

Understanding gambling risk-taking behaviour in young people – **Targeted resources**

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Introduction

These targeted resources have been developed to provide a framework for teachers to address the gambling harm which students may be experiencing.



Introductory workshop

Below is a framework for beginning the discussion about gambling with students in a safe and open environment. It is a great way to expose students to messages about a broad range of gambling issues that are relevant to young people.

Targeted interventions

Some students amongst your cohort may already be experiencing harm from either their own or someone else's gambling. In the case of these students, more specific interventions may be required to provide more support. These resources detail an approach to these conversations, focusing on particular aspects of youth gambling behaviours to support students in changing their behaviours.

Before you begin

Background information

Teachers and parents should read the Facilitator pack, which provides background information about how young people are affected by gambling harm.



Reflecting on your beliefs about gambling

Before you embark upon teaching any of these lessons, it would be helpful to reflect upon your own beliefs and experiences relating to gambling and, importantly, recognise that if you also need support in navigating any harm related to gambling, whether your own or someone else's, it is absolutely reasonable to seek out that support.

Those who engage in gambling can often be worried about judgement and criticism, leading to shame and other negative feelings or behaviours. Whether it's young people in your school, someone you know, or yourself, it's important to cast aside any biases towards negative connotations or attitudes towards those experiencing gambling harm.

Your responsibilities

As part of child safe practices, it is the responsibility of teachers (and schools) to be aware of changes in students' behaviour or mood which may indicate wellbeing issues.

Parents, caregivers, teachers, and school staff should familiarise themselves with the signs that a student might be experiencing gambling harm so that they are prepared to recognise these signs and act on supporting these students.

Whilst the GambleAware Targeted Interventions and lessons included with this pack provide support for teachers to hold conversations with students about their wellbeing, we recommend teachers refer to their state's and school's policies, professional standards, agreements and training for your responsibilities and legal reporting obligations. Teachers should also alert their student manager/principal of these matters.

Gender considerations

Differences in approaches to gambling and their impacts on boys and men versus girls and women are particularly significant in adolescence. Research suggests that young men are more likely to gamble compared to young women. When they do, they are more vulnerable to experiencing gambling harm than young women.

This difference in impact between boys and girls may influence your approach to implementing the following resources. Consider splitting

Before you begin

cohorts of students by gender to encourage more honest engagement with the resources and reach students with examples more relevant to their personal experiences. Separating genders can be problematic if not done in a way that is considerate of students and their gender identity. It is strongly recommended that you notify students at least one day prior to the session that they will be split into these two groups and give students an opportunity to speak to a teacher in confidence should they wish to change their groups. Any students known to identify as transgender, gender-diverse, or non-binary should privately be given the choice as to which group they will participate in.

Be aware that social factors influence young males' gambling behaviours. Many men report speaking about odds and making bets daily with their male peer group (Jenkinson, de Lacey-Vawdon, & Carroll, 2018). The behaviour of 'chasing losses' is fuelled by competition with their male peers. Be aware of young men, especially during adolescence, trying to protect themselves and the way they appear to their friends through what they share during these kinds of discussions.

Cultural considerations

Similarly, students from different cultural backgrounds may have different approaches to gambling. Australian research (GAMECS Project, 1999) has found differences in the attitudes towards gambling across the different multicultural communities in Sydney.

Firstly, the definition of gambling might be different across cultures. For some cultures gambling is part of their lifestyle, history, and tradition and have integrated values and beliefs that approve of or encourage gambling (Raylu & Oei, 2004). For example, Caribbean and Latin American people consider gambling to be very 'manly'. For Croatian and Chinese communities, gambling is a traditional, positive part of their culture. Many of these cultures and others

consider gambling a status symbol (Dickins & Thomas, 2016). This can make it challenging to have conversations about gambling with students from these cultures. They will be receiving mixed messages about the potential harms of gambling. They may potentially view gambling as an important part of their identity and background. Mahjong, for example, is closely associated with Chinese social customs, and in some cases gambling in this way is actively encouraged, and not seen as real or potentially harmful gambling (Dickins & Thomas, 2016). Students from these cultures may not be open to hearing about potential gambling harm.

