

GAMBLING AND PROBLEM GAMBLING IN FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

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The Promise

For the ancestors

The ancestor power in the dreams and works of indigenous peoples speaks clearly about love for the people, about connection to the spirit-world and to the earth. It connects to that place in the heart where our ancestors still live and breathe.

The connections remain unbroken, wrapped inside us, safe bundles, carrying the art that we create, the words that we speak, the language that we write, the songs that we sing, the dreams that we dream, alive in the prayers that we might utter silently beneath our breath.

It is our duty to carry the dreams, visions, and spirit-life from those who came before, to keep our children walking on this land, now, and into the future.

Allan Hunter (2004), *Manitou Rapids,*
Rainy River First Nation

Acknowledgements

Anishinabeg Whoh Tih Bah Chi Ndahn Nah Wah Oh Way Kah Hah Tah Gayng

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- Couchiching First Nation
- Iskatewizaggegan No. 39 First Nation
- Manitou Rapids Rainy River First Nation
- Naicatchewenin First Nation
- Naothkamegwanning First Nation
- Northwest Angle No. 37 First Nation - Regina Bay
- Northwest Angle No. 37 First Nation - Windigo Island
- Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining First Nation
- Migisi Sahgaigan First Nation
- Stanjikoming First Nation
- Washagamis Bay First Nation
- Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation

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Chapter 1: Gambling: Past and Present

Kahwhoh nji mah chi saag

Games of chance existed in many North American First Nation communities well before European contact (Altman, 1987; Campbell, 1999; Cozzetto & Larocque, 1996; Riches, 1975; 1980). Gambling was intertwined with cultural, ritual, and spiritual customs (Salter, 1979). Gaming to win money was perceived as dangerous to individuals and the community as a whole (Campbell, 1999). Contemporary First Nation's shift to win money has affected traditional family and community values (Wardman, 2001).

Today, bingo halls and casinos are more accessible to First Nations communities, increasing the risk of gambling problems and the need to understand the affect gambling has on these communities. The incidence of problem gambling is three to seven times greater in contemporary North American First Nations than in the general public (Moore, Jadlos, & Carlson, 2000; Wardman, 2001). Indigenous people from Australia and New Zealand experience a similar trend (Gruys, Hannifan, MacKinnon, & Paton-Simpson, 1998; Volbert, 1993; Volbert & Abbott, 1999). The significance of race, ethnicity, and low socio-economic status is unclear (Kelley, 2001). For example, low levels of income and education, combined with high unemployment rates, may contribute to significantly higher levels of First Nations problem gambling (Volberg, 1993; Volberg & Abbott, 1999; Wardman, 2001). The Nechi Institute studied several First Nations communities, including Mnjikaning and Sarnia, and concluded that gambling was a significant problem and that recognition of the problem was low (1995; 2000). A year after one of the largest First Nations casinos in Canada opened in Mnjikaning, Campbell (1999) found the community was extremely disrupted.

Some First Nations struggle with problem gambling while others are concerned about the effects that excessive gambling has on families, communities, and future generations. However, few studies have addressed these issues. Treaty #3 in northwestern Ontario noted a lack of information on what their gambling issues were and how they might be resolved, making it difficult to know where to begin addressing these concerns (Courtney, 2000).

A more thorough understanding of concerns and recommendations for gambling and problem gambling issues within Treaty #3 is presented in this report. It included perspectives from 192 First Nations living in 12 Treaty #3 communities with gambling venues located within, nearby, or several hours drive from the community. This report begins the process of addressing gambling issues in this region. People found it very helpful to talk to each other about gambling, often for the first time, during the interviews and workshops. Many people hoped that sharing their views would stimulate more discussion and found it very helpful to have their views presented in their own words.

The process used to learn First Nations' views is described in chapter two. In chapter three, reports for each of the 12 participating communities include an Anishinabeg (Ojibway) summary followed by detailed comments by community members. Trends in Treaty #3 gambling concerns and recommendations are presented in chapter four, and reflections are shared in chapter five.

Chapter 2: Learning by Listening

Kah gee nji chi gayng oh way mazah nah ay gun chi tah njee kih gaw tayg

A community-based research framework was used to ensure individuals living in Treaty #3, who wanted to explore concerns and recommendations regarding gambling and problem gambling, actively participated in the development of this study in collaboration with university researchers (see Freire, 1993; Oakes and Riewe, 1996; Dickson, 1997; Simpson, 2000; Hiebert 2003). This approach was interwoven into the fabric of the study from the preliminary planning stages, the analysis and interpretation stages, and to the final report stage. Using a community-based research methodology was extremely helpful in understanding the issues and recommendations, from the perspectives of Treaty #3 First Nations. Involving members of each community in all aspects of the study, contributed significantly to learning the subtleties and intimate perspectives, norms, values, behaviour patterns, thoughts, and feelings of the people closest to gambling and problem gambling in Treaty #3.

Participating Communities

First Nations have lived in northwestern Ontario and Manitoba since time immemorial; depending largely on fishing, hunting, gathering, and more recently, tourism, forestry, outfitting, and gambling. Twenty-seven Anishinabeg First Nations (two in Manitoba and 25 in Ontario) are members of Treaty #3. An invitation to participate in this study was sent to each band office during the fall of 2002, and the following communities agreed to participate (see Map of Communities, pp 143):

- Couchiching First Nation
- Iskatewizaggegan No. 39 First Nation
- Manitou Rapids Rainy River First Nation
- Naicatchewenin First Nation
- Naotkamegwanning First Nation
- Northwest Angle No. 37 First Nation - Regina Bay
- Northwest Angle No. 37 First Nation - Windigo Island
- Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining First Nation
- Migisi Sahgaigan First Nation
- Stanjikoming First Nation
- Washagamis Bay First Nation
- Wauzushk Onigum First Nation

These communities were of varying proximity to gaming venues. Three had gaming venues within their communities: Wauzushk Onigum First Nation, Eagle Lake First Nation, and Couchiching First Nation. Five had venues less than an hour away by vehicle: Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining First Nation, Washagamis Bay First Nation, Whitefish Bay First Nation, Northwest Angle No. 37 First Nation - Windigo Island, and Shoal Lake No. 39 First Nation. Four communities were more than an hour drive from a gaming venue: Stanjikoming

First Nation, Northwest Angle No. 37 First Nation – Regina Bay, Rainy River First Nation, and Northwest Bay First Nation (see Map of Communities, pp 143).

Community Advisors Plan Research

Each community identified one member to serve as a Community Advisor, who provided advice and made decisions on all aspects of the research plan, including the recruitment of participants and community-based research assistants, who assisted with the interviews, either conducting or facilitating, and provided feedback on earlier drafts of this document. Community Advisors included health officers, recreation officers, addiction counselors, bingo organizers, and others interested in gambling activities.

Community Advisors met in June of 2003, to decide whom the study would include, how participants would be recruited, how views about gambling would be collected, what questions or themes would be useful, where information would be shared, and local ethics and protocols to be followed. They recommended that men and women gamblers be included in the study, both non-gamblers and problem gamblers, and of different ages. They also recommended that each Community Advisor use the most effective method for their communities to recruit participants. Participants were recruited by putting up posters with information about the interviews, circulating the information orally, placing information in community health newsletters, or by going door-to-door and inviting people to participate. In total, 192 people were recruited for the study. Participants gambled daily (10%), almost daily (15%), one or two times a week (26%), a few times a month (24%), rarely (16%), or never (9%). Everyone was over 18 years old, approximately 60% were women (40% were men), 84% had children (included grown children), and 75% lived with gamblers.

Interview Questions

Community Advisors met before the study began and used consensus to develop the core questions used in this study. They decided that individual communities were welcome to add extra questions (see Appendix A for questions). One community choose to add the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI), a multiple choice questionnaire; however, the questionnaire was abandoned due to the lack of culturally relevant responses listed under each question and the lack of opportunity to share First Nations recommendations.

Interviews

Local research assistants were identified by Community Advisors and trained by a university researcher to assist with the interviews. During the interviews, some communities preferred to have only the university interviewer present, while others preferred to have both the community interviewer and the university interviewer present. All interviews were conducted in English; Anishinabeg translators were available in case they were required.

Elders conducted ceremonies to open and close the interviewing process in some communities. Feasts were usually held for the people being interviewed, and gift baskets of coffee and tea were given to each person in appreciation for the time and effort they took to share their insights.

Participants were provided the option of a private, informal interview, or a group discussion or sharing circle; all participants chose the former. From June to August of 2003

(see Appendix B for itinerary), 192 interviews took place inside people's homes, in back yards, in the workplace, in the community hall or health centre, and in the Roundhouse of one community. Each interview lasted about 30 to 60 minutes. Just over half of the participants chose to have their interview tape-recorded and others chose to have the researchers write notes. All interviews were anonymous to maintain confidentiality; six individuals expressed an interest to author their quotes (see Appendix C for sample consent forms). Detailed field notes describing the interview context and summarizing key issues discussed by each participant supplemented the interview process.

Interpreting Information

Interviews were couriered to transcribers in Winnipeg and entered into two databases using NVivo and SPSS programs. The information was sorted roughly into topics or themes identified by Community Advisors and Community Research Assistants while debriefing with the University Research Assistants in each community during the fieldwork. In addition, Research Assistants inputting the data, Principle Investigator, and Research Coordinator discussed possible themes. In October 2003, the Community Advisors met to discuss what they had learned from the interviews, reviewed and revised the draft themes, discussed community and overall themes that emerged, settled on the overall content of the community reports, and decided to compose the community description included at the beginning of each community report. Community Advisors recommended that information be presented in individual community reports, as well as in a more general report for the Treaty #3 region.

Community Reports

Community reports are found in the following chapter. Each report begins with an Anishinabeg summary, a brief description of the community, and a profile of the people interviewed, followed by direct quotes from participants voicing their ideas, concerns, and recommendations. The university-based team, following advice from the Community Advisors, compiled community reports. Community Advisors reviewed the reports for feedback, editing, and approval. As each community report was approved, it was added to the final report for final editing, external review, and addition of appendices, introductory chapters, and conclusions. The complete final report was distributed in confidential draft format to the four Treaty #3 Chiefs responsible for gambling, the local research advisors from each participating community, and then to the health or gambling-related representatives from the remaining Treaty #3 communities for review. Feedback from these individuals was incorporated into the final draft and submitted to the Grand Chief of Treaty #3 for review prior to submitting it to the funding agent. As the study progressed, Community Advisors recommended that this information be shared broadly, as they felt that other First Nations across Canada would appreciate hearing what members of Treaty #3 said about gambling and problem gambling.

The Research Team

Elders and Cultural Teachers

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Wayne Smith	Naichachewenin First Nation
Archie WOchiichagwe'Babigo'	Ining First Nation
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University of Manitoba and Treaty #3

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Chief Ed Morrison	Stanjikoming First Nation
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Mahengun Goodsky	Northwest Angle No. 37 First Nation
Chief Albert Hunter Jr.	Manitou Rapids Rainy River First Nation
James Henderson	Stanjikoming First Nation
Sandra Jameson	Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining First Nation
Theresa Jameson	Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining First Nation
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Brenda Kelly	Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation
Mitchell Lands	Migisi Sahgaigan First Nation
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Cathy Lindsay	Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining First Nation
Ida Linklater	Naicatchewenin First Nation
Bert Landon	Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation
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Melanie Skead	Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation
Delia Smith	Naicatchewenin First Nation
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Linda Wassaykeesic	Washagamis Bay First Nation
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Cathy Lindsay	Ochiichagwe’ Babigo’ Ining First Nation
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Pauline Big George	Treaty #3 Translator
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Chapter 3: Talking About Gambling

Me oh way kah kah kan ndah maung kee bih nzin dah maung

Community reports are presented in alphabetical order. Each report begins with an Anishinabeg (Ojibway) summary followed by acknowledgements, a community description, gambling ideas, concerns, and recommendations.

Couchiching First Nation

Anishinabeg Summary

- neeshwasso bey shig anishinabeg kee kah gah noh nah wug
- ne bih wah hahpi hah tah gay wug bung gee hay tah goh kaween we kah hah tah gay see wug
- ne bih wah hih kit toh wug kee nah nah gachi au sih gwah mih nig shuniah cha gih nah waut
- hah pih tah hih kit toh wug zahnug igo waut kee hah tah gay waut
- bung gee hay tah goh hih kit toh wug shuniah kee wah bah chi ah waut tay gooch hih tsh kee tih bah nzih gwah kah mah zihnay gay waut
- ne bih wah hih kit toh wug kee gah kandah zih gwah hahn dih kay hih nzhah waut zahnug igo waut oh way kah hah tah gayng

Kah mah ngo shcotch igo waung

- 1) kah kih nah hah wih yah koh pachi say kee hah tah gayng
- 2) tay gooch noh gohm hah tah gay wug peechee kee mih nih qway aut
- 3) kee chi way nji say chi hih zhaung kah tah nah tah gayng
- 4) whoh zaum kee hah tah gay waut kaween kay yah bih saag it tihzee wug oh mah shkoo nih guning
- 5) who shkih ah auk kah hah noh kee waut kitchi wah kah ih guning(bingo) tah mah chyah hah tah gay wug

Whoh noh way chihaun chi gah tay ghin

- 1) njit tah goh chi we ndah mah goh waung ih mah mazah nah ay gunning kah hah gunji gah tayg ngo gheezhig koh kah hih nzih saag kah whoh nji be ih gah tayg
- 2) njit tah goh kichi wah kah ih gun chi wah bah chi chi gah tayg chi we ndah mah goh waung oh way kee zahnug ih saag kee hah tah gayng
- 3) njit tah goh chewhoh koh bih ing chiu tih bah chi moh tah tih ing oh way kee hah tah gayng hih shqwah saa ih tsh kay goh kih tah nzih chi gay min(chi we sih ning)
- 4) mazah nay ay gah nun chi wah bah chi toh ingchi wah bah ndah moh waut ih yay haynzih saag hah wih yah kee zahnug igo goot kee hah tah gayng
- 5) njit tah goh kay goh chi hih nji chi gayng oh mah shkoo nih guning, kee chi ah aug chi weech igo wing “chi gah kih nah amah ngo ing kee chi ah aug chi anishinabay chi gayng, nah ghum moh nun, kaween kee wah bah mah seeg hah bih noh chee wug chi whoh tah min noot kay goh kah anishinabay chi gayng”
- 6) njit tah goh chi bih weechi igo wing , anishinabay pah kaun kah whoh njeet kah kah kay ndung kah hih nji chi gayt hah wih yah kee zahnug egoot kee hah tah gayng
- 7) kee gih toh pe waub pih konse chi wah bah chi chi gah tayg chi gah noh nind anishinabay kah hih nin noh keet chi weechi aut hah wih yah

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Community Description

Couchiching First Nation is located five miles east of Fort Frances, Ontario on Kings Highway near the Minnesota border and International Falls. Duluth, Minnesota, is a three-hour southerly drive; Winnipeg, Manitoba, is a four-hour westerly drive; and Thunder bay, Ontario is a three and a half hour easterly drive. About 700 or 800 of the 1,865 Couchiching First Nation band members live in the community. Couchiching First Nation built a Bingo Palace, which was open for a few months and is now closed. The nearest gambling venue is in Fort Francis. People also drive to Warroad, Kenora, Winnipeg, and venues in Treaty #3 to gamble.

Profile of People Interviewed

Twenty-one people over 18 years old were interviewed:

- 50% were female;
- 61% were employed;
- more than half gambled three to seven days per week;
- 17% did not gamble at all;
- gamblers spent on average \$783.00 per month (equals \$9,396.00 per year);
- almost 30% used money to gamble instead of paying their bills;
- 88% said they lost track of how much money they lost or won;
- 60% said they felt 'neutral' about losing money ;
- 45% believed they had a problem with gambling, and many shifted in and out of denial;
- 36% stated it bothered them when they could not gamble and suffered withdrawal symptoms when they tried to stop gambling;
- 95% were unaware of problem gambling counseling services.

Concerns

People expressed concerns about the impact gambling had on families, children, and community relationships. They were concerned about the ability of gambling parents to meet their children's basic needs, and saw people using gambling as a substitute addiction.

Children miss healthy role models

People said that because of excessive gambling, families were not as close and children missed healthy role models.

“I think the potential's there for them to grow into problem gamblers just because you do what you see. Like, I grew up in a house where, you drink. Guess what I did. I drank.”

“In town they have an early session which starts at about 6:30 and they have a late session that starts about 9:00 o'clock. Now if the parents are gone for the early session, whatever session, the children are not receiving help with their homework, if their parents would have stayed home and helped them out. I think it has some impact upon their grade achievement: Probably school attendance too.”

“What we have is a deterioration in the family unit... They're going to bingo and gambling. That quality time, the emotion of parenting, being emotionally present for their children is important. Children have questions. If that closeness isn't there with parent and child, then the child doesn't ask the questions about the world they should be asking.” (ADHN)

“There's a lot of denial, a lot of minimizing of the social impact on family life. The passing on of values, morals, everything is impacted by gambling. It's easy to look over there, but it's very difficult to look in the mirror. Like you say, I'm ‘participant number 20’, but like, this is what is happening to ME. When I look at the community, gambling has just had an incredible impact.”

People move in and out of denial

“I'd be what they call a pathological gambler. That's what they say, but like if they rate me that high, but I don't think I'm that extreme -- I don't sell stuff.”

Gambling is expensive

Many people stated that parents gambled instead of investing money in nutritious food for their children or paying their bills on time.

“I think my losses clearly out number my wins. If I win, I'll keep track of how much I win. I don't focus too much on how much I lose. I just don't want to know.”

“Use money to gamble that's supposed to be for a payment or a bill? I do all the time. I cut corners and stuff like that, eh. Otherwise, I wouldn't be able to do it. I think I bounced a cheque or two.”

Too much time is spent gambling

People see parents spending so much time gambling that their children are neglected.

“How has gambling affected my family relationships? I think it's deprived me of time... My kids tell me they don't like it. I know it affects them. What we live and learn, we become.”

“I've seen people have their kids outside the casino, outside bingo halls. You see people going at breaks to go check on their kids. Then they come in and say, ‘well, he's crying.’ At break time, I'd go outside when I was working and you'd see kids playing in the parking lot ... in their cars waiting for their parents to come out. They probably feel second best, like they're not loved --”

“I compromise their safety, their well-being, probably. Sad but ... I can say things in my own mind, to justify being away but like a lot of it is just protecting me.”

Gambling as a substitute addiction

“A lot of the things that I despised as a child growing up I became as an adult. It's been quite a few years since I drank, but I get the same friggin' mentality when I want to gamble as maybe my parents did when they were looking to drink. I know it is affecting our next generation.”

Traditional versus contemporary gambling

“It's different now, gambling is being offered like candy is now. In the old days we used to gamble on whether the hunt was going to be good and gamble in camp during the winter because there's nothing to do, it motivated people.”

“Now, you can go every night to a bingo. It is too accessible. I've seen and heard and talked to people that have broken up marriages, families. I would say gambling is more harmful now because of the easy access. Back then it was just a matter of something to do, you know, during the winter months.”

“The thing you're failing to see is that gambling has always been in our lives. Now it's just more extensive and easily accessible, and now people gamble for the wrong reason.”

“I think there must have been other things that went on in the evening for people years ago, but now it seems like bingo is the principal activity.”

Resources are used for gambling

Now that gambling is so popular, people use their resources to gamble instead of helping each other, caring for each other, and sharing resources.

“Before, our people used to hunt and they would always make sure the Elders and single parent families all had their meat before they would take theirs. That's always been a tradition. Now, it's like ‘I got a loaf of bread and a pound of hamburger, I'll make it for the end of the month and I'll borrow.’”

Gambling as a form of socialization

“I say gambling is a social event in my mind but when I go there it's really not. I walk in there with my wife and then five hours later we've said two words or 'Are you ready to go?'. Like, what's social about that? If I go there with my friends, same thing. Like shit, I don't go there to eat, I don't go there to talk. I go there to gamble.”

Bingo halls provide student jobs

Many people over 35 years old said bingo halls gave youth more job opportunities. However, 18 and 19 year olds said that while working at the bingo hall, they saw members of their own family winning money, and some ended up developing gambling problems.

“When I was probably 14, 15 years old I worked at a bingo hall in the community. It paid \$30.00 a night, plus commission on whatever we sold on the cards, plus tips, so I'd make a hundred bucks, and I'd probably make \$50.00 in tips. I didn't think my gambling was a problem because nobody had a problem with it. I went to work, I never ever missed a shift 'cause that's how I got my money. Having a lot of money and having gambling readily available, like I think that's a problem for youth. Because they see all the people winning. They think 'I can do that.' -- that's how I started. I know I wouldn't have gambled as much as I did if I hadn't worked at the bingo hall.”

Recommendations

Couchiching First Nation recommended providing gambling education to all age groups through programs, meetings, and digital newsletters. More activities organized through the Health Centre and Elders Centre was recommended, along with a First Nations gambling addiction counselor.

Become aware of the problem

“We definitely need some awareness -- awareness on what gambling is, social gambling and problem gambling.”

“We have to realize that a problem exists. Although you can't see it as readily as you can alcoholism, for example, people staggering around ... a gambler, they're just a person walking down the street, they don't stagger. It's more difficult to accept gambling as a problem. I think number one, we need to accept there is a problem and number two, we need to figure out how you go about helping problem gamblers.”

Provide printed information

People had several different ideas of ways to share information and increase awareness of issues related to gambling. They recommended that some of the bingo palace profits be used to print information about problem gambling and responsible gambling on

customer receipts and matchboxes passed out to gamblers. People said posters about problem gambling could be prepared and posted around the community.

“We have to force the issue. It has to be done. I don’t really care how you get the message out, but it’s got to be out there ... send the information out in newsletters.”

Take control: Plan our own programs

At the Health Centre we, *“could just get together and talk about gambling, to become aware of the facts, and then follow up with an activity of some kind, like barbecuing.”*

“For me, one of the things that we always say is mainstream systems, practices, programs, they don't work. Is that a way of us shrugging off our responsibility? Because it's too sensitive for us to tackle? I think if you're serious about it, get down to business. Tackle it right here if the issue is here. Don't look at Kenora or Treaty #3 to solve it for us. Let's do it here!”

Educate all ages about gambling

“There's got to be workers, there's got to be education awareness, programs, treatment, but like it's got to be right across the board. People need to be educated about gambling at all levels and all groups: men, women, Elders, children, political bodies, community workers. All have to be educated, otherwise problem gamblers are going to say ‘who the hell are you?’”

Plan alternative activities for all ages

“In today’s world you really have to be creative with programming for people. People make a decision: do I want to do this? Is it exciting? If it’s not they won’t do it.”

Plan traditional activities

“We could plan activities that include the whole community which are organized through the Health Centre in partnership with residents of the Elders Centre.”

“Something the family can do together, something more cultural. There’s a lot of games that were played. They’re fun. You never see young kids playing those kinds of games because they don’t know how. The Elders can teach those games to the family.”

“Those traditional games I think would be an excellent idea. If you look at today’s world, you have the Internet, TV, video games. Those only involve an individual and a monitor. There is no interaction between people going on. In terms of building the

community, the traditional games involve interaction between two or more people. Ultimately, it is the best thing to build relationships – just talking.”

“Teach them things old – the old songs that we used to have, because the kids are really interested. What I always want to do it teach them the old games that we used to play.”

Create an Aboriginal gambling counselor group

Almost everyone recommended providing free access to First Nations gambling counselors from outside their community, in order to ensure confidentiality, privacy, and access to culturally relevant support (see sample proposal in Appendix D). Under-utilized trained local counselors could provide counseling services to people in other communities.

“If community members are sent somewhere for training, there's got to be a benefit to the community. There's a lot of money being spent on training in the area of gambling in Treaty #3 -- but these workers, they go home and don't do nothing with it. It's a waste of time, it's a waste of money. They're sitting on the information and not using it, not passing it on. I don't know how you can make those individuals accountable. If you got certified gambling counselors out there, they have to use the information! There's 25 or 28 of these certified counselors out there in Treaty #3 and if they were accountable, you'd see things happening in the communities. I don't see it happening. Maybe everybody's waiting. 'We'll let Treaty 3 fix this or we'll let the University of Manitoba fix it or whatever'. That really just burns me up when I see the waste of those resources.”

Install a toll-free line for Aboriginal counseling

People said it would be extremely helpful if there was a toll free phone line answered by gambling counselors in another community. This would provide callers with information on gambling and an opportunity to talk to professional counselors about gambling concerns (see examples of toll free Help Lines in Appendix E).

Conclusion

Implementing recommendations is a difficult task. However,

“When faced with a problem we can be quite resilient and innovative.”

A motivated team will continually seek input from community members to ensure that these recommendations are put into action. Several people explained,

“If you want to start something, the community has to own it. If it's going to work the community has to have input. If they don't feel that, they're not going to own it, then they won't support it. Reporting back, letting them know what it is you're doing, what's working, what's not working. All that stuff is important.”

Iskatewizaggegan No. 39 First Nation (Shoal Lake)

Anishinabeg summary

- *mih twasso nee win anishinabeg kee kah gah noh nah wug*
- *neesah tah nah nah nun – nah nah mitinah who cha gih nah waun kee hah ndah tah gay waut*
- *nee bih wah hih kit toh wug kah kih nah gaygo mah goh shcotch ig waut*

Kah mah ngo shcotch igo waung

- 1) *kaween weechi ah see wug kah zahnug igo waut kah hah tah gay waut who zaum hih gih kah hah noh kee waut, tih bah chi moh waug kay goh kee ween ndah moyn dwah*
- 2) *who zah me noh wug kah goh pah tihzih aut me tsh haynji hah tah gay waat hih nan dah moog chi mah mih gay waut shuniah*

Whoh noh way chihaun chi gah tay ghin

- 1) *njit tah goh anishinabay pah kaun kah whoh njeet oh mah chi be hih shaut chi bih weech ig goh waung, kaween gay may mooch oh mah chi hih nji taut*
- 2) *njit tah goh chi kah kih nah amah goh waung oh way hah wih yah hayzih saat kee zahnug egoot kee hah tah gayng (mazah nah ay gah nunchi bah bah hih njee chi gah tay ghin wah kah ih gah ning)*
- 3) *njit tah goh pih zhin nji gun chi wah bah chi chi gah tayg chi ween ndah moyn dwah oh way kee zahnug gug kee hah tah gayng*
- 4) *njit tah goh kay goh che hih nji chi gayng oh mah shkoo nih gunning*
- 5) *njit tah goh chi mih nay ndung hah neen nah kay kay nzih wah bah chi chi gah tayg ih nah nah ndah way wah kah ih gun, njit tah goh gih yay chi gee kit toong, oh way gih yay chi nah nah gah chi ind shuniah mih nig cha gih nih gah nzhoot,chi tih bah chi moh waut sah goh kih yay tah wih saag kaynji wah bah chi chi gah tayg ih kichi wah kah ih gun*
- 6) *njit tah goh gih yay chi mih nih toh tah whin dwah kah kih nah gay goh kah kichi weeci tah waut oh mah hih shkoo nih gunning njit tah goh hih gih gah gih kih nah amah gay waut chi gah kih nah ah moh wah aut hah bih noh chee wug chi nih sit tah way nih moh waut ih yay kee zannah gug kee hah tah gayn*

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Walter Kejick, a trained gambling counselor, was a tremendous help with preparing feasts and interviews, providing advice at Community Advisor meetings, and for providing feedback on this report. Walter recruited gamblers, problem gamblers, and non-gamblers. His first recruitments declined after a tragic loss of a community member and Walter decided to recruit new participants who were interviewed July 7th - 11th, 2003. People were interviewed with the university researcher in the Health Centre. Everyone is thanked for participating, each of these contributions helped make this chapter possible.

Community Description

Iskatewizaggegan No. 39 First Nation (Shoal Lake) is a scenic lakeside community, 45 minutes west of Kenora and two and a half hours east of Winnipeg, with 345 of 512 members living in the community. There are 18 commercial buildings and several businesses, including a laundromat, gas station, day care, post office, health centre, library, police services building, and a school for children from Kindergarten to grade eight. The nearest gambling facilities are in Kenora and Winnipeg.

Profile of People Interviewed

Fourteen people over 18 years old were interviewed:

- 64% were female;
- 50% had one to three children;
- 36% did not gamble;
- 21% gambled three to seven days a week;
- \$25 to \$50 was spent by gamblers each sitting;
- 43% lost track of how much money was spent on gambling;
- no one used lucky items or strategies to win;
- 67% said gambling was a social event for them;
- 20% had chosen gambling over family events;
- 14% gambled with money that was supposed to be used for paying bills;
- 21% said it really bothered them when they could not gamble;
- 43% had been told they had a problem;
- 50% believed they had a problem with gambling;
- 14% had tried to stop gambling because it was a problem.

Concerns

Confidentiality and trust

Many residents said that they did not trust workers in their community and could not go to them for help. They asked for counselors from other communities, where they were not known.

Traditional gambling

Although gambling was a traditional part of First Nations culture, people said that they struggled with the way gambling has changed.

“Gambling historically has been in our culture for years and years. -- I struggle with how it was then and what it is today. It's so different. I mean we had traditional card games way back then. My mother knows some of those gambling activities. I have difficulty understanding why it's so different now, and why it's such a big problem. I think it's the level of stress that's increased. Technology is more quick paced. The kids mature more quickly than they did then [People use gambling to cope now].”

Changing economies

Traditionally, families had a subsistence economy, living off the land and sharing resources with each other.

“I remember gambling in my community growing up, men rarely got involved in gambling. And I think it's because the economics were different, because they we had commercial fishing, and we don't have that any more. There's nothing for men to do any more ... economics has a lot to do with it.”

Individuals said they would gamble less if they had fewer bills.

Jealousy over winning

People say money and jobs are unequally distributed, creating jealousies and contributing to poverty. Gambling is used as a possible source of income, or a desperate attempt to escape poverty. A child drew a picture that described his view of gambling and said:

“This picture is of my mom winning at bingo. See, she is jumping up and yelling ‘In your face!’ to everyone who didn’t win. Her bingo dabber is flying in the air. The little person is feeling a little bit jealous and a little bit small because he didn’t win.”

No money for children’s clothing

Gamblers living in poverty further reduced their ability to meet their children’s basic food and clothing needs.

“When his father was gambling we barely had any Pampers, my son’s clothing was getting small and stuff.”

Recommendations

Aboriginal addictions counselors

People asked for money to fund an Anishinabeg-speaking gambling counselor.

“There’s no money available for gambling counseling, just drug and alcohol counseling.”

“Probably a lot of them don’t recognize that they have a problem. And then there’s a barrier with language and maybe shame. A lot of the people that do gamble don’t speak English very well: The Elders and stuff. Services are not available for them.”

“Self awareness has a big impact, why people can’t move forward. You got to understand yourself before you can understand others – and before everyone can heal.”

Counselors from other communities

People wanted to see a gambling counselor but felt uncomfortable talking to someone from their own community, due to confidentiality concerns at the Health Centre.

