priority issue. Gambling has become relatively 'normalised', especially sports betting. There is a lack of understanding and knowledge by adults around the way young people are engaging with gambling via gaming. Teachers and parents also tend to perceive gambling harm as having a comparatively low impact on young people's health and wellbeing compared to drug, alcohol and tobacco use (Derevensky & Gilbeau, 2015).

Potential Impacts of Gambling on Young People	
Impact on emotional wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stress and anxiety • depression, especially amongst females • anger and physical lashing out • feelings of shame and helplessness • feelings of regret and guilt • mood swings • feelings of isolation • feelings of being judged.
Impact on relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • withdrawal from friends and family • disinterest in regular social outlets • intense interest in gambling conversations, to the detriment of others • interpersonal conflict with friends/parents/teachers who are worried about their gambling behaviours.
Impact on education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time spent away from school to gamble • poor academic performance from time dedicated to study taken up by gambling • an inability to focus on studies in the classroom/homework due to a focus on gambling.
Impact on finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • debts • money or valuables of the young person or family members go missing • selling personal belongings, or asking for money or loans • using parents credit cards without permission for gambling • not taking part in social activities (i.e. going to the movies with friends) because of a lack of income.
Impact on physical health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of sleep • a disinterest in activities they previously enjoyed, such as sport • increase in drug, alcohol or tobacco use • increased risk-taking behaviour in other areas of their lives.

In response to this, GambleAware has developed resources to address these misconceptions amongst adults, educate young people about potential harm, and provide a framework for supporting students who are experiencing gambling harm.

GambleAware works to prevent and minimise gambling harm within an informed, connected and resilient community where people are supported to help themselves and those around them.

All our work is driven by our vision of NSW working towards zero gambling harm.

To achieve this, we provide information, education, support and free professional treatment services so people can manage any issues they may have with gambling. We also provide education and resources so people who choose to gamble can do so safely.

Resources and services are available for the whole community. That includes anyone who wants to understand what a safe approach to gambling looks like, people concerned that a friend, loved one or workmate may have an issue with gambling, and everyone who needs help and support.

We work with partners, including health providers and community groups, to provide tools for the prevention and treatment of gambling harm. We also commission research to understand and prevent gambling harm and fund community prevention and education programs.

GambleAware's work is funded by the Responsible Gambling Fund. This is a fund established under legislation for purposes relating to responsible gambling, gambling harm minimisation and prevention and treatment for those struggling with gambling. We use this funding for:

- research to provide thought leadership and inform the development of evidence-based responsible gambling initiatives and programs
- community education to support informed gambling choices and safer gambling behaviour, encourage resilient communities, as well as destigmatise help-seeking behaviour
- intervention through provision of support and counselling services, including early access through online and self-help options
- support for policy development and regulatory oversight of responsible gambling obligations and practices.

This Facilitator pack is a supporting document for adults delivering gambling education and support for young people. It provides the necessary background for understanding gambling as it relates to young people by:

- Clarifying the nature of gambling-related behaviours amongst young people.
- Explaining why gambling is a priority health concern for young people.
- Identifying the warning signs young people may be experiencing harm from their or another person's gambling.

It complements the GambleAware teaching resources and targeted resource for intervening with students who may be impacted by gambling harm.

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The rising prevalence of youth gambling

How people participate in gambling is changing to become more online. Young people are increasingly exposed to gambling advertising and are able to engage with gambling more easily. This has the potential for them to experience gambling harm more often.



Social media marketing, online gambling advertising, sports coverage, and the expanding scope and variety of video games with monetary gambling opportunities, means young people are exposed to gambling in more aspects of their lives than in the past (Elliot & Le Guyader, 2020).

Smart phones and access to the internet increase the accessibility of gambling. The increasing convergence of gambling and video games - a popular pastime amongst young people - means young people are increasingly engaging with gambling-like features in games (Elliot & Le Guyader, 2020). In simulated gambling games money cannot actually be won through playing them so they are not regulated in Australia. They do not meet the definition of gambling, which is illegal.