On the other hand, some cultures strongly condemn gambling in any form. For example, Russians view it as a 'reprehensible pastime', the Tamil people view gambling as a 'sin', and Arabic and Macedonian cultures associated a great deal of shame with gambling (Dickins & Thomas, 2016). Students from these cultures may need support to respectfully engage in discussions about gambling, alienating or intimidating their peers with their views. Be aware that they may be refused permission by their parents to participate in these sessions for cultural reasons. The increased stigma can make it difficult for students of these cultures to seek help and support if they are experiencing gambling harm.

In summary, a single, generalised approach to discussing gambling and gambling harm will not engage every student. Each student brings a unique perspective to discussions about gambling, informed by their culture and experiences. As their teacher, you will be best placed to understand the particular needs of your cohort. Therefore, approach students sensitively and with empathy. Connect with student on a personal level and adjust your message according to their individual needs.

Introductory workshop

Lesson length: 45 minutes

How to use this section

This section details an easy to facilitate approach to starting the conversation about gambling with students. You can facilitate a whole class or an entire year level in an assembly-type setting.

The lesson is structured to prompt discussion from students with questions. It features several scripts, indented with dashes, that you can repeat in response to students bringing up those topics.

These discussion guides are interspersed with content information to explain teachers' concepts and make them feel informed and confident in approaching discussions about gambling.

Handling sensitive topics and issues

Start by introducing this lesson to students:

- Thanks for attending this session today. We're going to be discussing your thoughts on and experiences with gambling.

Some of you might not think this is much of an issue at this point in your life. But we want to set you up so that you have an awareness of it, and should you notice your friends and family, or yourself, experiencing gambling harm, you'll know how to respond.

Talking about gambling can be challenging. It's a topic that can evoke strong opinions or raise difficult questions about values and beliefs that have no easy answers.

What we discuss here today may be different to what you hear and see at home and from people close to you. Some of you may also have been affected by family members' gambling or might be struggling due to your own gambling.

So before we begin, I want you to know that this is a safe space. You won't get in trouble with me or the principal for what you say here. I want everyone to agree that you're not going to judge each other or feel judgement about what we discuss today. Let's start from a place of respecting each other by remembering that each person has their own beliefs and values and their own world views, experiences and opinions.

You don't have to share if you don't feel comfortable. However, if you feel like you are experiencing gambling harm, please speak to a teacher in confidence. Again, we're here to support you.

If someone does decide to share, please own your ideas by using "I think" rather than "you should". Every person in this room has the right to contribute, so please listen politely. Share feedback in a way that is considerate and positive: remember to be kind, helpful and specific when providing feedback.

Also remember that what is said in this room is said in confidence. It's brave of people to share their experiences with us, and they trust us to keep these experiences to ourselves. Please don't go repeating what you hear in here outside, in the yard, or at home, and especially not posting about it on social media.

Does anyone have any suggestions of some other guidelines we might add to that list to make you feel more comfortable and supported?

Consider writing up a list of guidelines and displaying them somewhere prominent in the room during this session. Gently refer students to the guidelines and remind them to follow them if the conversation starts to heat up.

By helping to create an environment where opinions and perspectives are respected, students will be encouraged and feel more confident to actively take part in the discussions.

When using this teaching resource in the classroom, be mindful of the different learning abilities, maturity levels and personal backgrounds of your students.

Starting the conversation

Once you have established the guidelines, and students feel comfortable, begin the session by asking:

Who here has gambled before?

Students might be willing to share their experiences with gambling, but don't push them.

Position yourself as genuinely curious, about the students' thoughts and their world. This means asking without expecting a specific answer. Avoid judging answers as right or wrong at this stage, even if your instinct is to jump in and start 'correcting' misconceptions. If students feel that they're being lectured to or told off for their behaviour, they will stop engaging with this lesson and become defensive about behaviours they think they might be punished for, rather than giving you open insight into their experiences.

