2

The gambling zone: Issues and consequences

GambleAware

NSW GOVERNMENT

Activity introduction

Quick summary
Students will work through an article outlining some of the factors influencing gambling-related behaviours. Using a quiz, students will compare the mechanics of games to gambling before exploring scenarios looking at the health impacts of gambling harm and discussing strategies to minimise harm.

Learning intentions

- To identify what influences gambling-related behaviour

- To understand the impact of gambling on health

- To assess the issues associated with gambling

- To identify sources of support for those experiencing gambling harm

21st-century skills

Communicating

Creative thinking

Problem solving

Empathy

Personal and social skills

Teamwork

Syllabus outcomes

- **PD4-2** examines and demonstrates the role help-seeking strategies and behaviours play in supporting themselves and others

- **PD4-6** recognises how contextual factors influence attitudes and behaviours and proposes strategies to enhance health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity

- **PD4-9** demonstrates self-management skills to effectively manage complex situations

- **PD4-10** applies and refines interpersonal skills to assist themselves and others to interact respectfully and promote inclusion in a variety of groups or contexts

General capabilities

Personal and social capability

Critical and creative thinking

Information and communication technology capability

Literacy

Cross-curriculum priority

None Applicable

Relevant parts of Year 7 achievement standards

- Students investigate strategies and practices that enhance their own, others' and community health, safety and wellbeing.

- Students demonstrate skills to make informed decisions, and propose and implement actions that promote their own and others' health, safety and wellbeing.

Topic
The gambling zone: Issues and consequences

Unit of work
Stage 4 Gambling

Time required
60 minutes

Level of teacher scaffolding
Medium – Manage class discussion, facilitate gameplay and use of devices.

Resources required

- Student worksheets – one copy per student

- One device per student

- One teacher device connected to a projector or smart board

- Gambling quiz (Appendix A)

- Scenario cards (Appendix B)

Keywords
Anticipation, brain, decision-making, gambling, harm, health, pleasure, risk.

Teacher worksheet

Learning intentions

Students will:

- identify what influences gambling-related behaviour.

- understand the impact of gambling on health.

- assess the issues associated with gambling.

- identify sources of support for those experiencing gambling harms.

Success criteria

Students can:

- analyse an article that discusses the influences on gambling behaviour.

- state the dimensions of health that are impacted by gambling harms.

- identify what is considered gambling.

- list sources of support for those experiencing gambling harm.

Teacher content information

Gambling can be a high-risk activity and is a priority concern for young people. Therefore, before conducting the lesson on gambling, it is recommended that teachers and parents read the Facilitator pack. The pack provides teachers and parents with essential information about gambling harm amongst young people and clarifies the nature of gambling-related behaviours and how to approach sensitive topics.

Teaching sequence

30 minutes - Part A: Gambling article analysis

15 minutes - Part B: Gambling quiz

15 minutes - Part C: Scenario analysis

Part A:
Gambling article analysis

Work through this resource material in the following sequence:

Step 1

Hand out the student worksheet and explain to the class that they will be looking at gambling behaviour and the relationship between risk-taking, the brain and the reasons people gamble.

Step 2

Invite students to read the article "Gambling addiction: Enter the 'zone' where winning is a distraction" without writing anything down. (www.abc.net.au/news/health/2017-10-14/gambling-addiction-the-zone-where-winning-is-a-distraction/9044598)

Step 3

Next, encourage students to reread the article. This time, ask students to complete the graphic organiser on their worksheets, breaking down the article's main ideas. Here, they will identify the article's main idea, three supporting key points and potential harms that impact health.

Step 4

Once students have filled out the article breakdown, invite them to share their understanding through a class discussion. Some questions to help facilitate the discussion may include:

- What are some reasons the article identified why people gamble?

- What brain processes does the article discuss that keep people gambling?

- What is the "zone" referred to in the article?

- What potential gambling harms does the article identify?

Part B: Gambling quiz

Step 1

Based on the article they read in part A, students will need to fill out the Gambling addiction quiz (See Appendix A). The purpose of the quiz is to demonstrate some of the conditioning methods mentioned in the article.