On average, young people in Australia start to gamble at about 11 to 12 years old (Hing et al., 2020). Almost one in three (31%) of Australian students aged 12 to 17 years reported gambling at some time in the past. One in six 16 to 17-year olds reported having gambled in the past year (Warren and Yu 2019).

The gambling behaviours of parents and caregivers are the strongest influence on young people's gambling, with most gambling occurring with parents/guardians (53.7%), followed by friends aged 17 or less (26.8%) (Hing et al., 2020). Growing up with an adult in the same household who struggles with their own gambling uniquely predicts at-risk gambling amongst young people (Hing et al., 2020).

Examples of the harms young people experience include poor academic performance, moodiness, interpersonal conflict, and uptake of other behaviours detrimental to their health (McBride & Derevensky, 2016). Young people aged 18 to 24 experience higher rates of gambling harm compared to the general NSW community (Hing et al., 2020). Few adolescents can recognise when gambling is problematic or access mental health professionals for assistance (Elliot & Le Guyader, 2020).

The psychology of gambling

When you engage in recreational gambling, you are not simply playing against the odds.

Companies that profit from gambling have a vested interest in engaging players for longer and having them walk away with the impression they did better than chance (Robinson, 2018). This fosters a false impression of skill, and makes it more likely for gamblers to return again and again.

Specifically, **the gambler's fallacy** is the mistaken belief that if an event happens repeatedly, a different event is imminent. In reality, the odds of any particular event occurring are always the same (Donati, Primi, & Cheisi, 2014). Gambling is, by its very definition, a random event. There is no system to predict patterns in random numbers. Whilst some forms of gambling, such as card games or sports and race betting do technically have some small degree of skill compared to poker machines or roulette wheels, this can be dangerous as it leads gamblers to overestimate the impact of their skill. (For more, see 'Exposure Through Sport' below).

Gambling operates on a Variable Ratio Schedule of Reinforcement. This means that every X number of times you perform the behaviour of placing a wager, you will receive the 'reward' of a win. However, rather than being guaranteed a reward after a set number of attempts, X varies and is unpredictable. This is a particularly addictive Schedule of Reinforcement, and particularly lucrative for gambling companies because the chance of a jackpot style reward is ever-present, but the number of attempts required to achieve it is variable. The reward can be promised and appear just within reach, and therefore encourages gamblers to keep playing, but never actually has to be delivered on.

When we get a 'win' or reward, our brain rewards us with the release of the chemical dopamine, an important neurotransmitter for feeling pleasure. However, our brains then begin to associate Dopamine and that pleasurable feeling with that activity. It begins to be released during situations where the reward is uncertain and the release increases during the moments leading up to a potential reward. Dopamine is released any time rewards are expected, regardless of whether they end up happening or not, which is why people can continue to gamble for hours with no actual payout. Chasing the win is rewarding in itself (Robinson, 2018).

Neuroscience research has found that gambling addiction has many of the same neural processes as drug addiction (Robinson, 2018). Repeated exposure to gambling and uncertainty changes the human brain, particularly in how the brain responds to losing. Counterintuitively, in individuals experiencing gambling harm, losing money triggers the rewarding release of dopamine as much as winning does. As a result, losing sets off the urge to keep playing, rather than the disappointment that might make you walk away. In essence, our brains are wired to reward us with the neurotransmitter dopamine which in certain situations and this makes us feel happy. Research has shown that the brain releases dopamine and reacts to gambling behaviours as it does with other pleasurable activities, leading to gamblers to chase that feeling in much the same way as many of us do with other pleasurable activities. This all means that our brain can subconsciously react to experiences that in the short term are interpreted as pleasurable but can lead to harm later down the line. There is a stigma associated with gambling behaviours that can lead to young people feeling shameful for their actions, but it is important to be clear on how our brains are wired to respond to rewards and pleasure to remove this stigma.