Open-ended questions, such as beginning with 'I wonder...', allows students to explore and test their own ideas without fear of being wrong. Continue questioning after students have answered, asking, 'Why do you say that?'. This prompts them to provide more information and detail, and further reveals their thinking.

Alternatively, you might find that using a Padlet allows students to respond anonymously and to engage in the lesson more.

It might surprise students to discover that there are many different forms of gambling beyond the traditional ones we might first think of. Remember that gambling doesn't have to involve the wagering of money: you could gamble for food, a toy, or even for pride. Any event with an uncertain outcome that humans are unable to control, such as getting a random toy in a pack, is considered gambling. It is therefore likely that students have gambled in some way in the past, or have at least been exposed to multiple forms of gambling.

We'll cover these in more detail in a moment, but continue to prompt students by asking:

- Has anyone ever played card games with chips, such as poker, even if you didn't have to contribute any real money?
- Has anyone ever encountered gambling in video games or online, such as lootboxes when playing Fortnite?
- Has anyone ever bought a booster pack for a card game, such as Magic the Gathering, or purchased a toy or something where you weren't certain what was inside?
- Has anyone ever looked at the odds for a team to win a sporting match?
- Has anyone ever "bet" their mates to do something?

Keep a list of all the suggested forms of gambling somewhere visible.

It might be important to bring a particular focus to sports betting. People's knowledge of sports can give them a false sense of being skilled gamblers.

- Who thinks gambling on a sporting match has an element of skill involved? You know your team, and you have a good understanding of the other teams in the league, and the game itself, so you should have a reasonable idea of what is going to happen, right? Also, the team with the lower odds should be a safe bet, right? Does anyone think there's an element of chance to sports betting? Of course there is. You don't know what's going to happen on the day. You don't know how certain players are going to perform, or if there might be injuries. Can anyone think of a time where a much worse team has actually beaten a stronger team? Betting is never certain. You're never guaranteed to win.

Perceptions about gambling

Next, ask students:

Why do you think people gamble?

As students discuss these topics through their own conversations and suggestions, or if they're not forthcoming, you can prompt or expand their thinking using these talking points.

- Social pressure can be a factor for people, especially young people, starting to gamble.
- Does anyone think that it's 'cool' to gamble?
- Is anyone ever impressed with their friends' or family members' gambling? Perhaps when they have a big win?
- Does anyone think gambling is 'manly'?
- Does anyone play a game where you compete against your friends? Or where you post your scores to Facebook or something like that? How does it feel to brag like that, when you're the winner? Does it make you feel good about yourself? And how does it feel when your mate is doing better than you? Are you jealous? Are you motivated to try hard to beat him? The desire to win can be a strong driving force in our behaviours. It can suck you into wanting to spend more to impress or outdo your friends.
- Some games will also reward you for signing up your friends. Has anyone ever seen or received a sign up bonus on a betting site for getting their friends involved? That seems like free money, right? Did you think about what impact it might have on your friends or family, exposing them to a gambling website like that?
- How often has one of your friends said, "I bet you can't" or "I bet you wouldn't"? They are betting on you, gambling on your pride, pressuring you into taking up the bet to show that you are capable. Trying to impress your mates is a really powerful motivator.
- Can you tell me how it feels to sit with your mum or dad and put bets on the footy? Why do you think that's the case? Does it make you feel connected with someone, when you're sharing their interests? Is this a good feeling?
- Betting for a monetary reward also encourages gambling. Has anyone ever thought they could earn some money, quickly and easily, by gambling? It's really enticing. And it feels great to get a big win. So you can totally see why people would want to experience that feeling, and chase after it.
- Has anyone ever heard of chasing your losses? What does that mean? What do you think would happen if you continued to chase your losses? Do you think it would be easy to get sucked into chasing your losses, or gambling more than you want or can spend? Why?
- Of course it seems fun to gamble. People wouldn't do it if it didn't make them feel good. Has anyone ever been in a casino? I wonder how they create that environment to make you want to gamble? There's lots of flashing lights, lots of sound effects. Has anyone ever seen one of those big jackpots go off? It's a big deal, right? They're fun environments. Online games have that same thing, shiny graphics and music.

