# Some truths about gambling

This is one activity in a sequence designed to challenge students to develop a stronger understanding of gambling and the ways in which it presents risks for young people across all socio-cultural groups. This activity aims to debunk myths and misconceptions associated with gambling and build students understanding of the costs of gambling and the impact of alcohol use on gambling. These resources were developed in collaboration with [GambleAware](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/) and [Liquor and Gaming NSW.](https://www.liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au/)

The activity sequence includes four lessons.

1. Some truths about gambling
2. Sports betting and advertising
3. Online and smart phone gambling
4. Gambling – seeking help

Duration: 65 minutes

## Focus of the learning

* Possible use of drugs and alcohol in licensed venues can lead to opportunities for high-risk gambling behaviours such as spending more money than you normally would.
* Develop assertive and avoidance behaviours to respond to high-risk gambling situations.
* Articulate their own limitations in terms of gambling in high risk situations.
* Recognise the risk of using online or mobile gambling channels in sporting settings while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
* Recognise the early warning signs of gambling issues and respond with knowledge of support services for themselves and others.
* Understand that drug use and intoxication is a major contributing factor in risk taking behaviours, including gambling and sports betting.
* Critique the advertising of gambling and challenge advertising techniques that promote excitement, glamour and skill and promise easy financial and social rewards.
* Recognise that gambling is not a game and being good at online gaming or mobile apps does not mean young people will be successful in gambling.
* Identify that the risks of gambling are considerable and it should not be undertaken lightly.
* Justify that responsible gambling means understanding the true odds of the game and the risks involved.
* Recognise that taking up gambling as a young person can increase the chances of developing a gambling problem.
* Develop strategies for recognising and responding to dependence on gambling or online gaming situations.
* Critically analyse the financial consequences of gambling issues both online and offline.
* Demonstrate skills to seek help for self and others if problems with gambling occur.
* Demonstrate a sound understanding of support networks both online and offline for issues and concerns with gambling.
* Consider the different sources of help available and what will enable and assist a young person to access these services.

## Suggested course outcomes and content

### Outcomes

3.1 Evaluate how contextual factors influence attitudes, values and behaviours.

3.2 Analyse the positive and negative implications of technology and digital media on self-concept, independence, relationships and health behaviours.

5.1 Critically analyse situations, attitudes and behaviours that influence independence, health, safety and wellbeing in different contexts.

5.2 Recognise and respond appropriately to situations which may be limiting or harmful to self and others.

### Content

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| Learning context | Content |
| Independence  Focus: Building self-concepts and independence | Personal values and beliefs   * influences on values and beliefs, e.g. technology, social and cultural norms, media, family, relationships * influence of values, attitudes and beliefs on decisions and actions in various contexts   Digital competencies   * online safety, e.g. digital footprint, scams, security, bullying and harassment * positive and negative influences of technology, e.g. online communities, connecting with others, gaming, body image |
| Drugs and alcohol  Focus: Making safe and responsible choices | Responsible behaviour   * gambling responsibly |

## Teaching notes

### Considerations when selecting activities

* Preview and evaluate all strategies, resources and teaching and learning approaches in full before use with students to determine suitability for student learning needs, stage of development and local school context.
* Consider the age, maturity, cultural background, sexuality, gender, sex, health and other characteristics of students in your care.
* Apply professional judgements to all strategies, teaching and learning approaches and resources including audiovisual materials (e.g. videos, media clips and YouTube), interactive web-based content (e.g. games, quizzes and websites) and texts.
* Seek endorsement by the school principal before use of materials in NSW government schools.
* Select the activities most suitable for your students.
* Individual students within the group have differing needs and backgrounds. Modify or extend some aspects of suggested activities accordingly.
* Consider and tailor lessons to cater for differing cultural perceptions of what should be taught at a certain age.
* Undertake a comprehensive step by step process to assess any physical or psychological risks associated with an activity before following using a variety of teaching strategies.
* Enable students to withdraw if they find issues personally confronting.
* Recognise that some students may find it difficult to contribute to class discussions and may say little in group activities. Don’t assume they are not engaged in the activities but rather provide all students with the opportunity to contribute in less public ways.
* Use the [resource review flowchart](https://nswpdhpecurriculum.coassemble.com/enter/b6fNd0S) to decide about the suitability of teaching and learning resources.

### Communication with parents and caregivers

Some aspects of Life Ready may be viewed as sensitive or controversial, such as learning about abuse, child protection, drugs, respectful relationships, sexual health, sexuality and violence. Inform parents and carers, prior to the occasion, of the specific details of the Life Ready program, so that parents and caregivers have time to exercise their rights of withdrawing their child from a particular session. In this regard, a parents or caregiver’s wish must be respected.

