



Prevention Starts With Awareness: YMCA Youth Gambling Awareness Program (YGAP)

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The YMCA Youth Gambling Awareness Program (YGAP), funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, educates youth and adults involved in young people’s lives about gambling awareness including potential risks, healthy choices and informed/responsible decision making. With an extended reach across Ontario, YGAP brings awareness to more than 50,000 people annually. Using a harm reduction approach, YGAP’s programming is aligned with the Ontario Ministry of Education’s curriculum requirements. YGAP provides a multi-faceted and innovative approach to problem gambling prevention through outreach, community education and awareness activities including youth engagement projects. Having evidence-based and evidence-informed components, the program is known beyond the Canadian borders and most recently YGAP was recognized with the Excellence in Prevention Award at the 31st U.S. National Conference on Problem Gambling (July, 2017) in Portland Oregon.

YGAP’s work includes a variety of tools meeting the needs of individuals and communities including:

Awareness Raising Activities

YGAP offers awareness raising programming in French and English for youth ages 8-24 as well as adults, parents and professionals. Content of youth workshops are developmentally appropriate, interactive, fun and engaging for classrooms, community centers, and camp settings. Workshops can be booked individually, or as a series for different age groups: 8-10, 11-14, 15-18, 19-24 and adults. Refer to the YGAP Workshop Options section below for more information.

Youth Engagement Projects

Youth driven initiatives are key in promoting youth expression and community action related to youth gambling. With a very impactful peer-to-peer model, Youth Engagements have become one of the staple elements of YGAP over the years.

Community Involvement Projects

Partnerships and collaboration with community organizations to plan and implement events designed to promote community awareness and involvement regarding youth gambling issues are included in each of the YGAP sites.

Community Health Fairs/Events

YGAP partners with local education and treatment service providers, local youth services agencies and mental health & addiction services. Additionally, YGAP is a constant presence at community health fairs and information events continuing the program mission to promote healthy active living, informed decision making, education and the prevention of youth problem gambling.

Referral Services

23% of youth know someone who may be experiencing problems with gambling (YGAP Impact Study, 2016). Each YGAP participant is provided information concerning treatment services and other community resources that can help with a potential gambling problem. This enables individuals to seek treatment or help without the need for disclosure of problem gambling issues in front of peers.

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Measuring Impact and Success

Integrating evaluation measures has been an ongoing aim for YGAP. Ranging from self-evaluation to formal third-party evaluations, YGAP's activities and approaches have been continuously improving. Over the years, YGAP has developed and conducted multiple evaluation projects to measure impact and program success. In 2016-17 alone, over 36,000 workshop, community involvement and youth engagement participants completed surveys.

In addition, working with a third-party evaluator, YGAP conducted a formal comprehensive impact study consisting of youth focus groups, pre and post workshop surveys, teacher interviews and teacher surveys. In total, 20 schools, 510 students (ages 15-18) and 25 teachers from 12 regions across Ontario participated in this impact study. The results of the program participant surveys and impact study reiterated that YGAP has been successful in increasing awareness of the: risks associated with gambling, available resources and treatment services and how to access them, low-risk gambling practices and reduction of the misconceptions regarding gambling.

The results also suggest that youth hold negative beliefs about people with gambling problems and without intervention (i.e., training, workshops), these beliefs are likely to remain consistent. YGAP therefore identified the need to deepen the organizational knowledge and understanding of the stigma related to problem gambling. Development of training and tools to educate youth about stigma and ways to reduce problem gambling-related stigma has become a priority.

Collecting community feedback is another avenue to measure impact and respond to community needs. Last year, more than 72 community organizations had a direct input into YGAP's programming via surveys. In addition to reinforcing the above findings, the results of the community surveys reiterated that the YGAP services and presentation content/delivery are relevant and age appropriate for participants, and that the program is a constant and needed presence in the wide spectrum of health and education prevention services.

YGAP Workshop Options

YGAP workshop options include a variety of offerings to align with the mandate of gambling education and prevention. The common denominator amongst these tools is the fluidity of the content and the drive to improve programs to stay relevant and up to date. Below are some examples of the tools:

Game-Bling: When Gaming Meets Gambling (English/French)

The Game-bling workshop aims to develop and enhance critical thinking by exploring the impact of technology on the gambling market, the blurred lines between gaming and gambling and underage 'gambling' opportunities (e-sports, fantasy sports, 'gambling' in videogames, skin betting, etc.). In this workshop, warning signs of problematic behaviors including excessive videogaming, technology use, social gaming and gambling are discussed. Harm reduction strategies and support resources are provided.

