

# RGPG Early Support Options Research Full Report

4/19/24 - FINAL



ANALYTICS  
& INSIGHTS

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Phases of Research

- Literature Scan
- Expert Interviews

# Background and Objectives

The Oregon Lottery's Responsible Gaming Code of Practice states the following goals:

- Provide information and tools to help players make informed choices and enjoy Lottery games in a responsible way
- Ensure that people affected by gambling issues know how to access help

The goal of this research project:

- To provide insights and identify opportunities regarding the set of tools, resources and services available to people who are questioning or concerned about their gaming – but may not be receptive to considering problem gambling treatment. The Lottery refers to these individuals as “Early Support Seekers.”

# Research – Study Phases



The research was conducted in four phases that began with **Phase 1 - a literature scan and Phase 2 - interviews with experts** reflecting problem gambling prevention, support, and treatment professionals to better understand the current Problem Gambling prevention and support landscape.

The final phases were conducted with players, as described below. This report focuses on the findings from these final phases of the research conducted with players. Player research was conducted by Dialogue, Inc. A summary of key findings from the literature scan and expert interviews can be found in the Appendix of this report.

## Phase 3 – Online Digital Diaries

The goal of Phase 1 was to explore past gambling concerns and considerations for making changes from the player’s perspective. All participants identified as having concerns about their gambling behavior in the past two years. Questions included changes they noticed in their gambling behavior in the past, motivations for seeking help, information or help they explored, and any actions they took/considered.

- 57 participants completed digital diaries over a two-day period: A 60/40 mix of non-lottery gamblers and Lottery Players including Lottery Products Players (Jackpot games, Scratch-its, Keno), Video Lottery Players and DraftKing bettors.

## Phase 4 – Online One-On-One Interviews

Objectives were to:

- Uncover opportunities for providing inclusive support tools, resources, and services that would be valuable in the early stages of the player’s journey
- Explore reactions to the OPGR “Help with Moderation” webpage including opportunities to further enhance its value
- Develop persona profiles and a journey map from the player’s perspective to better understand resources / tools that would be valuable throughout their journey
- A total of 26 interviews: Seven with non-lottery gamblers and 19 with Lottery Players: 7 Video Lottery Players, 7 DraftKing bettors, and 5 Lottery Products Players

# Segment Development – Player Research

## Online diaries with players revealed 3 segments:

1. Approx. 1/3 said they had concerns, took action, and now have a better relationship with gambling.
  - This segment was most open to help with changing their behavior
2. Approx. 1/3 said they had concerns and took minimal action.
  - This segment was somewhat open to help with changing their behavior, however, most felt they could control their gambling on their own
3. Approx. 1/3 said they did not have any current concerns and didn't need help.
  - This segment was adamant they don't need any changes / help although they stated during the screening process that had concerns about their gambling

## Online one-on-one interviews built on the findings from the diaries and was conducted with two of the above segments:

1. Gamblers who Had Concerns, Took Action and Have a Better Relationship with Their Gambling and,
2. Gamblers who Had Concerns and Took Minimal Action

Those who said they didn't have any current concerns and were not open to making changes, were not included in this phase.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# Overall Observations and Conclusions

## Overall Observations: Player Research

- As these gamblers progressed through the two phases of research, some became more open about their experiences and revealed their concerns were not as minimal as first presented in their online diaries. These concerns, mentioned later in the research, were often quite significant to them – impacting their family and friends This was most noticeable in the Had Concerns, Took Action, Better Relationship (**Took Action, Better Relationship**) segment.
- Throughout the research, the majority of gamblers in both segments indicated that they don't want to quit but do want to moderate their gambling and alleviate their concerns earlier rather than later.
- Some of these gamblers had limited awareness of resources, tools and services currently available. Those who had more experience using resources were either satisfied with what they found or were still searching for options that they could relate to and use.

**Supporting Observations: Expert Interviews** - Prior to conducting research with players, input was obtained from professionals representing system, service, consulting, prevention and treatment perspectives. Insights gained from players align with expert observations.

These experts noted that it is uncommon for people to reach out for information in the early stages of concerns mostly because they don't think they have a problem. Usually, outreach happens when there is a "bad outcome." Reasons mentioned for why this happens included:

- 1) There are limited resources available for prevention in the early stages of gambling concerns. Services are focused on 'downstream' harm reduction and abstinence for those already experiencing significant harms
- 2) It is rare for early support seekers to contact prevention or treatment services because they don't see themselves as needing treatment. Through messages they've received over time, they've formed a 'binary' view that they either have a 'problem' or they don't – rather than viewing seeking early support as an action that promotes their overall well-being.
- 3) Requests for up-front information to gain access to counseling or support may create a barrier for some early support seekers.
- 4) Treatment programs may not currently have access to or knowledge of early support options when someone says they want to cut down instead of quit.

# Overall Conclusions and Opportunities

## Key Conclusions - Segments

- There are clear differences between the two segments explored in this research – in their experiences, their emotions and the support they desire.
- The Had Concerns, Took Minimal Action (**Minimal Action**) segment are very sensitive to being referred to as “addicts” or to support that makes them feel like they are addicts. They are more interested in support options that focus on well-being and improving lives. This segment is more difficult to reach because they generally don’t believe they have a problem with gambling and/or believe they can control their gambling on their own.
- Those in the **Took Action, Better Relationship** segment were more eager for help and support. They explored and used more resources than the Minimal Action Segment, *and they continue to look for support.*

## Thought Starters – Segment Opportunities

- A key insight from this research and supported in the expert interviews, is that for any support option to succeed it needs to speak to players where they are:
  - For the **Minimal Action** segment, resources that ‘keep it light’ and focus on positive life changes are more likely to have success with them e.g., exercise, new hobbies, etc.
  - For the **Took Action, Better Relationship** segment in particular, they appreciate a variety of resources and support choices that are personalized to their needs at various stages and help to reinforce their new gambling practices.
  - For both segments, there is a strong appreciation for support that is non-stigmatizing and inclusive.