Gender considerations in youth gambling

It is important to understand the different approaches to gambling, and the different impacts on gambling, for boys and men versus girls and women, which is particularly significant in adolescence when opinions and lifelong habits are being formed.

Research suggests that for irregular (casual) gambling behaviours, boys and men are more likely to have gambled larger amounts with more frequency than girls and women (Tani, Ponti, & Ghinassi, 2020).

Young people experiencing gambling harm are more likely to be male (Andrie, Tzavara, Tzavela, Richardson, Greydanus, Tsolia, & Tsitsika, 2019, Livazović & Bojčić, 2019). This group likely consists of males who are struggling with academic achievement, substance abuse, and/or have a lack of parental involvement in their lives (Calado, Alexandre & Griffiths, 2017).

The social factor is a strong influence on young male's gambling behaviours. Many report speaking about odds and making bets daily with their male peer group (Jenkinson, de Lacey-Vawdon, & Carroll, 2018), and the behaviour of 'chasing losses' is fuelled by competition with their male peers.



Sports betting marketing heavily targets young males, with some studies suggesting nearly a quarter of male bettors were under 18 when they first placed a bet on sports (Jenkinson, de Lacey-Vawdon, & Carroll, 2018). In the same study, young men reported viewing these targeted campaigns favourably, as an appealing, low-risk or no-loss betting option.

All young people can benefit from gambling education and support. But young men may need more support to develop critical thinking skills so they can make informed choices about gambling, especially as they are targeted so successfully by gambling advertising.

The convergence of video games and gambling

Gaming is a popular past time for many young people. Unlike previous generations, today's young people have an online presence that blends seamlessly with their offline lives. Games contain gambling like elements, some of which replicate real-life behaviours, which exposes young people more frequently and easily than in the past (Elliot & Le Guyader, 2020).

In some instances, gambling in games is explicit. The player controls their character-avatar to engage in games of poker or blackjack.

In other games, players may not be conscious of indirect forms of gambling. One of these is the purchasing of 'loot boxes'.

A loot box (also called a loot/prize crate) is a consumable virtual item that can be redeemed to receive a randomised selection of other virtual items, or loot. This loot is tied to improving the gaming experience for players, and can range from cosmetic customisation options for a player's character, to game-changing equipment which increases a player's chances of winning, to additional in-game currency.

Loot boxes resemble gambling slot machines because no player skill is involved, and the outcome (prize) is randomly determined.

Experts have designed loot boxes to replicate many of the addictive elements of gambling (see below); they foster the impression of near-misses to encourage the purchases of more chances. They dole out rewards on just enough of a reinforcement schedule to keep players engaging with them, and they perpetually promise the chance of acquiring extraordinary rewards (jackpots). Many of these rewards are often available for direct purchase in the game's store, but for high prices, causing players to believe taking a risk on the chance of the loot box is better than spending the money directly, even though the odds are in the favour of the game.

Young people need to be made aware of how and why loot boxes function as an indirect form of gambling, especially when the psychological and behavioural parallels between gambling and games cause some players to be more likely to gamble than non-players (McBride & Derevensky, 2016). The prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for executive function (i.e. making informed decisions) does not fully mature in humans until approximately the age of 25, meaning that young people in adolescence are unable to fully and properly regulate their behaviours in a manner that keeps them safe. The immaturity of this part of the brain means that gambling-like behaviours cultivated through loot boxes correlates with gambling harm in adult gamers (Brooks & Clark, 2019).

How these games foster gambling behaviour in young people

A realistic gambling environment

The game might look like a casino or real poker machine, with shiny graphics and entertaining sound effects. They might also simulate the act of gambling, such as pulling the lever of a slot machine by swiping on your phone or tablet. Win-associated cues – such as jingles that vary in length and size as a function of jackpot size – both increase excitement and lead gamblers to overestimate how often they are winning. These games make it easy for young people to transition to real gambling by replicating and familiarising them with a gambling environment (Kim et al., 2017).