Betting \$ense-Gambling and Financial Literacy (English/French)

Through a series of activities and discussions, participants explore the fundamentals of financial literacy, budgeting, spending, borrowing and saving as they relate to gambling. The Betting \$ense workshop aims to enhance participants' awareness of the financial risks and implications of gambling and dispel myths about money and gambling. It invites participants to apply informed decision making and critical thinking skills in games of chance and explore the concepts of needs Vs. wants, comparison shopping and being a wise consumer as they relate to responsible gambling.

Media Impact - Thinking Critically about Media & Advertisements (English/French)

The Media Literacy Workshop aims to develop/enhance critical thinking in relation to the media and advertisements. The workshop explores marketing techniques and a wide variety of media content, including gambling advertisements and invites participants to question the objective and impact of media content and advertisements.

What's at Stake? (English/French)

An interactive workshop that encourages participants to explore the concept of gambling through investigation into odds and randomness and the impact they have on winning and losing. Individuals learn about the various traditional and current forms of gambling while gaining relevant knowledge in relation to harm reduction and the making of informed and healthy choices. The key points covered in this workshop are: definition of gambling, things of value, chance Vs. skill, probability and odds, signs of problem gambling, harm reduction and referral to support services.

Stigma and Gambling Addiction: Why Does It Matter? (English/French)

This workshop is designed to address the stigma surrounding problem gambling and its consequences. It explores the myths, misconceptions, assumptions and feelings towards people experiencing problems with gambling and the impact of stigma on help seeking behaviors. Stigma and Gambling Addiction is a module aiming at lowering public stigma and increasing positive attitudes towards treatment by addressing the nature of problem gambling as an addiction and facilitating discussions on language, attitudes and behaviors towards people with gambling problems as well as ways we can help to break stigma and support recovery. With an already significant presence in Ontario, YGAP hopes to extend its reach further and deliver problem gambling education and prevention messaging in more communities.

Partnerships and collaboration are vital in achieving collective impact for healthier communities.

For more information about these programs, please visit: www.ymcagta.org or www.youthbet.com.

Reference

Choi, K., Hazar, M., & Glynn, J. (2017, May 12). Evaluation of YMCA's Youth Gambling Awareness Program (YGAP).

Black Women: Gambling, Addiction and Recovery

Sandra Adell, Professor, Department of Afro-American Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison

In the Spring of 2005, I began keeping a journal that chronicles how I became addicted to slot machine gambling, although I didn't understand that what I was experiencing was an addiction until much later. In fact, when I realized shortly after my first visit to a casino in Wisconsin in April 2005, that the images we see in the media of well-dressed, happy people winning lots of money were hardly what was happening in casinos, I decided to write about the negative effects I was sure the casino industry was having on vulnerable communities, especially on African American communities in cities like Detroit, my hometown. Every time I visit Detroit, I hear stories about people who lost everything in the casinos, yet very little has been written in academic journals, books, or the popular press about problem gambling in African American communities

As a literary scholar and professor, I instinctively began searching for narratives— stories about casino gambling written by African Americans. My research led me to Gladys Knight's autobiography, *Between Each Line of Pain and Glory*, published in 1997. In her book, Gladys Knight deals briefly, in about ten or fifteen pages, with her addiction to blackjack. After finding so little information about women and gambling in general and almost nothing about African American women gamblers in novels, memoirs and popular magazines, I began searching social science and medical research databases for academic studies. I found one, an article on pathological gambling disorder by Renee M. Cunningham-Williams, et.al. The authors stated that this was "the first report of racial/ethnic variation in the reliability of game-specific disorder." They also stressed that their research was limited. It included only 315 individuals (African Americans and Caucasians) between the ages of 15 and 85 who participated in two telephone interviews about their gambling habits. The African American respondents "had low educational attainment and were predominately very poor. Therefore, [their] African American sample may not be representative of African American gamblers or gamblers of other races/ethnicities. As this was the first investigation examining racial/ethnic disparity in PGD diagnostic reporting, these findings need to be replicated using a more representative sample of gamblers with racial/ethnic diversity."