# Overall Conclusions and Opportunities

## Key Conclusions – Their Journey

- The journey of change for gamblers in both segments is non-linear i.e., not a simple problem-solution journey. The majority don't want to quit gambling, and while they are looking for ways to moderate their gambling behavior, their commitment to change fluctuates.
- Themes in their journeys include shifting views as they move from one phase to another including: the initial excitement of gambling, supported by the normalization of gambling as seen in sports betting for example; the initial false perception that gambling is an investment strategy; to experiencing concerns and becoming more cautious and they experience harmful consequences; the changing social influence of friends and family both positive and negative; the negative affects of alcoholism on gambling; and the on-going challenges of staying on track with their desired change.

## Thought Starters - Opportunities for Early Support Options in their Journey

- Providing early support communications and resources that promote overall well-being may help address barriers tied to perceived gambling stigma, especially for the **Minimal Action** segment.
  - This may help normalize seeking early support – changing the narrative from 'I have a problem and need help' to 'I want to improve my well-being.'
- An entry point for early support resources and services is when they are first starting to experience concerns about their gambling behavior and begin to shift from the initial excitement / enthusiasm to a more cautious approach.
- There are also opportunities to provide early support resources and services throughout their change journey such as those offered on the Moderation page of the OPGR.org website; in particular, the budgeting tools and videos featuring gamblers on-site were relatable to these participants.

# Overall Conclusions and Opportunities

## Key Conclusions – Resources Used

- **Apps and Websites** - were used in varying degrees by both segments, but more often in the **Took Action/Better Relationship** segment. While the use of apps was sometimes short-lived, apps and online resources were generally sought out and appreciated. However, not everyone was aware of these apps or websites, or where to find them.
- **Virtual peer support groups** such as Facebook Groups are valued for the convenience and the familiarity of this platform, although again, some did not know how to find these groups.
- **Professional in-person counseling** was appreciated by those wanting professional support, but more preferred peer support groups for their familiarity.
- **Self-care support** e.g., mindfulness, meditation, yoga, etc., received mixed results although some did find these resources to be useful, mostly those in the **Minimal Action** segment.
- Most were receptive and interested in motivational texts and felt they would appreciate these texts most when they were gambling.

## Thought Starters - Opportunities for Resources

- Onsite
  - As concerns begin to emerge, having access to on-site resources at bars and casinos e.g., QRC codes to websites / apps for easy access to info, tools and tips was suggested by both segments.
- Virtual / In-Person Peer Support Groups
  - Communicating the benefits of peer support groups and where to find them.
- Family and Friends
  - Encouraging conversations with trusted friends and family to provide self-awareness, and the opportunity to process their changes within their social circles – and provide some level of accountability.
  - Identifying opportunities to increase awareness of the potential negative influence of some peers e.g., encouraging time-outs when betting with friends or when in a text thread where friends encourage each other to bet.
- Motivational Texting
  - Offering opt-in motivational texts on phones to be used at a place/time when they need it most e.g., at retailers or in casinos.
- Free Support
  - Ongoing reminders that resources are free and available to all players and their significant others.

# Overall Conclusions and Opportunities

## Key Conclusions

### Moderation Webpage Reactions

- The Moderation webpage is very positively received: Liked by 25/26 respondents primarily because it has multiple resources in one place and speaks to them in an inclusive, non-judgmental way.
- The simplicity of the page, calm tone, ease of navigation, and interactive tools including the live chat, budgeting tools, quizzes, worksheets and the short videos are also mentioned as reasons for liking the webpage.
- While few could think of improvements to the page, there was a desire to know where the Lower Risk Gambling Guidelines come from and reasoning behind the guidelines.
- **Media**
- When asked about the best ways to reach them, they were most receptive to advertising / messaging on social media. Signage at gambling venues is also thought to be useful, but the signs can be hard to see in low lighting. TV was not mentioned as an ideal way to reach them.

## Thought Starters - Opportunities for the Moderation Webpage and Media Considerations

- No significant changes / fixes to webpage were identified.
- As on-going improvements are made to the webpage, consider explanations as to how tools /resources can be helpful - e.g., what the Lower Risk Gambling Guidelines offer and why they were chosen.
- Continue efforts to increase awareness of the budgeting tools which were universally liked, including the new Lottery supported budgeting app when its available.
- Continue to make it easy to find interactive tools such as self-reflection exercises and tools for goal setting which were appreciated.

### Media considerations:

- Continue targeted RG messaging on Facebook.
- Explore new ways to include onsite RG messaging at retailers and on machines.

