



Engaging the Community and Partners to Build Capacity to Prevent Problem Gambling

November 19, 2025 | 1:00 – 3:00 pm

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Introduce Yourself

1

In the chat, insert your location (e.g., city, state) & organization



Hello
my name is

2

Add your response to these questions

1. How have you seen gambling or substance use represented in movies or other media ?
2. In what decade?
3. Have you seen them depicted together?

Introducing Today's Presenters



Haner Hernandez,
PhD. CPS, CADCI, LADCI
Trainer



Emily Bhargava,
MA, CPS
Trainer

Key Objectives

Engaging the Community and Partners to Build Capacity to Prevent Problem Gambling



Describe a public health approach for problem gambling

01



Name populations disproportionately impacted by problem gambling

02



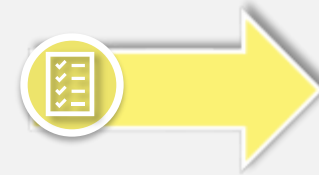
Define components of a community-led approach

03



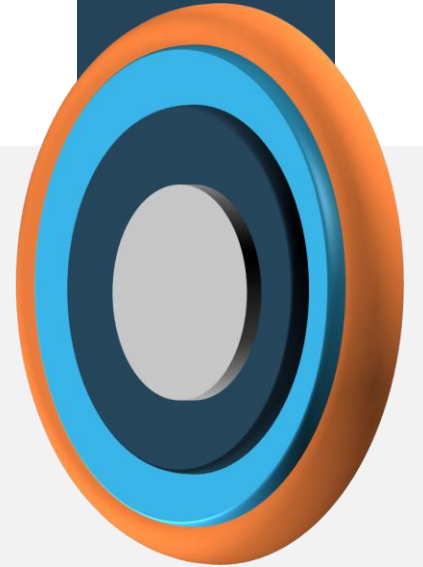
Identify and apply strength-based approaches by recognizing and building on community strengths, resiliency, and leadership