A 2009 study conducted by the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling and reported in the South Florida Times under the title "Black Women with Gambling Problems Outnumber Men," reported that African American women living in Florida had a 51% higher rate of compulsive gambling addiction than African American men, representing a 6 percent jump over the previous year. The study was based on 2,700 calls to the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling hotline and concluded that "19 per cent of the callers were African Americans, people from the Caribbean and/or people from Africa. Of these people, a whopping 54% are addicted to slots. Of that number, 83% are gambling so much that they could not pay their household bills." The study concluded that "Black/African American is the only ethnicity in which female

gamblers outnumber male gamblers, with females representing 51% of the total (typical female percentage for other ethnicities ranged from 33% to 40%)." The study also revealed that most of the women were experiencing emotional problems: 75% experienced anxiety, 82% were depressed, and 10% had serious suicidal ideas or previous attempts."

The question this study raised for me was whether the rates of addiction among African American women in other cities or states, and especially in Detroit, are similar. More importantly, how reliable is a study based exclusively on calls to gambling helplines? In densely populated urban environments, the numbers are probably higher than what was reported in this study. Yet African American women are virtually silent about their addiction. Aside from Gladys Knight, the only other black woman in the 1990s who spoke out publicly about her addiction to gambling was Denise Phillips. Her story appeared as a special report in the October 1999 edition of *Essence* magazine, a major publication that has as its target market African American women.

In March 2000, Lolita Standifer, a journalist for *The Michigan Chronicle*, published an article titled "*Black Women are the New Faces of Problem Gambling.*" Standifer described them as college-educated professional women, not at all what she expected. The question her article raised for me was how many of these women are seeking help beyond calls to gambling helplines? Where are they going to seek help? Additionally, what kind of therapy is available to them? To what extent might issues of race affect their decisions not to seek therapy? And then there is the issue of finances. How many African American women don't go into counseling because they can't afford it?

My own experiences with psychotherapy and addiction counseling have been problematic and stem back to my experiences as an unwed teen mother living on welfare in Detroit during the 1960s. These experiences, some of which I write about in my memoir, *Confessions of a Slot Machine Queen*, made it difficult for me to trust white mental health professionals even as recently as 2007, when I began working with a personal therapist. But by that time, I was desperate and very afraid that after all I had accomplished in my life, I was on a path of destruction. After I got drunk and passed out in the parking lot at a casino in May, 2007, I knew I had to find help, so I called Gateway Recovery in Madison. I explained that my problem was a gambling addiction and that I was drinking way too much. If I recall correctly, it only took a day or two for me to get an appointment.

As I entered Gateway's waiting room for my first appointment, I had to remind myself that I probably would not be assigned to an African American counselor. In Madison, as in cities across the country, African American mental health workers are few and far between. The demand for counselors specializing in gambling addictions far exceeds the supply. I was assigned to a

white woman who did not specialize in gambling addictions. Like most counselors at Gateway, her area of expertise was substance abuse. I was frank with her about my hesitancy: how could a white woman who has spent her entire life in a white community understand anything about me—a black woman from Detroit whose life was shaped to a great extent by the racism I had encountered for most of my life?

After several weeks of personal counseling, I was referred to a group therapy program at Gateway. I went once. There were roughly six or eight other people in the group, all white men, most in their twenties. I walked into the room where the meeting was held and felt my anxiety leap. As a sixty-one-year-old Black woman, I needed a different peer group. I also needed one that did not adhere to the rhetoric of the twelve step programs. After calling my counselor and explaining to her why I could not handle the sessions, she recommended that I try SMART RECOVERY (The acronym stands for Self Management and Recovery Training).

None of the participants I met at SMART were problem gamblers; there also were no African Americans. Their addictions were drugs and alcohol. The benefit for me was that the meetings attracted older adults and did not follow a twelve-step model. I mention this because I believe that counselors need to be mindful that twelve step programs are not for everyone. As Charlotte Davis Kasl argues in *Many Roads, One Journey: Moving Beyond the 12 Steps*, they do not allow for discussions of racism, systemic oppression, poverty and other issues that plague vulnerable communities. More importantly, for African American women, we are in need of counselors and support groups that are prepared to deal with depression which, according to Terrie Williams in her book, *Black Pain*, lurks behind the addictive behavior of millions of African American women.