Artificially increased odds

A game might make sure that you win more than you lose, especially during a trial phase, to get you hooked and spending real money, at which point the odds decline.

Game designers are not subject to the same regulations as gambling operators are. Game designers have greater control over the outcomes of these games. They can set the odds differently to the fall of a physical dice or a roulette wheel, and, crucially, can control the frequency of certain events, especially near-misses, where the outcome stops just short of lining up for a jackpot. These near-misses and almost-wins trigger areas of the brain that usually respond to wins, and almost winning triggers a more substantial urge to play than even winning itself.

Perceived low-risk gambling

Many of these games and apps allow you to practice gambling without risking your money. Some games will give a player limited free credits during a trial which encourages them to buy more after they are hooked. This normalises gambling for young people by teaching them the rules of the game which might lead or encourage them to gamble with real stakes.

Social elements

Many games encourage you to compete against your friends and share your results on social media. Some games will also reward you for signing up your friends.

The desire to win can be a strong driving force in continuing to play and purchase upgrades or items which help you win. Peer influence is an important factor that encourages young people to engage in online gambling (Kim et al., 2017).

Exposure through sport



More young people are engaging in sports betting. Never before has gambling been so heavily promoted and accessible through sport. The amount of gambling in and around sport normalises it within Australian culture and society, which makes it harder for young people to recognise potential harms (Pitt, Thomas, Bestman, Daube, & Derevensky, 2017).

Researchers and parents have noticed that more adolescents talk about odds when they are discussing sport, which makes gambling an important part of the game. This might encourage more young people to automatically gamble when they are watching sports (Pitt, Thomas, & Bestman, 2016).

Young people's perceived knowledge of the sport and the teams involved can give a false impression that there is a greater element of skill involved in sports betting. This can lead to sports enthusiasts having an inflated sense of confidence in their ability to win, possibly resulting in them gambling in riskier ways (Pitt et al., 2017).

This attitude is supported by the perception of adults 'safely' partaking in gambling on sporting matches, celebrating their big wins and 'hiding' their losses. It is dangerous for young people to adopt this misconception of the odds of gambling at an age when they are actively forming their approaches to the world. This misconception may lead to them experiencing gambling harm in the future as they try to apply the same approach to gambling activities with a greater degree of random chance.

Identifying warning signs

As part of child safe practices, it is a teacher and school's responsibility to identify whether they have noticed a change in student behaviour, mood and willingness to learn. Also, to create an opportunity to talk to both the student and their family about what they have observed.

Whilst GambleAware's targeted interventions and lessons included with this pack provide support for you to hold these conversations, it's recommended that you refer to your state's and school's policies, professional standards, agreements and training for your responsibilities and legal reporting obligations regarding disclosures made by students. You should alert your student manager/principal to these matters.

Some indicators and behaviours listed are worth discussing with a young person before assuming they are gambling. These behaviours do not develop overnight, and it can be difficult to notice when it goes from a bit of fun to a problem.

Some potential signs that a student might be experiencing gambling harm include:

- unexplained debts or extra cash and possessions
- unexplained time away from home, work, or school
- behaviour change (distracted, moody, sad, worried, etc.)
- withdrawal from friends and family
- less involvement with usual activities
- unusual amount of time spent watching or checking sports scores, statistics or playing poker games or other casino-style apps
- intense interest in gambling conversations
- playing gambling-type games on the Internet
- money or valuables are missing
- using gambling "lingo" in his/her conversation (e.g. flop, call, bookie, point spread, etc.)
- selling personal belongings, or asking for money or loans
- bragging about winning
- lying, cheating, or stealing in school.