“Bring in people from the outside. Bring in outsiders: Not to live here, just to do gambling counseling. They shouldn’t live here though. There’s teachers that have been here for years and years and, I don’t know, they just take advantage of us, eh.”

Gambling education

More information concerning the odds of winning and how the machines work would help some people who think they can beat the system.

“I think that people just need to be educated on gambling because they have a very distorted view of gambling. They think they can beat the machine. And then they’re not too happy when they win a hundred bucks. They have to win more...and they lose all that money that they won and usually whatever they took in there, they lose that too.”

“Someone from Treaty #3 came down and brought a computer and it shows how a slot machine works inside. So your chances of winning the jackpot or 7’s on there is pretty slim. People were surprised to see that. Yeah. I was surprised to see that myself.”

Tips for identifying problem gambling

Information on how to identify problem gambling would be helpful, especially in the form of workshops and posters.

“I think more awareness workshops would be good, you know, to help people know and be able to identify for themselves whether they have a gambling problem, because I think there’s like levels and stages of problem gambling.”

“Probably more education on the pitfalls of gambling is needed. They have to find out the hard way most of the time.”

Life skills workshops (budgeting and communicating)

“I think there should be something done but not so much focus on gambling itself but about life skills, development like budgeting and stuff like that.”

“Probably workshops, different kind of activities to promote family, you know, relationships. Trust building and stuff like that, communication skills. Yeah. I think people would go if they were geared to be fun... and innovative...more ideas like where there’s interaction and more activities with the various age groups.”

Set aside funds for gambling programs

Community budgets could include a budget-line for gambling programs, workshops, and posters, which cannot be used for other purposes.

“We take our money outside the community and gamble. It is affecting relationships... like with children and adults. It takes away activities and family life... We do have a program but it’s not funded like regularly.... They just have the program whenever the funds are available. There’s no consistency to hold workshops and stuff like that.”

“If we get money from other places, it immediately goes to the Band and it gets allocated to something else and there's no money there for whatever program it was given for.”

Educate youth and adults together

“With youth, they are kind of like in the middle. I think part of the problem is how we separate that particular group. I think we should see them as adults because they're not children any more. And the workshops and educational programs that come in should be geared for adults, you know, so that maybe the youth would start behaving like adults.”

Confidential suggestion boxes

People explained that suggestion boxes should be put up in a few different locations. Employees of the Health Centre or gambling addiction workers could read and address the questions and suggestions left in the boxes over the air on the local radio station.

“If there was something set up where confidentiality is maintained: A simple idea is having a suggestion box, you know, because people – some of them are shy to speak or they don't want others to know what they're thinking or feeling but maybe a suggestion box would do it.”

Broadcast information over the radio

The local radio station might air information programs about problem gambling. This would allow people to share their ideas confidentially, about what could be done to reduce problem gambling.

“So we also have a radio station that's under-utilized. Yeah, and that's another place that they could broadcast, you know, about gambling. How to recognize problem gambling I guess. It's confidential; nobody knows you're listening to it.”

Plan activities for Elders

“A lot of the people I see at the casino are Elders, so I think they need other activities that could maybe focus them toward something here instead of leaving to gamble.”

Acknowledge the need to strengthen family bonds

“People are more preoccupied with not only gambling but drinking and drugging more than they used to be. It started maybe 15 years ago. I think it's getting worse. I think it's affecting the younger generation now: More so than say my generation. I think the family bond is broken, the cycle of how we used to be is broken.”

Plan family activities

“We used to have a lot of activities. We used to share food and spend a lot of time doing activities together as friends, families. You don't see that happening any more.”

“We have a baseball field here at the landing nobody uses. They used to have baseball every evening in the summertime. A lot of swimming and a lot of outdoor activities, camping and stuff like that. They're indoors now. It would be nice to do that again but there is competition. We have the computers; we have the satellite dish; so that people are more comfortable to stay indoors.”

Increase parent-school involvement

“There's no parental involvement at the school and I know the school has a lot of problems getting children involved. There's a few parents that still are involved, but not a whole lot of them, the ones [with problem kids] that need to be involved.”

Open the recreation centre regularly

“They have a rec. centre but they just don't open it. It stays closed. They only trust certain people and those people don't want to open it. It just sits there and the kids could benefit from that.”

Increase accountability

People said it was important that money allocated for recreation in the community be used for that purpose.

“They had money for recreation but they allocated that money to something different.”

“We need a yearly audit of how money, space, and information at the Health Centre is handled so everyone has a say in how the Centre is used and is comfortable using it.”

“They don't do anything. The offices are all empty. It's hurting the community. I think they should get somebody -- an economic development officer. That person goes around checking that people are actually doing their work and stuff. Somebody out there checking, because most of these people here...they're still getting paid regular hours if they're not here. I think it would make a big difference. The community is frustrated by the favoritism. The same people get hired for the same jobs all the time.”

Pay volunteers

“Lets pay people for setting up social activities like the Christmas dinner, graduation events, and other community feasts, and for participating workshops or other educational events. Paying volunteers adds to the social value of their work and redistributes funds more equally.”

Educate students about gambling in school

Participants recommended asking the school to educate students about problem gambling.

“They have a resource teacher there and I'm not sure exactly what her role is. I'm sure that she can plan something. The children should learn how to recognize problem behaviours in their parents – and they can make their parents aware of it because they have a lot of a power as children.”

Conclusion

People said problem gambling is a personal and awkward topic:

“It's kind of like being an alcoholic...people go into the closet if they have a problem and they don't come out because they're full of shame. I think it's the same thing with gambling.”

Yet they say it is necessary to start talking about problem gambling in order to begin acknowledging that the problem exists. Then,

“at some point we have to find a way where we can deal with awareness and prevention together. I mean, I think that's the best you can do.... There's a stigma to being open that you have a problem.”

This handbook begins the process of addressing problem gambling,

“I hope that with this surveying, something good will come out of it that helps problem gamblers.”

Non-gamblers encouraged gamblers to think,

“...more about their families. It's no good to lose your kids. They have to think rationally about how they are going to raise their child when they are problem gamblers...Material things can be replaced but kids can't be replaced.”

In conclusion, an Aboriginal gambling addiction counselor group (see sample proposal in Appendix D) would provide invaluable services to individuals who are

uncomfortable talking with one of the many First Nations counselors trained through the *Gambling Addictions Awareness Initiative* living within this community. In addition to confidential counseling, these workers could organize workshops and coordinate healthy activities for all age groups.

Manitou Rapids Rainy River First Nation

Anishinabeg Summary

- nah nun anishinabeg kee gah gah noh nah wug
- neesh hih kit toh wug kay gah kee zahnun igo waut

Kah mah ngo shcotch igo waung

kee nih bah tah kah mih gih zit kah tah nah tah gayng, me oh way hayzhah saag:

- 1) kaween kay yay bih saag it tihzee wug
- 2) kaween kay yay bih shah way ndihzee zee wug
- 3) kaween gih yay mih noh hah see wug hah bih noh chee wug

Whoh noh way chihaun chi gah tay ghin

- 1) njit tah goh gay goh oh mah chi hih nji chi gayng, kay goh chi whoh ndum ih goh waut, tah min nay ndah goot chi whom bih nih gayng, chi gh gway cheeng sah goh
- 2) oh mah kah tah nah noh keet kah tah nji kah gway cheeng kay goh chi nih whoh nzhiz zih toot kay hih nji chi gayng, kaween hay tah whoh shkih ah auk, ndih goh kaun gay goh chi hih nji chi gayng
- 3) njit tah goh kah kih nah wih yah oh mah hih shkoo nih gunning chi gah gah noh nih tih waut, kih hah bih sah goh chi bih may ndih sih gwah
- 4) njit tah goh chi kah kih nah amah goh waung oh way hah wih yah hay nzih saat kee zahnug egoot kee hah tah gayng, chi weechi indwah sah goh gi yay hihgihkah zahnug igo waut kee hah tah gayng
- 5) njit tah goh mazah nay ay gun kah hah gungee gah tayg chi we ndah moy ndwah ih yay kah zahnug gug kee hah tah gayng “kee gih toh pe waub pih konse kih yay chi hah bah chi chi gah tayg hah wih yah kih noh nday gah gah noh nut”

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Community Description

Manitou Rapids Rainy River First Nation is located 50 kilometers west of Fort Frances in northwestern Ontario on historic Manitou Rapids. Of the over 700 band members, 250 live in the community. This community has steadily built a strong economic base,

resulting in unemployment rates lower than the provincial average. Members are employed in administrative services, a band-owned fish hatchery, resource harvesting, manufacturing, a local gas/convenience store, Manitou Forest Products Ltd., the sawmill, and the Little Fork Ojibway Window Company. The community is involved in two off-reserve economic ventures, the Red Dog Inn and the Senic River Mall, and operates the Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung Historical Centre (Manitou Mounds), a major tourist attraction that highlights the history of the Rainy River Corridor and the Anishinabeg people. Band members developed the Rainy River Watershed Program that watches over Rainy River and surrounding wildlife. In 1999, the Manitou Rapids Rainy River First Nation was a recipient of a “Caring Community” award provided by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The nearest gambling venue is in Fort Francis, although people also drive to Warroad and other gambling venues in Treaty #3 and the surrounding area.

Profile of People Interviewed

Five people over the age of 18 were interviewed:

- one person was female;
- one person gambled every day (spending about \$840 per month);
- two people gambled a few times a week (spending about \$100 per month);
- two people gambled rarely or never;
- two people thought they might have a gambling problem;
- one person used a budget when gambling, and the others lost track of their winnings and losses;
- people gambled either for the challenge, for recreation, or both.

Concerns about Gambling

Participants were concerned that gambling was affecting family and community bonds, as well as the overall well being of children.

Gambling is affecting relationships with each other

“Some of the people I know gamble every single day. I have a friend who gambles a lot. We used to be really, really close but he’s always gone like, he always wants to go to Winnipeg and stuff and so basically that’s all he talks about. He’s working just to gamble. Being close to his family [would help], but he’s not really close to his family.”

Problem gamblers neglect their children

“Family-wise the majority of parents are going to casinos late at night and leaving their kids. I know personally, two of my family members are gone almost every night and every weekend, and they don’t come back till the beginning of the week, so their

child doesn't really get to see them. He's [a young adult] now but the past seven years he hasn't really grown up with them 'cause they've been gone most of the time. It has affected his development a lot. It seems like he's old but it still seems like he acts like a little kid in that he still wants all that [parental] attention."

Youth are becoming problem gamblers

"My grandson said, 'Oh I can't wait till I get old enough to go to bingo'! He's still in his early teens."

"People I see in the bingo are getting younger. Eighteen-year-old kids and even younger. People sneak in to play, they look old enough, so they don't get ID'd."

"I think gambling's getting to be a problem among the youth. They think it's an easy way to make money but don't understand that it's an easy way to lose money too."

Gambling Recommendations

Community members suggested planning more non-gambling activities, organizing community discussions, and increasing awareness of problem gambling.

Plan activities for all ages

"More activities for everybody – like, for all ages...like barbeques or stuff, walks. We have a gym here. If there was like a work-out program going on for all the adults, like at a certain time, aerobics and weight lifting, things like that."

"Yeah, more activities really, I mean 'cause if you're sitting at home and there's nothing to do and you've got some friends over and you've got change in your pocket, you start gambling. But I guess if there was more activities that would help people."

"There should be more for the adults to do during bingo time (6-10pm)."

Hire someone to organize evening and weekend activities

"There should be someone like a counselor, but actually someone who coordinates activities for adults in the evening - horseshoe tournaments, healthy living activities, keep the adults busy."

"A community coordinator person is more needed than someone who just sits there and listens to people. They need to keep them busy. Then people will be together here doing stuff, like building a gazebo for the community garden. We need someone here getting us doing stuff together."

“It just seems community members have no alternatives. The recreation director should organize activities for 30-50 yr olds too (not just youth). She is new in position and could use this suggestion. Right now she is only doing part of her job.”

Plan a community discussion on gambling

“The only solution I can see is everybody just needs to throw everything aside and just kind of meet in the middle and just -- just have one big community. Yeah. Sort of like a - like a staff meeting. Just get everything out of the way, just throw every - all your quarrels aside and just meet together.”

“The whole community needs to get together on -- on all issues. I guess it's a trust issue. The reservation that we live on, there's a lot of family quarrels, you know. Families against families and stuff like that. That has been like that for generations and generations and it's just -- it's a trust issue. Like, you don't know if you can say something to somebody and trust them.”

Provide information in a newsletter

People thought that the newsletter was an effective way to share information and recommended that it be used more frequently to increase gambling awareness. In the past, the community has used a newsletter to:

“list things about alcohol abuse, being abused in relationships and pointers and stuff. For example, signs if you're in denial or not. They list things like that or they list telephone numbers that you can call if you don't want to talk to anybody in person.”
(see Appendix E for places to find information for community newsletters).

Conclusion

Although only a few people were interviewed from this community, their concerns and recommendations are similar to those identified in the other communities. This was one of the last communities to be interviewed, and Cheryl Currie noted that no new concerns or recommendations were coming forward in the last few communities.

Naicatchewenin First Nation (Northwest Bay)

Anishinabeg Summary

- neesh tah nah, nah nun anishinabeg kee kah gh noh nah wug
- nee walk nah nah mitinah ngo gheezhig shuniah whoh wah bah chi ah waun
- hah nund hih kit toh wug njit tah goh chi hah tah gay aun
- hah nund hih kit toh wug whoh weechi ah aun kee zahnung igo waut
- hah nund hih kit toh wug kee zay ghiz zih waut whoh zaum kih hah tah gay waut
- hah nund hih kit toh wug hah be noh chee wug kee gah nah way ndiz zoh waut whoh mama, whoh taytay hin kee hah ndah hah tah gay waut

Kah mah ngo shcotch igo waung

- 1) kah kih nah hah wih yah koh pah chi say wug hah wih yah kee zahnug igo goot keehah tah gayng
- 2) kah gwah tah gih say wug kee nih bah chyah hah tah gay waut
“ hah nund kih nwaysh shqwah mih nih qway hoog, me tsh ih goh kaween gay goh whoh tah tah way see nah wah tay gooch ‘BINGO’ nih soh tih bik whoh tah mih noh waut “ whoh gih mah kaun tih bah chi moh
- 3) kaween kay yah bih saag it tihzee wug tah bih shkoo may haynsha, ndoon nih toh min gih yay kee anishinabay chi gayng whoh zaum me ih yay kah hah tah gayng,
“nih nish shkah tis kee hanew whoh nih toh waung anishinabay chi gay win, noh ghom we nay tah wah nah nah gah tah way ndis zoh wug”

Whoh noh way chihaun chi gah tay ghin

- 1) njit tah goh kee whoh noc shig kay goh chi hih nji chi gay aung, kah kih nah goh hah wih yah
- 2) njit tah goh chi kah kih nah amah goh waung oh way hah wih yah hayzih saat kee zahnug igoot kee hah tah gayng, chi weechi indwah sah goh gih yay hih gih kah zahnug igo waut kee hah tah gayng “kee tah koh bih it tih min chi gah gah noh nih tih ing whoh goh nayn haynji hah tah gay in me tsh ih mah kay nzih tih bah chi moh wing ih yay kee zahnug gug kee bah kichi hah tah gayng”

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Community Description

Naicatchewenin First Nation is located on the north shore of Northwest Bay in Rainy Lake, an hour drive northwest of Fort Frances, Ontario. Of the 320 band members, about 250 members live in this lakeside community. Some work in the band owned and operated Kish Dug Cedar Furniture, producing handcrafted outdoor furniture. Residents travel to Fort Frances, Couchiching, and Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation to play bingo and participate in other gambling activities. An addiction treatment centre is operated by Treaty #3. It provides programs for people with alcohol, drug, and nicotine addiction.

Profile of People Interviewed

Twenty-five people over the age of 18 were interviewed:

- about 50% were women;
- 25% gambled three to seven days a week, and the rest gambled a few times a week or month;

- 50% used a budget when they gambled;
- individuals spent from \$8 per month to \$2,280 per month (\$27,360 per year), with an average of about \$25 to \$50 each time they gambled, or \$450 per month (\$5,400 per year);
- 25% said it bothered them when they could not gamble, and some suffered physical symptoms from gambling withdrawal;
- 5% stated that they had pawned items to gamble;
- 18% chose gambling over family events, which created marital problems;
- 41% had a spouse or family member who was a problem gambler;
- 14% gambled with money that was set aside to pay bills;
- 18% were told they had a gambling problem;
- 18% believed they had a gambling problem;
- almost half said their gambling caused them stress and anxiety;
- 50% said children with gambling parents were left to fend for themselves;
- 23% were unable to stop gambling due to:
 - i. bad influence of friends/family;
 - ii. lack of awareness about whether they actually had a problem;
 - iii. there being nothing else to do in the community;
 - iv. being addicted to gambling and couldn't stop;
 - v. feeling alone; they had someone to socialize with if they gambled.

Concerns about Gambling

Community members of Naicatchewenin First Nation were concerned that gambling was affecting family and marital relationships, creating poverty, and separating people from their traditions.

High potential for becoming addicted

“I was going seven days a week to bingo. I quit gambling because I realized it was affecting my family. I've never been really addicted to anything before in my life but the bingo part, it was almost like 5:30 I would start shaking and I NEEDED to go. I was like WANTING to go. At first bingo was just to get away, like time out. It was the thinking of trying to get back the money that I lost -- like I had to be there. About an hour before bingo would start I would get on the phone and literally just shake; I wanted to be there so bad... I knew that I was addicted when I was like, I GOT to go... It was more or less gradual quit. Like I would slow down right to the point where I would go maybe once a week. And then maybe every month.”

“I throw temper tantrums when I can't go. If I have the money then and I have to watch my kids I get all irritable and I start yelling and stuff 'cause I can't go. Yeah, but when I'm home they're happy.”

Gambling expenses create family conflict

“I'd make my dad sell stuff that he just bought. I think he would be mad, like 'cause he would have to buy it back. Because I wanted to gamble I'd make him go and pawn it. And if I won I didn't give him it. He did it 'cause I was his daughter. After he died it would bug me.”

“My husband gets mad at me because he doesn't want me to go to bingo and I get mad because I want to go. So we argue all the time.”

“... like my husband would get angry and say, ‘Well go then, GO!’. And when I was playing I had this guilty feeling that I should be at home instead of being here all the time.”

Bingo “orphans”

People talked about how gambling in their family had affected them as children, and how it affected their adult children.

“When my kids where younger my gambling caused abandonment issues for them. I was gone to bingo every night. As adults now, they are trying to deal with that; they say ‘Remember mom when you were gone all the time? We were scared. Two are into alcohol and drugs now.”

“I considered myself a bingo orphan when I was growing up...I'd come home from school and I'd only see her about an hour and she'd be gone to bingo and I'd be already sleeping by the time she got back. When I was growing up, it was hard for me to talk to my parents because I was so used to them being gone. It made us apart, I guess, just apart.”

“My kids are older now and they actually voice to me how they used to feel. Like you know, like you always left us in the evenings and stuff. They had one parent there but there it more or less that I wasn't there for them.”

Neglected children are angry

“My daughter gets mad because I leave her to gamble. I leave her with my boyfriend, he's not reliable sometimes: So I think that's why she gets mad. It's because when I leave her, she's not really being taken care of. He likes to drink a lot. So he's usually doing that.”

“...the kids are affected because our kids are angry. ... if you have a parent working or out of the home during the day and then they leave to go gambling at night, there's no time for the kids and so the kids are angry about that. And so they may act out on it.”

Gambler's guilt

Some parents who are problem gamblers are concerned about the effects that gambling is having on their children. One gambling mother said, *"look, my child drew a burial mound!"* The mother then added a cross on the hill and dollar bills with wings, saying that it illustrated the guilt she felt while struggling with her gambling problems.

Children plead unsuccessfully with their parents to stay home

"Well, just the kids that I see, they tell their parents don't go to bingo. And then that probably affects them."

Children miss healthy parental mentors

"Gambling hurts the family setting. The parents are setting a bad example. Those little kids will grow up and think they have to gamble - same as drinking."

Inadequate supervision

"When my grand children visit, if I want to go to bingo - they tell me they really don't like to see me go to bingo. A lot of children are left without supervision or with sitters not old enough to keep children."

"That's why are kids don't listen when told something. I have been concerned in our community, in the evening, you see kids wandering around and you know they're home alone. At 5pm I see the cars heading out of the community, they are just rushing. Parents don't put their kids to bed. Kids like to get tucked in. They don't come in 'til really late."

"Children are being left at home alone or with their brothers or sisters or other children. Their needs aren't being met. They're being neglected. Children feel that gambling's more important than them."

"I think the fact that the children are being left home with older siblings or teenage babysitters, I think that our younger kids you're seeing inappropriate behaviours as far as language because they're picking it up from older siblings and teenagers."

Children are left home alone

"I think a lot of times it would cause children to be jealous of other people, of like the parents who do stay home. Yeah. There's a lot of jealousy between the kids. One parent will stay home with their kids, but then their own parent is gone to bingo and not looking after them. Meanwhile other kids are being looked after, fed, bathed, or whatever. I notice these kids here, they hang around late: Because a lot of times they ain't getting the nutrition that they need, you know, because they ain't being fed. Like,

I hear a lot of talk. Like, these kids know a lot about sexual behaviour already: Even younger than 10 years old. I think it's because they're not being looked after. The parents don't know what's going on, and that's pretty scary. Like, even there were sisters giving each other hickeys and their parents are always going to bingo: Probably thirteen and nine. Yeah: And, then yet they pretend it's from guys, you know. And that's 'cause they are always being left alone."

Yeah, you see a little small child walking around at 9:30pm, then that's -- that's inhumane."

"You see a lot of the little ones being left at home alone. They probably wonder why their parents aren't at home doing stuff with them like all other families are. Most of the time, like when parents leave, it's like around supper time. Everybody heads about 5:30. They don't make supper for their kids. And then the parents get home about 10:00 and by that time the kids are, you know, maybe some aren't even home at night. So they don't eat during that whole time. Some of them just need to have that -- their bingo fix and they're not thinking about their kids at home hungry."

"Outside - walking around on the roads, kids are being abandoned and feeling abandoned. Kids don't get fed, when school is on especially because kids get back from school at 4:30pm but the parents leave to bingo at 5pm. Gambling con's parents start selling their stuff and getting angry when they can't go gambling, they take it out on their kids."

Money for children's basic needs is spent gambling

"My mother-in-law says I have a problem. She tells me that I should quit going to bingo and buy food instead of spending it on bingo. I think it's true because we're always short of food."

"I know people that take chances; they will spend their last fifty bucks at bingo. Next day they're kind of running around, like, 'Geez, I wish I had a loaf of bread or whatever'."

"Families want food coupons right after they got their child tax money. As soon as they get any money they spend it on gambling – the kids are hungry."

"Gambling is creating poverty for families; they barely have anything to eat. I think it's really affecting them big time, I feel sorry for these children trying to keep one another while the adults are at bingo. It's neglect."

"I'm never home. The things that they want I can't afford because I'd rather go play bingo and try and win but then I don't. So I lose my money, which is their money. Most kids in the community don't have what they want. Like clothing needs and food needs so they go into other peoples' homes and steal food. Parent are to blame: Not

the kids. It's the parents because they should be there: Like I should be there for my kids."

"I think it's the same as in any community. There's, you know, the money problem: And improper nutrition because there's not enough money to buy the proper foods."

"She doesn't see what she's actually doing 'cause with her, with the last twenty dollars, like, she'll still go, you know, expecting or hoping to win. She has four kids: And then she just never has any food in the house, any of the necessities they need, like toothpaste, toilet paper. Like, it's not really that important to her. When she gets paid, it's, like for herself. It's almost like no one can teach her to care for her kids. I'm surprised, you know, her kids aren't taken away. Like, nobody complains."

Lack of educational support from gambling parents

"Our kids are being left behind. There's been an on-going issue at community meetings where even though these parents are sober the kids seem to be left in the dark about everything. They run around at all hours of the evening, they do whatever they want to do. I think the kids are affected through the education system. They're not getting up on time, they're not doing their homework, they're not eating properly and then ultimately it affects your --how you perform in school."

Gambling is creating poverty

People in the community are spending too much time and money gambling, and it is creating poverty.

"If I was down to my last 20 bucks I'd go to bingo, you know, and so I could I win money and then go buy food right away or something. But it never happens."

"They could be sober for a number of years and still say, 'I can't afford the food on our table' or 'I can't buy necessities for my family' or whatever, but yet, they go out and play bingo every night. I can't figure that out. They spend fifty bucks every night but yet they can't put food on the table."

"I got into my hydro money and I let that slip for seven months and I thought each time I went to bingo I'd win and never did. And so I ended up having to turn to Chief in Council for assistance. So now I'm repaying that off."

"Most people are poor: Probably because of the gambling. No, gambling and drinking."

Gamblers are abandoning traditional community values

"You get stuck in the bingo way of thinking. It's hard to go back for me and it makes

me mad when we're losing our ways - but no one seems to listen. There's too much "should do". We talk and talk. Like even for camping, a retreat for problem gambling - everyone has gear, we could all pitch in, it's always about the money, and it should be just a community thing. The Anishinabe people were group oriented, now it's more western, everyone for themselves. Kill a moose and share it, now it's "mine". It's really hard to go back to how we were before because electricity, and water because everything is easier now. Younger people are lazier than my generation."

Traditional ways of breaking the cycle

"Sweat lodge works if you follow the steps, it has to be regular. Underlying hurt needs to be addressed, guilt, and shame are being passed on like a cycle. I've broken the cycle a little bit and noticed my girls have broken the cycle more."

Gambling parents drop children off at family events

"I think gambling is affecting lots because there are community activities for parents to participate in along with their kids but more or less they drop their kids off. It's more or less like a babysitting service."

Community Recommendations

Community members suggested planning more evening activities and circulating gambling educational material to help reduce or prevent problem gambling.

Plan evening activities for families

"So -- like, during the day time it's all right because there's a lot of things that are happening, different groups and activities, but in the evening that's when -- like, I guess 5:00 o'clock this closes, the band office. And as soon as this closes, it seems like everything else stops. So there's no, like, activities going on in the evening. So I think if there were -- if there was something going on I think I would stay here and do that rather than leave for the evening to gamble."

"I'd like to see family get-togethers so family can interact with their children."

Take responsibility to plan our own community activities

"The problem is we are dependant on the workers to organize it, to organize a karaoke night for example. Because you know, I think that what's happened is, is that as communities we've gotten dependant on outside people to do things in the community: Or workers. And I'm a believer that we're all responsible for that. You know, getting people together over at a house and you know, doing karaoke. It doesn't cost anything. You know, a pot of coffee."

“We don't know how to visit anymore or be together. You know, we always think we have to go somewhere to do something or we have to have money to do something. You know? But like when we do our crafts here, like there's so much laughter. I think we have to get out of that idea that it takes money or we have to go somewhere to do things to be not bored. Like when we do our craft stuff, like we have fun, we laugh. The kids are playing around, you know. At first it was kind of, oh all these kids -- but I'm so comfortable with them now. That's part of being together.”

“I've seen in other communities, this family sat here, this family sat here and by the time we're done we're visiting and laughing together... If you look at why there's a division in a community, it's something that happened years ago.”

Plan activities that include everyone

“All community activities are segregated – they need to be together.”

“Just do family stuff, ... like games or cooking or things like that, I guess.”

Help people take responsibility for making a change

“I guess one of the first steps would be to educate people. What happens when you are gambling. Then maybe that way they'll realize, ‘Hey, you know, something is wrong with me.’”

“There's several problems...I think because often if you're the gambler you're in denial about how it really affects the family. How it affects the community as a whole. Helping them to see that they have a responsibility to make change and it has to begin with themselves.”

Find funding for counseling and workshops

“People here have training to do gambling work shops and counseling but the funding is not here. We need funding for counseling.”

“Workshops - this community is probably one of the only communities that have people that actually show up. That are consistent with showing up for the groups and stuff and educating themselves.”

Plan sharing circles and talk about gambling

“But I don't think very many people talk about gambling. Like they don't to each other. So there needs to be more awareness. Maybe workshops on gambling. If you give them a gift or something people will come.”

“There needs to be more things to do here. I go out to gamble to be with my family. We should get a sharing circle going to talk about why we gamble. Social services staff could do this. Delia took gambling addiction training. The sharing circle would help people think about how gambling affects them, their family.”

Conclusion

Many people in Naicatchewenin First Nation said that residents are responsible for making the changes and that this report can be used as a starting point, or something to get together and talk about, share more ideas, decide on new plans of action, and to take control of the future.

“When I think of gambling and what it's doing our communities I think that we have to help the community members see that they're responsible for change in their community. And there's a lot of ways that you can do that but workers have to work together to do that, to start providing opportunities, to make people want to stay home and be with their family. It's just doing a few of those things to get them started on different activities and building that rapport.”

“I remember this Elder telling us, if we're willing to make change in our communities it's going to take six to ten years.” The time, effort and patience needed to lessen problems with gambling will be well worth the return in future generations.

Naotkamegwanning First Nation (Whitefish Bay)

Anishinabeg Summary

- neeshtah nah anishinabeg kee kah gah noh nah wug
- nee shwasso nah nun – ngo twauk who cha gih nah waun kee hah ndah tah gay waut
- nee bih wah hih kit toh wug hah bih ting hay tah kee nzah waut, ngoh ting kichi wah wee kah
- pah ngee hih kit toh wug kee bah nay toh waut chi hah ndah hah tah gay waut, nee bih wah hih kit toh wug kee gah gway shqwat tah waut
- hah nund hih kit toh wug kee zahnug igo waut chi hih shqwat tah waut kee hah tah gay waut

Kah mah ngo shcotch igo waung

- 1) “kee nih bah chyah hah tah gay waut hih gih anishinabeg, me ih yay mah goh shcotch igo waut, whoh wah bah dahn nah wah hih gih hah bih noh chee wug, whoh zah me nah wug ‘bingo’ kah whoh tah min noh waut, me tsh hay nee nji me gaut tih waut” “me ih yay kih hah tah gay aun, kaween gay yah bih nih wah bah mah seeg nih weechi hah gun nug, ngee nih tah hah duhn nih zhay ih gay koh, ngee nih tah bah git tah wah koh gih yay”
- 2) me hah nund hay nay ndah moh waut kee hah ndah hah tah gay waut chi tih bah um moh waut kah mah zhin ay gay waut, moh nzhug hih tsh kaween mah mih gaysee wug me haynzih keesh kih nah moh wind dwah kah mah zhin ay gay waut
- 3) kee shqwah mih nih qway aut mih haynji mah chyah tah gay waut, hay nee nji nih bah tah ciome mih ghiz zih waut kah tah nah tah ting, me tsh nee bih wah shuniah hay nzih cha gih nah waut, kee cha gih nah waut shuniah haynji me gaht ti waut, mih e mah haynzih mah chi mih nih qway aut

- 4) wah bah nji gah zoh wug hih gih kah hah noh kee waut ih mah kah tah nah tah ting, ha neen ndush nah kay nji weechi ing qwah kay ween nah wah kee nih bah chyah hah tah gay waut

Whoh nah way chihaun chi gah tay ghin

- 1) njit tah goh hih gih kah gih kih nah waut tah nghiz zoh waut chi weechi tah waut chi kah kih nah amah gay waut oh way kee zahnug gug kee hah tah gayng, toh goh gih yay hah ndih kay hih nshaung hah wih yah chi weechi ind,chi gah kih nah amoy ndwah chi whoh zah zaumma come mih ghizi sih gwah kee hah tah gay waut
- 2) nihnah ndah way nih mah non hah wih yah chi kah kih nah amah gayt oh way kee zahnug ih saag kee hah tah gayng, chi bih njot kah kih nah hah wih yah, kaween hah wih ya tah tih bah chi moh see
- 3) njit tah goh hah bih noh chee wug whoh mama, whoh taytay hih yaun chi ween dah moyn dwah oh way kee zahnah gug chi hih shqwah hah tah gayng kaween hih goh kee nah baach whoh gah kay ndah nzee nah wah tah mih noh say ween dah moyn dwah
- 4) shuniah nih nah ndah way mah non chew whoh njit toh waung kichi wah kah igun
- 5) “njit tah goh chi mah chi bah git tah waung, chi mah chyah hah duhn nih zhay ih gayng, chi whoh koh it ting, chi wee sih ning, me koh kah hih nji chi gayng, nih minji may ndahn”

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Community Description

Naotkamegwaning First Nation is less than an hour drive southeast of Kenora, Ontario. About 720 of 980 band members live in the community. The nearest gambling venues are in Northwest Angle #37, Fort Francis, and Kenora.