## DETAILED FINDINGS:

- *Personas Insights, Themes and Journey Map*

# Key Persona Insights by Segment \*

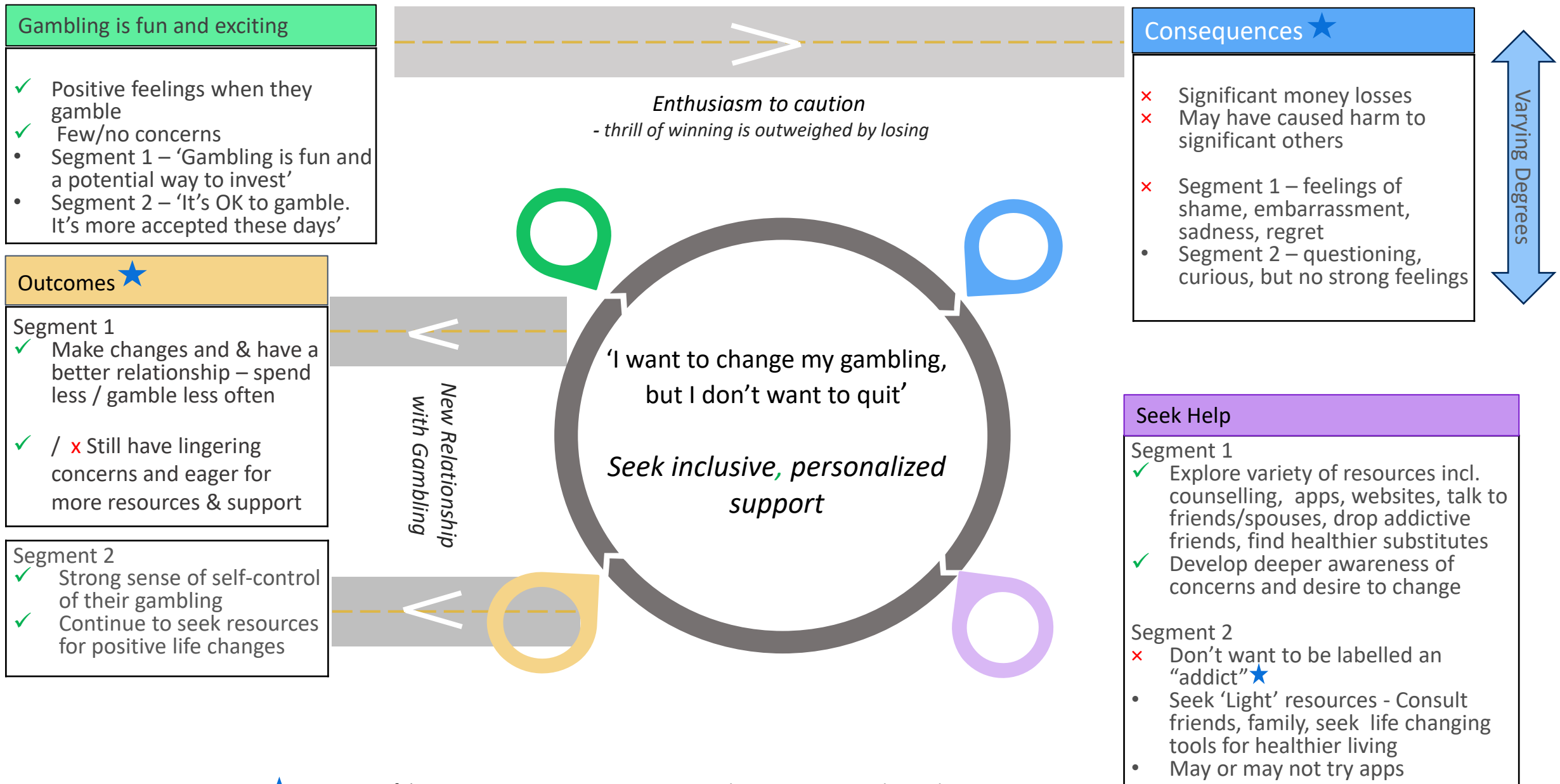
## Took Action, Better Relationship Segment

- Over half in this segment initially thought of gambling as an investment strategy
- They vary in acceptance of their concerns (a few referred to themselves as an “*addict*”)
- Initial “stand-up moments” for change were negative experiences – some serious e.g.; compromised/ruined important relationships (friends, spouse, family members) and misspent funds to pay for their gambling
- *Emotions runs deep in this segment – including shame, embarrassment, sadness and regret*
- *Most have sought help and have successfully changed their gambling but have lingering concerns.* Some are still stuck in a cycle of quitting and then returning to gambling and,
- *They crave resources and information – the more, the better*

## Minimal Action Segment

- Easily rationalize their gambling – Normalization and accessibility of gambling have made it easy to incorporate gambling into their lives
- Generally reticent to admit they had much more than a minor moment of questioning their behavior when in fact they experienced more significant issues
- Have had moments of ‘light’ reflection about their experiences e.g., self-talk, talking to friends/spouse.
- *Minimal emotions are associated with their concerns, but they are very sensitive to being labeled an “addict”*
- Fewer resources are utilized e.g., tried abstinence for a period, talking with a friend/spouse had some success
- *More receptive to general information on improving life skills (e.g., budgeting, goal setting) than tools for managing their gambling*

# Journey Map – Cycle of Gambling



★ = Meaningful moments

Segment 1 – Took Action, Better Relationship

Segment 2 – Minimal Action

# Journey Themes

## The Cycle of Gambling and Challenges of Change

- The majority of these players have found ways to cut back / have a better relationship with their gambling. They acknowledge that they will rationalize their gambling and can get caught in the cycle again - recovering their losses with wins that temporarily overshadow the negative consequences.
- In the Took Action, Better Relationship segment, this cycle can be especially challenging to break despite their recognition of the adverse affects of their gambling, and most in this segment are very open to learning about ways of addressing their challenges and staying on track.

## Shift from Enthusiasm to Caution

- Over time, as they experienced more losses, these gamblers, especially those in the Took Action, Better Relationship segment, talked about a shift in their perspective from seeing gambling as exciting to a more cautious approach as the thrill of winning was slowly outweighed by the consequences of losing.
- As concerns deepened, they described their moments of clarity. These moments often occurred after their losses started affecting more aspects of their lives. They reported tension with friends, issues with partners and family members, and feelings of disappointment and shame resulting from their gambling behavior.

*“Even though my feelings have significantly changed regarding how I perceive it [gambling] as a whole, there are still the other days where I feel like, okay, this win makes up for whatever loss you might have encountered.”*

*“I still think fondly about it[gambling]. I'm not going to lie. I know not to try it again. I mean, I've been tempted once or twice or ten times, but I know not to try again.”*

*“There's been several issues with my partner, who thinks and is well within her rights to think so, that I have a problem and I need to get help. And it's been the cause of several misunderstandings.”*

# Journey Themes (cont.)

## Social Influence

### Took Action, Better Relationship Segment

- Friends were mentioned as both a positive and negative influence by gamblers in this segment. They often started gambling in social settings, with friends or at a casino. However, there was also a strong recognition of negative consequences of being with some of their friends and that these friendships needed to change or end.

*“It really started to take a toll on my sleep schedule because that’s when my friends would want to go to the casino in the middle of the night, and it was financially like, oh, my gosh, I just spent half my rent money.”*

### Minimal Action Segment

- For this segment, examples of social influence to gamble included both experiences from their youth, where peer pressure led to gambling, and current social situations where gambling is a regular group activity.
- Having experienced a higher prevalence of gambling among their peers, they are more open to talk about their gambling such as discussing bets in group chats.
- Some view gambling as a part of cultural or family traditions, especially during holidays – suggesting that gambling is entrenched in their social and family network.

*“Sometimes you get peer pressured into playing certain games, but, yeah, maybe at that point in time because I think it was just hard enough to say no. When you're peer pressured, sometimes, it's just learning over time that it's okay. You don't always have to do that to fit in the group.”*



# Journey Themes (cont.)

## Effects of Alcohol on Gambling Behavior

- Alcohol is mentioned as a significant factor that alters their gambling behavior.
- When under the influence of alcohol, they talked about how they are more likely to deviate from their set limits and gamble more, often leading to higher losses and more concerns.