Gambling harm (health and wellbeing implications)

Gambling harm is a term that covers all the possible consequences of gambling and can lead to impacts on the individual's health and wellbeing. It can also have negative consequences for their family or community. It is not limited to financial losses; a person's emotional state and interpersonal relationships can be negatively affected by gambling.

Increased participation in gambling activities links with an increase in regular substance-use behaviours, including alcohol-especially binge drinking -smoking, and other drugs (Warren & Yu, 2019). This may be because these behaviours happen in conjunction with gambling, or because young people prone to risky gambling behaviour are more likely to take risks in other areas of their life and health.

Increased participation in gambling activities is associated with poor academic performance (McBride and Derevensky, 2016). If a young person is spending long periods engaging in gambling or gambling-like games outside of their studies, often late into the night, they may be compromising their time spent studying

and/or getting enough sleep. If they are highly focused on these activities even when not engaging in them, their ability to focus in class is further impacted.

Increased participation in gambling activities can lead to moodiness (McBride and Derevensky, 2016). Adolescents are particularly susceptible to mood swings, and these can be exacerbated as their state of mind becomes intrinsically linked to their successes at gambling and the consequences of their losses. Activities previously enjoyed can be overtaken by gambling due to a lack of time or interest in these activities, perhaps due in part to the perceived decrease in reward mechanisms these activities contain compared to gambling. This can lead to a further deterioration in mood as young people forgo other opportunities for physical, mental, social, and emotional outlets.

Some research links elevated gambling frequency to depression, particularly in females (Desai, Rani & Maciejewski, Paul & Pantalon, Michael & Potenza, Marc., 2005).

Increased participation in gambling activities can cause interpersonal conflict (McBride and Derevensky, 2016). When gambling becomes visible to family and friends it may lead to arguments with these support networks about their gambling and the harm it is causing. This, in turn, can leave adolescents in particular feeling isolated and judged for their habits.

There is some evidence to suggest that adolescents who gamble are more likely to get into fights with their peers at school (Slavin, Pilver, Hoff, Krishnan-Sarin, Steinberg, Rugle, & Potenza, 2013).

Curriculum resources

GambleAware has funded the creation of several curriculum resources mapped to Stages 4, 5 and 6 of the NSW Personal Development Health and Physical Education (PDHPE), English and Maths curriculum, to raise awareness amongst young people of gambling harm. They are designed to make teaching gambling-related content within these curriculums easy and simple.



The role of teachers

Fundamentally, the success of any school-based gambling education program, depends on the teacher's willingness and confidence to deliver the program.

Whilst this Facilitator pack aims to inform and support teachers to deliver these resources, further reading and professional development is highly recommended.

The role of parents

School-based prevention programs which include a parent element are more likely to lead to greater positive outcomes (Elliot & Le Guyader, 2020). It is strongly recommended parents and carers are made aware of these curriculum materials using the letter template found on p19.

The gambling behaviours of parents and carers are one of the strongest influences for the behaviour of young people (Pitt et al., 2017). Young people are more likely to have gambled in the past year if they had gambled with their parents during childhood and had parents who approved of gambling (Elliot & Le Guyader, 2020). Gambling is normalised in Australian households, with a perception of adults 'safely' partaking in gambling, especially around sports (Elliot & Le Guyader, 2020). When adults celebrate their big wins and hide their losses, their children associated gambling with positive experiences, without being exposed to or learning about the potential dangers. Parents and carers should therefore be encouraged to match and support the messaging of these curriculum materials within their own homes.

Families are encouraged to speak openly with their child about how they engage with technology and which games they're currently playing. Parents are in the best position to monitor their children's gaming and gambling activities. If their child is actively gaming and using other forms of technology to interact with friends and family then parents and guardians should be aware of safe practices. ESafety programs can provide support for guardians to monitor their child's activity and to ensure their health and safety is protected.

GambleAware is developing a parent's program to educate parents about the risks of young people and gambling. Including a parent's workshop, campaign and resources. Parents can find more information on the [website](#).