“We don't have a casino, but we do have people that travel outside the community and you can see it in the evenings. Bingo vans we call them. Go from door to door. They take people so they can get more bingo cards [with the gas money].”

Profile of People Interviewed

Twenty people over the age of 18 were interviewed:

- 14 people were female;
- people had an average of three children (some were adults);
- 19 people gambled, and one did not;
- people spent from \$25 to \$100 on gambling per sitting;
- most people gambled once a week or less;
- 45% lost track of how much they lost or won;
- 30% did not budget how much money they spent gambling;
- 25% brought lucky items to help them win;

- 25% said it either somewhat or really bothered them when they could not gamble;
- 21% had been told that they have a gambling problem;
- 37% believed that they have gambling problem;
- 68% had tried to stop gambling;
- the reasons that people said they could not quit gambling were friends/family telling them to continue gambling, feeling lonely and having no one to talk to about it, and a lack of other non-gambling activities.

Concerns about Gambling

The participants were concerned about the impact that gambling was having on families, friends, and the community. They were also concerned about people using gambling as a source of income, a substitute addiction, and a place of employment.

Impact of gambling on families

“The single biggest issue concerning gambling in the community is the family. The issues that it has for the family and what it's teaching to the next generation too.”

“Family disruption, childhood neglect, basic needs aren't being met, you know, loss of money for families, the stress, all that stuff. And, you know, to think of a pro, well, there are no pros for the family. Even when they win they're winning back their spendings, they're not really winning anything because they've spent so much money. They're spending a hundred and fifty to two hundred a night. So when they win fifteen hundred they're winning back their money. They just can't see that.”

Marital fights over money

“I have a friend whose husband, his gambling issues are quite bad. His money goes into gambling and he won't commit to household needs. The money will be gone before she's able to pay her bills or buy things that they need. Because he gambles so frequently their needs aren't being met in the home. Then it becomes a marital problem and they start to fight. I've seen that in a few families.”

“Gambling is a big problem in the community. Three-quarters of the population is gambling and that kind of takes away the family unit for them -- to enjoy their family lives, I guess, to bring up their kids.”

“Everyone's really into the bingo thing around here. So when they don't win and they've spent their whole welfare cheque or their whole paycheck on bingo and then they have no money for food, it becomes a family problem because, you know, someone in the family will say, ‘Well, why didn't you get groceries?’, and then it's a fight.”

Children are neglected or inadequately supervised

“The kids are the ones that are getting hurt because they're being neglected, abandoned because of gambling.”

“Some children are left alone I would imagine. I have been in touch with a few families that inappropriately left children, meaning their babysitter's eight, that sort of thing.”

“My youngest daughter sometimes says, "Are you leaving again, like, for the weekend?" But, I don't go gambling every weekend. Gambling is better than going out and getting drunk every weekend.”

“I think the main problem is children being neglected and that's when vandalism happens at the Elders centre, at 10:00 o'clock in the evening.”

“Children are just riding around. We see a lot of younger drivers, little kids that drive around in a vehicle and are probably partying. Walking around all night.”

“Gamblers are not spending the quality time with their kids or wife that they're supposed to. Some kids probably even come into care, some people who have addictions, I can't necessarily say it's bingo or gambling, but if they do leave their families often, then they actually abandon their kids - they go into care. Child welfare takes them in and go to foster homes.”

Parents plan gambling activities rather than family activities

“Because there's no parents around and when the parents do stay in the community, they want to get something going. It's always something like bingo or TV bingo and that's still gambling. And they don't have the time for their little ones. So more or less, I think the adults are thinking about themselves more and more.”

Gambling guilt and mood swings

“If parents don't win, look out, you know. It's a real bad day for everybody the next day. If they don't win, they know what they've done, so they're faced with the guilt. The money's gone, they haven't won and now what are they going to do? It becomes a big problem for the whole family. I've seen it where they've blown all the money on gambling, bingo or whatever. I have more contact with bingo.”

“The gambler usually has really big mood swings, rationalizing their behaviour and why they spent it and ‘I could have won’ and that sort of thing. And then if they can't get to bingo, if they have the money and can't go, oh, my God! The mood swings! The temperaments! And the loss of money and everything. Oh, yeah, it's a big problem.”

Gambling instead of hunting and fishing with friends

“Gambling has affected my social relationships with my friends. I used to do a lot of hunting and fishing and these guys that I used to hunt and fish with took me to gamble. And when you're out there fishing with them, that's what they talk about now.”

Conversations are mainly about winning and losing

“Like, here in the community, when people are talking it's the main focus of conversation. 'Yeah, I was only two numbers away.' 'I lost -- I won five hundred bucks but I lost it all again.' 'I almost won that pot.' 'I know where the next bingo is.' 'I think I'll go to the casino.’”

Gambling as a source of income

“I find that some families use gambling or bingo as a source of income. They spend all their money on bingo in hopes they'll win and then they think that's how they get by. If they need money for something, if they have to pay their hydro, they go to bingo to win the money, and then most of the time they don't, so it ends up their hydro is cut off.”

Accumulative costs of gambling

“Nobody wants to look at, like they're in denial. Like, I'll give you a for instance. One of my fishing friends, we were out ice fishing one day and he was complaining he didn't have enough money to do this and that. His ski-doo was always breaking down, he needed a new ski-doo.

I says, 'Okay' so we sat down. 'How many times a week do you go gambling?'

He says, 'Well, twice a week.'

Well, we knew he was going four times a week.

'Okay. Minimum, how much money do you spend?'

'Sixty bucks.'

So we added that up back for a week, four weeks, and we added it up for 12 months of the year, it came up to about eight thousand bucks.

I said, 'There's your brand new ski-doo.'

The other guys were doing that too, eh, so they get in the conversation. Yeah, they still were doing their own personal adding up.

And they said, 'Holy shit. The old lady spends five thousand bucks a year.

There's my new ski-doo!'

And I says, 'Yeah.'

'That's payments for my truck', he says.”

Band office loans used for gambling

“When people have an addiction to gambling they run to the Band Office for fixes. When they need the money, they go to the Band Office for money to pay their hydro bill, to give them welfare. The Band will give you loans with a co-signer. The Band is recognizing the problem now and they are stopping it. They're not just giving out loans and paying people's hydro any more. People are having to be more responsible. So I know that's changing.”

“But definitely, if I had a gambling problem and I spent all my money at bingo last night or, you know, in a casino and I was broke today and I had to pay some bills, I could go to the Band and get a loan. As long as you pay it back, you're okay. But if you start neglecting to pay it back, then they'll stop. So you can get into quite a bit of debt before it's figured out.”

Substitute addictions, from alcohol to gambling

“I feel it is a transfer of addictions. When people quit drinking they quit those types of social events. So they transfer that addiction to a gambling addiction and they start going to bingo all the time and that's where their money and time goes - from alcohol to bingo, or from alcohol to gambling. It's just a whole new bundle of problems. They're still not being an active family member, they're not doing the children's social activities and doing things with their family, they're still spending the money. It's still an addiction. When their money runs out and they can't play bingo or go to gamble then the fighting begins, which just leads back to alcohol. It's not a fix, no.”

“It's better than people getting drunk and walking around the streets in Kenora. There is a lot of gambling probably in every household, because people substitute alcohol with gambling.”

“They face the same issues. They might not be drinking, but they're still away from the family, they still have the mood swings, they still haven't dealt with the issues that make them addicted to any of these problems. And it's just -- a transfer of addictions is never a positive thing, it's just -- you're just avoiding the whole issue of healing. A good person to ask would be a family member in a home that has transferred an addiction. Do they prefer their spouse gambling and going to bingo rather than drinking? That would be an interesting answer. You know, it may be a little better. Maybe he comes home and he's physically abusive when he's drinking but when he gambles, he isn't. But I find that when you transfer addictions, whether it's drugs to alcohol to gambling, the whole issue of addictions is not being dealt with. And I do see that, I see a lot of people saying, ‘Well, I'm not going to drink any more, I'm just going to smoke pot.’ And they do it and they quit for six months from drinking because they're just smoking pot. The mood swings and the problems are still there. I always think it's related to childhood conditions.”

Insufficient or inadequate education and counseling resources

“It's a family disease. Alcoholism is rampant in these communities and every one, I really feel even the dry reserves are selling and bootlegging. It's a disease in all the communities and it's only slowly being dealt with because of the lack of resources. We don't have the resources here that we would in a normal mainstream setting where you can go to AA and you can have support groups and you have the resources and the knowledge and education to teach people what exactly alcoholism is. When people lack those resources and supports, it's really difficult for them to understand what's going on with them.”

“Taking them off reserve and getting treatment for people, they come back to the same environment. There's nothing here for them to do. There's nothing here for them to -- no supports. We're finding that the First Nations are going to be the last to get that help. Like, it's going to be a really hard transition for the communities to be healed.”

“I don't think they really understand alcoholism at all, or the transfer of addictions - all sorts of things. When we do workshops and we work with people out there, they don't want to come. It's very difficult. Our attendance here for workshops and educations is very low and, you know, we're all trying to figure out why and we're all trying to get that message out to people.”

“The best education and the best resource is talking to people individually.”

Socializing at bingo reduces depression

“It's hard on Elders when they're unable to get to bingo and do their social events any more, they are isolated in their homes and they fall into depression. And I have at least two Elders right now that are suffering from depression and it's because their health has stopped them from doing those types of social events there. It's hard on them. Bingo is the only social event they have, you know, and they can't go any more, it affects them”.

“I think gambling is a pro for people who use it as a social event with control. If they go every Saturday night, like, my mother does that, she goes every Saturday. It's a social event. She enjoys it a lot and that's all she does. She spends fifty bucks and that's her social event.”

Lack of social events

“It's a social event to come here on Tuesdays when the doctor's here. You should see the Elders and the people that come here, it's a social event and I find that we're lacking that. We're lacking activities to bring the Elders together, to bring the people

together, so there's supports for everybody, and that's what the Youth and Elder Centre is trying to do."

"We're trying to get more social events that are positive and get away from gambling, and there's even an Elder that's working hard on that. She feels that the gambling for the Elders is a problem. She wants more Elder socials times together, and I was actually saying how about if we do a nutrition bingo and we have like little gifts for them and she actually said she wanted to get away from bingo all together. Nothing related to bingo or any of the gambling. So crafts and cooking and whatever; whatever we could think of. So that's what the Y & E -- well, I kind of put the spark in their ear and in their minds and said, you know, try and start doing some social events for Elders because they have an Elders' co-coordinator and I think that's what they're going to start working on for September."

"But again we're trying to do other social events so that that's something they don't have to rely on for social event. Something that's free. Bringing them together."

Some counselors are problem gamblers

"The workers themselves are gamblers, you see them in the casinos, bingo halls, whatever. That's the thing I kind of have a beef with. They're addicted to it and how are they supposed to help somebody if they're going through the same thing? They were supposed to be role models."

Gamblers are late for work

"The ones that are working, they're the only ones that can afford to gamble. But if you're on welfare and you don't have any money, then you can't gamble, right? They come in to work late, because they've traveled three hours to go to a casino, they gamble all night, and three hours to drive back, which doesn't leave a hell of a lot of time to sleep. Like, even Kenora, I mean where they go gambling, mostly it's in the bingos, it's an hour away. And they leave, like, at 6:00 o'clock in the evening, go gambling to catch the evening session. They might gamble two sessions."

Community Recommendations

Community members recommended providing problem gambling education, a counselor, and more school programs. In addition, money for an addiction centre and the re-introduction of land-based activities were suggested.

Educate gamblers

People suggested providing information on identifying problem gambling, informing people where to go for help, and distributing information on how to gamble responsibly.

“Education is the first thing; need to have an understanding, because a lot of them don't understand. They think it's better than drinking and so more knowledge and education in the area and more support.”

“We have all these organizations in our community. We're getting them together to help out people in different ways, social, health, whatever it is.”

Organize support groups and counselors

We need, “a resource person to do awareness and visit people, you know, that kind of stuff around the community. So it's open for everybody and confidential. We don't have anybody like that.”

“We need support groups and we need people who can be supportive when community people are needing help and assistance.”

Teach students problem gambling prevention

“Prevention would be a good start. If we can get into the schools and teach the younger kids exactly about gambling and that it is an addiction, because I don't think they really know. So maybe prevention for the kids would be the best tactic.”

Educate parents

“What this community needs is parents to be parents. We need the parents to look after their own kids. We need the parents to be at home to teach their kids. We need the parents to love and look after their kids. And we need the community to become a community.”

Stop taking children gambling when they are 18 years old

“I think people should refrain from taking their children to gamble as soon as they hit 18”.

“I've seen some people, as soon as their child hits 18 then they'll take them to the city with them. I've seen them in the bingo halls in Kenora.”

Find funds for an addictions centre or program

“I think that what they need here is an addiction centre, that's what I think, and I think that's where money should be going to is to projects with addictions, anything to do with addictions. That's where that money should be going: All kinds of addictions because we're gambling with lives here.”

Plan traditional, land-based community activities

“We need to bring back things like hunting and fishing. We used to have a community feast, different feasts, blueberry feasts. We used to have one four times a year. That's where the whole community comes together. Now, the only time we do that is at Christmas. But we need to celebrate each changing of the season. That used to be a community event, and I remember those. That stopped happening when we became a wet reserve (alcohol was allowed) in about the mid-sixties.”

“Heck, we've lost all our cultural activities. There's no cultural activities going on.”

Organize activities where Elders teach youth

The Youth and Elders Training Centre is, “...supposed to be a gathering place for where the youth and Elders mingle and the Elders are supposed to pass on their teachings and that's not happening. The Elders are too busy gambling. All that's there is the youth and the children, just doing activities.”

“The Youth and Elders Training Centre needs way more activities. They really don't have a lot of activities going on right now at the Youth & Elder Centre, because there's been a high staff turnover and unqualified people getting positions there. Like our last Elders' coordinator, he was out in left field, he didn't even know what to do and, you know, that's the problem when they're hiring unqualified staff, that they don't know how to get these programs together and they've never had any experience with them, so they don't have any ideas. We could have all kinds of social events, including sewing and crafts and things like that. Elders are really interested in teaching the younger kids here. They would love to meet with kids and teach them. So hopefully there'll be some more activities available.”

Plan social events and summer jobs

“We need more activities and social events for people in the community.”

“What's here, it isn't much. They can probably do a lot more aimed at the younger people. They can upgrade the recreation facilities... Give them more activities or find summer jobs for them. There's a lack of summer jobs for students.”

Conclusion

People said that gambling and problem gambling contributed to marital conflict, neglected children, and financial stress. Participants recommended educating people of all ages as a step towards preventing gambling problems, establishing treatment programs, and planning non-gambling social activities for all ages, in order to rebuild a strong community.

Northwest Angle No. 37 First Nation - Regina Bay

Anishinabeg Summary

- mih twasso nee wun anishinabeg kee kah gah noh nah wug (shaungso ikwaywug, nah nun hihniniwug)
- neeshwalk, ngogeeeshik anishinabeg whoh cha gih nah waun kee hah dah hah tah gay waut
- nishwasso hih kit toh wug mah nay doh moh waut kee hah ndah hah tah gay waut
- ngotwasso hih kit toh zahnug igo waut
- nee wun hih kit toh wug whoh weech ah aun zahnug igo goot

Kah mah ngo shcotch igo waung

- 1) kaween hah pichi kay goh hih nah ndah zee wug mih nig kee hah tah gay waut oh way gih yay mih nig kah cha gih nih gay waut
- 2) hahnund whoh wah bah chi toh nah wah kee hah tah gay waut peechee chi mih nih qway aht, who zaum noh nday whoh nee kay nah wah kee mah nayn dah moh waut, me tsh haynew njee kay waut mih nig e tih kee nah mah tah bih waut mih nig sah goh gih yay kah cha gih nih gay waut, me tsh nah whuch hay nee nji mah nji say waut
- 3) mah nji toh tah wah wug hah bih noh chee wug kee nih bah chi hah tah gayng, njit tah goh chi mah mah njew ih git shuniah
- 4) njit tah goh anishinabeg kay goh pah kaun che hih nji chi gay waut kih whoh noc shing “kah gway nay nji chi gay wug, me tsh haynji hah tah gay waut, oh way gih yay haynji noh nday weech igo zih zee waut”

Whoh noh way chihaun chi gah tay ghin

- 1) njit tah goh chi kah kih nah amah goh waung oh way hah wih yah hay nzih saat kee zahnug egoot kee hah tah gayng, oh way gih yay hah ndih kay hih shaut chi weechi ind, Addictions of Manitoba chi gah gway chi min dwah oh mah chi be hih njah waut chi be weetah nah kee mih goh waung
- 2) njit tah goh gay goh chi hih nzih chi gay waut anishinabeg, tah bih shkoo sah goh chi gah gway chee waut, oh mah gih yay chi mah mowh tih sih tih aut, tah bih shkoo ‘Bingo’ kee hih shaung

Acknowledgements

We thank Don Kavanaugh, Health Director, for his feedback on this report and Mahengun Goodsky, a gambling counselor, for his contributions to the Community Advisory’s first meeting, ideas for study questions, and for inviting people to drop in to the recreational centre to be interviewed. Thank you to all of the youth who cleaned the recreation centre where private interviews took place with Cheryl Currie from August 25th to 27th, 2003. Feasts for participants were held in the main hall while Elders and youth worked on traditional crafts (beadwork, star blankets) and other youth played sports. Thank you to all the participants who shared their insights that contributed significantly to the success of this report. Meeg-wetch.

Community Description

Northwest Angle No. 37 First Nation is a mainland community located on Regina Bay on Lake of the Woods about one-hour drive southeast of Kenora, Ontario. Approximately 150 adults live in this area. There is a second Northwest Angle No. 37

community on Windigo Island near the Manitoba and Minnesota border. Both of these communities were originally located on Buffalo Point. However, some members moved to Regina Bay to stop commercial timber cutting and stayed on the mainland. This created the second community. Both communities share one Chief, as well as other personnel and facilities. The Regina Bay community report is presented first, and is followed by the Windigo Island report.

Regina Bay has a recreation centre, which is used frequently for various recreational activities, and weekly for bingo. People also drive to Fort Francis, Kenora, Warroad, and Winnipeg gambling venues. Funds raised from local bingo events are used to maintain the recreation centre and to support programs, such as the health program that “... utilizes *Elders to teach traditional knowledge to the youth.*”

Profile of People Interviewed

Fourteen people over the age of 18 were interviewed:

- nine people were female;
- five people gambled several times a week, two people gambled a few times a month, and two people rarely gambled;
- people spent about \$200 per month on gambling;
- people drove approximately 66 hours per month to gamble;
- eight people lost track of how much they lost or won;
- eight people said their gambling had caused them stress and anxiety;
- six people said they had a gambling problem;
- three people said they had used money to gamble instead of paying bills, and one person said they had pawned items to gamble;
- six people said they had tried but were unsuccessful at stopping to gamble because of pressure to continue gambling with friends and family, and due to uncertainties as to whether or not they had a problem;
- four people had a family member with a gambling problem.

Positive Comments about Gambling

Socialization

Many people said that weekly bingo in the recreational centre was a relaxing, social event.

“You go to bingo and there's a certain atmosphere that bingo players feel like it's their second home. Yeah, you can notice it, people kind of feel at home when they're playing bingo. It's a relaxing atmosphere. Personally, for myself, I feel relaxed say with my friends, my cousins and, you know, just talking, socializing.”

“I don't know, bingo here - I see people joking, visiting. It's good bingo here because it's just local people.”

“I live alone. In the evenings I get bored at home. I leave to go with the ladies to bingo.”

Weekly bingo raises funds for children’s activities

“I was for the bingo because it also brought money, some funding for projects here. Some of the money was helpful.”

“The bingo is positive in that it brings money to kid’s activities.”

“The once a week bingo makes money which keeps the rec. centre open for the kids .”

“Gambling provides money for children’s activities.”

Concerns about Gambling

Participants were concerned about people gambling too often, spending too much money, driving to other gambling venues, switching from one addiction to the other, and the limited number of alternative non-gambling activities available.

Excessive gambling is socially accepted

“Barriers to people getting help? Their peers. Peer influence and denial. Gambling is such an accepted social event it’s become a norm in our communities. That’s a big barrier to stopping or getting help. 95% of my family gambles.”

“We used to go events together, now we don’t. Events have to be planned around bingo time for them.”

Substitute addictions

Some people said that they gambled as a way to numb themselves to painful thoughts and feelings, and subsequently lost control over how much time and money they were spending, which made the problem worse.

“The way I look at it is they drank a lot back then and they wanted to quit, so they turned to bingo and they just kept going to stay away from the booze. So I think that’s how they got into that gambling stuff.”

“I spent nine years at residential school. Gambling is like a sedative so people won’t have to deal with some of the painful, hurtful things that have happened in their past. At residential schools they had such pompousness behind their actions. They wanted to transform us ‘heathens’. They would get us in those jails, and they would beat us, brainwash us, sexually abuse us.”

“Right now mum’s okay but -- I think she’s already addicted to gambling and she can’t stop. Before, when we lost our dad -- she went more and more, but that’s what kept her going so I didn’t bother her with it. That was a number of years ago already. Yeah. And now she can’t stop. I think the grief isn’t there any more, but it could be still. She also gambles partly because she doesn’t like seeing people drinking around the community. She likes to get away from it. She doesn’t want to be around when people are drinking and stuff.”

“It can be addictive. People are easily addicted, almost the same way as being addicted to food or alcohol and drugs.”

People are unaware of other ways of raising money

“Bingo is all they know. Their minds are not really broadened; they are ignorant to other ways to fund raise because bingo is easier.”

Children need healthy mentors

“But kids end up playing bingo too because they are brought here - they play outside because they see parents doing it. They start playing at 16.”

Adults need other things to do

“I have made attempts to stop, but when there’s no one at home it gets kind of boring, and I don’t drink. I live alone so there’s no other recreation for me.”

“Boredom is a barrier to stopping gambling or getting help. Nothing really happens, but bingo is always there - it never gets cancelled.”

Recommendations

People recommended more information on problem gambling, including where to go for help, and how to gamble in a healthy manner. They also suggested planning healthy-living evening activities for adults who are interested in socializing without playing bingo.

Promote preventative education

Participants recommended providing information on the symptoms of problem gambling. For example, they suggested inviting the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM) to host workshops on this topic.

“There needs to be awareness workshops. Once a person is addicted you can’t really stop them. Catch them beforehand; make people aware they might have a problem.”

“They are addicted and they don’t know where to go for help. There is help out there

I think - the problem is people don't know where to find it. They need info on how to find it."

Educate gamblers on the odds of winning

"Train people on how to be a better gambler. Trick them into thinking it will teach them to win and don't put problem gambling into the title. Really you're teaching them how to lose less money (not chasing loses, not gambling their winnings) and how the machines work. Teach them the odds. The Addictions Foundation of Manitoba said they would come into the community. They said they want expenses paid but would donate their time to us."

Plan alternative evening activities, such as exercise classes

Participants said that evening exercise classes would get people out socializing with others who were interested in doing something other than gambling. In addition, it would be a healthy activity.

"I think the problem gamblers need treatment. I know a lot of them say that they can't sleep sometimes. They need exercise: That would help them to sleep. Try and get their minds off their bills and stuff like that."

"The ladies might attend aerobic classes if we had them again."

"Maybe like, sewing classes or something, stuff like that for people."

Gamble for prizes instead of money

"We should have tournaments for prizes instead of money. People would still have that desire to gamble but would get a material thing (instead of money)."

Conclusion

This community made positive comments regarding gambling as a social event and as a way to raise funds for their children's activities. The concerns were similar to other communities, including the impact of sociably accessible excessive gambling and gambling as a substitute for other addictions. Recommendations from this community included education and alternative activities.

Northwest Angle No. 37 First Nation - Windigo Island

Anishinabeg Summary

- neshwaso anishinabeg kee kah gah noh nah wug
- kee who zah meen nah wug kah gee tih bah chi moh waut kee shah gah tay ndah moh waut oh way gihway kee gah gwah tah ngee in dwah kah gee tah shih kah kee nah ah moy ndwah

- mee gay ih way kah ih kit toh waut naun nawhk ngotwas so mihtinah ngo geesic kee cha ginah nih gay waut
- mee gay ih way kah ih kit toh waut oh way shuniah kee wah bah chih ah waut kee hah ndah tah gay waut tay gooch hih tsh kee tih bah nzih gwah kah mahzin nah ay gay waut
- mee gay ih way kah ih kit toh waut “kee mah mih gahn nih go waun, ngay nih mahn nay dum, nih noh nday mahw, hah munj hee took kah njih toh tah maun”
- nee win kee ih kit toh wug who weechi ah aun kee zahnug igo waut
- nee swih ih kit toh wug zahnug igo waut, whoh bah nay toh nah wah che hih shquat tah waut “wah sah ndah yah min, haun dih gay hih nshah aung chih nah gosh kah waung gwah pah kaun ha wih yah, kahn kay go pah kaun che hih njit chih gay aung” “nee bih wah tih sing ngee ih nay dum zahnug igo waun, mee ih tsh hay ngee hih nshah haun kah hah tah ting oh way sah goh che nan dah maun chi h bih noh day mah cha sih waun”

Kah mah ngo shcotch igo waung

- 1) nji tah go chi nih sih tah way nah ming ih yay kee zahnah gug oh way kee hah tah ngayng “ hah neen nah kay che nji che ngayng chi nih sih tah way nah gook oh mah hih shkoo nih guning mee ih yay kee zahnah gug, kay goh goh che hih njit che ngayng oh mah min nih sing kee whoh nock oh shing” “kee nih tah minih qway ogh hih koh, noh ghom hih tsh hah tah gay wug, kee shpin hih shquat tah aung hah neen ndush kay hih njit che ngay aung”
- 2) kaween ngay goh oh mah chih tih bah chic moh mah gug me ih yay kee zahnah gug kee hah tah gayng, kaween whoh gah kay ndah zeen nah wah me ih yay kee bah kitchi hah tah gay waut chih zahnug igo waut
- 3) me tsh kay ih mah hay nee shih zahnug ih say waut hih gih ha bin noh che wug whoh goh way sah goh kih way whoh shkih ah aug, nih wah bah mig goh nah nig kee hah tah gay aung

Whoh noh way chihaun chih gah tay ghin

- 1) nin nah dah way ndahmin chi weechi igo waung whoh zaum ih goh hih gih k zahnug igo waut kah hah tah gay waut
- 2) njit tah goh mazah nah ay gah nun chi wah bah ndah moh waut hay nji mahjii toh toh win dwah ha bin noh chee wug kee shah gooch igo waut kee nih bah chi hah tah gay waut whoh mama, whohtaytay aun
- 3) njit tah goh kay goh chi hihji chih gayng oh mah min ni sing, “ tah bih shcoo: - chi way bah nah beeng, - chi bah git tah waung , - chi anishinabay hih chih gayng, - chi pah qwah ko toh kayng, - chi mihzi nah tay sih chi gayng, - chi whohji chi gah tayg kitchi wah kah ih gun”, “kay goh sah goh che hihji chi gay waut hih gih kah zahnug igo waut kah hah tah gay waut, mah gihsha soh goh gih yay chig gishki qwaso waut, chig kah kee nah ih mah goh waut hih gih kitchi ah aug”

Acknowledgements

We thank Chief Lorraine Major for granting permission to conduct interviews and to the residents of Windigo Island who agreed to share their thoughts on gambling. We thank Mahengun Goodsky for flying in to conduct the interviews with Cheryl Currie on August 28th. Interviews were completed in the band office; Mahengun and Cheryl provided a small feast to thank the participants. The cooperation of everyone involved is sincerely appreciated, and is reflected in the quality of this report. Meeg-wetch.

Community Description

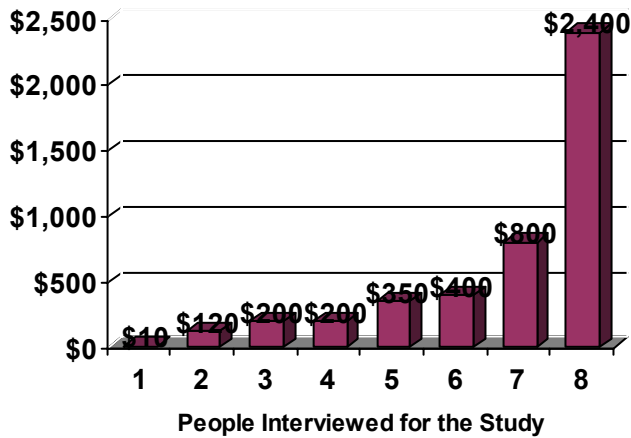
Northwest Angle No. 37 First Nation (Windigo Island) is a friendly island community located in Ontario, close to both the Manitoba and United States borders. In the winter, an ice road is built; in the summer, there is boat access. It is home to 29 adults, as well as a number of youth and children. Windigo Island shares a Chief, Health Director, and other personnel with Northwest Angle No. 37 in Regina Bay. Don Kavanaugh, Health Director, works closely with the island residents to develop new programs and activities in the community. Windigo Island has no gambling facilities. Therefore, residents frequently travel to the Seven Clans Warroad Casino in Minnesota.