Potential gambling harms

Now start to lead the conversation towards the potential harms of gambling by asking:

What harms do you think you might experience from gambling?

It's important to remember that when you start speaking with young people about their risk-taking behaviours and the possible consequences, remain non-judgemental. Explain the health risks in objective and simple terms. Remember to also tell students that some people gamble without experiencing harms. This is about being careful, setting limits and walking away once they reach those limits. Then explore the potential consequences of the risk-taking behaviours in a way that appears like you are concerned about the potential harms and want to work together with students to help them look after themselves. Make sure not to appear as if you are giving demands down to the young person from a position of authority.

As students broach these topics through their own conversations and suggestions, or if they're not forthcoming, you can prompt or expand their thinking using these talking points. Potential gambling harms and questions relating to these which are relevant to young people may include:

- Do you think gambling can lead to misuse or addiction to other substances?
 - An increase in regular substance-use behaviours, including alcohol -especially binge drinking -smoking, and other drugs, and we know how harmful this can be to your health.
- What effect do you think too much time spent gambling or playing games might have on your schoolwork? What might cause these effects?
 - Poor academic performance. If you're spending long periods of time gambling or playing games outside of your studies, often late into the night, you may be compromising your 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.
- What might gambling do to your mood or mental wellbeing, especially if you experience more losses than wins?
 - Moodiness. If your state of mind becomes linked to your successes at gambling and the consequences of your losses. Activities previously enjoyed can be overtaken by gambling due to a lack of time or interest in these activities. This can lead to a further deterioration in mood as you forgo other opportunities for physical, mental, social, and emotional outlets.
- What can excessive gambling mean for relationships with other people?
 - Interpersonal conflict. When gambling becomes visible to family and friends it may lead to arguments with these support networks. There is some evidence to suggest that if you gamble you are more likely to get into fights with your peers at school.
- Where people lose their bets, run out of money, and can't stop gambling, what actions might they turn to?
 - You might have to sell personal belongings, or ask for money or loans, just to get enough cash to gamble with.

Emotional responses to gambling

Psychologists have a great deal of evidence that shows that providing information isn't enough to change behaviour. It may be that teaching people about gambling odds is comparable to telling smokers about the harmful effects of smoking, or people who drink alcohol excessively about the harmful effects of drinking. People involved in these behaviours are usually already aware of these facts. Knowing something and having this knowledge change your behaviour are two different things.

As students broach these topics through their own conversations and suggestions, or if they're not forthcoming, you can prompt or expand their thinking using these talking points.

- Can someone describe how it feels to lose? Lose a game, lose money or something precious to us, or to miss out on experiences?
- How does your body react? What thoughts are going through your head? How does it impact the rest of your weekend after you've had a loss?
- Are these feelings 'worth' gambling?

Now ask students to contrast these feelings:

- How does it feel to be in charge of our emotions and our behaviours?
- What does the satisfaction of saving up for something and purchasing that feel like? It's nice to have the thing, but there's also the gratification of being disciplined enough over time to be able to afford it. Do you feel like maybe you've worked hard to earn it?

Bring an awareness to students of how gambling companies operate:

- Remember that gambling companies want you to keep gambling. They want you to keep losing money, because that means profit for them. So they're very, very good at doing that. They know how to keep you involved.
- Think back to when we were discussing why people gamble: because it felt good, because it was fun, because maybe there was an idea that it was cool to gamble, maybe because you saw an advertisement that lured you in with incredible odds or bonus offers.
- That's all designed to make you want to gamble. And they don't tell you about the potential harms, and how the other side might feel, when you're chasing your losses, and you're sacrificing other things to keep gambling, and having darker thoughts, such feeling worthless, a loser, hopeless, or despairing.

Self-management moving forward

Self-management broadly encompasses behaviour change techniques and strategies aimed at limiting or reducing gambling harms.