*“Obviously, when you introduce alcohol into the scenario, your standards get a little diluted...alcohol changes everything. That's why drinks are free at casinos.”*

## Normalization of Gambling

### Minimal Action Segment

- In this segment, there was a recurring theme of their gambling being normal and socially accepted.
- This normalization has made it more challenging for them to recognize the potential for addictive behavior because they see gambling happening all around them.

*“I've definitely noticed the popularity of it [gambling] amongst people I never even knew did it. I started doing it at a very early age in college because I was in a fraternity. I had friends. It's basically what you do. I threw \$5 here and there and didn't think about it. Now it's like people are going, like, are you watching the game tonight? Does anyone have money for this? In all my group chats with all my friends, it's just kind of exploded in popularity, which is wild to think about.”*

# Journey Themes (cont.)

## Light Self-Reflection and Self-Regulation

### Minimal Action Segment

- Participants in this segment expressed light moments of self-reflection concerning their gambling behavior.
- They recognized the “*highs*” of their gambling behavior, such as the endorphin rush, as part of their challenge and their fixatation on the possibilities - “*The fantasy is the reward*”.
- Some had concerns about the social and financial impact of their gambling, e.g., witnessing friends or family members who experienced adverse effects from gambling in addition to their own personal harms.
- However, the majority in this segment didn’t feel they were anywhere close to being an “*addict*”. They felt very confident that they were self-regulating their behavior in acceptable ways to them.
- For some, they were able to make changes on their own as they matured and had more responsibilities. They sought help using resources like apps, and /or had conversations with their spouse or a good friend.

*“I've had moments where I'm like, this is maybe not the most responsible thing I could be doing right now, but nothing crazy.”*

*“Being young and naive, you're like, I'm going to win all the time. Right? Or sometimes you get on a lucky streak if you're at a table; it's like, this always happens. No, it doesn't always happen. So, you learn over time, but then as you become more responsible, right? At least in my mind, you try to be more responsible as an adult. You learn to budget yourself, and you kind of take that and say, okay, you know what? Sure. It's not as exciting as it used to be. It's still exciting, but I can't be as careless as I once was as a younger adult.”*

# Perceptions of Stigmatization

- Overall, most of these players did not feel like they had personally experienced stigmatization, however, there was sensitivity to being labeled an “addict”
  - This sensitivity was especially high among the Minimal Action segment because they do not feel their concerns are severe
  - A couple of participants had met with therapists who they thought did not have addiction experience, and they felt stereotyped by them
  - A few had noticed advertising that felt like it was stigmatizing gamblers as “sad addicts”
  - One participant mentioned they had seen an article on addiction written by a doctor that felt stigmatizing – they had a strong preference for hearing from someone else in a similar situation instead of from a doctor

- A. Did any of these resources give you mixed messages? Please explain [Listen for, then probe: e.g., looking for ways to cut down, but only found info about quitting, etc.]
- B. Did any of the resources feel like they were characterizing you in a particular way – either negatively or positively? Please explain. [Listen for anything stigmatizing, or uplifting. Probe]

## RESOURCES USED

# Resources Used - Similarities and Differences by Segment

<i>Used by Both Segments</i>	<i>Took Action, Better Relationship Segment</i>	<i>Minimal Action Segment</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Abstinence and moderation</li><li>• Support from Friends and Family</li><li>• Online resources</li><li>• Alternative Activities/ Substitutions for Gambling</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Online Resources – apps mostly, websites</li><li>• Counseling and Therapy</li><li>• Peer Support and Personal Connections</li><li>• Self-care practices</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-Imposed Limits</li><li>• Abstinence</li><li>• Self-Reflection Practices</li><li>• Peer Support and Personal Connections</li><li>• Limited online resources</li></ul>

- Those in the Minimal Action segment did not explore or use as many options as the Took Action, Better Relationship segment. The Minimal Action segment did not have a lot to offer when discussing whether resources were helpful or not.
- A detailed list of apps and websites used is found in the appendix.

# Most helpful resources include both personal connections and digital options

## – Took Action, Better Relationship Segment

- **Peer Support and Personal Connections**

- As surfaced in the overall themes, personal connections, such as talking to friends or being part of a support group are highly valued, for their practical advice and emotional support – reported in both segments but more so in the Took Action, Better Relationship segment.

*“I would definitely say talking to friends [was most helpful] just because of the emotional connections that come with that.”*

- **Apps**

- Those in the Took Action, Better Relationship segment pointed to the usefulness of apps in helping them manage their concerns. Apps provide them *immediate support and offer tracking, reminders, and encouragement*, which they find beneficial, especially when they are alone.
- However, the *use of these apps for addressing gambling concerns was often short-lived* – they often would try them and then abandon them because they didn’t feel the need to continue using and/or their commitment to change fluctuated.

*“I actually paid attention to the limits you can set on now, the public apps that are allowed. And that's been super helpful. I even told more friends about it because they didn't even know it existed.”*

*“I never really commit for long, but I take the steps, I suppose.”*

- **Pursuing Other Activities / Substitutions**

- Engaging in activities such as exercise, going to the gym, art therapy, and goal setting with an accountability partner appeared to be effective. The more active substitutions helped to distract them from the urge to gamble and *provided a positive outlet for their energy*.

*“I just started yoga, and at first, it wasn't really working for me because it was not so fast-paced. I started running, and it was better for me, moving and getting pumped up, like running and hitting the gym. So that was very helpful.”*

# Most Helpful Resources cont.

- Those in the Minimal Action Segment rely mostly on setting limits and abstinence

- **Setting Limits**

- Most in this segment mentioned setting limits, *both in terms of money and time spent gambling.*
- *Using alerts and setting personal limits* were strategies that this segment found useful.

- **Abstinence**

- Abstaining from gambling for a period of time, was mentioned by several as the most helpful approach. They expressed a strong sense of a self-control by not gambling for set periods which gave them *a sense of accomplishment.*

- **Self-Reflection**

- They valued self-reflection and examining their motivations as part of their strategy to maintain a healthier relationship with gambling.

- **Social Support**

- Being with and talking to friends and family was an important way to keep their gambling in check.