Profile of People Interviewed

Eight people over 26 years old were interviewed:

- five people were female;
- people had one to four children, including adult children;
- many people had experienced loneliness and abuse at the residential school;
- all eight participants gambled, and half gambled up to six times per week;
- people spent nine hours a month traveling to and from gambling venues;
- on average, individuals spent \$560 per month gambling (\$6,720 per year);
- 50% used money to gamble instead of paying bills;
- three people experienced stress and anxiety because of their gambling;
- one person budgeted their gambling expenditures;
- 50% had a spouse or close family member with a gambling problem;
- some people stated that their gambling had caused problems for other family members;
- three people believed that they had a gambling problem;
- three people had tried but were unsuccessful at quitting gambling: They found it hard to quit because they:
 - i. were influenced by their family and friends who wanted them to continue gambling;
 - ii. were not sure if they actually had a problem;
 - iii. denied the problem to themselves when they wanted to gamble;
 - iv. could not stop because they were addicted to gambling;
 - v. could not quit because there was nothing else to do for fun.

Figure 1: Amount of money spent per month by the participants from Northwest Angle No. 37 (Windigo Island)



Concerns about Gambling

Participants were concerned about the lack of problem gambling awareness and the insufficient amount of information about gambling. They also expressed concern over the lack of non-gambling activities and the impact that gambling was having on children and families in general.

Gambling needs to be recognized as a problem

One of the main concerns of the island residents was the lack of help for problem gambling.

“What can be done to have this recognized as a problem in our community?”

Lack of non-gambling activities for adults

People said that gambling was an important social activity. The casino was the only place that they could interact with different people.

“We are isolated. Where do we interact with people? There is nothing else to do but gamble.”

“If we quit gambling, what will we do as an activity?”

People replaced drinking with gambling

Participants said they had stopped drinking because of gambling. As drinking had led to violence, they saw gambling as an improvement.

“Gambling is such a big thing for people here. They have to do it. People here went from drinking to gambling in the evenings.”

People said that if they stopped gambling, there would be nothing else to do but go back to drinking.

Lack of problem gambling information

People said that more information about the signs and symptoms of problem gambling would be useful because,

“People don’t know they are addicted to gambling.”

“Lot of times I thought I had a problem because I WANT to go and get that feeling of not wanting to leave the casino.”

Gambling parents feel guilt

One parent gambled frequently because he was unable to find other forms of entertainment and said,

“I feel bad. I feel sorry for the kids because they baby-sit each other when I gamble. They are at home but the supervision is not there and they take care of themselves.”

Generations of children miss healthy mentors

“When I was growing up, I saw my parents drunk - I didn’t want to be like that. Now the kids see us gambling.”

Lack of money for children’s basic needs

“My child has said to me ‘oh, you’re going to the casino, you’re going to go spend all the money then we’ll have no money.’ I have heard their cousins saying this too. I think it’s affecting the kids.”

Ineffective budgeting of gambling expenditures

“I try to set a budget but if I have my bank card and I know there’s money in there I will use it.”

Gambling regrets

“When I lose, I feel regretful: I feel like crying. Why did I do that for?”

Gambling and marital conflict

“Gambling has caused problems in my marriage.”

Community Recommendations

Participants recommended providing residents with counseling services to help those already addicted, and to provide information on gambling that might prevent future problem gambling. In addition, they recommended developing more non-gambling activities for people who wanted to reduce gambling activities.

Provide counseling services for problem gamblers

An overwhelming recommendation was to provide counseling services for problem gamblers.

“Well, the NNADAP [National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program] worker - this is the first time he has been here. Our community needs more support for problem gambling. Maybe one-on-one counseling would help.”

“There needs to be more counseling for gambling.”

Distribute information on gambling

Participants said that parents need to be aware of how addiction can run in families and in cycles, and how nightly gambling by parents may affect their children. They recommended sharing this information in, “... posters and pamphlets on problem gambling”, which could easily be sent by mail to this remote island community.

Work together to plan non-gambling activities

Community members recommended planning regular non-gambling evening activities for adults. Currently, people saw gambling as the only available activity. They recommended workshops and sharing circles to help people identify other activities. Individually, people suggested,

“Some things are needed to fill that time when people are bored and leave to go gambling. Maybe camping trips: More trips.”

“We should play baseball, have a rec. centre and movie nights.”

Plan traditional activities

Participants suggested reintroducing traditional activities that strengthened peoples’ connection with the land and with their traditions.

“More fishing, hunting, traditional stuff.”

“I think gamblers need other things to do. Maybe beading or something, you know, or learning how to make a traditional craft or something.”

Invite Elders to share traditional skills and teachings

“I know we have some Elders that know how to make things. It's a matter of asking them to see if they could come over here and teach us. Yeah: That would be nice instead of going to bingo.”

“We've had a few missionaries come over. They are okay; get the kids to socialize. It would be nice to have more activities like that for families like the missionaries plan, but not necessarily Christian activities. Traditional healing would be nice but what can we do to heal something like an addiction? We weren't raised really traditionally here, but we did get teachings from the Elders. Residential school was there though, gave us their teachings. Our parents didn't teach us how to dance and stuff. My mom went to residential school and her mom died really young, so she didn't know. We are trying to learn it on our own, but there are difficulties. We all understand smoking is bad and now the kids are scared of smudging - they think inhaling the smoke is like smoking.”

Conclusion

Residents on Windigo Island are concerned about problem gambling, and ask, “*What can be done to have this recognized as a problem in our community?*” Although they struggle with problem gambling, there is a strong bond between one another: “*everyone is family here. We all get along.*” This community has tremendous potential to work together with Regina Bay residents, to develop alternative social activities, gain access to counselors, and distribute written information on problem gambling.

Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining First Nation

Anishinabeg Summary

- neesh tah nah anishinabeg kee kah gah noh nah wug
- nah nah mitinah who cha gih nah waun kee hah ndah tah gay waut
- nee bih wah hih kit toh wug kah kin nah gaygo mah goh shcotch igo waut

Kah mah ngo shcotch igo waung nih

- 1) kee tah nih hah kuus kee nih bah chah hah tah gayin who zaum kih cha gih nih gay, me tsh hay newh who chauni may nduh mun
- 2) nooch noh ghom who zah me nah wug kah hah tah gay waut peech kee miniquay aut
- 3) kee toon nih toh min ih yay anishinabay chi gay win, kaween gayah bih kee zhaug it tizee min
- 4) kah kin nah hah wih yah oh mah mah nan ndoh moh ogo nah waun oh way kee hah tah gayng

Who noh way chih haun chih gah tay ghin

- 1) kah gah kay ndahsoot oh mah shkoo nih guning chi weechi igo wing
- 2) njit tah goh chew koh bihing oh way sah goh chih gah gah noh nih tihing
- 3) njit tah goh gihyay hih qway yoog chih weechi ig goh wing

- 4) njit tah goh giheyay chih anishinabay hah tah ting ka ween neen inah kay ayee kee iji mah nji toh taut tih see wug
- 5) njit tah goh giheyay chi mah shkah way nduh ming chih hah tah gay sih wung

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Community Description

Ochiichagwe' Babigo' Ining First Nation is a 20-minute drive north of Kenora. About 114 people (75 adults) live in this growing community. They have a new fire hall, police station, and a public marina that recently opened on the Winnipeg River. Each year the community hosts a summer Pow Wow. The nearest gambling venue is in Kenora.

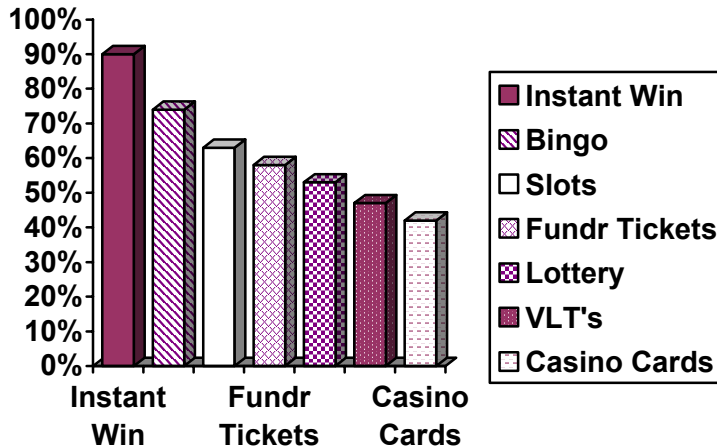
Profile of People Interviewed

Twenty people over the age of 18 were interviewed:

- 12 people were female;
- one person was an Elder;
- 63% gambled at least once a week;
- people spent about \$50 per sitting when gambling;
- more than 50% used a budget when they gambled, and most people excluded travel costs to gambling venues in their budget;
- 21% brought lucky items to help them win;
- 41% had at least one family member who was a problem gambler;
- 25% said it bothered them when they could not gamble;
- 11% pawned items to gamble;
- 32% used money to gamble instead of paying their bills;
- 21% were told by someone they had a gambling problem;
- 32% believed that they had a gambling problem;
- 37% gambled when they were drunk or high in the past year;
- 37% said gambling had caused them stress and anxiety in the past year;
- many people said that children took care of themselves when adults gambled;
- most people had engaged in at least five different gambling activities in the past year. The most common activities (in order) were playing instant win tickets, bingo, and slots.

- 21% had tried to stop gambling but were unsuccessful, because:
 - i. their friends/family pressure them to gamble;
 - ii. they were not sure if they actually had a problem;
 - iii. there was nothing else to do but gamble;
 - iv. they had a gambling addiction and could not control their behaviour.

Figure 2: Gambling activities played by participants in the past year (e.g., 90% bought instant win tickets, 74% played bingo, and 68% played slots).



Concerns about Gambling

Participants were concerned about gamblers' health and financial stress. They expressed concern over people replacing alcohol abuse with problem gambling, and the impact that gambling was having on family and community relationships.

Overspending on gambling is affecting people's health

"Gambling affects you health-wise. Mentally, physically, spiritually, all of those. Physically... you get knots in your stomach. You get side aches. This is from overspending. You're thinking all of the time, 'where am I going to get the money now?' Spiritually...I've done something wrong and given in to it, then I'm hard on myself for doing it."

"... when I lose, I feel awful: I feel depressed. I go feel I have to go have a smoke or if I lose I'll have a drink or something."

"There are times when we're really low because we're spending money we haven't got or we've dipped into other areas we shouldn't have. I get stressed to the max and I try to win it back to alleviate it. It doesn't work though: It makes it worse. It brings that stress level up even higher. There are times when I think I'll win, but then you hit

the bottom pretty hard if you don't. I get angry at myself for having spent money that I didn't have in the first place. I get depressed. I wonder what I'm going to do to pay the bills off that I used the money gambling for."

"You often turn to something that's going to placate you, it's going to make you feel a little bit more comfortable, a little bit better. You don't think that well; if I keep gambling, it's not going to make anything better. It makes me feel good now, and I want to feel good now. You don't think about feeling bad tomorrow, you just think about now."

Gambling poverty and charity

"I wish people could just stop...they always say, 'Oh, I wish I had enough money to go get this, go get that, to do this and that'. And once they get money, they all go to bingo or take off to Winnipeg and blow their money...I wish they'd realize. I think gambling is no good because you're just wasting money: Time and money."

"I think about the First Nation circle. When we go gambling, the light side of it is that we all say we are donating kind of thing, so we put humor to it. But there are times when I think 'oh no, I didn't win. How am I going to pay a bill."

"Any kind of money they get they will go to Winnipeg and gamble with. I love them dearly, but I don't think that they recognize their problem. I really don't. It's hurt them and they argue about it and then they're short of money and they live on a fixed income. How on earth do you gamble like that when you live on a fixed income?"

"You can see it in the community; people spend their money on gambling. My friend's wife spends at least \$50.00 a day. Now, if you're spending \$50.00 a day, times seven, that's \$350.00 a week times four, you know, it comes like close to \$1,300.00 a month. When you're living in poverty, how do you spend \$1,300.00 a month?"

"People's lives are being ruined by gambling now. If it's not alcohol or drugs, now they're gambling...they're keeping themselves in a state of poverty."

Financial stress

"You see people struggling on whatever. You can plainly see they're struggling and then they're still going out and spending money on gambling. People who haven't got money, they're bumming off family members to go gambling, and I think it sucks. It's just a drain of money. That's how it's affected the community, it's draining people's money."

Gambling as a substitute addiction

Participants observed people replacing alcohol abuse with problem gambling, and said that it kept them in poverty and feeling desperate. They said people needed to resolve their addiction by healing their pain, so that the community could also heal.

“I think gambling has a powerful effect on people in our community. I mean, just within my own family I feel like my in-laws have substituted alcoholism for gambling, and it becomes worse and worse as the years go on. It's just like an addiction, any other kind of addiction. I mean, they can't wait 'til the end of the month; they can't wait 'til, you know, that direct deposit is in their bank account.”

“I had an addiction to drinking and cigarettes 'til I was 25, then I gave them both up. Something had to replace the drinking: It was eating. I ate like crazy. I got to be 250 pounds. Something had to replace the cigarettes, and for me it was bingo.”

Gambling initially began as a fund-raiser, and got out of control

“I've gone and gambled myself... if you are in more control of it, it can be a good thing. You can use it for fund raising mostly for your community. But the other side of it is the majority of people who are gambling in this community have lost sight of that. There isn't that control: It's out of control. And like I say, it's just not the gambling; it's the gambling, drinking and drugs that all go hand in hand. I don't know that would be a safe thing to come out and say right out in front the community at this point, but that's how I see it.”

“I gamble as a challenge. Yeah, put myself to the test. Just see if I can handle it. You know, if I win, you know, I'll keep playing more, and sometimes I can't stop, and then I'll just spend all my money. But, you know, that's why if I have a friend with me she'll pull me back and they'll take me away.”

“People can get desperate people when they have an addiction to something. They put all their energy into that instead of using that energy to better themselves or their community. It is the same with gambling. People in this community will do anything to have enough money so that they can buy a 'starter pack' at bingo, and when they are there, they see everyone from their community. It is a meeting place for people to socialize.”

Winning is exciting and fun

“Going gambling is something like an excuse to get away from what I'm doing, you know, and that's something people do. I know when I first started bingo I remember I went there not knowing what to expect, but when I won I had an adrenaline rush. You know, and I thought, 'Wow, that was so cool. You know, 'Bingo!' Yeah. And then there was that adrenaline rush. And then I liked that feeling so every time I got close,

you always got, you know, you got excited. And used to always go back for that feeling.”

Gambling has the potential of becoming a problem

As an adult child of alcoholic parents, the realization that gambling could become a problem occurred when,

“... I was going to a Stampede and they had some wheel thing, you put a quarter in, you win 10 to 1. I was having incredible luck at this thing, every time I put down money, I won. So much so that I remember the guy running it came over because he thought the guy spinning the wheel was letting me win. And then I can remember feeling this like incredible sense of power, I could win all this money, look. I think I won \$75.00 and it was all in quarters. So I just felt really POWERFUL! I thought, well, I could win a hundred and fifty if I bet all this – and then that’s when I started to think – ‘oh, that’s how that starts – I’m going to stop now. I better stop now because I WANT this money’. I didn’t have seventy-five bucks when I started and I want this \$75.00 now, and I realized I could lose it. I felt so good about winning it and I could feel that feeling leaving me because I wanted to spend more. I don’t know that I thought it was an addiction, I just know it didn’t feel right, it didn’t feel good, I didn’t like the way it made me feel. And ever since then I’ve never ever been to the casinos in Winnipeg. I don’t play bingo.”

Disillusionment, colonization, and assimilation

“I think First Nation people are not Third World people, almost fourth world...there's a real whole different sense of poverty and disillusionment within communities plus social and economic things that have happened in communities that, I think, have resorted to this. I understand what leads people to gambling, but I don't accept it because I think there are other things that we could do other than gamble and throw our money away.”

Helplessness created by colonization and assimilation

Some participants said problem gambling, and other addictions, is due in part to the helplessness people feel as a result of colonization and assimilation.

“Different people from the United Nations who come and visit these communities are astounded that these First Nation communities are living like people in Soweto, South Africa and the only difference between us and them is that we have a parcel of land that is supposed to be for us. People forget at one time Anishinabe owned the whole country. To put people in this little space of land, then to tell people they can't hunt and fish and trap, which was the economy. The white people say they came here and Aboriginals had nothing. We had an economy! We were trading, we were bartering, it just wasn't with money, and people survived like that.... Now people don't know how to handle their money because we had no money. When you trade and say ‘well, ...

you've got fish and I have rice so we're going to eat tonight'. That works. When you tell people you can't hunt and fish and trap, and they have a language barrier, English is definitely a second language, how are they supposed to compete out in that world the same as you? I mean, it just doesn't happen, it's just not fair."

"I always say that non-Native people signed a Treaty too; we didn't sign it with ourselves. A Treaty is an agreement you make with another nation and the other nation is supposed to honour it too. We're always told we're not honouring the Treaty. I'm sorry, I find that hard to believe. I think we are. But who else did we sign the Treaty with? I think it's led to people's gambling, people's addiction -- because you feel so helpless."

"How do you empower yourself? And the people that have oppressed you really don't want you to be empowered because you might find out what they did. I hear all across the country, First Nations people healing themselves, which is wonderful. But how come white people don't think they have to heal themselves? I mean, they were pretty abusive. They are financially, emotionally, psychologically, and physically abusive to each other and to everybody else. I think that's led to a breakdown in our social and economic structure and people have addictions because they feel so helpless."

A focus on gambling is severing ties with our grandchildren

Gambling activity is weakening the social bonds between generations. Gambling grandparents are passing on gambling skills rather than traditional skills to the younger generations.

"So I don't know how we help the youth of our community. It scares me: It scares me because I'm a grandmother and I don't have an answer. And it scares me when I look at my grandson; that makes me cry. I think our grandchildren are going to ask us what did we do for them, what did we leave them, and we're going to say, 'Nothing.' We're going to have to stand there and say 'Nothing.' It hurts me to think that that's going to happen."

Problem gambling creates marital conflicts

"I'd say it's a lot of stress, a lot of worry, that kind of thing 'cause if [my partner] doesn't win, she gets mad. When she brings that anger home, you know, 'I didn't do good,' before you know it, it's kind of like a bossy attitude, bully attitude and they start taking it out in the home. Comments like 'You're a loser.' It just gets abusive. So you do your best not to aggravate the situation. So you just leave it for a bit and come back hopefully to talk about it and then give it a chance and say 'I understand you took out what you needed to take out, but now it's time for me to heal.' And the other person says 'Leave me alone. I don't want to talk about it no more.' So that's what I say, like, gambling has -- you know, it hurts."

Problem gamblers make comments like,

“When I win that million, you know, you can have everything and I’ll leave you, ’ just loser comments, you know – they just hurt. And when you’re gambling you don’t realize that you hurt people like that too.”

“I think that gambling within our community is one of the biggest factors that has created so much chaos. When I say chaos it’s more like there’s family violence issues. A lot of family violence issues. It’s a big concern here. The community has become really, really closed. It’s not as open as it used to be several years ago. There’s no trust. There’s a lot of fear. Gambling is a big piece of it and what goes along with it is drinking. Drinking is a big thing here in the community as well.”

Children are missing healthy mentors

There was also concern that so much gambling:

“... sets a bad example for the children. I guarantee probably about 80, 90 per cent of the kids that grow up on this reserve are going to do the same as their parents, they’re going to gamble, gamble, gamble. And it’s great if you’re good at it, but obviously the odds are against you, so I think it sucks. It’s a disease in this community.”

“Gambling is a drain, it’s a disease, it sets a bad example for the kids, and in theory it could make children feel they come second, like, because parents will be spending money on gambling and stuff.”

Gambling parents neglect their children

Community members were very concerned that parents gambled too often and spent too little time with their children.

“I think gambling is a bad influence when people go at the expense of spending time with their kids. I’ve seen that. What kind of message does that send to the kid: The child? It seems like an addiction if you have to put gambling ahead of other things like family and friends.”

“Where the parents and stuff could be with the children, like going to baseball games and stuff like that, they tend to go to bingo or go to Winnipeg to go play slots. So it’s the children that miss out. People talk about going to Winnipeg with their kids to spend time with them, but actually, they’re not going to be with them all night. They’re actually going to play slots.”

Excessive use of babysitters

“I see there’s gambling out there and I think it affects some of the children in the

community, because I baby-sit sometimes for people that go to bingos and that. So I know that's there."

"It's okay to get a babysitter, but all the time? And then to turn around and wonder why your children are misbehaving or acting out -- that's what kids do when they don't get their emotional needs fulfilled."

"...older children are looking after the younger ones. To a point, it's okay, but not all the time. Like, a couple of hours once a week or so is not too bad because the children are intermingling with each other, but not like all weekend long! The parents come home and then leave, come home and leave, and the kids are always watching the kids more or less everyday."

Children are left alone while parents gamble

"I just think they're too young to be left alone. Yeah, 'cause it takes away that time for the parents to be with their kids. Yet they just go off running to bingo. I think it's just from bingo."

"The kids are fending for themselves. On many occasions I've seen children sitting outside their homes. A lot of them like I say are fending for themselves, having to feed themselves, look after each other. Again, it's just not the gambling. I think the gambling and the drinking and the drugs go hand in hand. So there is a lot of what I call lock-key children who are left to take care of themselves and each other. And yeah, it's been sad to see."

"Children are being parents to themselves. It's not healthy. I used to work with kids in the community. The scenario out here is if we had an activity going on, like, say like last night if there was an activity there, the people would drop off their kids and then take off to bingo. And we've had problems sometimes finding the parents afterward because they, won big and took off to the bars in Winnipeg for the night. Then the kids would be left. Some of it's really bad. So the kids learn that too. So they're mimicking their parents and the parents wonder why the kids are the way they are."

"Children are all over the place I guess you can say, like, they're all over the reserve. There's a lot of bingo players in this community going to the other reserves to play, so I think it does have an effect on them. The parents aren't there. We got a river going by here and there's a danger of somebody having a crash or drowning."

Parents gamble instead of supervising homework

"They're not being parented or they're not doing their homework, because no parent is there to be vigilant and say, 'Well, did you do your homework?'. You know, just

because your daughter is 11 or 12 years old doesn't mean that she should be by herself all evening while you go to play bingo.”

Children plead with parents to stay home

Some community members talked about their children’s protests to being left alone too often.

“Well, my daughter, she doesn't like me going anywhere. She's seven... there's times where I want to go to that big bingo or just to go to bingo...she'll get upset, but I'll still go. So, I think that's just hurting her. You're going above her just to please yourself. She just says, 'Oh, why can't you stay home? Why do you always have to go bingo!' or she'll just cry. But I'll still go. I'll just leave her if she's in the room. I'll just go.”

Residential school experiences broke down parenting skills

Some participants observed that individuals who went to residential schools and foster homes might not have learned healthy parenting skills, and might think that it is normal to leave children at home alone while gambling.

“If you've never been parented, for example, residential schools, foster home situations, how do you know that's not right? And you see everybody else around you doing the very same thing. Oh, that's normal. It becomes normal. It becomes VERY normal. The pain of residential schools, being abused, being taken away from your families resulted in a lack of parenting and emotional nurturing, and I think that residential schools and foster homes have allowed people to not know how to parent.”

“People said some parents had not learned to cope with those earlier experiences. If you're fighting a pain and you're not processing it in a healthy way with a counselor, then you do anything to take the pain away. I don't intend to say well, I'm going to become addicted to gambling, or I'm going to become addicted to alcohol or drugs, or whatever, but it just happens because you can't handle it. You don't know what else to do: You don't know who else to turn to or who to look at. So you say well, maybe if I just go and do this, it's fun, take my mind off it and boom, you're addicted.”

Community Recommendations

People recommended respecting the qualifications of trained community counselors and encouraging individuals committed to improving the situation to stay motivated. They recommended introducing small, confidential sharing circles, women’s discussion groups, and reintroducing traditional activities.

Value the qualifications of local counselors

“You get more qualified people in the community, you educate them and then they are not given work. People have to look elsewhere, off the community.”

Provide higher-level support for problem gamblers

People said the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP) worker does not have enough power to make change.

“The NNADAP is a referral source. I don’t really think that’s enough to help with gambling, drinking, drugs, family violence. It is a band-aid solution. We need more.”

Plan small, confidential sharing circles

“What can be done? I think maybe something like what we’re doing now - starting maybe small circles, allowing the people to express themselves in a confidential matter.”

Respect confidentiality

“...confidentiality, you say that word, they go ‘yeah right, confidentiality’. It goes in one ear and out the other in regards to gossip and stuff like that. It doesn’t stay where it’s supposed to. So it’s going to take a long, long time I think before this whole thing can correct itself.”

Encourage women to take responsibility for our community activities again

“We’re trying to get the women together again... to discuss having more activities in the community. Activities for youth, for the Elders. I’m really hoping that this time the women can do something for our community. It’s been too long that our community has been just stuck, lost, not just individually lost but lost as whole community.”

“It’s been said so many times that women are supposed to be the backbone of the community, are supposed to be the support, are supposed to empower each other, are supposed to empower all the ages. And this is something that hasn’t been done, again like I say, since the gate went up. I really do see us dying if we don’t do something... I’m really hoping that this will turn itself around, you know, with the help of the women.”

Plan traditional gambling activities

“People played a game ...called Omaha ...they used to have bartering stones ...somebody would end up with some of my bartering stones and I’d end up with some of theirs, but you didn’t fight over it because they weren’t essentials. That was traditional.”

“There's a moccasin game too and you just play with stones, find the pea under the three shells ... that was traditional. There was no money that exchanged hands. People didn't ruin their lives by playing these games.”

Follow traditional teachings

“I guess my dilemma in the community is we try and live traditional lives, be traditional people. I don't think gambling is part of that...”

“I think that spirituality has a big thing to do with this. Like they say, it's mind, body and spirit. The people's spirit here has been broken big time. I'm not sure what it's going to take to see that spirit of community come to life again. I don't know what it is but I'm really hoping that the answer will come soon.”

Keep hopeful, stay motivated, be patient, and “keep planting the seed”

“The women in the community are struggling with problem gambling as well. We all know what the other is doing. It's such a close community you can't get away from it. But at the same time I think that we all know we want to have a healthy community again. At least this is what I'm hoping. And to me as long as there's that little bit of hope then why not. You know?”

“There's a good solid group of people who really want to move ahead, I really believe that, but we're not enough. There's not enough of us, and when those people who really want to move ahead try and get together, and do different things, there's a whole group of those people that are against it that won't come. And the same can happen the other way, that group of people who are really into gambling or unhealthy living, they put on something and I don't always come because I'm tired of doing all that...The split in our community I think is because of that.”

People recommended being patient, as it takes a long time to turn things around.

“This community was once positive. I'm not saying totally positive, but a lot more lively, happier. It has completely turned upside-down, and it's going to take a long time for it to turn itself back up the right way.”

Conclusion

“Keep planting the seed.”

Migisi Sahgaigan First Nation (Eagle Lake)

Anishinabeg Summary

- mih twaso nah nun anishinabeg kee kah gah noh nah wug
- nah nah mitinah – ngoh twaulk who cha gih nah waun kee hah ndah tah gay waut

- nee win ih kit toh wug zahnug igo waut, nah nun who gee kah qway kish kitoon nah
- wah chih shquat tah waut kee hah tah gay waut

Kah ma ngo shcotch ih goh waung

- 1) sih nug say wug ha wih yah kee nih bah chi hah tah gay waut
- 2) kah gwah tah gih say wug shuniah kee nih bah chi hah tah gay waut
- 3) kaween kay yah bih sasg it tihzee wug kah koh mah chi hah tah gay waut
- 4) chi weechi indwah hih gih kah zahnug igo waut kah hah tah gay waut

Who noh way chihaun chih gah tay ghin

- 1) njit tah goh anishinabay oh mah hih shkoo nih gunning chi weechi aut kah zahnug igo waut kah hah tah gayng
- 2) injit tah goh chi kah kih nah amah goh waung oh way hah wih yah hayshi saat kee zahnug egoot kee hah tah gayng oh mah Migisi Sahgaigan (mazah nah ay gah nun chi bah bah hih njee chi gah tay gin wah kah ih gahning)
- 3) njit tah goh chi bah bah hih nshaung oh mah shkoo nih guning, kay goh sah goh chi hih nji chi gayng, tah bih shkoo sah goh kay goh chi weechi in dwah hah be noh chee wug
- 4) chi gah nah way nih min dwah hah be noh chee wug kee hah ndah hah tah gay waut who mama, whotaytay hih yaun
- 5) njit tah goh chih zah gah sway it tih waut hih gih gah kin nah waut tah nghiz zoh waut
- 6) shuniah nin nah ndha way mah non, chew who shih toh waung kichi wah kaw igun kay nzah waut sah goh hih gih anishinabeg chi weechi indwah kah zahnug igo waut kah hah tah gayng

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Community Description

Migisi Sahgaigan First Nation is a friendly lakeside community located a half hour drive west of Dryden, Ontario. It is proud to be home to an elementary and junior high school that is high school compatible, an arena, and the first “healthy house” in North America. This home is built using environmentally friendly technology and materials, and is powered by wind and sun. The plan is to build similar homes throughout northern First Nation communities.

Sahgaigan First Nation holds an evening bingo Wednesday through Sunday at the

community arena, where smoke-free bingo is played upstairs. Revenues from bingo provide essential funding for numerous activities, including arena maintenance, school functions, youth hockey, family and crisis support (e.g., financial backing for funeral expenses), uninsured medical expenses, and the youth centre. Revenues are also used to provide a regular social activity for residents.

Profile of People Interviewed

Fifteen people over the age of 26 were interviewed:

- 11 people were female;
- two people gambled daily, four people gambled up to six times per week, five people gambled one to three times a month, and four gambled rarely or never;
- people spent about \$50 to \$100 dollars each time they gambled;
- most people gambled for fun/recreation, and some men gambled for the challenge;
- 20% used lucky items to help them win, including lucky rocks and bingo dabbers;
- 20% used secret strategies to help them win;
- 60% set a budget when they gambled;
- 27% kept track of how much they won and/or lost;
- two people said it really bothered them when they could not gamble;
- 27% spent money on gambling instead of paying bills;
- four people believed that they had a gambling problem;
- five people tried to stop gambling, but only two had been successful;
- barriers to quitting or reducing time spent gambling included:
 - i. pressure from gambling friends to join them;
 - ii. reliance on gambling to pay bills; and
 - iii. alleviation of loneliness by going to the gambling venue.

Concerns about Gambling

While gambling has an important and positive impact on the community of Migisi Sahgaigan First Nation, residents were concerned about its negative effects on families and on those experiencing financial problems. Participants were concerned that people were now less connected with each other and that there was insufficient support for problem gamblers.

Gambling affects the whole family

“Gambling affects the whole family structure for sure: The extended family usually.”