First, remind students of the purpose of this lesson today:

- We said at the start that some of you might not think gambling is much of an issue at this point in your life. But we wanted to set you up so that should you notice your friends and family, or yourself, experiencing harm from gambling, you'll have some strategies for dealing with it.
- So, what are some ways that might help you cope if you find yourself in this challenging circumstance.

As students broach these topics through their own conversations and suggestions, or if they're not forthcoming, you can prompt or expand their thinking using these talking points. Coping strategies experienced by young people include:

- **First of all, seek help.** Your teachers, your parents, or any adults you trust are here to look after you and support you. We know gambling can be something really confronting to talk about, but we won't judge you and you don't have to try and figure it out on your own.
- **Setting yourself a time or money limit, and stick to it.** Make a deal with yourself that once the timer goes off or once your credit runs out, you're not going to go and invest more. Or you could set yourself a designated day off, such as one day at school where all talk about odds is banned, or one rugby game where you're not going to consider gambling or talk about bets, just enjoy the game.
- **Do different activities.** Gambling is fine in moderation and as a social pastime, but if you're finding gambling is getting the better of you, make a list of other things you like doing, such as walking the dog, hanging with your mates at the park, doing art, or reading. Stick this list up somewhere visible around the house. When you're feeling drawn to gamble uncontrollably, try to do something from the list instead.
- **Walk away if you're losing more than you can afford.** It's never too late to immediately make a positive choice and just remove yourself from that situation instead of sitting there getting deeper and deeper into trouble. Seeking help from a counsellor or a trusted adult can be hard, but it's always easier than the alternatives that come from not seeking help.
- **Think about how the money you're losing could be better spent.** Remind yourself of those positive feelings of saving up and working hard, rather than chasing your losses or a big, easy win, which is statistically unlikely to happen.
- **Remind yourself of the negative emotions associated with gambling harm.** Focus on why you need to limit your gambling and focus on what it feels like when you do the responsible thing rather than giving into your urges. The thrill of a win is short-lived, leading to chasing new highs, whereas the contentment that comes from mastering yourself last a lot longer and has far more positive outcomes (and doesn't cost anything!).

Conclusion



Spend some time answering any lingering questions or points of discussion students might want to raise.

Remind students that they can always approach a teacher in confidence if they feel they are experiencing gambling harm.

Targeted interventions for at-risk students

Introduction

As with the Introductory workshop, these interventions feature scripts interspersed with background information.

They are aimed at a single or 3 to 4 students who are identified as experiencing a specific gambling harm. We recommend you provide additional support to these students, and involve a teacher, the principal, the school counsellor, and parents if possible, in these sessions.

Be aware that young people may not be ready/able to change their behaviour when they first come into contact with a health professional. Evaluate their awareness of the problem and acceptance of the need to address it, and match your interventions to your students' current stage of preparedness to change.

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, and to create an opportunity to talk to both the student and their family about it.

Whilst the GambleAware targeted interventions and lessons included with this pack provides 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. You should also alert your student manager/principal of these matters.

Beginning the conversation

It's important that you first establish trust. Trust and relationship are key leverage points from which help can be offered. Remember that if you want someone to be honest with you, you must be willing to listen and be honest with them.

Start by saying:

- We (your teacher, principal, guidance counsellor, parents) have noticed some changes in your behaviour recently and we wanted to see how you're going. You're not in trouble, and we won't get you in any trouble from what you say here today. Would you be willing to work with us on that?

Letting someone you care about know that you suspect a problem and are worried, in a supportive and calm manner, is more likely to work than being judgemental or aggressive. Sometimes, young people are relieved to know someone is worried about them and are grateful the subject was broached and will want to continue having the conversation.

However, others might be defensive and retract because they're ashamed.

If the person denies gambling is a problem, you are still encouraged to say you are worried and care about them.

Ask them if they believe there is a problem. Although you may not get an honest answer or the answer you were expecting, if you approach someone in a non-confrontational way, you might get some useful information, or at least open a dialogue with the young person.

- Do you have any idea of why we might be worried about you?
- Is there anything that's been troubling you lately?