*"I would say the limits are definitely the most helpful because, as far as keeping track [of your gambling]."*

# Mixed Experiences/ Least Helpful Resources

## Self-Care Practices

- Experiences with self-care practices, such as meditation, varied from person to person and the effectiveness was clear to only a few participants.

## Internet Deep Dives - Led to Misinformation

- Deep dives on the internet were sometimes found to be less helpful or even harmful because they can lead to misinformation. They mentioned getting lost in content they later realized was unreliable or had “ulterior motives like selling supplements”, or even encouraging gambling.

## Complexity and Volume of Information on Websites

- A few mentioned that websites with an abundance of information and complex vocabulary were overwhelming and unhelpful.

## Professional Counseling and Therapy and Group Therapy

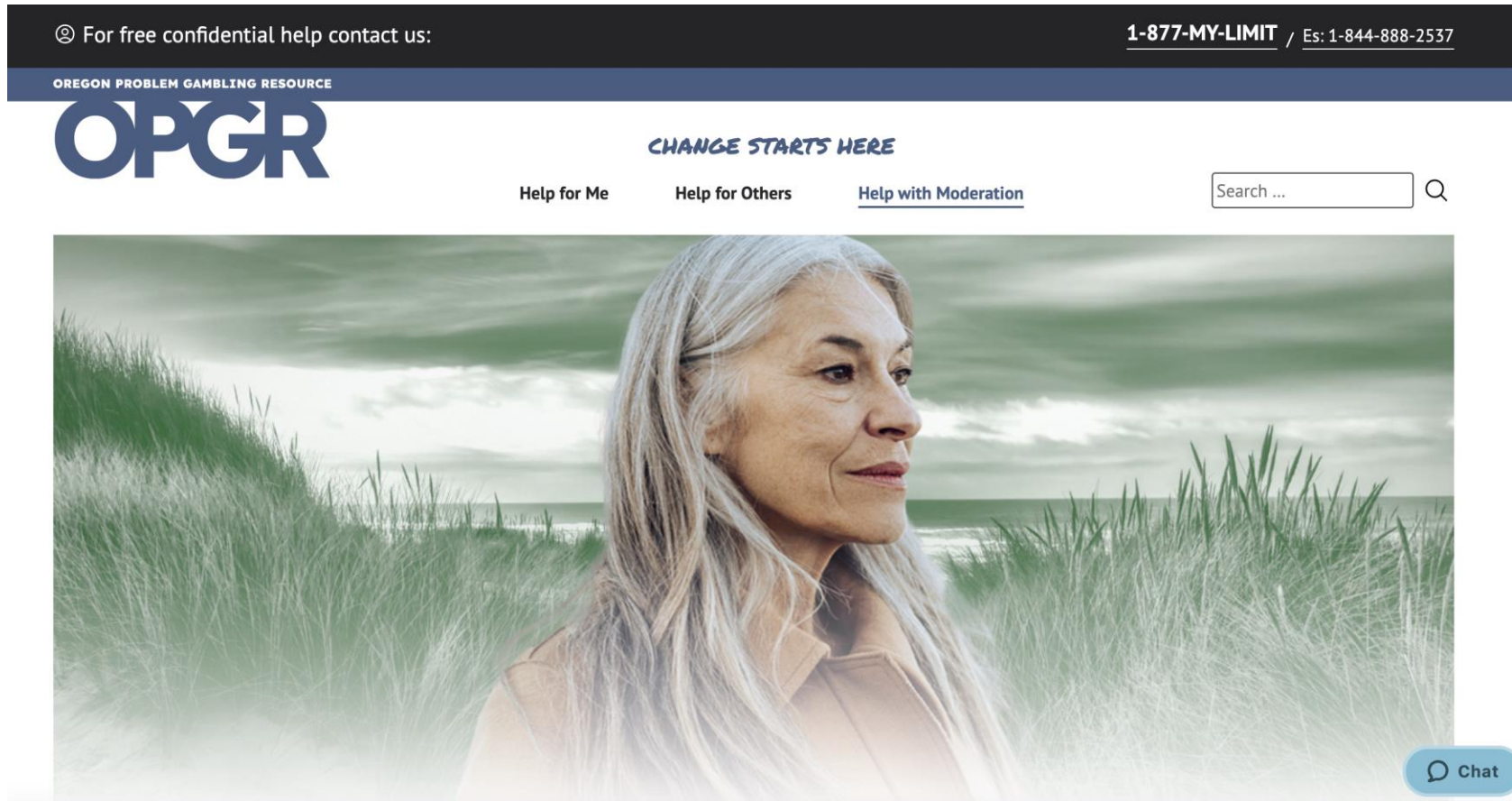
- While there were mixed responses regarding professional counseling and therapy, these services were considered helpful by some, mostly because they offered a non-judgmental space and were delivered by experts.
- Those preferring group therapy talked about shared experiences with others who are facing similar challenges. They found comfort in not being judged, and being among peers who understood their situation.

*“It was therapy [that was most helpful]. I love the fact that I was having conversations with someone who was an expert in addictions, someone who helped me see the danger of what I was doing. At that point, I didn't think it was that dangerous, but at the same time, it was an eye-opener to finally understand that it was more than what I could see.”*

*“So, one-on-one, they ask you many questions you don't even know how to answer, and sometimes they don't say anything. You keep quiet and hear you talk, and then you don't have anything to say because you don't know how to explain to this person, understand without feeling judged.”*



# Moderation Webpage



*"I think it's [the webpage] really good. I think it's really thorough. It's the most thorough resource I've ever come across as far as gambling goes."*

# Moderation Page

## Areas explored on their own – What caught their attention

- **Budgeting Tools**
  - The majority were drawn to the budgeting tools, highlighting the importance of their need to manage finances and tracking expenses.
  - This was appealing to both segments because budgeting was seen as relevant regardless of one's relationship with gambling.
- **Instant Help / Chat**
  - They were impressed with the chat function that provides immediate support without hurdles (direct access).
- **Interactive Content**
  - About three-quarters mentioned they were enticed by the videos and the risk quiz which were described as “helpful for learning” and self-improvement.
- **Track your Progress and Gambling Awareness**
  - A majority mentioned they read some of the content about understanding your relationship with gambling, tracking gambling issues, and support for recovery because these seemed useful in managing their own gambling habits.
    - The Minimal Action Taken segment felt like this was less relevant to them because they didn't think they had a big problem with gambling.