Problem gamblers are unaware of their problem

“When I found out that I had a gambling problem was when my little boy was starting school. I used to go every night right from the time he was born, and I thought that I needed to be at home for him during school nights. Like from Sunday to Thursday I made a commitment that I would stay home with him so that I could help him at school. I could bath him. I could put him to bed at a proper hour. And that's when I started to realize that gambling was a problem for me because I was having withdrawals and I was angry. It wasn't a good time, and it took me about a year to get over that anger. Eventually it just got easier and easier and I got to the point where when I was in the bingo hall I didn't want to be there. I felt I was wasting time and I could be doing other things. And I even got to the point where I knew that I needed to be with my son, and that's how it happened for me. He became more important than the bingo game. Today I feel okay.”

Some gamblers have financial problems

Participants said that some people have financial problems because of gambling.

“I know a couple of people who have had their phone disconnected and their hydro. They have to run to the Band to get help for their hydro because they'd spent all their money on bingo.”

“It's an expensive sickness.”

“I know in the past– I was tired a lot at work. I think I had a lot of worry while I worked because of financial – like fulfilling my financial obligations.”

Gambling affects our friendships

People said that they were less connected with their friends now than before gambling became popular.

“Gambling can affect your co-workers. It can affect your friendships because they can come to an end if they keep bleeding you for money. Your friend is no longer your friend. They're using you for whatever they can get out of you. It can cause hatreds. It can cause jealousies when somebody wins and the other guy doesn't. In small communities like the First Nations there's enough problems without adding things like that to it.”

Gambling affects respect for Elders

“I know of people that almost prostitute themselves to get money. It's very off-colour for that man or woman to be hanging around a bingo hall for instance shimmying up to the guy saying, ‘Aren't you going to pay my way in?’ When this is a professional person that should be highly respected as an Elder and for the profession they do. Things like that, like it degrades people. It can take you from your profession to

nothing. Like it can cause losses beyond repair that take you a lifetime to build up, you can lose as quick as a wink."

Bingo breaks up family activities

"The Family Wellness Camp, the purpose of it is to bring the parents and children, the grandparents, everybody together. Around bingo time, everyone clears out."

We lack support for problem gamblers

"Like there's no Aboriginal gambling counselors from between Thunder Bay to Winnipeg. If you can find me one, I'd be surprised. That's an 800 mile radius. North, west, south, east, there's none."

"The ones that seriously do have a problem with gambling here -- I don't believe there's any help for them."

"I had a gambling problem and I felt like I was alone. I didn't think anybody else was going through the same thing as me. I thought I was just alone and like I felt like I didn't have anybody to talk to or to turn to. I had to sort of help myself, like do it on my own, by myself at home."

Gambling Recommendations

People recommended hiring counselors, distributing information about gambling, and planning activities for people interested in doing something other than gambling. They also advised the leadership to discuss this issue and to set aside money for a traditional problem gambling treatment centre. In addition, participants stressed the need to ensure children were being cared for while their parents were gambling.

Hire counselors to talk with and to plan workshops

The community needs an Aboriginal problem gambling counselor to help people who have gambling problems.

"I think there should be a program within the community -- like a gambling counselor or a gambling awareness sort of program in the community. People want to talk about it. I mean like you probably noticed that whoever you interviewed in the last few days wants to learn more about what they can do. What can we do? Do we need a worker here? You know what I mean? So they can recognize when they're having a problem or in terms of helping themselves they'd have someone that would be here to help them with their problem. I think that for recommendations -- we need a worker."

"When people get destitute and become depressed and suicidal it's a real issue, and

there's nowhere right now for them to go or for anybody to talk to. It's almost like it's a helpless situation, and we could lose community members because there is no help. And my recommendation is to bring it in: Not just at Eagle Lake, at all the Reserves. Or have them off Reserve in places such as Friendship Centres or somewhere people can access a worker to help them out .”

Offer a Gamblers Anonymous program

“I would like to see a program set up for gambling, gamblers anonymous, gambling addictions because like I said, I've never seen any type of program, or if there's somebody already working on it but I haven't seen anything.”

Hire Aboriginal gambling counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists

“You need team work. You need crisis intervention. You need all kinds of intervention but right now we don't have much of a team. We need a gambling counselor big time. So do all the other First Nations from what people tell me. More workers, front line workers, other service providers, community health reps, nurses, whatever. It's a well-known fact that problem gamblers need somewhere to go and people to help them. My recommendations? That the leadership continues to work on awareness and having a gambling counselor available. The only counselor I know of in this area, say Dryden, is Sunset Counseling. And my experience with that is when they end up with Native people at Sunset Counseling for addictions or gambling or post-traumatic stress disorder, all kinds of things that affect a lot of the First Nations people and it's beyond them. They don't know how to help them. They're saying you need somebody more than a counselor. You need a psychologist or a psychiatrist. Like this is way too much for me. So they don't even have services in Dryden for Native or Aboriginal people. It's strictly mainstream that they can help. They can't really help Aboriginal people. It's an under sight on the part of Dryden. Mayor and Council don't have a clue or don't care about Aboriginal people. We're only 20 minutes away but you can't just send them to this non-Native gambling counselor that doesn't have a clue about coming to the Reserve, going to the casinos, whatever and how life for Aboriginal people is. It's not the same as for non-Aboriginal people. But yet that awareness isn't there.”

“A gambling counseling service might make people have their eyes opened to the realities of what they're doing every night for four hours. It doesn't seem like much but that's four hours that you could be, you know, going to a movie with your kids or playing Monopoly or popping popcorn and watching a movie. That's four hours you don't get back.”

“We should have -- we should have a gambling counselor. It is a sickness. People need help.”

Provide gambling information: Workshops and brochures

Participants recommended distributing self-awareness questionnaires, brochures identifying the symptoms of problem gambling, information on upcoming gambling workshops, and prevention tips to everyone's home.

"We need a gambling counselor; workshops, and information workshops. We don't have anyone here who's a gambling counselor or we might but I've never seen them do any types of workshops or information sessions or I've never even seen pamphlets around for that so I don't even know if there's a program already set up for that..."

"To me there's not enough awareness or education."

"If we had self awareness questionnaires or booklets or pamphlets or something to give to people so they can realize that they do have a problem. It would have to be anonymous. I think it's just self-awareness, some sort of way of getting people to admit that they do have a problem. But then again it would have to be delivered door to door because people don't just pick those kinds of things up. If you have them dropped off at your house, you can read it and go from there."

Offer life skills and budgeting workshops for gamblers

"I think if we had a gambling addictions worker I think that would definitely be a positive thing. And not only for counseling ones that end up in a bind but just for other things like life skills and the budgeting, to bring in some kind of budgeting courses. You have to be really creative in bringing those kind of workshops to the community or you're going to end up as the only person sitting at the workshop, because nobody wants to go to a gambling or a budgeting workshop. You know, so you have to find creative ways to phrase it. If we had a worker that could focus on that alone it would -- I think it would definitely benefit the community."

"Some people haven't had budgeting skills or any kind of life skills training programs in their entire life, so something like this would -- would maybe help out and it's never too late to learn."

Plan more non-gambling activities with children and families in general

Many people recommended developing more alternative places to go, planning non-gambling activities, parents spending more time with their children, and communicating or sharing between the people living within the community.

"What's needed? I think somewhere for the people to be doing recreation at night. And the youth, more activities for them."

"Parents need to get involved with their kids. There's more children than parents and it's a family camp. Family wellness, not children wellness and youth wellness."

Reduce gambling activities or cancel bingo on alternate days

“I believe in everything in moderation and that you can have too much of a good thing. So if people would just cut back maybe, go down to bingo once a week, twice a week, then they would have more time for family stuff. I know it takes away from bingo fundraising but there's always people coming to fundraise. I mean people are always coming to play bingo.”

“Maybe at the management or the leadership level they could decide to coordinate something where they could maybe cancel bingo on alternate days -- so people could be at the Family Wellness Cam.”

Ensure that the children are looked after while their parents gamble

“Something should be put there for the kids while these parents are at bingo because there's no one watching them. There should be events happening for kids while the bingos are going on so they're being kind of watched. Like the youth centre being open. And like the bingo should pay that I think. It's like a babysitting service but not.”

Invite the leadership to talk about developing the positive sides of gambling

“It'd be nice to have leadership participate in a an individual interview, but also as a group. So that each one has their perspective ...and hear each other. And then maybe even make it bigger where like leadership is sitting with the community on that. Because I really believe that it's not drinking anymore. I believe it's gambling. And it's sort of going, filtering down to our children and our children are being affected by it. We don't think they are but they are.”

“Everything has to revolve around bingo, and I think it should be turned around. I think it needs to revolve around people. And sometimes I wish people could sit down and talk about these things. Like the leadership. What's really important here in life. Our children -- that we role model to them, like that togetherness and being together, that attending these functions, that they're important and that we want to be here for them.”

Redistribute jobs more equitably

“I think the bingo jobs should go to the people who have no jobs and need that 50 bucks to get milk and diapers and what not instead of the people who get paid every two weeks and working bingo is just spare cash. So I think if they switched the work around, the leadership did something about that then I think things would improve.”

Fund traditional healing treatment centres for problem gamblers

“I recommend the government puts out some money for treatment centres for Aboriginal people. Not just the mainstream ones that are out there. Add a little wing to it. I mean an actual treatment centre for Aboriginal people with gambling addiction problems. Because there's traditional healing and there's mainstream healing and some people don't want to go to just one. They want to go to what they can get the most out of. Even in Canada, I don't even know where you would go .”

Conclusion

Participants in this community are determined to make a change. They share the following story of a parent who was able to understand her fears, got control of her gambling problem, and turned her life around. People strongly recommended establishing a counseling support system to help others who are unable to accomplish this significant change on their own.

“I have got to tell you this story because this is where I changed. I got kind of a spiritual awakening about gambling. Oh, we had a big fight, my husband and I because I wanted him to stay home and watch our son so I could go to bingo. We got into a big fight. I was mad. I was crying and he went to bingo.”

“I was doing dishes there looking out the window. And the sun was just going down and the tears just started falling. I was feeling so lonely. I was feeling lost. My son was playing in the living room/kitchen there. I was thinking why am I feeling this way? Why am I so angry? I should be happy that I'm home with my little boy. We're safe. We have a nice home. I got my little boy. Why am I feeling this way? And then it came back to me. When I was a little girl I was always left with my brothers and sisters and that was the time that I used to get scared and lonely -- at sundown, because I knew it was going to get dark. And I don't know, I just had a spiritual awakening. I don't know what it was but something happened to me that night.”

“From that time on I was at peace. I could be home with my little my boy. For me that was where I began to change. I didn't go through that anger or that resentment toward my husband anymore. It was just like I'm okay now. See you after. And I would go and do my own thing with my son. And I still do that. It's that pain that you got to go through of being alone and, oh God -- like for me, I know that's where I came to peace with my gambling. I'm still like that today. I don't have to go. I've got more important things to do.”

Stanjikoming First Nation

Anishinabeg Summary

- neesh tah nah nih swih anishinabe kee kah gah noh nah wug
- hah nund kah gee kah gah noh nin dwah nih swih – newin hah bih noh chee wug whoh tah yah wah ah aug
- bey shig hah tah kaween hah tah gay see mih nig kah kee kah gah noh nindwah
- nah nah mitinah – ngoh twauk nah nah mitinah whoh cha gih nah waun kee hah ndah hah tah gay waut
- whoh tah baun whoh wah bah chi toh nah wah kee hah ndah hah tah gay waut
- nih swih hih git toh wug kee pih talk koh shi noh waut kih hah tah gay waut
- hah pih tah hih kit toh wug who weechi yah aun kee zahnug igo waut
- hah nund hih kit toh wug kih zahnug igo waut kee hah tah gayng
- hah nund hih kit toh wug kee nzay ghizi waut
- hah nund hih kit toh wugkee bah nay toh waut chi nih bah waut
- hah shi neesh hih git tah waug gee gah gway poh nih toh waut, bey shig hay tah whoh gee kish kit toon

Kah mah ngo shcotch igo waung

- 1) “nih bah tah come mih ghiz zih wug kah hah tah ting, kaween pah biz kayn kayn nji gah see wug hah bih noh chee wug”
- 2) mih ih yay ngee yay hay kit toh waut kee hih shqah mih nih qway aut hay shi mah chiyah tah gay waut kee shpin kee hih shquah hah tah gay waut, me hay kit toh waut chi mah chi mih nih qway aut
- 3) gnoh ting hih nzhah goh chi igoog chi hih zha aun kah hah tah gayng, whoh zaum hih koh kee whoh nzhoo nih hahm sih aun ndib oh goh koh kah booh zih nit tah wih yaut, kaween koh noh nday hih kit
- 4) kaween gay goh hah pichi oh mah chi hih nji chi gayng, “ kichi waasah noh pih meeng ndishi tah min, hah pah nay hih nah nah gah tah way ndaun ih gah tah nah tah gayng, whoh zaum kaun gay goh oh mah chi hih nji chi gay aun”

Whoh noh way chihaun chi gah tay ghin

- 1) njit tah goh chi kah kih nah amah goh waung oh way hah wih yah hayshi saat kee zahnug egoot kee hah tah gayng, hah wih yah chi be njah waut oh mah shkoo nih guning chi bih gah gah noh nih goh wing
- 2) njit tah goh gay goh oh mah shkoo nih gunning kay goh chi hih njit chi gayng
- 3) chi weechi indwah hih gih yay kah zahnug igo waut kee hah tah gayng

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Community Description

Stanjikoming First Nation is located on Rainy Lake, about a 1 ½-hour drive in the summer or ½-hour drive by winter ice road to Fort Frances, Ontario. Twelve years ago, before the summer road was built, this was a remote island community; today, approximately 150 people live here and it remains a traditional community. Stanjikoming has a Roundhouse and annual June and December Pow Wows. There are no gambling facilities and no stores to sell lottery or scratch tickets. Residents travel to Fort Frances, Kenora, Warroad, and Winnipeg to gamble.

Profile of People Interviewed

Twenty-three people over the age of 18 were interviewed:

- 13 people were female;
- most people had three to four children;
- four people gambled everyday, nine gambled up to six days a week, eight gambled a few times a month, and one person never gambled;
- people spent about \$50 to \$150 each time they gambled;
- people spent about \$1,060 per month on gambling (\$12,620 per year);
- people traveled by car about 40 hours per month to gamble;
- three people had been in a car accident while driving somewhere to gamble;
- almost half had a family member with a gambling problem;
- more than one-quarter used money to gamble instead of paying bills;
- 60% said they had a gambling problem;
- 70% said their gambling had caused them stress or anxiety;
- more than half said their gambling had caused sleep problems;
- 50% had tried to quit gambling.

Concerns about Gambling

Participants were concerned that gamblers were neglecting their children. They were also concerned about the social pressure to gamble. They said that it seemed like people were switching from other addictions to gambling. People felt that there were not enough non-gambling activity options.

Children are missing healthy mentors and adult supervision

There was a strong feeling in this community that the children are truly suffering from adult problem gambling. The children want to spend time with adults, learn from them, and contribute to the community. However, they are being left alone too often without supervision and emotional care.

“They’ll say there’s somebody there old enough to look after the younger ones and they have enough to eat, that they’ll be busy the whole time that they’re gone. That’s

what they make themselves believe. That's not always the case... I actually seen where those kids that have absolutely nothing to do and you ask them have they eaten today? Have they had breakfast or supper? And they say no. So we usually bring them over for some kind of meal. And they usually like to help out in whatever I'm doing. For some reason they feel like they have to. They have to help me. But I don't ask. I just let them know that there's things they can do -- like even cutting grass. There was a lot of them used to come over all the time because I was one of the ones that had kept them busy. Kept them occupied. I'd have them come over and they knew that I was going to be providing them with a barbecue or drinks and they'd cut grass. We'd go and cut wood for some of the Elders or the Round House whenever we needed fires .”

“So they're just eager to have some adult supervision. Even though it could just be going swimming. They're just happy when there's somebody there with them. It's a pretty bad situation at times because the kids -- you always see them up early in the morning and not really having anything to eat or anything to do until possibly some of the adults come back from the casino .”

“Well, the kids are bored, you know, they don't have nothing to do because all the adults are darting off to bingo, and the casino.”

“People are always gambling and the kids are feeling left out...I heard a kid say ‘I wish I was old enough so I could go to bingo.’ I was wondering what he was talking about. Why? And he was like, ‘well, my mum and them are always gambling, like going to bingo and stuff. I like to be with my mum, you know.”

“Since I stopped gambling as much they're talking more because we're home and they sit by me everyday. When we sit and watch TV they'll sit beside me and I'll say I like that. They're by their mum too. And they do all their chores around the house, they clean the house and stuff like that. So it's kind of like a better environment for them. We used to say, ‘No, we can't afford that.’ Now they get it.”

Parents are spending too much time gambling and neglecting their children

“Well, there's a lot of animosity towards their parents. They feel like they have been abandoned by them.”

“The kids get neglected. People don't take them seriously.”

“They're losing that bond, yeah. They don't focus on their kids when they get back. I think they're too much worried about what they lost and whatever else.”

“Just look at yourself and if you really like what you're doing to yourself and your family. See what it's costing your kids. See how your kids feel....Talking to them now,

my kids didn't like it. They never told me 'cause I guess they thought I always wanted to go."

Children are left either alone or with a babysitter too often

"They're always left either with a babysitter or with an older brother or somebody. It probably hurting them, Why aren't mum and dad here? They're always gone. It's probably hurting them mentally."

"Well, a lot of people go out and they forget to think of their kids. So a lot of kids like get in trouble."

Parents spend money gambling rather than on their children

"How is my gambling's affecting my son? He can't get the things that he used to get when I wasn't gambling. When I didn't go to the casinos he used to get what he wanted. It used to be when I had extra money I'd get him something. But now I use it for the casinos, yeah. He sees that and he, Ah, when I come back from the casinos and I got busted I'll sit there and I'll just sit there sad. He'll look at me and say, 'Dad, you shouldn't have went over there 'cause I don't like seeing you sitting there bumming out."

People lack patience: It takes a lot of work and time to heal

"It takes a lot of time to heal a certain part of your body -- so people don't like the time, like how long it takes -- to heal the addiction. That's why people are scared. Like, a lot of people are scared of the time - because we all got kids, you know, and stuff like that, other stuff to worry about."

People replace alcohol abuse with problem gambling

"It's another sort of an addiction that they find. People go to bingo 'cause they quit drinking. Just another addiction. If they can't go to bingo they'll find another addiction. And one guy was saying that if he would quit gambling he'd probably end up going back drinking again."

"The impact of drinking and gambling together are probably three to four times more. There is a lot of violence and anger. And there's a lot of people that are suicidal when they come back from gambling."

Friends and partners pressure others to gamble

"Yes, I attempted to quit but my husband tried to get me to go back because he knows I like it. I quit for two weeks."

“My boyfriend tries to get me to go gambling but I tell him no.”

“Even if you don't want to go, you start cutting a dress and somebody will call you and say,

‘Can you bring us to the bingo hall?’

‘Oh, I don't think so.’ I'll say.

‘Well, what's the problem?’

‘I don't want to go and I don't have no’ -- If I say I don't have no money people will pay me and they'll give you gas.”

“He quit for a year or so. I don't know why, he went back 'cause his girlfriend was going. She's a gambler.”

“I spent \$1,400 the last visit. I don't want to ever go again but I will because of my spouse.”

There is nothing else to do

“Well, I think it was just boredom, being at home. Like this community is so isolated, there's not too much to do here.”

“Stopping gambling? I'd say one of the biggest barriers is that they have nothing else to do.”

“I think about the casino all the time because I have nothing to do staying here. There's always the casino to go to. ‘Let's go to the casino. Let's go see how we can do.’”

“They don't have nothing else to do. Like they stopped drinking a while ago and they've just gone over to gambling instead.”

“I just go just to go. Just to get out of the house. There's nothing else to do in this community.”

Gambling helps with the loneliness

“Yeah it's something. For some of my aunties, it's just loneliness. They're lonely and it's a way to socialize. That's what they say. Yeah, to get out to the bingo hall or something.”

“Right now this community is pretty quiet and there's not too much that's social. The only time we socialize is when we're drinking and that's really fun. We socialize when we're partying together. That's when they tend to open up to each other and start talking. When we're sober it's just the opposite, they won't even talk to each other. And I don't know what to say. Really it's like that. That's what I see anyway.”

Community Recommendations

People recommended planning gambling awareness events and non-gambling activities. They also suggested providing support for problem gamblers.

Plan gambling awareness events

People suggested inviting guests in to speak about gambling, and to show gambling videos. They thought,

“...it would be better if there was more information sent out to the community...more awareness, and possibly some workshops.”

“Yeah. It's a real problem. I really think it should be mandatory for all parents to take some gambling awareness. The communities should host these because they receive funding through Casino Rama.”

Plan non-gambling activities

Participants said they saw gambling as one of the only social activities in the community and suggested developing other activities with the help of local teachers.

“People in our community used to do a whole bunch of crafts. Not any more, they've given away their beads, they've given away their material and they don't have no get-togethers and they're getting rusty. Myself, I'm going to lose track too. I don't sew as much as a long time ago, but I still bead .”

“We have to have programs for gambling. And just social events that would keep everyone together like maybe baseball or recreational stuff for the kids. And stuff like that. Alcohol free stuff, you know.”

“Well, bingo's like a game. So I think if they had something to do with games, a different type of game though, not one that includes money. If they had other things going on probably people would go for that.”

Plan activities that involve all ages and get people back out on the land

“People should go out fishing or do stuff together. Doing community things instead of always doing their own thing.”

“Camping would be nice. We could do those kinds of activities, like go to the island and bring the kids and the families.”

“Camping trips... go back to the old ways. If we could go out for about a month or even a couple of weeks. To go rice picking.”

Hire more staff at the fitness centre so that it can be kept open

“There's like a lack of things to do. We got a fitness centre but there's not enough funding to put people in there all the time, to keep it open. It's got a pool table, saunas, computers and it's hardly ever open. It's always locked up. The kids, they're always waiting. Over there, by that tree, I always see kids waiting outside, you know, wondering if it is going to open up .”

Plan regular sharing circles where people can talk

“Gambling pulls them out of the community. What I like to see is everybody get back together and start talking with each other. We had a group within the community and everybody talked and shared their feelings. And when they left they were all happy.”

Find out what programs problem gamblers need

The workers need to spend time with community members to find out what programs are needed.

“What I was thinking is a whole community meeting. Just get the community together and find out what they want. Because see, it's hard, as workers we can say ‘this is what you need’ but I think it’s got to come from the people.”

Plan a family treatment program for gamblers

“I am seeing the destruction of the families. I’ve always been wanting to organize a family treatment program for gamblers. It could be six weeks or four weeks. Utilizing round houses, safe places where people know they can sit and talk.”

“I think we should have something in place for gambling and alcohol problems....some kind of counselors and stuff like that.”

Provide a crisis telephone line for people with gambling problems

“It seems like the only time people will want to sit down and really talk about anything is after they come back gambling and usually early in the morning. They're wanting to sit and talk. Early in the morning at work. Yeah, and they WANT to talk.”

People are tired of being asked what they need: They now want help

“It seems like there is no help. All we do is fill out stuff. I don't know how many times there’s been questionnaires and there's nothing for it. We need a treatment centre. We need to have somebody that's just there to listen. I would like to see somebody coming in through the Band or somebody trained. Yeah. Somebody just coming and helping, at least once a week.”

Conclusion

Participants were waiting to share their insights on the impact that gambling and problem gambling was having in their community. Some explained how they urgently needed help for their own gambling problem. Others mentioned that people had stopped communicating with each other. Young adults said that they wanted to learn traditional teachings from their Elders, but they thought that their Elders were uninterested, and therefore were afraid to ask. On the other hand, Elders said that young adults were uninterested in learning traditional teachings and felt undervalued.

Many people spoke highly of an influential Chief who organized regular cultural activities. He passed away about 12 years ago, just before the road was built. People felt that the combination of these two events had eroded their strong sense of community. Today, participants explained that many people practice their traditional ways and care for the well-being of their community and each other. They want to spend more time together, and when they are ready, some will follow in the great Chief's footsteps by once again initiating cultural activities for the community.

Washagamis Bay First Nation

Anishinabeg Summary

- me twaso nih shih anishinbeg kee kah gah noh nah wau
- nah nun igo whoh zaum ha bih noh chee wug whoh tah yah wah haugah
- nee win hih kit toh wug zahnug igo waut kee hah tah gay wau

Kah mah ngo shcotch igo waung

- 1) kaween kih yah bih saag it tihzee wug, kaween gih yay pihzin dah tih see wug me ih yay whoh zaum kee hah tah gay waut
- 2) kaween hah pichi kay goh hah noh keewin me ih tsh haynji hah tah gay waut, kah gway nee hayji way wug
- 3) njit tah goh anishinabay pah kahn kah whoh njeet oh mah chee be hih shaut chi bih weechi igo waung kee zahnug igo waung min nih qwaywin, kah zah gah swatchi gah tayg oh way tsh kee hah tah gayng
- 4) kaween tay bway tahnzee wug hih gih kah kee nah waut tah nghiz zoh waut eyay kee zahnah gug ih yay kee hah tah gayng
- 5) nih shwah nah tah come mih ghizi wug whoh shki ah auk kee mih nih qway haut toh goh gay ihyay kee zah gah swat toh moh waut ih kah zah gah swatchi gah tayg may gwah kee whoh nday dih waut whoh mama, whoh taytay hih aun

Whoh noh way chihaun chi gah tay ghin

- 1) njit tah goh anishinabay pah kaun kah whoh njeet oh mah chi be hih shaut chi bih weechi igo waung
- 2) kee gih toh pe waub pih konse chi waub bah chi chigah tayg chi gah noh nind hah ah way anishinabay kay weechi igo ing
- 3) oh way gih yay nin nun ndah way ndah min oh mah hih shkoo nih guning kaygo chi hih njit chi gayng “ tah whoh nih shi shin ih mah hih yang kay nji sho shkwaut tih ayng, kay goh

- sah goh chi woh ndumi igo waut chi nshah sih gwah kah tah nah tah gayn woh zaum haytah noh ghom ha be noh chee wug nih wah bah maug”
- 4) njit tah goh chi bih kah kih nah amah goh waung, chi wah bah nday ih goh waung, ha bih noh chee wug sah goh gih yay chi kah kay ndah moh waut kee wah bah mah waut woh mama, woh taytay hih yaun kee min noh whah sinogh kee hah tah gayng
 - 5) njit tah goh hih gih kah gih kih nah waut tah nghiz zoh waut kay goh chi hihnjitchi gay waut oh way kah zahnug igo waut kee hah tah gayng
 - 6) chi kah kin nah ih moy hin dwah hih gih woh shki ah auk chi anishinabay chi gayng
 - 7) chi gah gay chi min dwah woh shki ah auk hah neen hay nah way ndah moh waut oh way kee zahnug saag ih yay hah tah gay win
 - 8) njit tah goh kay goh oh mah che hih nji chi gayng kee woh noc shing chee hih nshah sih gwah kah hah tah gayng

Acknowledgements

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Community Description

Washagamis Bay is located on the northern part of Lake of the Woods near Kenora. Of the 168 band members, about 129 members live within the community. The community hosts an annual Pow Wow each summer, and has an Elders Centre. The nearest gambling venue is in Kenora. Residents also travel to Winnipeg, Fort Francis, and Warroad to gamble.

Profile of People Interviewed

Thirteen people over the age of 18 were interviewed:

- seven people were female;
- one person gambled daily, one person gambled three to six days a week, three people gambled a few times a month, and eight people rarely or never gambled;
- 50% of the gamblers did not use a budget;
- 25% believed that one of their family members had a gambling problem;
- four people believed that they had a gambling problem;
- three people had been told that they have a gambling problem;
- three people had tried to stop gambling.

Community Concerns about Gambling

Participants were concerned that people were less connected with the community, and that there was not enough employment for everyone. They were also concerned about the lack of Aboriginal counselors, and the troubled youth left alone by gambling parents.

People were disconnected from their community and friends

Participants said that people stopped working together to organize community events. They also said that people had stopped working with other families, and that they did not trust each other as they did before gambling became popular.

Too many people are unemployed and depressed

There is not enough paid work for people within the community.

“People need money, it leads to depression....welfare, drug and alcohol abuse, violence. You know, people get depressed. They think ‘well, okay, what am I going to do, I have no money. I can't go gamble so what else am I go to do. I might as well go drink so I can l wake up in the morning and not have to worry about it. Like as long as I drink I won't know about it’.”

Expenditures need to be accounted for

“Well, I think that for INAC [Indian and Northern Affairs Canada] dollars and all that, there's a process. There's a process that we have to follow and we have to do reporting and all that. I think we need that type of accountability across the board. I think there needs to be more community input.”

Lack of counseling services for problem gamblers

Participants were concerned about the lack of counseling services and treatment programs for problem gamblers.

Children are neglected by parents and Elders

“Their family isn't there for them, if they want to go boating, or they just want to go and play frisbee or catch, they're parents are not there.”

“Before Elders always used to sit with the kids and do crafts. In most Reserves the Elders used to do a lot of stuff. Half of the kids out here now don't even know their background. They don't know how to do a lot of stuff. ... the younger people, like the generation growing up now... But now nobody wants to work with the kids, eh.”

“Parents who gamble don't even spend the time with their children.”

“Children like their parents to stay home and spend time with them.”

“Gambling takes money from the kids.”

Children are angry

“The kids are so rebellious: A lot of them. The kids are really rebelling against them. Between the ages of anywhere from 12 to 19.”

Children learn to gamble from their parents

There was a concern that if activities for children and youth were not developed in the community, the children would follow in the footsteps of their relatives and develop problems with gambling and drinking.

“I think we got to more or less get the stuff for the kids, because if they don't start doing something for the kids the kids are just going to follow in their footsteps. Like gambling, all of what they see.”

“There's some people, I guess it's a way of life for them. A lot of these people that gamble now, their parents gambled when they were kids. It keeps going on. It's generation after generation.”

“To steer the youth into a different direction - get the older population to try to stop gambling. Yeah, because like kids do what they see. It's just like drinking coffee, you know. I mean, they see adults drinking coffee and they'll start drinking coffee.”

Community Recommendations

Participants recommended hiring an Aboriginal addictions counselor, building more recreational facilities, and planning more non-gambling activities. They also recommended providing gambling education, inviting different segments of the community to discuss gambling concerns, and taking the problem seriously.

Hire an Aboriginal addictions counselor

Participants suggested installing a confidential telephone line, so that they could talk to a counselor whenever they needed to.

“We should also have a counselor to help problem gamblers.”

“Maybe a position for someone that actually handles that. You know, someone that gamblers can talk to and it would be confidential. But it's kind of hard when everyone knows each other and they say ‘Hey, this person came and seen me today.’ You run into that here. Maybe it would be good to have an off-Reserve person that no one knows to come and do that. I think that would work really well.”

Build a recreation centre and rebuild the playground

People recommended building a recreation centre and rebuilding the playground so that they would have a meeting place to socialize without gambling, exercise, play sports, have karaoke and other social events, and have sports and crafts programs for children and youth.

“It'd be nice if we had a skating rink and volleyball, stuff like that to keep the kids away from gambling. Because mostly now what I see in the casinos is the children.”