Establishing how parents and caregivers will be informed about programs and involved in consultation is a school-based decision. Where parents and caregivers indicate they wish to withdraw their child from a program it is useful to negotiate which parts of the Life Ready program they are concerned about. A sample information letter is available on the [Life Ready website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready).

### Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

There are a number of strategies that can be used to create a supportive learning environment which enables students to feel safe to learn and ask questions. They include:

* making students aware at the beginning of Life Ready lessons that disclosing personal information that indicates they may be at risk of harm will be reported to the school principal in all instances. This includes personal disclosures related to instances of abuse, drug use, neglect or sexual activity under the legal age of consent.
* being aware that some parts of Life Ready can be confronting and sensitive for some students.
* enabling students to withdraw if they find issues personally confronting to protect them from making harmful disclosures. Equally, it is important to be prepared for issues that arise as a result of a student making a public disclosure in the classroom.

It is recommended that staff use a question box to allow for students to ask difficult questions anonymously through the unit. The question box provides staff with information on student prior and post knowledge by assessing the questions which arise through the question box. Students should be provided with a piece of paper at the beginning of each lesson which they can write their question on and submit. All students should submit a piece of paper, even if it is blank to ensure anonymity.

More information on creating a safe and supportive learning environment can be found on the [PDHPE curriculum website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/curriculum/pdhpe/general-information/learning-environment).

## Learning experiences

Teacher note: Introduce the learning and develop a supportive environment within your classroom. As a class, brainstorm some clear expectations which will be in place during the unit. For example, always support each other, respect other’s cultural traditions, beliefs, values and languages, everyone has the right not to offer an opinion.

### Activity one – Alcohol and gambling (10 minutes)

Class brainstorm – Behaviours associated with drinking alcohol.

* What behaviours may young people engage in while using alcohol?
* Which behaviours might result in loss of money or potential legal issues?
* What percentage of young people do you believe engage in gambling?

Students record the risks and outcomes associated with alcohol use and gambling. Use a [Venn diagram](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/599) to draw comparisons between the outcomes.

As a whole group, discuss.

Discussion points

* Many young people use alcohol and gambling without issues or negative outcomes.
* Some young people engage in gambling of all kinds from poker machines to sports betting to online games involving exchange of real money.
* Licensed premises where alcohol is readily available can lead to opportunities for high-risk gambling behaviours with access to poker machine lounges, casinos and even private gambling rooms.
* Both alcohol and gambling can be used in the privacy of the home or socially with others.
* When young people consume alcohol, decision making is affected. This may influence their decisions about gambling.
* Alcohol can lower inhibitions. Young people may perceive lower risk or greater confidence in relation to their chances of winning or losing money through gambling.
* Both alcohol use and gambling can impact on other aspects of an individual’s life, including relationships, decision making and financial impact. Responsible decision making is crucial.

### Activity two – [Nick’s](https://youtu.be/K0U0oHgk4H4) story (9min 33sec)

Students reflect on their own understanding of gambling. Invite students to share

The [Child Protection: Responding to and reporting students at risk of harm policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0067) sets out roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to child protection including training, reporting on safety, and supporting children and young people, as well as monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements.

All staff have an obligation to advise the principal or workplace manager of concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people that arise during the course of their work

Watch [Nick’s story](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0U0oHgk4H4) (9m 33sec) from GambleAware NSW.

* Discuss as a class some of the challenges that Nick experienced as a young person engaging in gambling for the first time.
  + When did Nick gamble for the first time?
  + What were his initial impressions?
  + When do you think he developed a real problem with gambling?
  + How did his friends and girlfriend influence his decisions?
  + What were some of the warning signs his gambling was becoming a problem?
  + If you were friends with Nick, what advice would you give him?

### Activity three – Our own gambling habits (10 minutes)

As a follow up to Nick’s story, students use a personal mobile device to review the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI). Nine questions make up the online quiz at [gambling help online](https://www.gamblinghelponline.org.au/take-a-step-forward/self-assessment/problem-gambling-severity-index-pgsi#/?_k=ea3wqn).

It is important that students are not encouraged to share personal information but to use the quiz to develop their understandings of the personal impact of gambling. The quiz is designed to encourage students to reflect on warning signs of problem gambling and what to look for in self and others.

In pairs or small groups, students answer the following questions.

* What is one thing you notice from the quiz questions?
* Propose reasons for the quiz questions for example,” when you gambled, did you go back another day to try to win back the money you lost?”
* Predict what percentage of people who engage in gambling or sports betting have a problem?
* How could [GambleAware](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/) (1800 858 858) NSW gambling help hotline assist people who have a problem with their gambling?
* Develop some tips and advice for a young person to encourage responsible behaviour in relation to gambling at a licensed venue (when they turn 18).
* What could you do to support friends or relatives who may have developed a problem with gambling?