Next, recognise that there are some positive benefits to their behaviour.

Gambling can connect people, with online spaces allowing for sophisticated, realistic and meaningful interaction which can be socially and emotionally meaningful. For a young person who is engaging in these behaviours in moderation, and who has a healthy amount of physical interaction with people and other activities, the camaraderie can be positive. Those who struggle socially can find social validation through gambling with low social risk.

Gambling can also be a calming and rewarding pastime, used as a release and way to unwind after a stressful day, an argument or a challenging situation. Unpleasant feelings such as stress, depression, loneliness, fear, and anxiety can trigger gambling behaviour as a means of avoiding or escaping these negative emotions.

These may be particularly prevalent factors in the life of an adolescent.

- I totally understand why you might be doing this. It sounds like in some ways you feel like it is good for you, or that it's helping you. I recognise that it's something important to you. And that's an okay thing to do, in moderation.

But we're worried that it might be starting to get a bit out of hand, and that it's having a negative impact on you. Can you see why we might be thinking that? Do you think that's fair?

Once you have worked with the student to identify the particular harm they are experiencing, choose from the relevant script below and work with them to identify the impacts and engage with preventative measures.

If a student is spending too much money on loot boxes

It might be hard for you as an adult to see a digital item as real or valuable. But for young people who grow up online, the online world is just as important as the offline one.

Gambling like elements in games such as loot boxes can be enjoyed when engaged with in moderation. Encourage young people not to use them to chase after particular rewards.

- We've gone over the odds of loot boxes. Is it clear to you that it's pretty unlikely you're going to get that reward you're really chasing by purchasing more and more loot boxes?
- You've said that you're not really getting the enjoyment out of opening loot boxes anymore, but you remember that you used to. And you're still purchasing a lot of them despite not enjoying it. That's okay, that's understandable. It's a well known psychological response to gambling.
- Do you think that if you opened loot boxes for fun rather than expecting or hoping for a certain reward, they might surprise you, and you could get some of that enjoyment back?
- Remember that you can earn loot boxes and skins/items/other rewards as you go. You will feel more reward if you've earned them rather than just taking the easy option of paying to win.
- How do you think you would feel if you bought 100 loot boxes and still didn't get the reward you were hoping for?
- What do you think is an acceptable number of loot boxes per day or week? Let's factor in how much pocket money you actually have available to spend, and whether you want to spend it on other things as well.



If a student cannot control their spending on gambling/gaming:

Gamblers sometimes feel they cannot control their impulse to gamble, even when they know their gambling is hurting themselves or their loved ones. It controls their thoughts and behaviours; it is all they can think about and all they want to do, no matter the consequence. Furthermore, adolescents are only just beginning to develop the part of the brain involved with impulse control and risk assessment decisions, making it even more difficult for them to resist the temptation of gambling.

Voluntary limit setting has been shown to reduce gambling expenditure over the long term amongst people who gamble regularly (Auer, Hopfgartner, & Griffiths, 2020).

- You've said that you struggle to stop yourself making purchases even when you know it's not the right thing to do. That's understandable. I know you're trying hard, and it's nothing to be ashamed about. Sometimes our brains are our own worst enemies.
- It might be a good idea to set some limits for yourself on purchases. This would involve agreeing to a set amount of money to be budgeted towards these purchases. You could do this by only using pre purchased in game currency¹ rather than spending straight from your card. It would give you time to think about your purchases, and if you reached your spending goal, you wouldn't continue to spend beyond your means. We could check-in in a week to see how you're going sticking to those spending goals. Would you be willing to try that?

- **You might want to think about unlinking your card from the game as well or using other games which aren't a play to play model.**

Studies have shown that a 'bust' moment, where players spend over their limit in a session, are bound to happen. (Rodda, Bagot, Manning, and Lubman, 2019). In these cases, a number of bust-prevention strategies were identified by participants as effective, including, avoiding gambling altogether, removing their access to cards or cash, and walking away when losing.