“A recreation centre, something with an ice rink. We need some stuff like that, a baseball field.”

Distribute problem gambling educational material and organize workshops

“Education. Awareness. I think a lot of these real die-hard ones will die gamblers. But the kids can start recognizing that what they're seeing in their parents' maybe is not normal. So they don't grow up and say to their kids, ‘Jesus! What are you complaining about?’ My dad used to gamble all week. I only gamble three days a week.”

Take problem gambling seriously

Participants asked the community, and specifically the leadership, to begin taking problem gambling seriously.

“I guess there's supposed to be somebody out here but I don't think anybody really does anything about it or it's not viewed as a problem in this reserve. If you ask somebody if they have a problem with gambling, they'll say ‘No!’ They'll think you're crazy for asking.”

Plan activities that encourage adults to act as role models for youth

People suggested organizing activities that allowed adults to teach their traditional knowledge to youth.

“We need to develop youth programs that are not geared towards something so adults can go to a racetrack or go to a casino. It's basically being role models to them.”

Ask youth how gambling is affecting them and what they need

“Have the youth come in and maybe try to talk to them about how it affects them.”

“I think there needs to be more community input, especially from the youth. Because they're the ones that are feeling the effects of gambling mostly, you know, with the lack of parental supervision and things like that.”

Plan more programs and activities for people of all ages

People said that problem gambling occurred due to a lack of other community activities and recommended planning more alternative events to reduce the number of people that leave the community to gamble every evening. Community members suggested that support be given to people organizing community events and activities, such as health programs, computer skills training, craft nights, cashless card nights, and card tournaments.

“I just think basically more programs -- even for the adults in the evening, to get them away from gambling. Play cards or crafts -- stuff like that.”

“I just think basically more programs -- even for the adults in the evening, to get them away from gambling. Play cards or crafts -- stuff like that. Just to get the parents or adults into doing something other than going to gamble.”

“It keeps going on. Gambling and drinking. It's generation after generation. And it's not good. They should try to get programs going.”

Conclusion

Participants said that gambling and drinking were problems in Washagamis Bay First Nation. They said that these problems were a result of having nothing else to do. Also, they expressed concern about the effects that these behaviours were having on children and youth. Their top suggestion was to plan more alternative activities for people of all ages, and recommended that money be used to build a recreation centre, playground, and other spaces that all community members could use. In addition, they suggested that money be allocated toward developing healthy living programs.

Many participants expressed concern about not knowing how funds are being allocated within their community. They suggested that leaders inform residents when and how community funds are used for various programs and community buildings.

Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation

Anishinabeg Summary

- mih twasso ngo twasso anishinabeg kee gah noh nah wug
- hah pitah kah kee gah noh nin dwah, kaween wohh nah nah gah chi ah see aun wohh toh shuniah mih aun
- nih shwih hih kit tah wug zahnug igo waut
- nee win hih kit toh wug zahnug igo waut “nih nee chaun nih zug nee we ndah mah goog zahnug igo waun, ndih goog chi hah bih aun”
- hah nund hih kittoh wug oh way shuniah kee wah bah chi ah waut tay gooch hih tsh kee tih bah nzih gwah kah mah zihnay gay waut

Kah mah ngo shcotch igo waung

- 1) nih bah tah come mih ghizi wug hih gih anishinabeg kah tah nah tah ting me tsh nee bih wah shuniah haynji cha gih nah waut “me ih yay hay nayn ndah maun oh way hah bih noh chee wug haynji kah gee bah tih zih waut wohh zaum wohh mama, wohh taytay hih aun nih bah tah come mih ghizi wug kah hah tah gayng”
- 2) tay gooch noh ghom hah tah gay wug peeh kee mih nih qway aut, oh way gih yay kah sah gah swatchi gah tayg, “hih njah sih gwah kah hah tah gayng, tah wohh nzah me noh wug kah gew shqway be yaut oh mah, me bay nzhih guhn hay nji hah yah waut ah gah mih nih qwait tah goh ah gah hah tah gayt, hah tah hah gay wug wohh tay e mih yah”

- 3) kaween ngay goh chi wah bah chi toh waung chi gah kih nah ah moyn dwah hih gih anishinabeg kee zahnug igo waut kee hah tah gayng, e yay gih yay kay nji weechi ind oh way gih yay chi whoh zah zaummah come mih ghiz zih sig kee hah tah gayt”
- 4) kee shpin kih hah bih hah chi gah tay ghin hih nah hah bah chichi gah nun kee hah tah gayng, nooch ne bih wah whoh tah zahnug igo nah wah

Whoh noh way chihaun chi gah tay ghin

- 1) njit tah goh anishinabay pah kaun kah whoh njeet chi bih weechi igo wing, oh way gih yay chi gah kih nah ah moyn dwah kee gah gah qwat tah gih saat hah wih yah kee nih bah chi hah tah gayt
- 2) njit tah goh kah kih nah hah wih yah oh mah hih shkoo nih guning gay goh chi hih nji chi gay waut chi whoh ndum hih say waut sah goh
- 3) chi hah nshay gee way chi gah tayg kah tah nah tah gayng kah tah nji nzhoosquat tih ayng “nih noh nday wah bah ndahn oh mah kah kih nah gay goh kah whoh tah min noh waut kah kin nah hah wih yah , oh way gih yay kah ne mih it ting, kaween gay yah bih gay goh chi hih nji chi gay waut hah bih noh chee wug kah koh hah mah gug ih kah tah nah tah gayng
- 4) kay goh pe nzhee hih toh kayg hih nih wah bah chi chi gah nun oh mah kah tah nah tah gayng

Acknowledgements

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Community Description

Wauzhushk Onigum is located on scenic Lake of the Woods, very close to Kenora, Ontario. About 300 of the 500 band members live in this friendly community. Wauzhushk Onigum owns and operates Pow Wow Island, which includes a Youth and Elder Training Centre and roundhouse. The original roundhouse was built on this site in the late 1800’s. Traditional sites are still frequently utilized by community members.

Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation owns and operates the Golden Eagle Casino situated near the band office and marina on Lake of the Woods. The casino complex was originally a residential school, which was closed in the early 1970’s and then converted into a community arena with a bingo hall upstairs. Today the building houses both a main floor bingo hall and a roulette and casino card-game section.

Profile of People Interviewed

Fifteen people over 18 years old were interviewed:

- 11 people were female;
- people had up to seven children (the average was four children);

- 80% gambled at least occasionally;
- more than 50% gambled weekly;
- more than 25% gambled three to seven days a week;
- 50% did not budget their gambling;
- three people believed they had a gambling problem;
- four people had been told that they have a gambling problem;
- 36% stated it bothered them when they could not gamble and described experiencing physical withdrawal symptoms when they tried to stop;
- almost 30% used money that was set aside for bills to gamble;
- people said it was difficult to stop or reduce gambling because they were:
 - i. pressured to gamble by friends and family;
 - ii. left with nothing else to do;
 - iii. addicted and could not stop or slow down;
 - iv. not sure if they had a problem, so they continued to play.

Concerns about Gambling

“Yes - my kids have said I have a gambling problem. They tell me to stay at home.”

“Well my wife would definitely use the house money to gamble, money for groceries and bills, yeah. It was a strain on us. It was a strain on our relationship too because it was a pain in the ass for me to go to her and say we need this and that, and you're going to go use it to gamble. ‘Yeah, but I might win,’ she would say. ‘Yeah, but we can buy stuff right now’, I would reply. May it be milk or whatever. It was a strain on the relationship for sure. Every evening I knew I was staying home with the kids.”

“But like I have to go because maybe all my sisters are going or just something to do, I guess. My friends are going.”

Parents spend too much time and money gambling

People said that gambling was hurting children because some parents who gambled were not fulfilling the physical and emotional needs of their children. They were also concerned that children were left without supervision while their parents gambled, and that gambling was damaging the connectedness of the family unit.

“Kids I imagine here are left behind. It must be hard for them. They had a monster bingo in the community last year. I looked around and the whole community was deserted. Alls you saw was the kids walking around by themselves.”

“When I lived with my grandparents as a teenager, they gambled a lot and sometimes I was hungry and there wasn't any thing to eat, it was hard .”

“Everybody is too busy gambling here. They aren't taking care of their families. They are neglecting their kids. Kids wander around aimlessly - they go to the local gym, play outside, don't usually have baby sitters, eight and nine year-olds are believed

old enough to care for themselves.”

“Lots of people leave their kids outside to fend for themselves while they go inside to play bingo.”

“Parents aren't there to protect their children from harm, it puts them at risk to experience physical or sexual abuse.”

“These people spend money on bingos. It should be spent on food or clothing for kids and stuff like that.”

“Everything was always family oriented traditionally. But with drinking and gambling the adults segregate themselves from the kids. Also there is no one around to teach the kids anything.”

“Sometimes, like, if I come down to get gas or something you can always tell there's a bingo going on, there's nothing but kids, little kids running around up the hill, out there by themselves. Same thing in the winter, you see kids running around outside the casino. Hanging around the front door. Like I say, they're just waiting for their parents to get out of bingo. I don't know. Like the parents should be out doing something with them, or at home with them anyway.”

Some were concerned that gambling in the community was influencing youth to gamble

“All the younger kids see the older people gambling and stuff and then they do too. Like, I know when we have community gatherings and stuff that's mostly what the people do, at a wake, the night before a funeral, people will sit there all night and gamble and play cards. Some of the younger kids thirteen, fourteen, stay up all night and gamble with them.”

“Gambling leads to teen trouble, there is a chain effect and children fall into the life style themselves. The problem's they see their parents gambling and they aren't taught to invest or save, and they fall into the pattern of gambling themselves.”

“People I see in the bingo are getting younger, 18 year-old kids and even younger people who sneak in to play. Because they look old enough, they don't get ID'd. I think gambling's getting to be a problem among the youth. They think it's an easy way to make money, but don't understand that it's an easy way to lose money too.”

Many were concerned that youth abused drugs and alcohol while their parents were away gambling

“I think gambling has played a great role in our young kids being lost. When they say our kids are breaking the law out there, they're really lost little souls and most of the

parents or guardians are out playing bingo. Of course when a youth like that has no direction or is not given any direction, they start hanging around with other kids that are left alone and then they start getting into trouble. It's during the times that these people are sitting at bingo that the kids are getting into trouble."

People have switched from alcohol and drug abuse to gambling

There was concern that problem gambling was serving as a replacement addiction for some community members. Rather than healing from their addiction, people had switched from problem drinking to problem gambling.

"Without gambling, there would just be a bunch of drunks here. But a problem gambler is the same thing as a drunk. They sell their stuff to fill their need."

There are no resources to educate people about problem gambling, including how to get help and how to gamble in a healthy way

"It seems to be everybody that is short on money, gambling is their light at the end of the tunnel it seems, where actually it isn't. It's really hard."

If slot machines are brought to the casino, more people will develop gambling problems

"Gambling right now is not hurting the community too bad. But if slots came here there would be problems. I see it in Winnipeg - problem gambling, people obsessed."

Community Recommendations

Community members had four main gambling-related recommendations:

1) The community needs their "own counselor in place here, and workshops to educate people about gambling."

People said that because there was a casino in the community, a position should be created for someone to work specifically with those who develop/have developed gambling problems. This person would have to be trusted by the community, and would also have to be well liked.

"We need somebody who can actually go to the people, who can go and sit in the casino and see who keeps coming in from the community and be able to say 'listen, do you think you have a problem?' It has to be somebody who everybody gets along with, not somebody who just needs a job. Not somebody who is just doing it because it's a job. There's not much, but there's a few that people do talk to."

"We need to teach parents about gambling and how it affects our kids."

"We need more visual things in the casino. That people going there constantly have to see."

People said it was important that the counselor come from outside the community. They noted that they would not feel comfortable receiving guidance from a gambling counselor who was from their own community because problem gambling was a very uncomfortable and private thing to discuss. People knew each other too well in the community, and they would therefore be concerned about confidentiality. They also said that they would be too embarrassed to talk to one of their own community members about their gambling problems. While many people wanted access to a gambling counselor, they said that they would only use this service if the person were not a member of Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation.

It was suggested that the person hired for this position work one-on-one with people, and organize gambling workshops for adults and youth in the community. In order to encourage people to attend the workshops, it was suggested that funding be provided for food.

“I think we should have different kinds of programs or awareness workshops - information sessions that would help gamblers.”

“It’s hard to get people to admit they have a problem, that’s the thing. It would be nice to have our own counselor in place here, and workshops to educate people about gambling. They have diabetes workshops for the community and they really help. People need to know if they are leaving their kids too much. People need to find out for themselves where they are at.”

2) The community needs more planned activities that include all community members

People said that problem gambling was caused by the lack of socializing and sharing in the community. They recommended more planned activities that would allow people of all ages to socialize without gambling.

“Activities have to be geared to the family you know? Activities like on Treaty Day. If you have just youth activities, that’s all who will go. We need more activities geared to the family. Not just the kids. Stuff that involves parents.”

3) Turn the casino back into an arena and bingo hall

Some people interviewed suggested that the casino be returned to an arena and bingo hall (remove the table games). People said that the community was more connected when there was an indoor arena.

“It’s the casino that has screwed us right up. We used to be a very -- I mean we weren’t the tightest community, but before we had this casino here we were at least a group, one group. Either ’92 or ’93 we got our casino. The people who wanted the casino were the ones that were gamblers... We should have kept our rink instead. We were a community then. We all had – we all believed in each other, you know, like this guy might be on a different team but we still rooted for him because he was from our community. So it didn’t really matter if you’re on a different team, as long as you were from our community we all supported each other. And we were -- we were tight

then. Our casino, as a community and as a people we're not getting anything out of it. I don't see what's the sense of having this thing here. As opposed to when we had a rink, well, we all had -- I don't know what you call that – solidarity or something. You know, we believed in that, but not now.”

“I see no need for the casino. It just doesn't seem to be doing anything. Like, even the times I have gone in there. There was only a handful of people there. It just doesn't seem to be even carrying its own weight.”

“...that's what the casino is right now, it took over the hockey rink. That should be brought back.”

“I would probably shut the casino down except for the bingo... Right now it's in such a deficit that we haven't really gotten anything out of our casino. It hasn't aided us in any social or economic ways. I'm not sure how long it's been running, maybe ten, fifteen years. I think we should downsize it, maybe just a bingo hall. Bingo does make money, and I think that would be more beneficial to the band in terms of like, providing the programs, the money to start stuff for housing, or try to get out of a deficit.”

“I would like to see a sports complex. Have dances there, events. The casino took away the recreation for the children of our community. My grandkids are in their early 20's now. It hurt them to lose the sports complex when they were younger.”

“Gambling? It's taken away our arena for one. There's no recreation building like we had before.”

People also said that there was too much drinking at arena events and that they would prefer the arena to be “dry”; meaning no alcohol would be allowed inside the facility if the arena were returned to the community.

4) Do not bring slot machines into the community

People said that if slot machines were introduced into the local casino, more people would develop problems with gambling, and the financial gain would not be worth the social cost.

Conclusion

In conclusion, people are very concerned that the local casino is having negative effects on the children, families, and connectedness of the community. People stressed the importance of developing activities that enabled families and the community to interact in healthy ways, in order to counteract the negative effects of the casino.

People believed that revenue from the casino should be used to hire an Aboriginal gambling counselor from outside the community, to help people who have gambling

problems because of the facility. Other communities surrounding Kenora also wanted a gambling counselor from outside their community, including Shoal Lake No. 39, Ochiichagwe' Babigo' Ining (Dalles), and Washagamis Bay. It would serve Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation well to work together with one or more of these communities to create and fund a central Aboriginal gambling counseling service. Due to the success of the *Gambling Addictions Awareness Initiative*, there are many trained Aboriginal Treaty #3 gambling counselors that could work in these communities (see sample proposal in Appendix D).

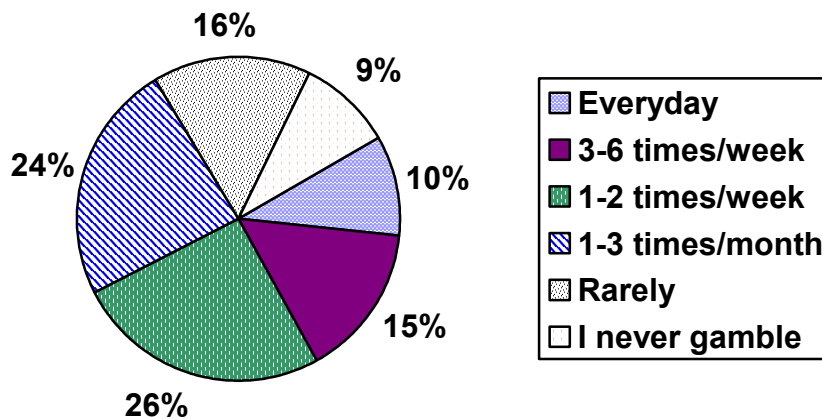
Chapter 4: What We Learned from Listening

Mih oh way kay kay ndah maung kee bih nzin ndah maung

Individual community reports summarized the gambling concerns and recommendations expressed within each community. Some individuals also shared insights applicable to the Treaty #3 region. The insights, common themes voiced throughout the communities, and a summary of the information shared by all participating communities are presented in this section.

Perspectives were attained from non-gamblers, gamblers, and problem gamblers in Treaty #3. Of the 192 individuals who shared their concerns and recommendations, about 25% rarely (once a year or less) or never gambled, 25% gambled daily or almost daily, roughly 25% gambled once or twice a week, and about 25% gambled once a month (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Breakdown of gambling frequency among participants



Barriers to stop gambling

People who said they gambled were asked questions about their gambling behaviour (144 people). Gambling was perceived as a problem for almost half (45%) of the participants that were asked this question. Over 25% reported that someone had said they had a problem with gambling; family members told most people. Over 25% of participants indicated that they were either really or somewhat bothered when they could not gamble. Over 40% of the participants had tried to stop gambling; the majority of these attempts were unsuccessful. Frequently mentioned barriers to stopping problem gambling were: (1) a lack of awareness; (2) individual denial; (3) addiction to the behaviour; (4) peer pressure from family and friends to continue gambling; and, (5) boredom and loneliness (they had nothing else to do with each other).

Gambling expenditures

The more frequently a person gambled, the higher the amount of money spent gambling per month and per gambling session. Two-thirds of the participants who gambled at least once a month did not keep track of how much they won or lost. The average amount spent per month on gambling was \$630 (the most spent was \$5,200 per month, and the least spent was \$8 per month). On average, participants spent \$50 to \$100 per gambling session.

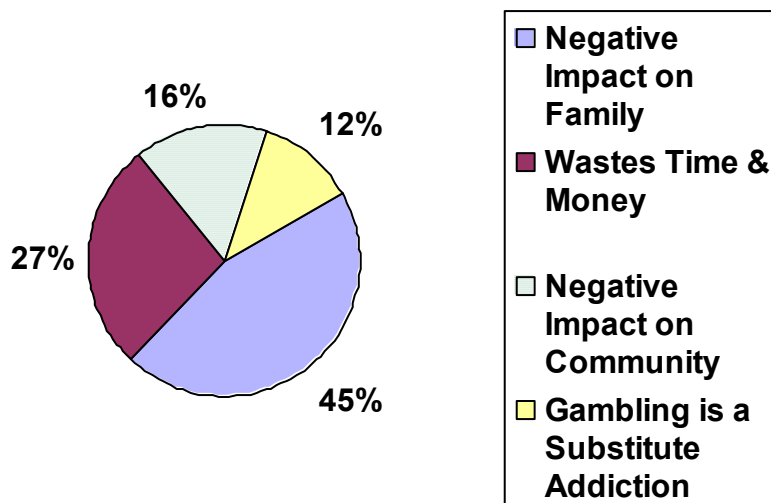
Feelings associated with gambling

Women were more likely than men to use lucky items, including figurines (trolls, Buddhas, hippos, etc.), pictures of loved ones, jewelry, rocks, or pennies, when gambling. Women typically said that they gambled for recreation, while men typically said that they gambled for the challenge, or for both the challenge and recreation. Most participants indicated that they felt happy and/or excited when they won. The most common feeling for men and women was regret when they lost money gambling. They also reported feeling mad, depressed, and disappointed.

Community Concerns about Gambling

While each community had individual concerns about gambling, there were common themes that repeated across First Nations. Many said gaming was a traditional part of First Nations culture, but expressed concern about how present day gambling was different and more harmful than the traditional games of the past. The main concerns were: impact on children, family and social relationships (45%); money and time lost to gambling (27%); impact on the community (including traditions) (16%); and, gambling as a substitute addiction (12%) (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Overall gambling concerns



Impact on children, family and social relationships

*“My husband gets mad at me because he doesn't want me to go to bingo....”
(Naicatchewenin First Nation)*

*“I'd say it's a lot of stress, ... 'cause if [my partner] doesn't win she gets mad... ‘... when I win that million, you know, you can have everything and I'll leave you,’ ...”
(Ochiichagwe’Babigo’Ining First Nation)*

“ ... I used to do a lot of hunting and fishing” (Naotkamegwanning First Nation)

“My husband would ... say, ‘Well go then, GO!’ And ... I had this guilty feeling that I should be at home....” (Naicatchewenin First Nation)

“I'd make him go and pawn it. And if I won I didn't give him it....” (Naicatchewenin First Nation)

Parents talked about the effects that their gambling had on their own children

“If I have the money then and I have to watch my kids I get all irritable and I start yelling...” (Naicatchewenin First Nation)

*“...I want to go to ... bingo...she'll get upset... but I'll still go.
(Ochiichagwe’Babigo’Ining First Nation)*

“The things that they want I can't afford because I'd rather go play bingo and try and win but then I don't... I should be there for my kids.” (Naicatchewenin First Nation)

“When my kids where younger my gambling caused abandonment issues for them. I was gone to bingo every night...” (Naicatchewenin First Nation)

*“I think it's [gambling] deprived me of time... My kids tell me they don't like it...”
(Couchiching First Nation)*

“My daughter gets mad because I ...leave her with my boyfriend...she's not really being taken care of. He likes to drink a lot...” (Naicatchewenin First Nation)

“... they baby-sit each other when I gamble.” (Northwest Angle No. 37 – Windigo Island First Nation)

People talked about the effects that gambling had on children in their community

“Parents don't put their kids to bed. As soon as they get any money they spend it on gambling – the kids are hungry.” (Naicatchewenin First Nation)

*“You see them [children] in cars.... waiting for their parents to come out.”
(Couchiching First Nation)*

“[Gamblers need] their bingo fix and they're not thinking about their kids at home hungry.” (Naicatchewenin First Nation)

“Children feel that gambling's more important than them.” (Naicatchewenin First Nation)

“People are always gambling and the kids are feeling left out... I like to be with my mum...” (Stanjikoming First Nation)

“They're not getting up on time, they're not doing their homework, they're not eating properly ... it affects...how you perform in school.” (Naicatchewenin First Nation)

“... They're going to bingo... That quality time,... being emotionally present for their children is important. ” (Couchiching First Nation)

“...there's a lot of animosity towards their parents.” (Stanjikoming First Nation)

“... parents are setting a bad example... kids will grow up and think they have to gamble....” (Naicatchewenin First Nation)

“There was a lot of them used to come over... They're just eager to have some adult supervision....” (Stanjikoming First Nation)

*“...The parents come home and then leave... kids are always watching the kids....”
(Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining First Nation)*

“The kids are the ones that are getting hurt because they're being neglected - abandoned because of gambling.” (Naotkamegwanning First Nation)

“They're not being parented...children are misbehaving... when they don't get their emotional needs fulfilled.” (Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining First Nation)

Adults talked about the effects that their parent's gambling had on them as children

“I considered myself a bingo orphan...I'd come home from school and I'd only see her about an hour and she'd be gone to bingo and I'd be already sleeping by the time she got back...” (Naicatchewenin First Nation)

“... they gambled a lot and sometimes I was hungry..., it was hard.” (Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation)

People talked about the financial problems created by gambling

“I get angry at myself for having spent money that I didn’t have.. what I’m going to do to pay the bills....” (Ochiichagwe’Babigo’Ining First Nation)

“...they go to bingo to win ...most of the time they don't, so their hydro is cut off.” (Naotkamegwanning First Nation)

“They could be sober for a number of years and still say, ‘I can't afford the food on our table’ or ‘I can’t buy necessities for my family’ ... yet, they ...play bingo every night.” (Naicatchewenin First Nation)

“...they're bumming off family members to go gambling... it's draining people's money... it sets a bad example for the children. (Ochiichagwe’Babigo’Ining First Nation)

“...I bounced a cheque or two.” (Couchiching First Nation)

“It’s an expensive sickness.” (Sahgaigan First Nation)

“...we all say we are donating... there are times when I think...How am I going to pay a bill.” (Ochiichagwe’Babigo’Ining First Nation)

“If it's not alcohol or drugs, now they're gambling... keeping themselves in a state of poverty.” (Ochiichagwe’Babigo’Ining First Nation)

People talked about the effect that gambling had on traditional community values

“You get stuck in the bingo way of thinking... Anishinabe people were group oriented...now... everyone for themselves...The underlying hurt needs to be addressed....” (Naicatchewenin First Nation)

“We need the parents to be at home to teach ... to love and look after their kids. And we need the community to become a community. There's no cultural activities going on.” (Naotkamegwanning First Nation)

“People ... will do anything to have enough money so that they can buy a “starter pack” at bingo... it is a meeting place.” (Ochiichagwe’Babigo’Ining First Nation)

“... gambling is their light at the end of the tunnel... actually it isn't.” (Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation)

People observed gambling being used as a replacement addiction

“...I get the same... mentality when I want to gamble as maybe my parents did when they were looking to drink....” (Couchiching First Nation)

“When people quit drinking they... transfer that addiction to a gambling addiction... They're still not being an active family member... their money runs out and they can't play bingo... then the fighting begins...leads back to alcohol.” (Naotkamegwanning First Nation)

“... a problem gambler is the same thing as a drunk...” (Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation)

“I had an addiction to drinking and cigarettes Something had to replace the drinking. It was eating. Something had to replace the cigarettes... it was bingo.” (Ochiichagwe' Babigo'Ining First Nation)

“Gambling is like a sedative so people won't have to deal with some of the painful, hurtful things that have happened in their past.” (Northwest Angle No. 37 – Regina Bay First Nation)

“...they transfer that addiction to a gambling addiction...from alcohol to bingo. When their money runs out ...fighting begins... leads back to alcohol.” (Naotkamegwanning First Nation)

“... they're still away from the family... have the mood swings... haven't dealt with the issues. The best education and the best resource is talking to people individually.” (Naotkamegwanning First Nation)

People talked about the difficulty of not gambling due to the lack of alternative activities and the socially acceptable popularity of gambling

“Boredom.... Nothing really happens but bingo is always there - it never gets cancelled.” (Northwest Angle No. 37 – Regina Bay First Nation)

“...gambling has always been in our lives. Now it's just more extensive and easily accessible, and now people gamble for the wrong reason.” (Couchiching First Nation)

“... nothing else to do.” (Stanjikoming First Nation)

“I think about the casino all the time because I have nothing to do staying here.” (Stanjikoming First Nation)

“... there must have been other things that went on in the evening... now ... bingo is the principal activity.” (Couchiching First Nation)

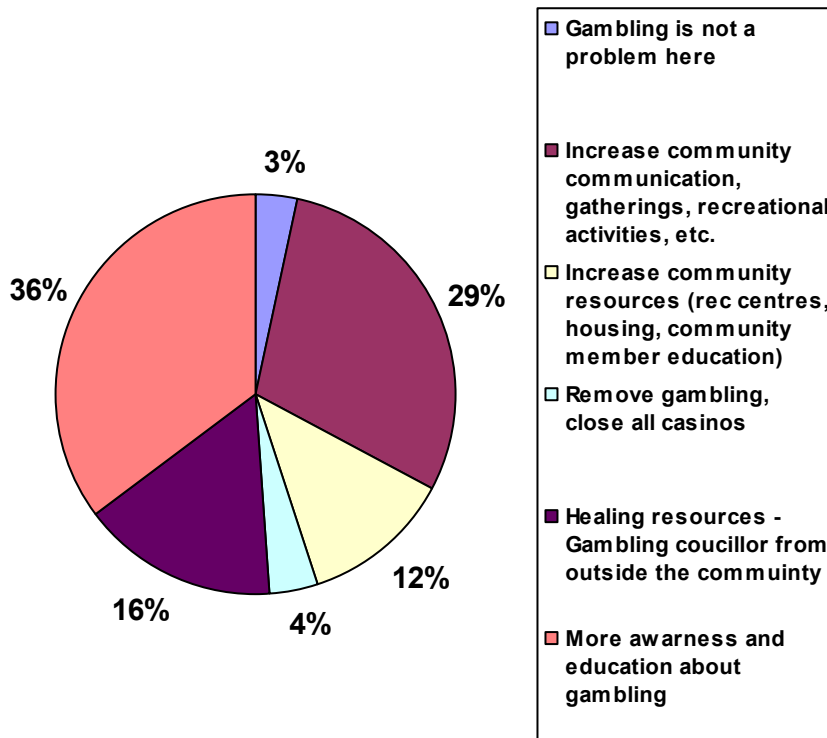
“Gambling is such an accepted social event it’s become a norm in our communities. Events have to be planned around bingo....” (Northwest Angle No. 37 – Regina Bay First Nation)

Community Gambling Recommendations

Most community members supported gambling in moderation. It was seen as a functional pastime, and traditional gambling was recognized as a valued Anishinabeg tradition. A few people (3%) said that contemporary gambling was not a problem, while others (4%) said that it was so serious a problem that all gambling venues should be removed from the communities.

For all communities, individuals most frequently recommended that more education about gambling be made available. An increase in community-based activities, including traditional activities (e.g., games of chance) was the second most frequent recommendation. Local healing resources, including local counseling services and general support (e.g., recreational centres) were also recommended by a significant number of people (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Overall community-based gambling recommendations



People recommended more education on problem gambling, information on where to get help, and how to gamble responsibly

*“Education ... more knowledge and education... and more support.”
(Naotkamegwanning First Nation) (see examples of telephone, e-mail and video sources for help in Appendix E)*

Suggested means of educating people about problem gambling included: delivering pamphlets door-to-door; organizing short and fun workshops; hanging up posters within the community; and, implementing gambling education for children in schools.

“... self awareness questionnaires or booklets or pamphlets... to give to people so they can realize that they do have a problem. It would have to be all anonymous... delivered door to door because people don't just pick those kinds of things up... you can read it and go from there.” (Sahgaigan First Nation)(see example questionnaire from Gamblers Anonymous in Appendix F)

“...have our own counselor in place here, and workshops to educate people about gambling.” (Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation)

“...it should be mandatory for all parents to take some gambling awareness. The communities should host these because they receive funding through Casino Rama.” (Stanjikoming First Nation)

“...people ... need to be educated on gambling because they have a very distorted view of gambling. They think they can beat the machine.” (Iskatewizaggegan No. 39 First Nation)

People talked about the need for First Nations gambling counselors

Most communities wanted First Nation gambling counselors to be hired from outside their community. Many communities said that they were too concerned about confidentiality to talk with a gambling counselor from within their community (see sample proposal for use by communities interested in developing co-op counseling services in Appendix D).