Black Pain is not a research project or clinical study; it is anecdotal. In addition to telling her own story of depression, Williams relied on those of other black women and men who spoke candidly about their mental health and their attitudes about therapy. Stories can be powerful mediums for change. They can also be cathartic for both the storyteller and the listener. If the 2009 Florida study is any indication of the pervasiveness of gambling addictions among African American women, there is a wellspring of stories that can help mental health care providers understand some of the underlying causes, including the impact race and racism has had on the lives of black women. The challenge is to identify these women so we can help move them from addiction to recovery.

References

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Kasl, C. D. (1992). *Many roads, one journey: Moving beyond the twelve steps. A new understanding of recovery*. New York: Harper Collins.

Phillips, Denise. (October, 1999, Vol. 3), Bet Your Bottom Dollar, *Essence*, 112.

Williams, T. M. (2009). *Black pain: It just looks like we're not hurting*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Centre Fundraising Campaign in Full Swing

The Centre's ongoing fundraising campaign continues to grow with the support of corporate and private sponsors. Due to restricted government infrastructure funding, we have initiated a fundraising campaign to help us maintain our ability to develop and deploy empirically-based prevention and harm-minimization programs. The Centre is housed on McGill University's main campus in the heart of Montreal, Canada. McGill University is a public university and recognized charitable organization.

Donations can be made to:

The International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors
McGill University
3724 McTavish Street
Montreal, Quebec H3A 1Y2

Official letters of contributions and tax receipts will be forwarded

The 2017 Holiday Campaign



The 2017 Holiday Campaign is in full swing! This annual campaign, a collaborative initiative of the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors at McGill University and the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG), encourages lottery corporations in North America and around the world to share the message that when gifting lottery tickets, it is important to keep the recipient's age in mind. Momentum and participation in this campaign is growing steadily and participation is free.

Research shows that the majority of adolescents gamble at least occasionally, and that lottery products may be a gateway to problem gambling. Youth gambling has been shown to be linked to other risk-taking and addictive behaviors such as smoking, drinking and drug use.

In 2016, a record number of lottery organizations world wide formally participated in this initiative. We are continuing to expand our collaborative efforts to promote responsible gambling. Join the campaign today!

Post Doctoral Position Available

An immediate opening for a post-doctoral fellow focused upon studying youth risk-taking behaviors is available. A doctorate degree in developmental, clinical, school/applied, social, experimental or health psychology, addictions research, or related field is required. Fluency in French is an asset. An understanding of addictions is beneficial but not required. The candidate must have skills in statistical analyses and research methodology, and experience in using SPSS and/or SAS for data analyses. The successful candidate should be highly motivated, have strong library research skills, experience in academic writing, strong analytic skills, and be able to conduct field-based research projects independently. We are searching for someone who is independent, yet who enjoys working in a collaborative environment. We are offering either a one-year or two-year position. Salary is commensurate with other post-doctoral positions. The successful candidate will work in the area of youth risk-taking behaviors and will become an active member of the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors. He/she will be responsible to the director of the centre and will work closely with the research faculty, other post-doctoral candidates and graduate students. Responsibilities will include developing and conducting field-based research studies, analysis of data, manuscript writing, assistance with grant writing, and literature searches. The candidate will also contribute toward the development, production, and distribution of a quarterly publication. Opportunity to present at national and international conferences is offered and the candidate is expected to publish in peer reviewed journals.

Please e-mail or mail letter of application, curriculum vitae and three reference letters to:

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Centre News

Dr. Derevensky in Romania

In September, Dr. Derevensky attended the 18th RSCANP Congress and the 40th National Conference on Child and Adolescent Neurology - Psychiatry and Associated Professions conference in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Dr. Derevensky delivered the keynote address titled "Working with adolescent problem gamblers: From research to practice" as well as a second address titled "Treating young problem gamblers: More art than science?"



From Left to Right: Dr. Viorel Lupu, Dr. Ramona Lupu, Dr. Robert Ladouceur, Dr. Lucie Baillargeon, Lynette Gilbeau and Dr. Derevensky



Upcoming Events

- **New York Council on Problem Gambling Conference**
November 16-17, 2017
Albany, New York
- **NAGS 27th Annual Conference**
November 22-24, 2017
Melbourne, Australia
- **International Gambling Conference**
February 12-14, 2018
Auckland, New Zealand
- **New Horizons**
February 13-15, 2018
Vancouver, B.C.
- **Alberta Gambling Research Institute 17th Annual Conference on Gambling Research**
April 12-14, 2018
Banff, Alberta

News Briefs

Disney Supports Anti-Gambling Amendment

Disney Worldwide Services in Florida recently contributed \$575,000 to an organization called *Voters in Charge* whose aim is to prevent gambling expansion in Florida. Since March 2017, Disney Worldwide Services has contributed a total of \$2.33 million to this initiative which seeks to amend the state's Constitution by giving voters not politicians the exclusive right to approve or not permit casino gambling in the state. According to John Sowinski, Chairman of *Voters in Charge*, the group hopes to get onto the 2018 ballot and are "returning the ultimate authority to approve casino gambling to the people of Florida."