# Moderation page – Likes\*

25 out of 26 participants had positive reactions to the webpage. 1 had a “neutral” response

- **Simplicity and the Calming Design**

- The calm colors and simple design were very appealing, especially for the Took Action, Better Relationship segment.

- **Convenience**

- The availability of various tools and resources on one page was liked and appreciated for its convenience.

- **Access to Online Support**

- The option for immediate chat support as soon as the user opens the webpage, was highly appreciated including the direct link to this resource.

- **Videos**

- The videos were liked, especially the shorter videos - some were vocal that they had short attention spans. Only a couple of participants mentioned viewing the longer “Make a Change” video when they looked at the webpage on their own.

# Moderation page – Likes (cont.)

- **Interactive Tools**
  - The interactive elements were universally liked – the quizzes and the workbook were well-received.
  - They value engagement and interactivity, which makes their experiences more *personal and effective*.
- **Non-Aggressive Approach**
  - The majority expressed a *preference for the non-aggressive tone and helpful approach* - where the content does not confront them about their gambling but instead offers help and tools in a more subtle manner.
- **Emphasis on Well-being**
  - The majority responded positively to *messaging focused on improving well-being* rather than just highlighting problems.
  - This was especially meaningful to the Minimal Action Taken segment, who did not feel they had much of an issue with gambling.
- *There were no strong dislikes mentioned about the page*

*“I found it [webpage] informative and user-friendly. They didn't use any words that would scare anyone away. There are lots of helpful stuff.”*

# Sections Probed During the Interview

## - Gamcare workbook

### Likes

- Interactive Elements and Engaging Content
  - Interactive elements of the workbook, such as quizzes, diaries, and self-reflection exercises, because these felt interesting and engaging
- The personalization and relevance to them
  - The workbook content resonated with them, particularly for personal goal setting and tracking progress, something they felt would be helpful in life
- Having Support and Accountability
  - The exercises providing a sense of accountability, which was seen as valuable for those trying to manage their gambling habits

### Mixed Reactions / Dislikes

- Digital vs. Physical Format Preferences
  - While most appreciated the workbook format, they had varied preferences for digital versus physical formats
  - Some appreciated the ability to print the workbook, others suggested the convenience of digital access and use
- Accessibility and Visibility
  - The majority only discovered the workbook when directed to it, indicating this resource could be overlooked – *the button was small and hard to see*
- Content Overload
  - Most expressed concern about the length of the workbook and the volume of information it contains
  - They preferred *bite-sized, manageable sections* of information, which is less overwhelming

# Sections Probed During the Interview

## - Budgeting Tools

### Likes

- Free Tools
  - The majority appreciated the availability of free resources like Mint to manage their finances, immediately understanding this would help them better manage their finances
  - The Minimal Action Taken segment was more receptive to these broader tools that would help them in life
- Being able to Integrate with Banking and Financial Accounts
  - Approx. half appreciated the ease with which some apps like Mint, integrate with their financial accounts to provide a comprehensive view of their finances
- Variety of Options and Suggestions
  - They liked having a variety of budgeting tools to choose from and appreciated the curated selection of apps

*“I thought it [the budgeting tools] was direct to the point. Here's a list of some of these free budgeting apps. There it is. Which I thought was smart.”*

### Budgeting Tools

While not specifically built for gambling, you can try one of these free budgeting apps to help you track your expenses and learn powerful insights about your spending habits.

- [Mint](#)
- [YNAB](#) (You Need a Budget)
- [Pocket Guard](#)
- [Everydollar](#)
- [Wally](#)
- [Empower](#)

### Mixed Reactions / Dislikes

- There were no dislikes in this section

## Sections Probed During the Interview

- Track your progress

## Likes

- Apps and Habit Tracking
  - The majority appreciated apps that help them track their progress and habits because it can help better manage areas they would like to improve in life
  - The gamification of habit tracking, especially when done in a social setting with friends for accountability, was well-received
- Creating New Habits
  - They were consistently interested in replacing negative habits with positive ones – even beyond gambling
  - Activities such as meditation, exploring nature, socializing, and listening to music were recognized as beneficial in making a change – although their effectiveness was sometimes questioned
- Dopamine Video
  - Strong interest was expressed in learning how certain activities could substitute for the rush associated with gambling

## Mixed Reactions



- Apps and Habit Tracking
  - While participants liked the idea of tracking progress, some found the process of using multiple apps or tools cumbersome
  - Some who have used these types of apps before mentioned not using them long-term because of their fluctuating interest in changing their behavior
- Creating New Habits
  - There was also feedback that some suggested activities may seem privileged or unattainable for those struggling with addictions or financial instability

*On tracking your progress ... “I think that's great. There are a few ways of doing that. I like the idea of tracking our goals and habits. I think that's important for people. I am creating new habits. It's good to give examples, like the fact that you go out to calm down, which is cool.”*

# Sections Probed During the Interview

## - Risk Quiz

### Likes

- Taking the Quiz
  - Most of the Took Action, Better Relationship segment were interested in taking quizzes, finding them fun and engaging
  - They liked the placement of the quiz in the middle of the webpage because it was noticeable and made it accessible – not needing to navigate elsewhere
- Feedback on Quiz Results
  - The quiz providing immediate feedback and guidelines on what to do next
  - Some felt the quiz results validated their self-evaluation of being 'low-risk' which was reassuring
- Potential for Sharing and Helping Others
  - The usefulness of the quiz not only for themselves but also as a resource to share with friends or family members who might be struggling with gambling



### Mixed Reactions

- The Minimal Action Taken segment was less likely to have taken the quiz because it didn't seem relevant to them

*On the quiz... "When it asked, have you ever missed an important event to gamble? And did you ever put gambling above taking care of personal? It made me realize my levels had crossed. So that was a big eye-opener."*



# Sections Probed During the Interview

## -Lower Risk Gambling Guidelines

### Likes

- Having Guidelines
  - Most liked the idea of having guidelines and found them helpful as they provide structure and boundaries for gambling - such as: limiting gambling to four days a month or avoiding more than two types of games