“Bring in people from the outside. ... not to live here...to do gambling counseling.” (Iskatewizaggegan No. 39 First Nation)

“We need somebody who ...can go and sit in the casino and see who keeps coming in from the community and be able to say ‘listen, do you think you have a problem?’” (Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation)

“The NNADAP is a referral source... to help with gambling, drinking, drugs, family violence. We need more.” (Ochiichagwe’ Babigo’ Ining First Nation)

People recommended increasing community activities, especially traditional activities, for people of all ages

*“We need more activities geared to the family.” (Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation)
“Camping trips... a month or even a couple of weeks. To go rice picking.”
(Stanjikoming First Nation)*

*“We need to bring back things like hunting and fishing...community feasts...blueberry feasts... celebrate each changing of the season....”
(Naotkamegwanning First Nation)*

“... need other things to do...beading... traditional craft... instead of going to bingo.” (Northwest Angle No. 37 – Windigo Island First Nation)

“Something the family can do together, something more cultural Elders can teach those games to the family.” (Couchiching First Nation)

“We could have ... social events...sewing and crafts.... Elders are really interested in teaching the younger kids here.” (Naotkamegwanning First Nation)

Many people talked about bringing back traditional gaming activities

“Those traditional games I think would be an excellent idea. If you look at today’s world, you have the Internet, TV, video games. Those only involve an individual and a monitor. There is no interaction between people going on. In terms of building the community, the traditional games involve interaction between two or more people. Ultimately, it is the best thing to build relationships – just talking.” (Couchiching First Nation)

“Well, bingo's like a game. So I think if they had something to do with games, a different type of game though, not one that includes money.” (StanjikomingFirst Nation)

“People played a game ...called Omaha...or there's a moccasin game.... People didn't ruin their lives by playing these games.” (Ochiichagwe’Babigo’Ining First Nation)

People talked about increasing healthy activities in general

“The ladies might attend aerobic classes if we had them again.” (Northwest Angle No. 37 – Regina Bay First Nation)

“More activities ... barbeques ... walks... work-out program... aerobics and weight lifting, things like that.” (Manitou Rapids Rainy River First Nation)

People recommended more money for problem gambling education and treatment, for community and traditional activities, for more addiction centres, and for more recreational centres for alternative activities

“If we get money from other places, it immediately... it gets allocated to something else....” (Iskatewizaggegan No. 39 First Nation)

*“...what they need here is an addiction centre...All kinds of addictions....”
(Naotkamegwanning First Nation)*

Many people talked about the need to *sit together* as a community, the value of talking about gambling, and the importance of making decisions about how to address problem gambling in individual communities

“We should get a sharing circle going to talk about why we gamble... help people think about how gambling affects them, their family.” (Naicatchewenin First Nation)

*“...Tackle it right here.... Don't look at Kenora or Treaty #3 to solve it for us.”
(Couchiching First Nation)*

“Everything has to revolve around bingo... it needs to revolve around people. What's really important here in life... Our children...” (Sahgaigan First Nation)

“...deal with awareness and prevention together.” (Iskatewizaggegan No. 39 First Nation)

“...get the community together and find out what they want.” (Stanjikoming First Nation)

“The whole community needs to get together... I guess it's a trust issue....” (Manitou Rapids Rainy River First Nation)

“... everybody get back together and start talking with each other.” (Stanjikoming First Nation)

Chapter 5: Reflections

Me oh way kay mih nji may ndah maung

The collective voices of the participants in this study provide a significant contribution to understanding the concerns felt by community members and to identifying steps to address issues pertaining to gambling and problem gambling in Treaty #3. These concerns and recommendations are firmly grounded within the cultural fabric of the communities. They are based on the participants' intuitive understanding of and respect for the complex factors influencing Anishinabeg gambling behaviour in Treaty #3. As a result of the community-based methods used for this study, participants provided valuable insights on the research process, and as one Community Advisor stated to Cheryl Currie, "*You have sat with us and heard us. You have a perspective that is important. Your voice and your impressions need to be heard in this report.*" We humbly present our external researchers' perspectives in this section.

Talking with one another

The effectiveness of talking about sensitive issues is well known. For example, an Aboriginal community significantly reduced their suicide rate in one year by independently getting the community together regularly to talk about suicide (Kral, 2000). Anishinabeg Community Advisors stressed the importance of talking about gambling and problem gambling at the first Local Research Advisors Committee meeting in June 2003; this theme continued throughout the study. The process of talking openly about these sensitive issues began with the Community Advisors and local individuals hired to assist with the interviews. These individuals listened to many different perspectives, and in the interviews, they saw first-hand the value of talking about concerns and recommendations. This was confirmed at the second Local Research Advisors Committee meeting in October 2003. In addition to finding it helpful to talk with participants, Community Advisors also said it was extremely useful for them to meet with other Community Advisors to talk.

"It really helped to hear other people's stories; people who felt the same way about gambling as me. There is strength in numbers. We are going to meet monthly and keep talking." (Stanjikoming First Nation)

Talking "on the page"

Understanding the value of talking, the extremely sensitive nature of issues pertaining to gambling and problem gambling, and the feelings of denial and shame often associated with problem gambling, the principle investigator felt it was most beneficial to present participants' insights in their own words. This enables First Nations to privately *listen* to other people's thoughts and feelings, with the hopes of inspiring more individuals to begin addressing problem gambling by talking about it openly, both with each other and with trained professionals. Individuals who understand will read between the lines to feel the pain, fear, frustration, disappointment, shame, denial, and many other strong emotions shared during these private interviews, which are impossible to record on paper.

“Like you say, I'm number X, but like, this is what is happening to ME. When I look at the community [report], gambling has just had an incredible impact.” (Couchiching First Nation)

Establishing an environment to talk

First Nations were concerned that disconnectedness and divisiveness in some communities would be a barrier to beginning to talk. Many people recommended bringing people together, to listen to each other, to put unresolved quarrels aside, and to decide collectively on a plan of action for a strong future.

Identifying and prioritizing an action plan

The purpose of this report was to provide insights that might be useful to those working towards improving the quality of life influenced by gambling and problem gambling. It was useful to learn people's concerns and their individual recommendations, both which could contribute to reducing the risks created by problem gambling. Feedback from Community Advisors on the draft report has already confirmed that:

“The findings are very helpful. I always ask them what they need and they say ‘I don't know.’ But in the report I could read what they need. They said it in there.” (Northwest Angle No. 37 Regina Bay and Windigo Island).

“These findings are very informative. They are a tool we can work with.” (Naotkamegwanning First Nation)

“I think when we get the results of this summary, then we can say this is what was heard and this is what can we do.” (Stanjikoming First Nation)

Importance of reaching the “invisible” voices

Denial and shame heavily influence the ability of problem gamblers to get help. Typically, problem gamblers either denied or minimized their gambling behaviour. Community Advisors stated that problem gamblers generally refuse to talk about their gambling because they are ashamed of their behaviour.

“Problem gambling; it's that river called de-Nile.” (Couchiching First Nation)

“People in this community do not come to talk to me about their gambling. They hide it. They come and talk about their drinking and drug problems, but there is something about gambling that has so much shame attached to it.”

A large portion (63 people or 45%) of the participants in this study identified themselves as problem gamblers. Their concerns and recommendations are shared openly for the first time in this report, providing a valuable tool for other problem gamblers and professionals. Six Elders, Chiefs, and Health Directors expressed an interest in authoring their contributions to this report, as they felt it would benefit the community. For the other

participants, their requests for anonymity were respected. As stated by one community member,

“Using names in this report would put a shadow on this whole gambling study. It would put community members against each other.”

There are strong and often opposing opinions about gambling in communities. This report provides individuals with an opportunity to *talk* about their concerns. By presenting other peoples’ stories, this report may act as a first step to reducing the barriers to getting help, and might inspire others to join in the discussion.

Addressing gambling as a replacement addiction

One of the recurrent themes of problem gamblers, gamblers, and non-gamblers alike was that gambling was being used a replacement for alcohol, drugs, and other addictions. People said that alcoholics were less violent when they shifted to problem gambling, that gambling was often a distraction from unresolved problems, and that problem gamblers often suffered with other addictions simultaneously.

There is an overwhelming need for professional counseling support, specializing in First Nations addiction and co-addiction in these communities. The Gambling Addictions Awareness Initiative trained First Nations gambling counselors in Treaty #3 (supported by the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba). These counselors are a vital resource. However, problem gamblers expressed concerns about confidentiality, and were unable to confide in the trained counselor within their own community, where everyone has known everyone for generations. This concern was raised repeatedly (with the exception of Sahgaigan First Nation and a few other communities). A draft proposal, to be modified by Treaty #3, presents a co-op counseling service, which utilizes trained First Nations counselors in communities other than their home community (see Appendix D for a sample proposal).

Community-initiated alternative and traditional activities

The final theme that was of utmost significance to all communities was the importance of rebuilding individual, family, and friend relationships within the community. The importance of getting people to talk with each other, to interact in a positive manner again, and to reconnect with cultural values and norms, wove throughout the interviews. Although some First Nations referred to gambling as a social activity, many also commented that playing bingo and visiting casinos with friends was not truly social. They said that it drew people away from following traditional teachings, which directly influenced the quality of life within the community.

Many people talked about reclaiming cultural traditions by planning more traditional activities within their communities, such as: sharing traditional teachings; working on crafts together; community camping and fishing trips; and, reintroducing traditional games. These types of activities provide an environment where people can socialize in healthy, time-honored ways that strengthen cultural values and put gambling back into *balance*. As explained by several Elders, traditional games, including games involving *gambling*, are an important part of building relationships.

In conclusion, this process of listening and learning has enabled us to present the collective voice of long-term residents of 12 communities in Treaty #3. Collaboratively, individual concerns and recommendations regarding gambling and problem gambling were compiled, creating a powerful profile of pertinent issues. Many Community Advisors are now planning their own unique action plan based on the recommendations shared in this report.

We have all benefited personally from our immediate involvement with this study. We will see the true results of this work in a year or two, after implementing some of the recommendations and facilitating more opportunities for Anishinabeg to talk about gambling, either by reading this work or by participating in local community discussions.

Meeg-wetch

Recommendations

This study provided individuals and their family members and friends, as well as Health Directors, NNADAP workers, Recreation Officers and others working in First Nation communities, with a valuable tool for beginning to talk about gambling, problem gambling concerns, and recommendations. In addition, this study provided insights into the community-based support for initiatives sponsored by senior government officials, including Ministers of Health and other related officials. The following recommendations would contribute significantly to improving the quality of life and reducing the epidemic level of problem gambling found in some Treaty #3 communities. Individual communities may find some recommendations more helpful and more feasible than other recommendations. Due to the unique and distinct nature of each community, additional consultation is required before implementing these recommendations for all Treaty #3 communities.

1) Toll-free telephone help line with First Nations counselors

This would provide an alternative for individuals who are unable to get help due to isolation or lack of privacy in small communities where everyone knows everyone.

2) Private access to a confidential e-mail chat line with First Nations counselors

About 50% of the communities have e-mail and internet access. Implementing access to all communities and providing computer terminals in private, confidential locations, with direct connections to e-mail chat lines, for gamblers and problem gamblers would be a valuable asset to individuals who are uncomfortable talking in-person about their concerns. These individuals will find it extremely useful to read about other people's concerns, to view the comments from the participating First Nations counselors, and to *talk* about their concerns anonymously on the chat line using a community computer terminal.

3) Self-exclusion expanded to include all provinces

Approximately 45 individuals in Treaty #3 have "self-excluded". Some of these individuals travel extensively due to their positions in the community and find that they need to self-exclude in each province. In addition, many individuals in Treaty #3 travel to

Manitoba, which requires an extra step to ensure that they are self-excluded in both Ontario and Manitoba. National self-exclusion would provide a significant service to those individuals who are attempting to resolve their gambling problems.

4) Self-exclusion expanded to include bingo and video lottery terminals (VLTs)

In the more remote communities of Treaty #3 problem gambling takes place in the form of bingo and VLTs. In some Treaty #3 communities, almost 100% of the adult population attends bingo halls. The expansion of self-exclusion from just large gambling casinos to local bingo and VLT halls would help significantly with problem gambling in Treaty #3.

5) Expand use of identity package (scanner) currently used in Manitoba

Treaty #3 problem gamblers find the identity detection system used in Manitoba very effective. It includes a body scan, which effectively eliminates any chance of camouflaging one's identity. The expansion of this system into Ontario, and ideally across all provinces, would be a valuable asset to those problem gamblers who have self-excluded.

6) Elimination of *Scratch to Win* and other gambling promotions

Private and public corporations within Treaty #3 are advised to eliminate *Scratch to Win* and other promotional campaigns built on gambling activities. This also includes similar activities currently taking place in local schools. Although these activities may appear to be innocent motivators for non-gamblers, they exasperate children of gamblers and problem gamblers. Considering the extensiveness of problem gambling in this region, and the level of concern raised by residents, it is unconscionable to continue these activities.

7) Gambling and problem gambling education

Brochures, lesson plans, newsletter inserts, flyers, posters, workshops, talk shows, plays, videos, and sharing circles are a few of the forums needed to educate individuals, families, and communities on gambling and problem gambling. Funding targeted specifically for these types of gambling education activities is required.

8) Co-op gambling counselors group

A community-based cooperative counselors group specializing in gambling and problem gambling would more effectively utilize the trained gambling counselors currently living in Treaty #3. This would enable community members, who are uncomfortable asking local trained counselors for help due to their long-term familiarity, to turn to counselors in neighbouring communities. Hired counselors would have to be qualified and certified through a University and/or the Canadian Society of Counselors and Therapists. A confidentiality clause needs to be in the employment contract. In essence, the Canadian Society of Counselors and Therapists would monitor the hiring of these positions.

9) Non-gambling activities

Recreation Officers, or equivalent, are encouraged to promote non-gambling activities and alternatives to gambling.

10) Alternative fund raising activities

The use of bingo and other forms of gambling as a means to raise funds for recreational activities (e.g., hunting, crafts, and sports) makes it extremely difficult or impossible for problem gamblers to manage their problem. Adequate funds for non-gambling activities prioritized by communities in Treaty #3 would significantly reduce this contradiction of activities. Participants in this study recommended various alternative activities, including sports, crafts, land-based activities, and cultural-based activities (e.g., pow wow, sharing circle, and traditional games).

11) Establish Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon in Treaty #3

Treaty #3 residents would benefit significantly by having local Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon meetings. In addition, information on when and where meetings are scheduled would be beneficial for Treaty #3 residents who may need help when traveling to attend these meetings at large centres.

12) Establish gambling programs in casinos

Winnipeg has been the forerunner for developing problem gambling programs in casinos. A similar program in Treaty #3 bingo and VLT halls would benefit some problem gamblers in the region.

13) Establish a Native Addictions Council of Ontario

Modeled after the Native Addictions Council of Manitoba (NACM), a similar establishment based on First Nations teachings and traditions would be extremely helpful to the residents of Treaty #3, and would supplement the treatment centres available in Ontario.

Recommendations for Future Research

- 1) Develop a problem gambling screen relevant for First Nations (e.g., First Nations Problem Gambling Index). Ideally, indigenous peoples would develop this screen for their own purposes. This is an important initial step for First Nations committed to addressing problem gambling.
- 2) Numerous individuals discussed experiencing withdrawal symptoms when attempting to stop gambling. However, problem gambling screens do not focus on withdrawal. Therefore, additional research is needed on withdrawal, withdrawal symptoms, and the relationship between withdrawal and problem gambling.
- 3) Some problem gamblers in other regions indicated that the Gamblers Anonymous approach is not helpful. Further research on the relevance of Gamblers Anonymous programs to First Nations would be extremely useful.

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Appendix A: Core Questions Used in the Study

The following questions or themes were developed by the Community Advisors for use in all communities. Individual communities added questions or themes to this core list. All participants chose confidential informal conversations or interviews.

I. Participant Demographics and Gambling Profile

1. a. What is your age: Under 18, 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, or over 56
- b. Record the participant's gender: Male or Female
2. a. What forms of gambling do you take part in?
- b. How often do you gamble?
- c. How much do you spend?
- d. Have you ever kept track of how much you lost or won?
3. a. How far do you travel to gamble?
- b. Do you consider travel expenses as part of the total cost of gambling?
4. Do you gamble alone or with friends and family?
5. How many gamblers are there in your household?
6. Do you have children? How many?
7. Do you gamble for recreation or as a challenge?

II. In Depth (Concerns)

8. a. Do you ever bring lucky items to win? What do you bring?
- b. Do you use spiritual methods (e.g. visit a medicine woman) or follow signs in nature to help you win (e.g. Sun dogs, lunar eclipse).
- c. Do you use strategies to win? What strategies do you use?
9. How do you use the extra (winnings) money you have?
10. a. How do you feel when you are unable to gamble?
- b. How do you feel when you win?
- c. How do you feel when you lose?
11. a. When gambling, do you set a budget or use what you have in your wallet?
- b. Have you ever used household money to gamble?
- c. Have you ever pawned items, broken the law, or bounced cheques for gambling money?
12. What is a problem gambler?
13. a. Has anyone ever approached you saying you had a gambling problem?
- b. Did you ever have moments where you thought your gambling might be a problem?
14. a. Have you ever made an attempt to stop gambling?

- b. What are some of the barriers that keep you from stopping or getting help?
- 15. a. How has gambling affected your personal relationships – family, friends, and spousal relationship?
- b. How has gambling affected your professional (work) relationships?
- c. Have you ever chosen gambling over family or social events?
- d. Is gambling a social event for you?
- 16. Have you ever had suicidal thoughts because of gambling?

III. Conclusion (Recommendations)

- 17. How has gambling affected your community?
- 18. Where are the children in your community when adults are gambling?
- 19. What has gambling done for and to your community (pros and cons)?
- 20. In your community, how does gambling affect the leadership, workplace (staff), and administration in your community?
- 21. Are there resources, activities, or things needed in your community to help gamblers and problem gamblers?
- 22. What things are there to do in your community that do not involve gambling?
- 23. What recommendations do you have related to gambling in your community?
- 24. What can be done to help youth who are gambling?
- 25. Do you have any questions or comments about gambling in your community that you would like to add that were not discussed here.

Appendix B: Interview Itinerary, June to August of 2003

Treaty #3 Community	Data Collection Dates
Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining	June 16 – 20
Washagamis Bay	June 23 – 27
Rat Portage	June 30 – July 4
Iskatewizaagegan No. 39	July 7 – 11
Eagle Lake	July 14 – 18
Naotkamegwanning	July 21 – 25
Couchiching	July 28 - August 1
Stanjikoming	August 4 – 8
Rainy River	August 11 - 15
Naicatchewenin	August 18 - 22
Northwest Angle No. 37	August 25 - 29

Appendix C: Ethics Approval and Informed Consent Documents



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OF MANITOBA

Department of Native Studies

Gambling and Problem Gambling in First Nations Communities

Informed Consent Document

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The purpose of this project is to allow you to share your thoughts and experiences concerning gambling and problem gambling within your community. Your interview will take less than one hour to complete. At the end of the interview, you will receive a gift basket from the Second Cup Coffee Store to thank you for participating in the study.

With your permission, the interviewer will tape (audio-record) your answers to his or her questions. If you do not want to be taped, that is okay. Let the interviewer know, and he or she will write what you say down. If you do not want what you are saying to be written down that is okay as well.

Everything that you say to the interviewer will be kept completely confidential. You will be kept anonymous in this research, meaning your name will not appear on any of the documents. Please feel free to not answer any questions you do not feel comfortable with. You may also end your participation in this study at any time during the interview and still receive your gift.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Cheryl Koster at (204) 474-8763 or Jill Oakes at (204) 474-7352. This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at (204) 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Name (Please Print)

Date

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date



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Local Research Advisor Review

[Similar forms were provided to Health Directors, Addiction Counselors, NNADAP workers, Treaty #3 Chief's Committee on Gambling, and Treaty #3 Grand Chief]

A copy of this form will be returned to you for your records and reference. If you would like more detail or have any questions, please contact Dr. Jill Oakes, Principal Investigator, at (204)474-7352 or jill_oakes@umanitoba.ca. You will be provided a copy of the Final Report once it is approved by the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Council.

Please take the time to read this carefully.

During the summer of 2003, 12 communities in Treaty #3 participated in the Gambling Study. As a Local Research Advisor, I have been asked to review the Introduction and Conclusion chapters and the chapter pertaining to my community, and provide any additional comments or suggestions for revisions.

Please sign either line 1) or line 2)

- 1) I have reviewed the Final Report and have no further comments.

Local Research Advisor's Name	Local Research Advisor's Signature	Date
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OR

- 2) I have reviewed the Final Report and have attached my comments.

Local Research Advisor's Name	Local Research Advisor's Signature	Date
-------------------------------	------------------------------------	------

Principal Investigator's Signature	Date
------------------------------------	------

Dr. Jill Oakes
 Principal Investigator
 Gambling Study
 Department of Environment and Geography
 University of Manitoba
 Winnipeg, R3T 2N2
 Phone 204-474-7352
 Fax 204-474-7699
 e-mail jill_oakes@umanitoba.ca

Appendix D: Gambling Counseling Centre Proposal

This proposal is developed from ideas collected while doing fieldwork and is included for use or modification by community officers. Aboriginal gambling counselors could form a co-op where they are matched with people asking for help from other communities. The counseling co-op could be centrally located in Fort Frances and Kenora with satellite co-ops throughout the Treaty #3 region.

Purpose

Provide problem gamblers from small communities with Aboriginal gambling counselors in a manner that ensures confidentiality is maintained.

Rationale

Most First Nations are uncomfortable confiding in counselors who live in their own community. Communities have small populations where everyone has known each other for generations. Therefore, asking for help from a local counselor would be similar to being counseled by 'family'. However, First Nations recommend having access to trained Aboriginal counselors who are familiar with the local traditions rather than non-Aboriginal counselors.

Resource Management

Many First Nations have been trained as gambling addiction counselors and live in Treaty #3 communities. These gambling counselors would work together planning workshops, sharing circles, posters, newsletters, and other gambling education materials and activities. They would provide private counseling services and supervise a confidential toll-free telephone line designed to help gamblers, problem gamblers, and their families. In addition, they would provide each other with support, debriefing, professional development opportunities, and brainstorming solutions to complex cases.

First Nations communities would pool their trained gambling counselors so people would have their calls answered by counselors from another community. Eight positions would be created, using trained gambling counselors currently available in Treaty #3 communities. These individuals would provide First Nations with the services needed to help with gambling problems and would provide information needed to prevent people from developing gambling problems.

Infrastructure and Personnel

One full-time First Nations office assistant is required to redirect calls, prepare paper work, maintain files, schedule appointments, prepare promotional material, mail out information, and generally support and facilitate the gambling counselor's co-op. Rented office space in Kenora and Fort Francis, with the possibility of smaller satellite offices, would provide easier access than one central location. To address confidentiality and anonymity concerns, clients could wait in a private room where they are protected from being seen by other members of their community. In addition, clients from one community could be scheduled at times when other clients from the same community are not

congregating in the area. Meetings with clients could be scheduled for five days a week, with workshops, sharing circles, and other educational experiences planned for several evenings each week and on Saturdays. Counselors could work a staggered workweek, so that six people were always available to take calls and in-person appointments.

Satellite counseling co-ops could include two trained First Nations from two other communities who work several afternoons per week. These counselors would provide counseling services to those people who are unable to travel to the centrally located counseling co-op. These counselors could report to the centrally located counseling co-op or work out of the central location several days each week (to meet with clients more comfortable meeting in another location) and assist with the production of relevant gambling education materials.

Funding

Eight First Nations gambling counselors and one office assistant could be paid from government funding transfers identified for First Nations health services. Eight counselors are initially recommended to ensure adequate availability, professional exchange of ideas and techniques, collegial support, a reasonable workload, time for professional development, and time to develop workshops, activities, and promotional materials.

Budget

One full-time Office Assistant

Take calls, schedule appointments, distribute information

Eight First Nations Gambling Counselors

In-person and telephone counseling for gamblers and their families

Coordinate workshops, sharing circles, other educational events

Prepare brochures, newsletters, posters and other promotional information

Office expenses

Printing expenses

Phone and Mail costs

Computer and printer

Office rent

Appendix E: Telephone, In-Person, E-Mail, and Video Help

In-Person Help

In addition to local trained NNADAP representatives, the following provide counseling services for compulsive gamblers in the Northwest Ontario-Manitoba area:

Red Willow Lodge
714-190 Smith St, Winnipeg, MB
Phone (204) 943-8374

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba
Adult Intake – Rehabilitation Services
1041 Portage Ave, Winnipeg, MB
Phone (204) 944-6200

Addictions Recovery
93 Cathedral St, Winnipeg, MB
Phone (204) 586-2550

Native Addictions Council of Manitoba
160 Salter Ave, Winnipeg, MB
Phone (204) 586-8395

Addictions Services Kenora Gambling Program
21 Wolsley St., Kenora, ON
Phone (807) 467-3555
E-Mail ask@lwdh.on.ca

Riverside Community Addiction Services
110 Victoria Ave, Fort Frances, ON
Phone (807) 274-4807
Email: ccsfort@fort-frances.lakeheadu.ca

Sunset Country Counseling Services
Box 3003
58 Goodall St. Dryden, ON
Phone: 807-223-6678

Community Counseling and Addiction Services
61 King St., P.O. Box 506
Sioux Lookout, ON P8T 1A8
Phone: 807-737-1275
Email: kateccas@hotmail.com

Community Counseling and Addiction Services
P.O. Box 1336 146 Howey St.,
Red Lake, ON P0V 2M0
Phone: 807-727-1100
Email: ccaservi@red-lake.lakeheadu.ca

Telephone Help

Source: http://www.responsiblegambling.org/gambling_helpline_numbers.cfm

AADAC

Confidential and open 24 hours a day. First Nations services 1-866-33AADAC

United States

In the U.S., National Problem Gambling Helpline Network 1-800-522-4700

Ontario Toll Free Problem Gambling Helpline Number

Confidential and open 24hrs a day. Available in English & French. 1-888-230-3505

Alberta Problem Gambling Hotline

Confidential and open 24hrs a day. 1-800-665-9676

British Columbia Problem Gambling Information and Referral Service

Confidential and open 24hrs a day. 1-888-795-6111

Manitoba Problem Gambling Helpline

Confidential and open 24hrs a day. 1-800-463-1554

New Brunswick Problem Gambling Helpline

Confidential and open 24hrs a day. 1-800-461-1234

Newfoundland and Labrador Helpline

Confidential and open 24hrs a day. 1-888-737-4668

Nova Scotia Problem Gambling Helpline

Confidential and open 24hrs a day. 1-888-347-8888
1-888-347-3331 (hearing impaired)

Prince Edward Island

Confidential. 1-888-299-8399

Quebec - Gambling: Help and Referral

Confidential and open 24hrs a day. 1-800-461-0140

Saskatchewan Problem Gambling Helpline

Confidential and open 24hrs a day. 1-800-306-6789

Yukon 800

Confidential and open 24hrs a day. 1-800-661-0408

Video and E-Mail Help and Information for community newsletters and brochures

Video

A First Nations awareness resource video titled 'Balance' is available from www.bcreponsiblegambling.ca

E-Mail

E-Mail help, tips, guidelines, and other information found in the following web sites would be useful information to insert into community newsletters and brochures.

<http://corp.aadac.com/gambling>

www.ncpgambling.org

www.gov.ns.ca

www.bcreponsiblegambling.ca

www.gamblersanonymous.org

www.gam-anon.org

Due to the limited access to the internet for individuals in Treaty #3, pages from the web have been inserted into this appendix for use by communities interested in sharing information on gambling and problem gambling in local newsletters, brochures, bulletins, and flyers.