- It might be a good idea to pass control of some of that purchasing responsibility to your parents. It would involve removing any payment methods or passwords from your accounts so that you couldn't make impulse purchases. That could really help you stick to your goals of spending less or less often. Would you be willing to try that?

Try to give young people responsibility and make them feel empowered towards their own self-control, rather than taking decisions away from them and punishing them through restriction, so that long term, positive behaviour change can occur.

¹ In game currency which can be purchased with real money will have a different name depending on the type of game the student is playing. Some examples are battle passes, tokens, credit points, chests, gems, crates, loot crates, coins and crystals.

If a student is spending too much time or giving too much attention to gambling/gaming:

The online world is an integral part of many young people's lives and banning them from video games or their phones altogether can potentially be socially excluding, making it hardly an appealing option.

Instead, give young people the tools to counter against their addictive behaviours by providing viable alternatives to the pull of these activities. These alternatives need to a) be something the student actually enjoys doing, and b) meet the same need the game/gambling was meeting (e.g. social anxiety or loneliness, stress relief, or boredom).

- What are some things you enjoy doing, or previously enjoyed doing? It could be walking the dog, doing art, tossing the footy, going to the skate park with your friends, reading, playing board games. Let's make a big list of all these things.
- Can you tell me how it feels to do these things? Or can you remember back to a time when you did more of these activities, how did you feel?
- It might be a good idea to get back to some of these other things you enjoy doing. I understand that being online is important to you, but perhaps you could set yourself a time limit for games, and try to stick to that. How much time do you think sounds reasonable for a weekday/weekend? Perhaps get yourself an egg timer or set an alarm on your phone and try to stick to that. When the alarm goes off, switch your focus to another activity for an hour.
- Let's make a list so that..
 - ... when you are feeling lonely/isolated, you call a friend on the phone and arrange to meet them at the park
 - ... when you're feeling stressed, you go for a walk or run
 - ... when you're feeling bored, you first try to pick up a paintbrush and do some art.

Relapse prevention

Where a young person has experienced gambling harm, emphasis the importance of seeking and continuing with professional support. Not only will this ensure the young person is speaking with a qualified professional, you can rest easy knowing that the burden of advice now rests with that professional and you need only support the young person in acting upon the advice they're given, rather than having to provide that advice yourself. Always remember that you are also able to seek advice from professionals, whether for yourself or in supporting a young person.

Work with the young person and professionals to develop a plan for future situations. This gives a young person a solid strategy for action when challenged by their triggers, rather than feeling helpless and returning to familiar and easier behaviours for comfort.

- Can you tell me about the feelings of wanting to gamble/wanting to buy a loot box? What sensations are happening in your body? Do you get a twitchy leg? What thoughts are going through your head? What are some situations that lead you towards gambling/gaming? It could be that you've had a tough day at school, or you're feeling isolated from your friends.
- Let's make a list of those, and stick them up somewhere highly visible, perhaps near your gaming system, or make a card for the back of your phone.
- When you notice you're starting to have some of these feelings, I want you to try and do one of three things: go for a walk, pick up your cricket bat, call your friend on the phone (or whatever the student has identified they enjoy).
- It's okay if you have a slip up every now and then. But remember you can always make the choice to immediately get yourself back on the right path.
- Let's practice for a moment taking a deep breath in while counting to five. Hold it. Now breathe out for the count of five. Do that four more times. Whenever you're feeling overwhelmed, take a moment to focus on your breathing like that, five lots of five. Then say to yourself, "When I finish breathing, I'm going to make a positive choice."

Ongoing support

Continue to check in with these students regularly, to see if they are sticking to their goals around self-managing their behaviour, or to assess whether they are experiencing an increase in gambling-related harms.

Again, as a teacher, be mindful of your state's and school's policies, professional standards, agreements and training in terms of your responsibilities and legal reporting obligations with regards to disclosures made by students.

It is strongly recommended you seek professional support for students experiencing gambling harm.

Find out more – additional resources

For more information, please refer to the Facilitator pack, or the following resources:

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)

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

Find out more - additional resources

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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