### Activity four – Challenging myths (20 minutes)

Students work in small groups of 4-5.

* Groups record their ideas on butcher’s paper, a device or an online space for the question — Why do people gamble?
* Allow five minutes for groups to discuss and record ideas. Encourage students to think about the ways in which gambling is promoted as exciting, glamorous and skilful, easy financial and social rewards.
* Students identify the ideas from their group (or another group’s brainstorm) that they consider to be myths or misconceptions about gambling by circling or highlighting these ideas. For example, people can win easy money, the odds are in their favour, the more they play, the more chances they have to win.
* Students work in pairs to research the facts behind these myths or false beliefs. Students should be encouraged to find at least one fact or piece of evidence that proves each myth wrong to share with the whole group.
* The following sites provide information.
  + [NSW government GambleAware](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/for-teachers-and-youth-workers/free-classroom-resources) classroom resources
  + [South Australian government Office for problem gambling](http://problemgambling.sa.gov.au/)
  + [Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation](https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/)
* Invite each group to share their myths and their findings with the whole group and add to their myths and facts sheet as groups present additional information.

### Activity five – Warning signs and support services (15 minutes)

In small groups, students create a list of warning signs that may indicate someone has an issue with gambling. Share these as a whole group.

Brainstorm some long term consequences of problem gambling including effects on:

* finances
* career
* family relationships
* partner/ friends

Students use the [GambleAware](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/) website to identify support services available to help people.

## Teacher notes – Gambling

Many people in NSW and across Australia gamble by playing poker machines, betting on sporting events, buying lottery tickets or playing casino games. For most people gambling is an occasional social activity that causes no harm. For some gambling can cause serious harm and have a negative impact on their social, emotional, mental and financial health.

Gambling is defined as the risking of something of value on a chance outcome in the hope of winning a more valuable prize than the original stake. Monetary gambling refers to spending real money on poker machines, race betting, sports betting, scratchies/lotteries, keno, bingo, poker, other casino games, esports betting, fantasy sports betting, and informal private betting. Simulated gambling is defined as games which imitate many core characteristics of gambling (e.g., the look, sound and actions) but which do not provide an opportunity for a cash payout. Examples of simulated gambling include video games with ‘mini’ gambling components, gambling-themed apps from an app store, free demo or practice games on real gambling websites or apps, and games with gambling components on social networking websites, as well as purchasing loot boxes and betting with in-game items.

According to the [NSW Gambling Survey 2019](https://www.responsiblegambling.nsw.gov.au/research2/nsw-gambling-survey-2019), most forms of gambling have declined in the last decade. In 2019, 53% of people in NSW engaged in some form of gambling in the previous 12 months. In 2016-17 they spent $9.53 billion, with lottery tickets and race betting most popular with people aged 45 – 64. Gamblers aged 18 – 24 years were most likely to bet on sports and use gaming machines. This age group are also more likely to experience harm from gambling. Some people who engage in risky gambling behaviours put themselves and others at risk of depression, distress, job loss, relationship breakdown, bankruptcy and illegal behaviour to fund debts.

The [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Gambling in Australia snapshot (2021)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/gambling) estimates that 1.33 million people in Australia were classified as being at some risk of gambling-related harm in 2018 with males more likely to suffer gambling related harm than females. It was found that risky gambling behaviours increased for young people aged 18-34 years and decreased for older people aged 35 -54 years. Less than one percent of people who gambled in NSW sought help for problems relating to their gambling in the past 12 months and it is estimated that the actions of one problem gambler can affect up to six other people around them.

As young people are particularly vulnerable to the normalisation of gambling through exposure to gambling advertising, gambling products, gambling in the home and the increase in the availability and accessibility of gambling through various online platforms, education is an important part of awareness raising.

It is illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to gamble, including Lotto, Scratchies and online gambling.

### Young people and gambling

How young people are engaging with gambling is changing. This change is being driven by rapid technological changes, the high-level of engagement of young people with mobile technology and gaming, the increase in traditional and online gambling advertising and the expanding variety of games with gambling-like components and monetary gambling opportunities.

GambleAware NSW commissioned the [NSW Youth Gambling Study 2020](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/check-out-our-research/published-research/nsw-youth-gambling-study-2020) to investigate gambling and simulated gambling behaviours amongst young people aged 12 – 17 years in NSW. The study aimed to increase understanding of gambling engaged in by young people in NSW in order to prevent and reduce gambling-related harm. GambleAware NSW is acting on the findings of the report with a program of work focused on the education and raising of awareness of parents, young people, and the community, through schools, sport and online and social media.