Gamblers Anonymous & Gam-Anon Meetings in Ontario and Manitoba

Source: <http://www.gamblersanonymous.org/mtgdirCAN.html#CANon>

Gamblers Anonymous provides support for gamblers who would like to quit, and has programs in place to help families. Gam-Anon provides assistance and support to families living with someone who has a gambling problem. For more information on these organizations, and local chapters offering help in Manitoba and Ontario, visit the following websites:

www.gamblersanonymous.org

www.gam-anon.org

MANITOBA ([Monday](#), [Tuesday](#), [Wednesday](#), [Thursday](#), [Friday](#), [Saturday](#), [Sunday](#))

Winnipeg Hotline Number: (204) 571-3685

MONDAY

Fireside G.A.
7:30 PM
Messiah Lutheran Church
400 Rouge Road
Winnipeg, Manitoba

TUESDAY

Serenity G.A.
7:30 PM
Garden City United Church
725 Atlantic Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba

WEDNESDAY

Westman/Brandon G.A.
7:30 PM
Call (204) 725-3355

Winnipeg G.A.
1:30 - 3:00 PM
Saint Eugene Church
(In the basement)
1009 St. Mary's Road
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Open Meeting

Serenity G.A.
7:30 PM
Garden City United Church
725 Atlantic Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba

THURSDAY

Message of Hope G.A.
7:30 PM
St. Bartholomew's
881 Autumnwood Drive
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Magic G.A.
8:00 PM
St. Patrick/St. Jude Parish Hall
625 Spruce Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba

FRIDAY

Fireside G.A.
7:30 PM
Messiah Lutheran Church
400 Rouge Road
Winnipeg, Manitoba

SATURDAY

Winnipeg G.A.
2:00 PM
Young United Church - AB Room
222 Furby Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Magic G.A.
8:00 PM
St. Patrick/St. Jude Parish Hall
downstairs
625 Spruce
Winnipeg, Manitoba

SUNDAY

Fireside G.A.
7:30 PM
Messiah Lutheran Church

400 Rouge Road
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Message of Hope G.A.
7:30 PM
St. Bartholomew's
881 Autumnwood Drive
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Westman/Brandon G.A.
7:30 PM
call (204) 725-3355 for information

ONTARIO ([Monday](#), [Tuesday](#), [Wednesday](#), [Thursday](#), [Friday](#), [Saturday](#), [Sunday](#))

Toronto Hotline Number: (416) 366-7613

Windsor Hotline Number: (519) 971-5215

MONDAY

Etobicoke G.A.
7:00 PM
Renforth Baptist Church (Rear Door)
627 Burnhamthorpe Road
Etobicoke, Ontario

79 Victoria Street
Aurora, Ontario
Closed Meeting

Kitchener G.A.
7:30 PM
Grand River Hospital
Kaufman Building
40 Green Street - Room 315
Kitchener, Ontario

Brampton G.A.
7:30 P.M.
William Osler Health Center
135 Mc Laughlin Road
(North of Steeles, South of Queen)
Brampton, Ontario

New Day G.A.
7:30 PM
Bethel Baptist Church
300 Coldwater Road
Orillia, Ontario

Burlington G.A.
7:00 PM
1299 Brant Street
Burlington, Ontario
Closed Meeting
Step Meeting

Ottawa G.A.
7:30 PM
Resurrection of Our Lord Church
1940 Saunderson Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
Closed Discussion

Guelph G.A.
7:30 PM
Homewood Health Centre
Room G - McKinnon Bldg - Lower Level
150 Dehli Street
Guelph, Ontario

Windsor G.A.
7:30 PM
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
1215 Parent Avenue @ Giles
Windsor, Ontario
Closed Meeting

Hawkesbury G.A.
7:30 - 9:00 PM
Centre Chretien Viens & Vois
926 Lansdowne
Hawkesbury, Ontario
Open Discussion

TUESDAY

Aurora & District G.A.
7:30 PM
Trinity Anglican Church

London G.A.
7:30 PM
Open Door Christian Fellowship
940 Dundas Street
London, Ontario

North York G.A.
7:30 PM
St. Johns Rehab Hospital
285 Cummer Avenue
(Between Yonge and Bayview)
North York, Ontario

Oshawa G.A.
7:00 PM

Oshawa Community Church
71 Simcoe Street South
Oshawa, Ontario

Pembroke G.A.
8:00 PM
Royal Canadian Legion
Main Street
Pembroke, Ontario

Toronto G.A.
7:00 PM
Columbus Centre #106
901 Lawrence Avenue West
Toronto, Ontario

WEDNESDAY

Barrie G.A.
7:00-8:30 PM
United Church, Room 415
112 Collier Street
Barrie, Ontario
Combined/Step Meeting

Niagara Falls G.A.
7:00 PM
St. Andrew's United Church
5654 Morrison Street
Niagara Falls, Ontario

Oakville G.A.
7:00 PM
Central Baptist Church
346 Rebecca Street
Oakville, Ontario

Ottawa G.A.
7:30 PM
Alexander Community Centre
960 Silver Street
Ottawa, Ontario
Open Discussion

Rexdale G.A.
7:30 PM

Martingrove United Church
(North of Rexdale Blvd., South of Finch)
Rexdale, Ontario
Step Meeting

New Life Step Meeting G.A.
7:30 - 8:30 PM
Central United Church
160 Spring Street
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

Sault Ste. Marie G.A.
7:30 PM
Central United Church
160 Spring Street
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

Sudbury G.A.
7:00 - 9:00 PM
Pingate Addiction Centre
336 Pine Street
Sudbury, Ontario

East End G.A.
8:00 PM
Church of Resurrection
1100 Woodbine Avenue
(3 Blocks North of Danforth)
Toronto, Ontario

Windsor G.A.
12:00 PM
Most Precious Blood Church
1947 Meldrum@Tecumseh
Windsor, Ontario

THURSDAY

Ajax G.A.
7:00 PM
Ajax-Pickering Hospital
Room 3049
Harwood Road South
Ajax, Ontario
Step Meeting

Barrie Thursday Night G.A.
7:00-9:00 PM
Collier Street United Church
112 Collier Street
Barrie, Ontario

Downsview G.A.
7:30 PM
Humber River Hospital
2175 Keele Avenue
(Between Lawrence and Eglinton)
Downsview, Ontario

Guelph G.A.
7:00 PM
Homewood Health Centre
Room G McKinnon Bldg - Lower Level
150 Delhi Street
Guelph, Ontario

Hamilton G.A.
7:00 - 9:00 PM
Trinity Baptist Church
922 Main Street East
Hamilton, Ontario
Closed Meeting

Orleans G.A.
7:30 PM
Eglise Ste-Marie
4831 Inness Road
Orleans, Ontario
Francais/Ouvert

Ottawa G.A.
7:30 PM
4831 Ch. Innes
Orleans, Ontario
Francais/Ferme

Penetanguishene G.A.
7:30 PM
Georgian Woods Addiction Centre
Georgian Woods House
500 Church Street
Penetanguishene, Ontario

Thornhill G.A.
7:30 PM
Thornhill United Church (Basement)
25 Elgin Street
(4 Lights North of Steeles, East of Yonge)
Thornhill, Ontario

Woodstock G.A.
7:30 PM
All Saints Anglican Church

25 Winnett Street
Woodstock, Ontario

FRIDAY
Cornwall G.A.
7:30 PM
Knox St. Paul United Church
108 Second Street & Sydney
Cornwall, Ontario
Open Discussion

Fort Erie G.A.
7:00 PM
Trinity Lutheran Church
171 Bertie Street
Fort Erie, Ontario

Glencairn G.A.
7:00 PM
Hopes Acres Salvation Army
Glencairn, Ontario

Ottawa G.A.
7:30 PM
St. Paul University
223 Main Street - Room 154
Ottawa, Ontario
Closed Step Meeting

Rexdale G.A.
7:00 PM
Martingrove United Church
(North of Rexdale Blvd., South of Finch)
Rexdale, Ontario

Windsor G.A.
7:30 PM
St. Andrew Presbyterian Church
405 Victoria Avenue
Windsor, Ontario

SATURDAY
Ottawa G.A.
1:00 PM
McNabb Community Centre
(Corner of Percy & Gladstone)
Ottawa, Ontario
Open Meeting

Downtowner's G.A.
12:00 Noon
Church of the Redeemer
(Main entrance, upper level)

162 Bloor St West
Avenue Rd. and Bloor
Toronto, Ontario

SUNDAY

Guelph G.A.
7:30 PM
Homewood Health Centre
Room G McKinnon Bldg - Lower Level
150 Delhi Street
Guelph, Ontario

Mississauga G.A.
7:00 PM
St. Mary's Ukrainian Church
3625 Cawthra Road
back entrance
Mississauga, Ontario

North Bay G.A.
A Day at a Time
2:00 PM
North Bay Halfway House
393 Oak St.
North Bay, Ontario
Open Meeting

Ottawa G.A.
7:00 PM
Northwestern United Church
(side door downstairs)

241 Northwestern Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario
G.A. Big Book Discussion
Open speaker meeting last Sunday of month

Sarnia G.A.
7:00 PM
St. Peter Catholic Church
756 Maxwell Street
Sarnia, Ontario

Sunday Night G.A.
7:00 PM
St. John's Hospital Auditorium
285 Cummer Avenue
(Between Yong and Bayview)
Toronto, Ontario

Toronto Step G.A.
10:00 AM
Columbus Centre Room 106
901 Lawrence Avenue West
Toronto, Ontario

Windsor G.A.
7:00 PM
St. Anne's Church
12233 Tecumseh Road
Windsor, Ontario
Step Meeting

From Gam-Anon: Are You Living With A Compulsive Gambler?

Source: <http://www.gam-anon.org/gamanon/living.htm>

- If there is a gambling problem in your home, the Gam-Anon family group may be able to help you cope with it. If you are living with a compulsive gambler, you will answer "YES" to at least six of the following questions.
- Do you find yourself constantly bothered by bill collectors?
- Is the person in question often away from home for long, unexplained periods of time?
- Does this person ever lose time from work due to gambling?
- Do you feel that this person cannot be trusted with money?
- Does the person in question faithfully promise that he or she will stop gambling; beg, plead for another chance, yet gamble again and again?
- Does this person ever gamble longer than he or she intended to, until the last dollar is gone?
- Does this person immediately return to gambling to try to recover losses, or to win more?
- Does this person ever gamble to get money to solve financial difficulties or have unrealistic expectations that gambling will bring the family material comfort and wealth?
- Does this person borrow money to gamble with or to pay gambling debts?
- Has this person's reputation ever suffered due to gambling, even to the extent of committing illegal acts to finance gambling?
- Have you come to the point of hiding money needed for living expenses, knowing that you and the rest of the family may go without food and clothing if you do not?
- Do you search this person's clothing or go through his or her wallet when the opportunity presents itself, or otherwise check on his/her activities?
- Does the person in question hide his or her money?
- Have you noticed a personality change in the gambler as his or her gambling progresses?
- Does the person in question consistently lie to cover up or deny his or her gambling activities?
- Does this person use guilt induction as a method of shifting responsibilities for his or her gambling upon you?
- Do you attempt to anticipate this person's moods, or try to control his or her life?
- Does this person ever suffer from remorse or depression due to gambling, sometimes to the point of self-destruction?
- Has the gambling ever brought you to the point of threatening to break up the family unit?
- Do you feel that your life together is a nightmare?

What is Gam-Anon? Gam-Anon is a fellowship of men and women who are husbands, wives, relatives and close friends of compulsive gamblers. You need not wait for the compulsive gambler to seek help before coming to Gam-Anon. In Gam-Anon we learn effective ways of coping with the gambling problem. By seeking help for ourselves and gaining serenity and peace of mind, we find that we are better able to cope with our problems on a day-to-day basis and in some cases motivate the gambler toward seeking help for him or her.

Did You Grow Up With A Compulsive Gambler?

Source: <http://www.gam-anon.org/gamanon/living.htm>

Compulsive gambling is a symptom of an emotional illness, characterized by low self-esteem, immaturity, instability and obsessive behavior. Because compulsive gambling is an insidious and

baffling illness, some adults have difficulty deciding if they were affected by compulsive gambling during childhood. The following questions may help you to determine whether compulsive gambling affected your childhood or present life.

- Do you obsess about money?
- Did family activities revolve around gambling events? (sports, cards, lottery, racetracks, etc.)
- Have you ever been missing money?
- Have you ever paid or been asked to pay a parent's debts?
- Do your parents often argue about money?
- Were you forced to form an alliance with one parent against another?
- Did your parents use you as a sounding board for their marriage?
- Are you afraid to be alone with the gambling parent?
- Do you feel anxious when the phone rings, mail comes or doorbell rings?
- Do you feel responsible for the unhappiness in your home?
- Do you confuse pity with love?
- Have you had problems with your own compulsive behavior?
- Do you feel more like the parent than the child?
- Are you unable to remember all or parts of your childhood?
- Do you care for others easily, but find it difficult to care for you?
- Do you find it difficult to identify and express your feelings?
- Do you have trouble with intimate relationships?
- Do you lie when it would be just as easy to tell the truth?
- Do you feel more alive in the midst of a crisis?
- Do you think more money would solve your problems?
- If you answered yes to some or all of these questions, Gam-Anon may be for you. Gam-anon is a fellowship for families, relatives and close friends who live and have lived with the gambling problem. We would like you to feel that we understand as perhaps few can and that Gam-Anon can offer you a new way of life.

Talking About Problem Gambling With Someone You Care About

Modified from <http://www.bcresponsiblegambling.ca/problem/talking.html>

- You cannot make someone stop gambling, but showing concern and support are important steps in helping a problem gambler receive professional help.
- Tell the person you care about them and you are concerned about their behaviour.
- Avoid sounding judgmental - remember it is the behaviour that is the problem, not the person.
- Tell the person how their actions are affecting others - be specific.
- Remember that people in this situation are vulnerable.
- Let the person know you are willing to help, but do not try to counsel them yourself.
- Provide information, not advice - Refer them to this web site.
- Encourage them to find out about the self-exclusion program by contacting MB or ON Lottery Corporation.
- Encourage them to seek help from a professional counselor through the NNADAP or an Employee Assistance Program.
- Suggest they call the 24-hour toll-free Problem Gambling Help Line.

Frequently Asked Questions

Source: modified from <http://www.bcresponsiblegambling.ca/problem/faqs2.html>

Q: What is problem gambling?

A: Problem gambling includes all gambling behaviour patterns that compromise, disrupt or damage personal, family or vocational pursuits. In extreme cases, problem gambling can result in financial ruin, legal problems, loss of career and family, or even suicide.

Q: What causes problem gambling?

A: Gambling in Canada is a well-regulated form of adult entertainment and is a pleasurable pastime for the majority of participants. However, some people do experience problems associated with their gambling, and may seek help from a variety of professional resources. There is no one cause or precipitating factor in problem gambling, generally it is a combination of social, biological and psychological factors. The problem might be overt—with individuals or families seeking help from a professional that deals specifically with problem gambling. People encountering difficulties associated with gambling often experience emotional, financial, family, legal, or substance abuse problems, and may seek help from a variety of other resources that do not specifically deal with problem gambling. The presenting problem may be linked with problem gambling; however, gambling may not be initially identified as a primary problem.

Q: What kind of people become problem gamblers?

A: Anyone who gambles can develop problems if they are not aware of the risks and do not gamble responsibly. When gambling behaviour interferes with finances, relationships and the workplace, a serious problem already exists.

Q: Can children or teenagers develop gambling problems?

A: ... some youth participate in illegal forms of gambling, such as gambling on the internet. Some research that shows children may be more likely to develop problems related to gambling than adults. While debate continues on this issue, there appears to be a number of factors influencing this finding. Parental role modeling is key, in that parents present a model on how to cope with stress. Age of exposure plays a part, in that adults who seek treatment for problem gambling report having started gambling at an early age. A number of adolescents reported a preoccupation with everything related to gambling prior to developing problems.

Q: Is problem gambling really not the result of irresponsible or weak-willed people?

A: No. Many people who develop problems have been viewed as responsible and strong by those who care about them. Precipitating factors often lead to a change in behaviour, such as retirement or job related stress.

Q: Is there a link between problem gambling and chemical dependency?

A: Though people can develop problems related to gambling without having a problem with alcohol or other substances, there does appear to be evidence of family patterns regarding dependency. Many people who develop gambling related problems report one or both parents had a drinking and or gambling problem.

Q: Is problem gambling associated with other mental health problems?

A: Problem gambling often exists in isolation of any other mental health issue. Loss of judgment and excessive gambling may occur during a manic episode with someone who has a bipolar disorder. Many people who have problems with gambling report symptoms of depression. Some people state

their depressive symptoms were alleviated while gambling, only to return once the gambling behaviour ceased. Others who have been diagnosed with an antisocial personality disorder can also experience problems related to gambling.

Q: What types of gambling cause the most problem gambling?

A: Anecdotal reports indicate that the faster the wager to response time with a game, the more likely players are to develop problems with a particular game. Many believe video lottery terminals pose the most risk for developing problems as they have the fastest wager to response time of any game type. More research is required in this area to determine if this is a fact.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF COMPULSIVE GAMBLING
AND THE G.A. RECOVERY PROGRAM**

Source: modified from <http://www.gamblersanonymous.org/qna.html>

What is compulsive gambling?

The explanation that seems most acceptable to Gamblers Anonymous members is that compulsive gambling is an illness, progressive in its nature, which can never be cured, but can be arrested. Before coming to Gamblers Anonymous, many compulsive gamblers thought of themselves as morally weak or at times just plain 'no good'. The Gamblers Anonymous concept is that compulsive gamblers are very sick people who can recover if they will follow to the best of their ability a simple program that has proved successful for thousands of other men and women with a gambling or compulsive gambling problem.

What is the first thing a compulsive gambler ought to do in order to stop gambling?

The compulsive gambler needs to be willing to accept the fact that he or she is in the grip of a progressive illness and has a desire to get well. Our experience has shown that the Gamblers Anonymous program will always work for any person who has a desire to stop gambling. However, it will never work for the person who will not face squarely the facts about this illness.

How can you tell whether you are a compulsive gambler?

Only you can make that decision. Most people turn to Gamblers Anonymous when they become willing to admit that gambling has them licked. Also in Gamblers Anonymous, a compulsive gambler is described as a person whose gambling has caused growing and continuing problems in any department of his or her life. Many Gamblers Anonymous members went through terrifying experiences before they were ready to accept help. Others were faced with a slow, subtle deterioration, which finally brought them to the point of admitting defeat.

Can a compulsive gambler ever gamble normally again?

No. The first bet to a problem gambler is like the first small drink to an alcoholic. Sooner or later he or she falls back into the same old destructive pattern. Once a person has crossed the invisible line into irresponsible uncontrolled gambling he or she never seems to regain control. After abstaining a few months some of our members have tried some small bet experimentation, always with disastrous results. The old obsession inevitably returned. Our Gamblers Anonymous experience seems to point to these alternatives: to gamble, risking progressive deterioration or not to gamble, and develop a better way of life.

Why can a compulsive gambler not simply use will power to stop gambling?

We believe that most people, if they are honest, will recognize their lack of power to solve certain problems. When it comes to gambling, we have known many problem gamblers who could abstain for long stretches, but caught off guard and under the right set of circumstances, they started gambling without thought of the consequences. The defenses they relied upon, through will power alone, gave way before some trivial reason for placing a bet. We have found that will power and self-knowledge will not help in those mental blank spots, but adherence to spiritual principles seems to solve our problems. Most of us feel that a belief in a Power greater than ourselves is necessary in order for us to sustain a desire to refrain from gambling.

Do Gamblers Anonymous members go into gambling places to help former members who are still gambling?

No. Families and friends of these people have asked us to intercede but we have never been able to be of any real help. Actually, sometimes we felt we retarded a member's eventual recovery by giving them this unsolicited attention. It all goes back to the basic principle that a gambler ought to want help before he or she is approached by us.

I only go on gambling binges periodically. Do I need Gamblers Anonymous?

Yes. Compulsive gamblers who have joined Gamblers Anonymous tell us that, though their gambling binges were periodic, the intervals between were not periods of constructive thinking. Symptomatic of these periods were nervousness, irritability, frustration, indecision and a continued breakdown in personal relationships. These same people have often found the Gamblers Anonymous program the answer to the elimination of character defects and a guide to moral progress in their lives. **GAMBLING**, for the compulsive gambler is defined as follows: Any betting or wagering, for self or others, whether for money or not, no matter how slight or insignificant, where the outcome is uncertain or depends upon chance or 'skill' constitutes gambling.

If I join Gamblers Anonymous won't everyone know I am a compulsive gambler?

Most people made quite a name for themselves as full-fledged gamblers by the time they turned to Gamblers Anonymous. Their gambling was not usually a well-kept secret. It would then be unusual if the good news of their abstinence from gambling did not cause comment. However, no disclosure of any affiliation with Gamblers Anonymous can rightfully be made by anyone but the member themselves. Even then, it should be done in such a way that will work no hardship on the Gamblers Anonymous fellowship.

If I stop gambling will it not make it difficult for me to keep some desirable business and social contacts?

We think not. Most of the world's work of any consequence is done without the benefit of monetary wagering. Many of our leaders in business, industry and professional life have attained great success without knowing one card from another or which way the horses run around the track. In the area of social relationships, the newcomer will soon find a keen appreciation of the many pleasant and stimulating activities available - far removed from anything that is remotely associated from gambling.

How does someone stop gambling through the Gamblers Anonymous program?

One does this through bringing about a progressive character change within oneself. This can be accomplished by having faith in -- and following -- the basic concepts of the Gamblers Anonymous Recovery Program. There are no short cuts in gaining this faith and understanding. To recover from one of the most baffling, insidious, compulsive addictions will require diligent effort. **HONESTY, OPENMINDEDNESS, AND WILLINGNESS** are the key words in our recovery.

Can a person recover by himself/herself by reading Gamblers Anonymous literature or medical books on the problem of compulsive gambling?

Sometimes, but not usually. The Gamblers Anonymous program works best for the individual when it is recognized and accepted as a program involving other people. Working with other compulsive gamblers in a Gamblers Anonymous group the individual seems to find the necessary understanding and support. They are able to talk of their past experiences and present problems in an area where they are comfortable and accepted. Instead of feeling alone and misunderstood, they feel needed and accepted.

Does Gamblers Anonymous look upon compulsive gambling as a vice?

No.

Is knowing why we gambled important?

Perhaps, however insofar as stopping gambling, many Gamblers Anonymous members have abstained from gambling without the knowledge of why they gambled.

What are some characteristics of a person who is a compulsive gambler?

INABILITY AND UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT REALITY. Hence the escape into the dream world of gambling.

EMOTIONAL INSECURITY. A compulsive gambler finds he or she is emotionally comfortable only when "in action". It is not uncommon to hear a Gamblers Anonymous member say: "The only place I really felt like I belonged was sitting at the poker table. There I felt secure and comfortable. No great demands were made upon me. I knew I was destroying myself, yet at the same time, I had a certain sense of security."

IMMATURITY. A desire to have all the good things in life without any great effort on their part seems to be the common character pattern of problem gamblers. Many Gamblers Anonymous members accept the fact that they were unwilling to grow up. Subconsciously they felt they could avoid mature responsibility by wagering on the spin of a wheel or the turn of a card, and so the struggle to escape responsibility finally became a subconscious obsession.

Also, a compulsive gambler seems to have a strong inner urge to be a 'big shot' and needs to have a feeling of being all powerful. The compulsive gambler is willing to do anything (often of an antisocial nature) to maintain the image he or she wants others to see.

Then too, there is a theory that compulsive gamblers subconsciously want to lose to punish themselves. There is much evidence to support this theory.

What is the dream world of the compulsive gambler?

This is another common characteristic of compulsive gamblers. A lot of time is spent creating images of the great and wonderful things they are going to do as soon as they make the big win. They often see themselves as quite philanthropic and charming people. They may dream of providing families and friends with new cars, mink coats, and other luxuries. Compulsive gamblers picture themselves leading a pleasant gracious life, made possible by the huge sums of money they will accrue from their 'system'. Servants, penthouses, nice clothes, charming friends, yachts, and world tours are a few of the wonderful things that are just around the corner after a big win is finally made.

Pathetically, however, there never seems to be a big enough winning to make even the smallest dream come true. When compulsive gamblers succeed, they gamble to dream still greater dreams. When failing, they gamble in reckless desperation and the depths of their misery are fathomless as their dream world comes crashing down. Sadly, they will struggle back, dream more dreams, and of course suffer more misery. No one can convince them that their great schemes will not someday come true. They believe they will, for without this dream world, life for them would not be tolerable.

Is compulsive gambling basically a financial problem?

No, compulsive gambling is an emotional problem. A person in the grip of this illness creates mountains of apparently insolvable problems. Of course, financial problems are created, but they also find themselves facing marital, employment, or legal problems. Compulsive gamblers find friends have been lost and relatives have rejected them. Of the many serious difficulties created, the financial problems seem the easiest to solve. When a compulsive gambler enters Gamblers Anonymous and quits gambling, income is usually increased and there is no longer the financial drain that was caused by gambling, and very shortly, the financial pressures begin to be relieved. Gamblers Anonymous members have found that the best road to financial recovery is through hard work and repayment of our debts. Borrowing and/or lending of money (bailouts) in Gamblers Anonymous is detrimental to our recovery and should not take place.

The most difficult and time-consuming problem with which they will be faced is that of bringing about a character change within themselves. Most Gamblers Anonymous members look upon this as their greatest challenge, which should be worked on immediately and continued throughout their lives.

Who can join Gamblers Anonymous?

Anyone who has a desire to stop gambling. There are no other rules or regulations concerning Gamblers Anonymous membership.

How much does it cost to join Gamblers Anonymous?

There are no assessments in connection with Gamblers Anonymous membership. The newcomer signs nothing and pledges nothing. However, we do have expenses relative to our group meeting and our Gamblers Anonymous service facilities. Since Gamblers Anonymous has traditionally been fully self-supporting and declines outside contribution, these expenses are met through voluntary financial support by the members.

Experience has shown that acceptance of these financial responsibilities is a vital part of our individual and group growth process.

Why are Gamblers Anonymous members anonymous?

Anonymity has great practical value in maintaining unity within our fellowship. Through its practice at the level of press, radio, films and television we have eliminated the possibility of fame and recognition being given to the individual member; hence, we have not been faced with any great internal struggles for power and prestige, which would prove highly detrimental to our essential unity.

Anonymity also has great value in attracting new members who initially might feel there is a stigma attached to the problem. Therefore, we guarantee the newcomer as much anonymity as they choose. More importantly, we are beginning to realize that anonymity has tremendous spiritual significance. It represents a powerful reminder that we need always place principles above personalities.

Our survival as individuals demands that we renounce personal gratification . . . so our Gamblers Anonymous movement not only advocates but tries to practice true humility and it is through greater humility that we will be able to live in peace and security for all the years to come.

Is Gamblers Anonymous a religious society?

No. Gamblers Anonymous is composed of people from many religious faiths along with agnostics and atheists. Since membership in Gamblers Anonymous requires no particular religious belief as a condition of membership, it cannot be described as a religious society. The Gamblers Anonymous recovery program is based on acceptance of certain spiritual values but the member is free to interpret these principles as he chooses.

For further information, E-mail isomain@gamblersanonymous.org.

Do You Have A Problem With Gambling?

<http://www.bcreponsiblegambling.ca/problem/need.html>

Do you ever...

- Feel the need to cut down on your gambling?
- Feel annoyed by criticisms of your gambling?
- Feel guilty about your gambling?
- Borrow money to gamble?
- Gamble more than you intend to?
- Often gamble until your money is gone?
- Lie about your gambling?
- Hide evidence of your gambling (betting slips, lottery tickets, IOUs)?
- Lose time from work or school as a result of gambling?
- Gamble while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs?
- Gamble to pay debts or solve personal difficulties?
- Feel anxious, hopeless, depressed or suicidal because of your gambling?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, you may have a problem with gambling. Problem gambling is treatable and help is available.

Responsible Gambling Tips

Source: http://www.responsiblegambling.org/gambling_tips.cfm

For many people gambling is exciting and entertaining. They make careful decisions about spending time and money, where to go and how to have fun.

Here is how most people gamble responsibly:

- They gamble for entertainment, not as a way to make money;
- They balance gambling with other leisure activities;
- They usually gamble together with friends or family, not alone;
- They do not 'chase' losses; they accept losses as the cost of entertainment;
- They only use discretionary income, not money for everyday expenses;
- They do not use cash machines to get more money for gambling than they intended;
- They set a budget and stick to it;
- They do not borrow money to gamble;
- They set a time limit and quit when the time is up;
- They take frequent breaks;
- They know that the risk of problems increases at times of loss or depression.

Warning Signs

<http://www.bcreponsiblegambling.ca/problem/warning.html>

When Gambling Stops Being A Game

Problem gambling can lead to financial ruin, legal problems, loss of career and family, or even suicide. Much like a dependency on alcohol, the need to gamble may become the most important activity in the life of someone who gambles excessively. Sometimes this happens to people going through a crisis such as divorce, financial setback or serious illness.

Problem gambling is treatable and help is available.

How to Recognize Problem Gambling

Do you or someone you care about have a problem with gambling?

Gamblers who are experiencing problems may go to great lengths to deny or cover up their problem. Here are some warning signs that may indicate that gambling has become a problem:

- Gambling for longer and longer periods of time;
- "Chasing losses" - gambling more often to "win back" lost money;
- Neglecting family/personal needs to gamble;
- Growing debt from gambling;
- Absence from school, work or important social activities to gamble;
- Gambling to escape daily pressures and obligations;
- Involvement in illegal activities to finance gambling;
- Lying about the extent of gambling involvement.

Is Gambling A Problem In Your Household?

(<http://www.bcresponsiblegambling.ca/problem/household.html> reprint from Nova Scotia's Responsible Gambling website)

If you answer yes to at least six of these questions, you may be living with a problem gambler.

- Do you find yourself constantly bothered by bill collectors?
- Is the person in question away from home for long unexplained periods of time?
- Does this person ever lose time from work due to gambling?
- Do you feel that this person cannot be trusted with money?
- Does this person faithfully promise that he or she will stop gambling; beg and plead for another chance, yet gambles again and again?
- Does this person ever gamble longer than he or she intended to, till the last dollar is gone?
- Does this person ever gamble to get money to solve financial difficulties, or have unrealistic expectations that gambling will bring the family wealth or material comfort?
- Does this person immediately return to gambling to try and recover loses, or to win more?
- Does this person borrow money to gamble with or to pay gambling debts?
- Has this person's reputation ever suffered due to gambling, even to the extent of committing illegal acts to finance gambling?
- Have you come to the point of hiding money needed for living expenses, knowing that the family may go without food and clothing if you do not?
- Do you search this person's clothing or go through his or her wallet when the opportunity presents itself?
- Do you hide his or her money?
- Have you noticed a significant change in the gambler as his or her gambling progresses?
- Does the person in question consistently lie to cover up or deny his or her gambling activities?
- Has the gambling ever brought you to the point of threatening to break up your family?

- Does this person ever suffer from remorse or depression due to gambling, sometimes to the point of threatening self-destruction?

Myths and Misconceptions

(<http://www.bcreponsiblegambling.ca/problem/myth.html> Reprinted from Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling)

- Gamblers have flamboyant, carefree personalities. (Some are, but others are quiet, introverted, and serious minded.)
- Gamblers enjoy risks in all areas of their lives. (Some are big risk takers - others are conservative in personal habits and work.)
- If you do not gamble daily, you are not a problem or compulsive gambler.
- You can be addicted to an activity. (Gambling can change one's mood by affecting the biochemistry of the brain much the same way as alcohol or drugs.)
- Gamblers are thieves and criminals. (Not true, but some gamblers may resort to criminal behaviour in desperation.)
- A compulsive gambler will bet on anything. (Problem gamblers generally have preferences and are not tempted by every type of gambling.)
- All compulsive gamblers want to lose. (Most are addicted to the act of gambling - they would rather lose than be out of the action.)
- Compulsive gamblers are weak-willed, otherwise they would simply stop.

Common Misconceptions

Many people believe they can "win big" over time. They mistakenly believe they can beat the odds.

The following are some common misconceptions or irrational beliefs about gambling:

- Gambling is an easy way to make money;
- Gambling is the solution to my problems;
- I believe I can beat the odds;
- Borrowing to gamble is okay;
- I can always win it back;
- This machine is ready for a large payoff, or it is my turn to win;
- My lottery number is bound to come up if I consistently play the same numbers.

Appendix F: '20 questions' from Gamblers Anonymous

This list of questions from Gamblers Anonymous is a general educational resource; it does not replace a diagnosis by a healthcare professional specializing in problem gambling. These questions may help you decide whether compulsive gambling is a problem for you or someone you know. Most compulsive gamblers will answer yes to seven or more of these questions.

- Do you lose time from work (school) due to gambling?
- Is gambling making your home life unhappy?
- Is gambling affecting your reputation?
- Have you ever felt remorse after gambling?
- Do you ever gamble to get money with which to pay debts or to otherwise solve financial difficulties?
- Does gambling cause a decrease in your ambition or efficiency?
- After losing, do you feel you must return as soon as possible and win back your losses?
- After a win, do you have a strong urge to return and win more?
- Do you often gamble until your last dollar is gone?
- Do you ever borrow to finance your gambling?
- Have you ever sold any real or personal property to finance gambling?
- Are you reluctant to use "gambling money" for normal expenditures?
- Does gambling make you careless of the welfare of your family?
- Do you ever gamble longer than you had planned?
- Do you ever gamble to escape worry or trouble?
- Have you ever committed, or considered committing, an illegal act to finance gambling?
- Does gambling cause you to have difficulty sleeping?
- Do arguments, disappointments or frustrations create within you an urge to gamble?
- Do you have an urge to celebrate any good fortune by a few hours of gambling?
- Have you ever considered self-destruction as a result of gambling?

Map of Communities