*"I like everything about it [the guidelines] because it was talking about keeping you in check, keeping myself in check...And also..the type of games or the number of games I engage in. This is great."*

### Mixed Reactions

- Understanding Purpose of Guidelines:
  - Some questioned the intention behind certain guidelines, such as limiting gambling to four days a month or avoiding more than two types of games - they weren't always clear on why these are the guidelines
- Personal Relevance:
  - Some felt the guidelines were more relevant to those with gambling problems rather than to them, especially among the Minimal Action segment



## Revisiting the Website

- 11 out of 12 of the Took Action, Better Relationship segment would revisit the website
  - Only 5 out of 13 Minimal Action Taken segment stated they would revisit the site
- The Took Action, Better Relationship segment expressed a clear intent to revisit for resources, self-assessment, and to explore more content.
- Those who were interested in revisiting often cited specific features such as the helpful resources, videos, worksheets, and interactive elements like the live chat.
- Most in the Minimal Action Taken segment were more likely to feel the information was for someone else and felt they would not revisit.
- While most said the information would have been more helpful if accessed earlier in their gambling experiences, they also expressed that they may not have been looking for support in the early stages.

*“I think that I would [revisit]. Especially for ideas, like creating new habits or brainstorming other alternative things I could do instead of gambling. I think that's what I am having a hard time with. I get bored and don't think of anything else I could do.”*

# APPENDIX

- List of Resources Used

Summary of Findings from:

- Literature Scan
- Expert Interviews

# List of Apps Used –

Took Action, Better Relationship Segment

Apps	# Mentions	Experiences
Gamban	3	It was a “good app”. Helpful for blocking access to gambling sites
Facebook Support Group	2	“Don’t have to worry about people being judgmental, great place to share and hear others’ stories”
BetBlocker	2	“Incredibly helpful.” Easily blocks access to gambling sites and provided resources for managing gambling
Juice Reel	1	It was “definitely helpful”
Reddit	1	Provides unbiased information, sometimes information can be confusing because it can seem like the terminology used is like a “foreign language”
Self Control gambling app	1	Helpful with setting and tracking limits
Gamstop	1	Helpful in letting them know when they’ve gambled enough for that day
Recover Me	1	Good for connecting with support and monitoring their progress
Headspace app	1	Good for relaxing

# List of Apps Used –

Minimal Action Segment

Apps	Mentions	Experiences
Sober Sidekick	1	Helpful but wishes more people knew about it
Juice Reel app	1	Heard about it as a good way to check your wins and losses
Clearspace	1	Provides helpful breathing exercises and quotes before you go on certain apps like gambling apps
Habit Bull	1	Not helpful
Block Online Gambling	1	Helpful for people that gamble online
Gambling Addiction Recover	1	Helpful but wishes more people knew about it
I Am Sober	1	- Mentioned by same participant
Quitzilla	1	- Mentioned by same participant
Bad Habit Tracker	1	- Mentioned by same participant
Recover Me	1	No comments
Stop Gambling: Quit Now	1	No comments
Quit Bet	1	- Mentioned by same participant
Sober Buddy	1	- Mentioned by same participant
Addiction Recovery	1	- Mentioned by same participant
Quit Habit: Quit Bad Addiction	1	- Mentioned by same participant

# List of Websites Used –

Took Action, Better Relationship Segment

Websites	Mentions	Experiences
Google	8	Useful for finding good websites, resources and forums
Gambler’s Anonymous	4	Appreciated anonymity and chat feature
National Council of Problem Gambling	2	“love the resources” on the site, like the chat support, education and can find treatment providers
Wikipedia	1	Provides information but isn’t motivating
Gatesplay Foundation	1	Offers helpful strategies
Blogs about gambling addiction	1	Good resource to hear what people did to get over their addictions
ChatGPT	1	Was helpful and was “like a friend that I could confide in and tell him that I have what I think is a problem, stopping gambling at casinos without being judged. Yeah, I like to think of him as a computer with a six pack”
BeGambleAware	1	“Very helpful” for information on where to get help and get advice on how to control gambling
LCB.org	1	Liked that it looks professional and was “fairly unbiased”

## List of Websites Used –

Minimal Action Segment

Website	Mentions	Experiences
Healthline.com	1	Browsed through quickly, was educational
Google	1	Good for finding multiple free resources
Gambling Forums	1	“Engaging and helpful”
Peer Support Forums	1	Learned new things while finding new resources
Gambler’s Anonymous	3	Feels comfortable because of the anonymity
The Responsible Gambling Council	1	Very helpful online tool

# Executive Summary – Literature Scan: Key Elements of Early Support Options for Alcohol Consumption and Gaming

- The availability of information and resources varied between the gambling vs alcohol spaces – resources were more abundant for those seeking information and/or considering a change in their alcohol consumption.
- A very popular approach to early support and contemplation in the alcohol space is the sober curious movement which takes an exploratory self-help approach.
- The table below summarizes key elements of early support/prevention activities observed for gaming versus alcohol consumption. Similarities and differences are also called out:

Gambling	Alcohol
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both use the stages of change framework to evaluate where an individual is on the change spectrum (see page 10)</li> <li>• Both use similar strategies, actions and tools to help guide change: self-help, self-reflection, mental health, cognitive behavior therapy, motivational interviewing</li> </ul>	
<p>Differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those that seek help are most frequently directed to treatment</li> <li>• Limited social media content / challenges (e.g. Dry January challenge)</li> <li>• Limited social media engagement with treatment provider accounts (e.g. OCPR/OCPPG Facebook posts)</li> <li>• Search for gambling help turns up mixed – and potentially detrimental - results (e.g. app store displayed gambling tracking apps and online slot machine apps)</li> </ul>	<p>Differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of treatment and early consideration self-help options</li> <li>• Plenty of social media content and engagement</li> <li>• Resources outside of treatment (self-help, social media challenges, social media content, dating apps, social events, etc.)</li> <li>• Search for help with alcohol turns up relevant resources without mixed messages</li> </ul>



# Executive Summary – Literature Scan: Sober Curiosity Offers Flexibility and Motivation

- The strategies and actions used in the Sober Curious space align with strategies and actions used in the gambling prevention and treatment space, the difference is that the Sober Curious movement is delivered in a more positive, inclusive way.
- The sober curious approach offers the following:
  - There's something that motivates you to change, not an assessment that labels you (no stigma)
  - Self-guided exploration of self, including behaviors (you're in control)
  - Flexibility in finding what works for you
  - Doesn't require you to be in a treatment setting
  - Easy to recruit others to join you in your journey (support/community)
  - Fun and engaging ways to try it out (e.g. dry January, sober spring)
- While prevention and treatment providers use PG screeners to categorize a player's behaviors, player-facing assessments can be used to raise awareness and promote specific strategies and actions (e.g. changing thoughts, limiting, planning, etc.).
  - Hoosier Lottery's Positive Play content is a good example of this.