The role of the school community

Any learning in class will need to be reinforced by what is modelled to students by their wider school community, including their teachers, school staff and school leadership team. Addressing skills and knowledge alone will not suffice; students will require a multifaceted and multimodal learning approach that is embedded throughout their day.

The impact of any interventions that are brief, without 'booster' sessions, or that are unsupported by parents and the wider community, are likely to depreciate over time. This is why a whole school approach is recommended: so that the learnings and preventative measures are heavily reinforced in and outside school, and over time. It may be that for these initiatives to be effective, it will involve a 5-10-year timeframe of commitment by the school.

Below are templates for letters to teachers and parents to explain this program and to encourage their participation in supporting students' learning around the school and at home.

Template for letter to school staff

Dear Staff,

This letter is to inform you of the school's recent approach to gambling education via the NSW GambleAware in Schools program.

Research shows that young people are increasingly exposed to gambling at an early age, particularly through sports and the gambling-like elements found in some video games, and that there are correlations between the use of gambling-like elements in video games and the development of gambling problems. Experts are increasingly concerned that this growing exposure may lead to more young people experiencing gambling harm, now and later.

We understand that the possibility of students experiencing gambling harm may be of lower importance compared to other health issues, and the challenges of including new material in a crowded curriculum. However, by disregarding gambling, we increase the risk that it will be the source of harm to our young people.

This unit of work aims to help students develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to make safer gambling choices. It will correct students' misconceptions around gambling and raise awareness of gambling harm, whilst teaching important elements of the curriculum.

The lessons will need to be reinforced by the wider school community. Addressing the skills work alone will not suffice; gambling education with regards to real behaviour change will require a multifaceted and multimodal learning approach that is embedded throughout the students day.

We therefore ask that you review the Facilitator pack and materials as part of your professional development even if you are not directly involved in the implementation of these lessons, and to consider your approach towards gambling around students.

Template for letter to parents

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

This letter is to inform you of the school's new approach to gambling education via the NSW GambleAware in Schools program.

Research shows that young people are increasingly exposed to gambling at an early age, particularly through sports and the gambling-like elements found in some video games, and that there are correlations between the use of gambling-like elements in video games and the development of gambling problems. Experts are increasingly concerned that this growing exposure may lead to more young people experiencing gambling harm, now and later.

This unit of work aims to help students develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to make safer gambling choices. It will correct students' misconceptions around gambling and raise awareness of gambling harm, whilst teaching important elements of the curriculum.

The gambling behaviours of parents and carers are one of the strongest influences for the behaviour of young people. In particular, the perception of adults 'safely' partaking in gambling, celebrating their wins and hiding their losses, and the normalisation of gambling in sport, are strong influencers on young people's attitudes.

We encourage you to support your child's learning at home by speaking openly with your child about gambling, and how they engage with technology.

We have attached a fact sheet containing further information on risky gambling and supporting young people. If you require more information, please contact the school for a more detailed resource pack.

If you are worried about your child's behaviour, with regards to gambling, gaming, or any other issues, please don't hesitate to contact the school.

Handling sensitive topics and issues fact sheet

Talking about risky behaviours and gambling harm often involves addressing sensitive topics and issues. These conversations may evoke strong opinions or raise challenging questions about values and beliefs with no easy answers.

What they learn in class may differ from what they hear and see at home and in the world around them (noting that advertising is everywhere). It is essential to handle these issues without reinforcing stereotypes, increasing confusion, or raising tension between students.

When talking about the issues, memories, and feelings associated with lived experiences of gambling harm, it is essential to create a safe and positive classroom environment that encourages participation and cooperation without placing pressure on those who may not feel comfortable sharing their stories. Remember, just because a student in your class may have lived experiences of a sensitive topic, it is not their responsibility to educate the rest of the class about it.