Crackdown on UK Online Gambling Site Ads

UK regulators have urged online operators to remove ads featuring cartoon characters from their advertisements fearing that these images may lure underage youth to these gambling websites. Concern has been raised that some of Britain's largest betting operators are promoting games using popular characters that may appeal to children. Furthermore, these types of advertisements have not violated the Gambling Commission rules. In a letter written by a consortium of organizations including the Gambling Commission and the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP), it was stated that vulnerable individuals and those under the age of 18 should be protected. This letter also advises operators to immediately remove any website or third-party ads that are likely to appeal to people aged 17 or younger and that are generally readily accessible for viewing. The letter further warned of possible sanctions should sites fail to comply.

UK Viewers and Gambling Ads

According to a data compiled by BBC journalist Victoria Derbyshire, Britains are being bombarded by gambling advertisements during televised football matches. The journalist examined 25 matches in the current season involving British football teams. A total of 1,324 commercials were recorded across these matches, with 272 of these ads related to gambling for an average of roughly 1 in 5 being gambling related. For some games, the average rose as high as 1 in 3 ads being gambling related. While no gambling advertisements are supposed to be shown before 9PM, this is not the case for live sporting events. Anti-gambling groups are further concerned about these findings and are raising concerns about the exposure of children to these ads during sporting events.



Recent Publications and Presentations

REFEREED PUBLICATIONS

Mills, D., Milyavskaya, M., Heath, N., & Derevensky, J. (in press). Gaming motivation and problematic gaming: The role of needs frustration. *European Journal of Social Psychology*.

Pitt, H., Thomas, S., Bestman, A., Daube, M., & Derevensky, J. (in press). What do children observe and learn from televised sports betting advertisements? A qualitative study among Australian children. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*.

Kim H., Wohl, M., Gupta, R. & Derevensky, J. (2017). Why do young adults gamble online? A qualitative study of motivation to transition from social casino games to online gambling. *Asian Journal of Gambling Issues and Public Health*, 7(1), 6.

Marchica, L., Zhao, Y., & Derevensky, J. (2017). An analysis of health-related information using gambling-related keywords. *Journal of Substance Abuse and Alcoholism (Special Themed Issue - Research on Gambling Disorders)*, 5(3), 1-7.

Richard, J. & Derevensky, J. (2017). Identifying the relationship between mental health symptoms, problem behaviors and gambling among adolescents. *Annals of Behavioural Science*, 3(2), 1-9.

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BOOK CHAPTERS

Derevensky, J. & Gilbeau, L. (in press). Preventing adolescent gambling problems. In A. Heinz, N. Romanczuk-Seiferth, & M. Potenza (Eds.). *Gambling disorders*. Berlin: Springer International.

INVITED ADDRESSES

Derevensky, J. (2017). Working with adolescent problem gamblers: From research to practice. Invited keynote address presented at the 18th RSCANP Congress and the 40th National Conference on Child and Adolescent Neurology - Psychiatry and Associate Professions conference, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, September.

INVITED ADDRESSES (CONT'D)

Derevensky, J. (2017). Treating young problem gamblers: More art than science? Invited address presented at the Joint Session of Children and Adolescent Neurology-Psychiatry and Associate Professions, 18th RSCANP Congress and the 40th National Conference on Child and Adolescent Neurology - Psychiatry and Associated Professions conference, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, September.

UPCOMING CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Pitt, H., Thomas, S., Bestman, A., Daube, M. and Derevensky, J. (2017). The factors influencing children's attitudes and gambling consumption intentions. Paper to be presented at the American Public Health Association annual meeting, Atlanta, November.

Pitt, H., Thomas, S., Bestman, A., Daube, M. & Derevensky, J. (2018). Does sports betting advertisement impact Australian children's gambling attitudes, product knowledge and behaviours? Paper to be presented at the International Gambling Conference, Auckland, February.



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