# Executive Summary – Literature Scan: Explore New Alternatives with Care

A variety of strategies and tools available for those considering a change in their alcohol consumption could be applied within the gambling space - but must be done with care – for example:

- Determining which entities are most appropriate to initiate a social media challenge or partner with existing apps
- Determining how best to engage/communicate with individuals who do not identify as having problem gambling – and which entities are best positioned to deliver these messages

## Create Social Media Challenges

Dry January, Sober Spring, etc.



A person performing the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge

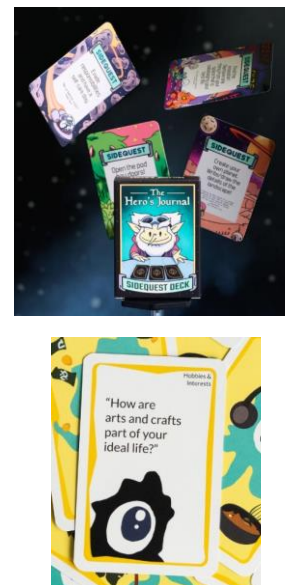
## Enable Self-Reflection

Apps, workbooks, journals, etc.



## Encourage Exploration / Trying New Things

Adventure cards, apps that get you out of your comfort zone



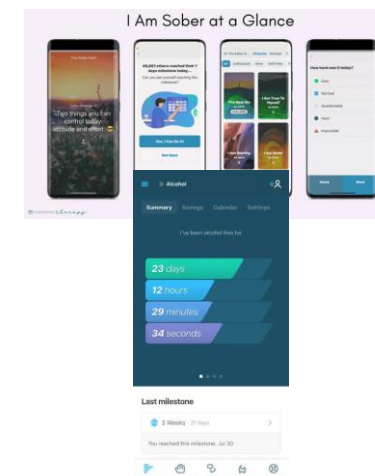
## Aligning with Social Causes

Join a challenge and have family/friends sponsor you to support a cause you care about



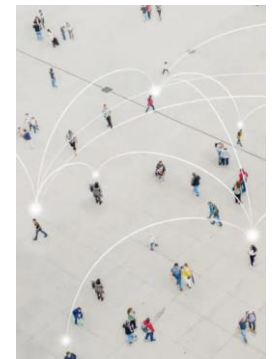
## Partnering with Existing Apps

Promote free self-care apps, partner with existing apps, promote free apps available via health care provider, ability to integrate into Convenience app?, etc.



## Creating an Ambassador Network to Amplify Content

Finding gambling prevention enthusiasts to amplify tips and advice on how to reduce gambling harms on social media.



# Executive Summary – Literature Scan: Language Matters!

- What is being said (or written on screen) must match the imagery. For example, if the message is related to encouraging limits, images of those enjoying gambling are not consistent with that intent.
- Use positive/affirming language
- Remove ambiguity/clear call to action; easy to understand
- Removing stigmatizing language / normalize talking about gambling
- Focus on what you'll gain, not what you'll lose
- Focus on positive reinforcement / motivation
- Empower them / show they're capable of change / give them the tools
- Right message at the right time



# Executive Summary – Literature Scan: Strategies for Change Observed by Gambling Research Australia

- The current problem gambling prevention and treatment programs point to professional help with the end goal of abstaining from gambling.
- Based on research from Gambling Research Australia, most problem gamblers prefer the self-help route vs. going into a treatment program. Self-help isn't for everyone and is not an effective approach for those with severe gambling harm/behavior.
- Gambling Research Australia pointed out different strategies and actions based on where someone is on the stage of change spectrum:
  - Participants in the **earlier stages of change** were more likely to use “planning” and “setting limits” strategies - Includes taking steps to be more aware of their gambling (gambling strategy, what they spend, time spent, and setting limits) and taking care of themselves.
  - Participants in **later stages** were more likely to use “changing thoughts,” “health and well-being”, and “self-assessment” strategies - Focused on changing how you think about gambling.
  - “Changing Thoughts” was among the top 5 strategies, regardless of what stage of change there were in.

# Challenges & Opportunities Identified in Expert Interviews

	Prevention Lens	Treatment Lens	System-Wide
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited available resources</li> <li>• Primarily face-to-face/community-focused outreach – presentation/outreach, rather than self-guided model</li> <li>• Low public awareness or concern that gambling can be harmful if not managed – low interest in hearing about it in schools</li> <li>• Harms from gambling still not seen as a legitimate health care issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early support seekers don't see themselves as needing treatment – don't seek information because 'that's not me'</li> <li>• Services are focused on 'downstream' harm reduction and promotion of abstinence for those already experiencing significant harms</li> <li>• Paperwork involved to gain access to services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treatment/abstinence-based model, versus overall health promotion and harm reduction model</li> <li>• Currently no widely accepted term for this segment</li> <li>• Segment isn't well-served by current model</li> </ul>
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify appropriate online and community channels to make tips, tools, resources, and relatable peer networks broadly available for this segment</li> <li>• Increase harm reduction and self-care message for this segment - self-awareness, values alignment, and self-care focused assessment tools, what to watch for, activities promoting balance and health, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support prevention and operator efforts to better serve this much further 'upstream' segment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide early support and information without needing to be enrolled in the system</li> <li>• Strong partnership across prevention, treatment, and operator to better serve this segment in a holistic way</li> <li>• Continue efforts to increase awareness. Promote shifting societal/cultural biases/stigma</li> <li>• Creating messaging, tools and resources relevant to where gamblers are (meet them where they are)</li> </ul>