For young people gambling is often presumed to be a small risk due to low access to licensed venues in which gambling takes place. However, this belief does not consider the ways in which gambling has changed over the last decade and fails to recognise the influence of gambling advertisement on young people. Recent findings from the CQUniversity study [Exploring the changing landscape of gambling in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/check-out-our-research/grant-funded-research) suggest that simulated gambling on social media, video games, smartphone applications and online betting are key issues for young people under 18. [GambleAware](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/) further suggest that the proliferation of online and mobile channels and the normalisation of gambling through advertising within sport have changed the way young people are exposed to and impacted by gambling.

The [NSW Youth Gambling Study 2020](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/check-out-our-research/published-research/nsw-youth-gambling-study-2020) found that 70% of young people between the ages of 12-17 years had engaged in monetary gambling or played games with gambling components in the past year. This indicates a far higher proportion of young people engaging in gambling than many other forms of risk-taking including alcohol use, smoking and illegal drug use. On average, young people started gambling at around 11 – 12 years of age. This is also lower than the average starting age of 16 years for tobacco smoking and alcohol consumption ([Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia/contents/priority-populations/younger-people)).

According to the [Loot Boxes: Are they grooming youth for gambling](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/check-out-our-research/grant-funded-research) report by CQUniversity, more young people engaged in simulated gambling and purchased loot boxes in the past year than engaged in traditional forms of gambling. A loot box (also called a loot/prize crate) is a consumable item that can be redeemed to receive a randomised selection of other virtual items, or loot. This loot is tied to improving the gaming experience for players, and can range from cosmetic customisation options for a player's character, to game-changing equipment which increases a player’s chances of winning, to additional in-game currency. Loot boxes resemble gambling slot machines because no player skill is involved, and the outcome (prize) is randomly determined.

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

Loot boxes are common in the best-selling video games and are a growing concern due to the risk and reward properties that closely align them with traditional gambling, the potential for encouraging greater gambling involvement, and the potential for associated gambling harm. Both adolescents and young adults who had either opened, bought or sold loot boxes within the last 12 months were also more likely to have gambled in the last 12 months, gambled more frequently and spent more money, suffered more gambling problems and related harm and have a more positive attitude towards gambling in general.

The proliferation of online and mobile gambling channels and the normalisation of gambling through advertising within sport have changed the way young people are exposed to and impacted by gambling. For young people who follow sport, gambling promotion is a normal part of the lived experience. Ground signage, team uniforms, information relating to gambling odds and scheduled advertising all add to the ubiquity of the message on both television and radio. Young people surveyed for the [NSW Youth Gambling Study 2020](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/check-out-our-research/published-research/nsw-youth-gambling-study-2020) reported frequent exposure to gambling advertising. This was most commonly noticed as advertising on television, online and on social media. Frequent exposure to gambling advertising appears to normalise the behaviour amongst young people. Access to online devices also influenced gambling participation. Focus group participants said that how often and how long they participated in simulated gambling was directly linked to how accessible their device was and the degree of parental monitoring.

The [NSW Youth Gambling Study 2020](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/check-out-our-research/published-research/nsw-youth-gambling-study-2020) revealed that most under-age gamblers are introduced to gambling by a family member, and that having a parent who gambles or friends who are involved in gambling may further increase the chance of risky gambling behaviours among young people. Furthermore, the study acknowledged that some young people have gambling problems, with 1.5% of respondents classified as problem gamblers and a further 2.2% as at-risk gamblers. Young people were more likely to be a problem or at-risk gambler if they had lower levels of wellbeing, were more impulsive or started gambling at a younger age

Research shows discussing gambling harm in schools is a powerful tool

Young people are likely to benefit from school-based intervention and prevention programs that are aimed at changing attitudes and beliefs related to gambling behaviours. It is also important to involve parents, carers, community leaders and educators so that they also understand the current gambling environment to enable them to minimise young people’s exposure to harm. in 2020 a literature review and teacher survey looked at how gambling harm prevention could be implemented. From the report it was concluded that:

* teachers are important for any school-based prevention program
* school programs which include a parent element are more likely to be successful
* school-based programs are more likely to lead to knowledge, awareness and attitude change than behaviour change
* any program should look at the convergence of gaming and gambling.

## References

[Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia/contents/priority-populations/younger-people)

[Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Gambling in Australia snapshot (2021)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/gambling)

[Exploring the changing landscape of gambling in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood. - CQUniversity](https://www.responsiblegambling.nsw.gov.au/research2/research-grant-reports#id881696-03List)

[GambleAware](https://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au/resources-and-education/for-teachers-and-youth-workers/free-classroom-resources)

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