When using teaching and learning activities from these resources, be mindful of your students' different learning abilities, maturity levels, and personal backgrounds. Many of the issues, perspectives, and language explored in these resources are not limited to the experiences of people who have lived experiences of gambling harm.

Teachers must be aware of students in their class who may have direct or indirect experience with family trauma, violence, bullying, mental illness, engagement in risky behaviour, and individual or family experiences of gambling harm.

In particular, efforts should be made to ensure that students feel they are in a safe learning environment. One of the main ways of doing this is by setting group rules by establishing a mutually agreed list of sharing guidelines, displaying them in a prominent place, and kindly encouraging the class to remind each other of the guidelines. The guidelines could include:

- Own your ideas by using “I think” rather than “you should”.
- Respect each other by remembering that each person has their own beliefs, values, world views, experiences, and opinions.
- Each person has a right to contribute their ideas, so listen politely.
- Be brave in sharing your ideas, experiences, and opinions.
- Consider the privacy of your classmates and appreciate that everyone has the right to privacy; this might mean they don't want to share their ideas or experiences on an issue.
- Share feedback in a considerate and positive way: remember to be kind, helpful, and specific when providing feedback.

By helping to create an environment where opinions and perspectives are respected, students are encouraged to actively take part in advancing respect for the rights of others within the classroom and beyond.

For more information and guidance on how to establish a supportive classroom environment to discuss these issues, refer to the Targeted resources pack.

Find out more – additional resources

The issue of gambling can be a sensitive topic for young people and adults. As a result of engaging with uncomfortable content, students may experience a range of emotions and reactions. It may be appropriate to share some coping mechanisms with them, such as deep breathing, going for a walk, taking time out, journaling, drawing, or listening to music.

In cases where students require counselling or support, refer them to assistance from the school counsellor or from one of the organisations listed below. There are online, over-the-phone, and face-to-face resources to help them deal with gambling harm-related issues. These services provide a platform where young people can talk about how gambling impacts their lives or the lives of someone they know.

GambleAware (gambleaware.nsw.gov.au)

Provides free confidential advice and support for people affected by gambling.

Office of the eSafety Commissioner (esafety.gov.au)

Promotes online safety education for Australian young people, educators and parents.

Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) (www.acma.gov.au)

Independent Commonwealth statutory authority, responsible for regulating gambling advertisements and communications and media services in Australia.

Liquor and Gaming NSW (liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au)

Accountable for the development, implementation and integrity of the overall regulatory framework across alcohol, licensed clubs, charitable fundraising and gambling activities in NSW.

Gaming and gambling articles

These articles provide more information about the convergence of gaming and gambling.

How to stop your kids getting addicted to loot boxes in their online games–David Behrens
(yorkshirepost.co.uk/lifestyle/how-stop-your-kids-getting-addicted-loot-boxes-their-online-games-2913039)

What to do when your child starts spending money in video games–Patrick Wright
(abc.net.au/everyday/what-to-do-when-your-child-starts-spending-money-in-video-games/11645102)

Online gaming addiction in kids: tackling it with compassion–Sally Webster
(nexuspsychology.com.au/online-gaming-addiction-kids-tackling-compassion)

Find out more - additional resources

Counselling

In cases where students require counselling or support, refer them to assistance from the school counsellor or from one of the organisations listed below.

Kids Helpline

Kids Helpline is a counselling service for Australian children and young people aged between 5 and 25 years.

Website: kidshelp.com.au

Phone: 1800 551 800

Headspace

The National Youth Mental Health Foundation provides information and advice for young people going through difficulties through their Headspace centres and online and telephone support services.

Website: eheadspace.org.au

Beyond Blue Youth

Beyond Blue Youth has been established to provide information about anxiety, depression and suicide to young people in Australia aged 12–25.

Website: youthbeyondblue.com/home

Phone: 1300 22 4636

Lifeline

Lifeline provides 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

Website: lifeline.org.au

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