Step 2

Invite students to fill out Appendix A: Gambling addiction quiz. The answers to the quiz have been highlighted below for your reference.

1. **Gambling uses 'operant conditioning' to reward us. How do they do this?**
   a. Using encouraging noises and lights
   b. Rewarding at regular intervals
   c. Unpredictably offering rewards
   d. Using sad noises and lights

2. **What Neurotransmitter gets released into the brain after a gamble has been won?**
   a. Serotonin
   b. Norepinephrine
   c. Dopamine
   d. Endorphins

3. **Why do people strive to continue even though they have already lost all their cash?**
   a. The brain gets overloaded with thoughts, causing a massive headache and, therefore, no care for the situation
   b. The brain gets used to the rush of dopamine from a win, causing the individual to strive for more dopamine
   c. The brain doesn't even acknowledge how much has been lost
   d. The brain gets used to the rush of dopamine from losing money

4. **Which animal was involved in early classical conditioning experiments?**
   a. Pigeons
   b. Rats
   c. Cats
   d. Dogs

5. **Excessive gambling can cause financial strains and woes, which could lead to which of the following events?**
   a. A movie night with friends
   b. A downward spiral leading to the inability to pay bills and other necessities
   c. A reliance on fast food to meet nutritional needs
   d. A decrease in party attendance

6. **Which of the following is an addiction that can develop from a gambling addiction?**
   a. Cocaine
   b. Alcohol
   c. Cannabis
   d. All of the above

7. **What are some of the methods used to keep people in gambling venues?**

    a. Free drinks

    b. Free wifi

    c. Free backrubs

    d. Free money

8. **Which of the following would GREATLY contribute to the financial woes that develop from excessive gambling?**

    a. Eating too much fast food

    b. Watching too much Netflix

    c. Losing a hoodie

    d. Losing a job

9. **What effect does being 'in the zone' have on gamblers?**

    a. A hyper-awareness of one's surroundings

    b. Losing touch with reality

    c. They are guaranteed to win

    d. They are guaranteed to lose

10. **To help someone experiencing gambling, they can be encouraged to …**

    a. Seek help from a professional to work through their problems

    b. Keep going and they'll win eventually

    c. Stop paying bills to focus on gambling

    d. Ignore the advice of friends and family who tell them to stop

Part C: Scenario analysis

Step 1

Organise students into small groups of two or three. Invite them to choose a scenario from the set of four provided (See Appendix B).

Step 2

Ask the groups to reflect on the information they read in the article and their understanding of risk, gambling and health as they read through their chosen scenario card in their groups.

Step 3

Once they have read their scenarios, invite each group to work together to answer the questions on their worksheet for part C.

Step 4

If time permits, you may wish to encourage students to continue working through each of the scenarios, assessing each of the scenarios based on the questions on the worksheet.

Reflection

Encourage students to reflect on their own circles of support and identify people or places that they could go to seek help. You may want to provide a minute of quiet reflection for this or have them write their ideas down on their worksheets.

Differentiated learning

Extension – Invite students to find additional information or articles about the role of dopamine and its influence on gambling harm. Students can then create a summary table outlining the information that they find.

Provisions for Learning Support – Provide students with some additional information to assist or reduce the complexity of each task. For example:

- Part A: Provide the main idea for the article and then allow students to identify the 3 key pieces of information from the article to support the main idea that you have provided.

- Part B: Allow students to discuss their answers and write their answers in dot points.

- Part C: Encourage those who require learning support to take on a role that they are most comfortable with. Depending on their strengths, this could be a scribe, timekeeper, speaker or group manager.

Teacher reflection

Take this opportunity to reflect on your own teaching:

What did you learn about your teaching today?

What worked well?

What didn't work so well?

What would you share?

Where to next?

How are you going to get there?

Student worksheet

Thought starter

Young people experience higher rates of gambling harm compared to the general NSW community (Hing et al., 2020). So where's the harm?

1. Article breakdown
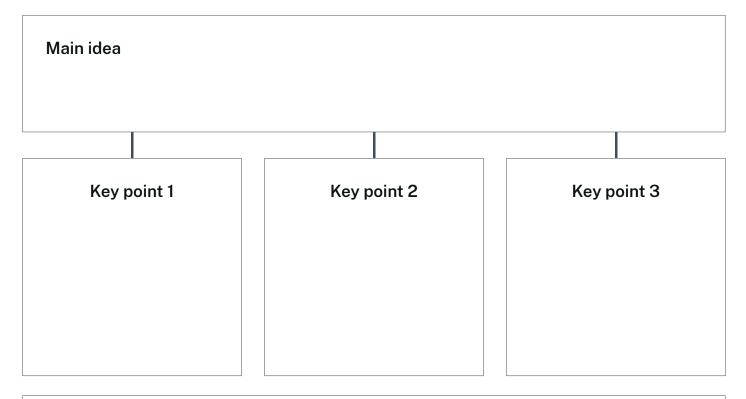
Access the following article, read through it once, then re-read the article and fill in the article breakdown summary below. (https://www.abc.net.au/news/health/2017-10-14/gambling-addiction-the-zone-where-winning-is-a-distraction/9044598)

Title:

Author:

Publication: **Date:**

Main idea

Key point 1	Key point 2	Key point 3

Potential harms that impact health

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2. Scenario cards

Scenario number	Scenario analysis	Answers
	Is this an example of gambling? Explain your answer.	
	Does this seem like a worthwhile use of money? Explain your answer.	
	Is the individual in this scenario receiving any rewards for their behaviour?	
	What are some potential harms or issues the individual in this scenario is experiencing?	
	How is the individual's behaviour impacting their health?	
	What could be done to support the person in your scenario further?	

3. Reflect

Can you identify four people or places you would go to for support if you or someone close to you were experiencing gambling harm?

Appendix A: Gambling addiction quiz

1. **Gambling uses 'operant conditioning' to reward us. How do they do this?**

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    ☐ c. Stop paying bills to focus on gambling

    ☐ d. Ignore the advice of friends and family who tell them to stop

Appendix B: Scenario cards

Scenario 1

Aamir is a student in Year 8. He has a lot of friends and seems quite popular at school. Aamir recently got the new iPhone. Aamir's cousin showed him many different games, and he has been playing lots of those games online. Most of the games are free, but some games cost money. They don't cost very much: anywhere from $5.00 to $10.00 each week to play. Aamir likes playing the games, has started to spend more time alone, and often sits alone to play his games at lunchtime. Aamir's parents work long hours in the city, and Aamir's older sister looks after him until they get home, around 7 pm. Aamir's sister is studying the HSC and doesn't like to be bothered while studying, so she sees no issues with Aamir playing online games and spending money on loot boxes. Aamir's friends have tried to make plans outside of school and asked why he is so distant. Aamir hasn't responded well to his friends and, as a result, has become even more distant.

Scenario 2

Kirra is 15 years old, home-schooled, and has a part-time job. Kirra works approximately 15 hours per week and has recently developed an interest in online sports betting after being introduced to it by workmates. Kirra places bets online and on the phone and sometimes uses their parent's credit cards because Kirra thinks they won't notice. Lately, Kirra has spent a lot more money than usual on sports betting and is now boasting about it to people online.

Scenario 3

Pelin is 13 years old and is currently in Year 7. Pelin's parents bought a PS5 and Call of Duty as a birthday present. Pelin enjoys playing COD and often plays all night. Sometimes, Pelin falls asleep at school or stays home when their parents go to work to sleep in or play games. When Pelin plays games, they purchase loot boxes and weapon packages to increase their chances of winning. Pelin spends about $60.00 weekly on in-app purchases but rarely beats the opponents. Recently, teachers have noticed that Pelin looks more tired than usual, and their relationship with friends is falling apart because of becoming snappy.

Scenario 4

Filemu is introverted, in Year 8 and has started playing Fortnite on an iPhone. Recently, Filemu has dedicated more time than usual to gaming and has begun playing Fortnite at recess and lunchtime. Filemu has been caught by their parents making in-app purchases with their credit card and has spent over $300.00 in the last week on skins. Filemu has been trading the skins with friends, leading to Filemu buying more skins. When Filemu was questioned by a teacher about a lack of interest in school and engaging with peers, Filemu ignored them and became even more withdrawn.