04



Identify strategies for equitable planning

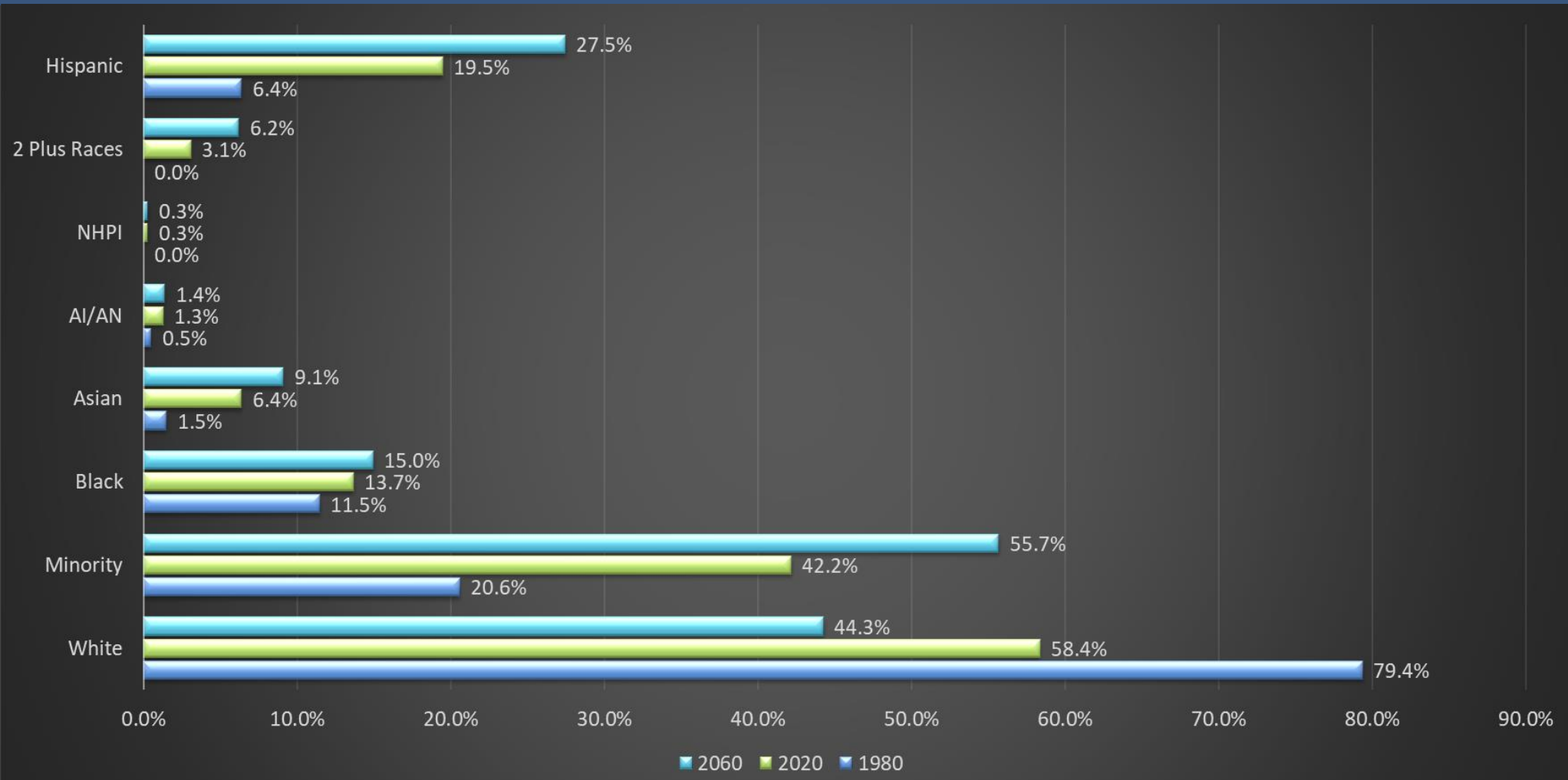
05



Changing Demographics: Who Makes up our Community?

(Percent of U.S. Population)

US Census Projections out to 2060

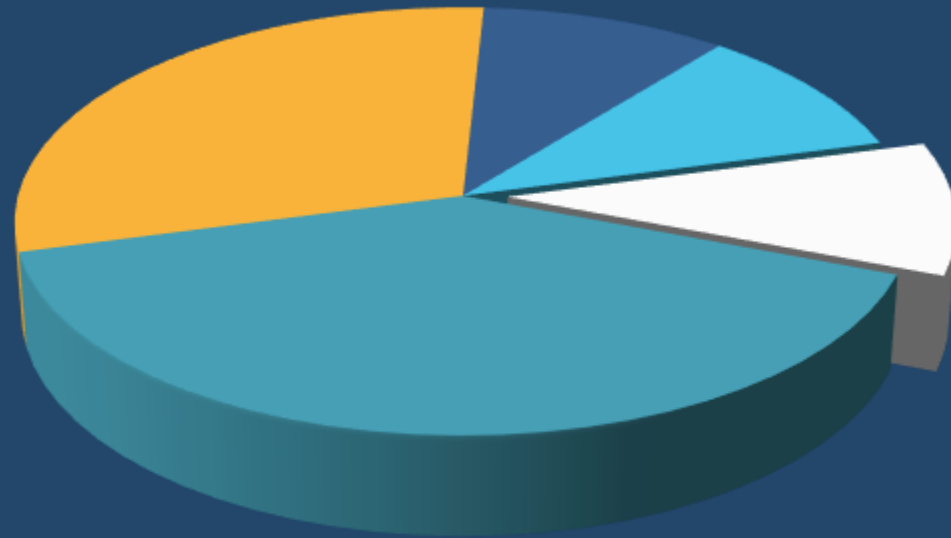


What Makes Us Healthy



So What's the Answer?

What Makes Us Healthy



Genes and
Biology
10%

Although there are many possible causes of human disease, family history is often one of the strongest risk factors for common disease complexes such as cancer, cardiovascular disease (CVD), diabetes, autoimmune disorders, and psychiatric illnesses.

What Makes Us Healthy

The biggest influence on our health are social and economic factors!



Social and
Economic
Factors
40%

Adverse social and economic conditions also matter greatly to health and affect a large segment of the U.S. population. Despite its large and powerful economy, the United States has higher rates of poverty and income inequality than most high-income countries.

Structural Determinants of Health

Structural determinants of health (SDOH) are the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life.



Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Public Health Professionals Gateway, Social Determinants of Health

Education

Educational attainment of a community as well as its access to quality, affordable educational opportunities.



Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Public Health Professionals Gateway, Social Determinants of Health

Economic Stability

Economic environment in which people function.



Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Public Health Professionals Gateway, Social Determinants of Health

Social and Economic Context

Interactions between individuals and groups in a community.



Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Public Health Professionals Gateway, Social Determinants of Health

Neighborhood and Built Environment

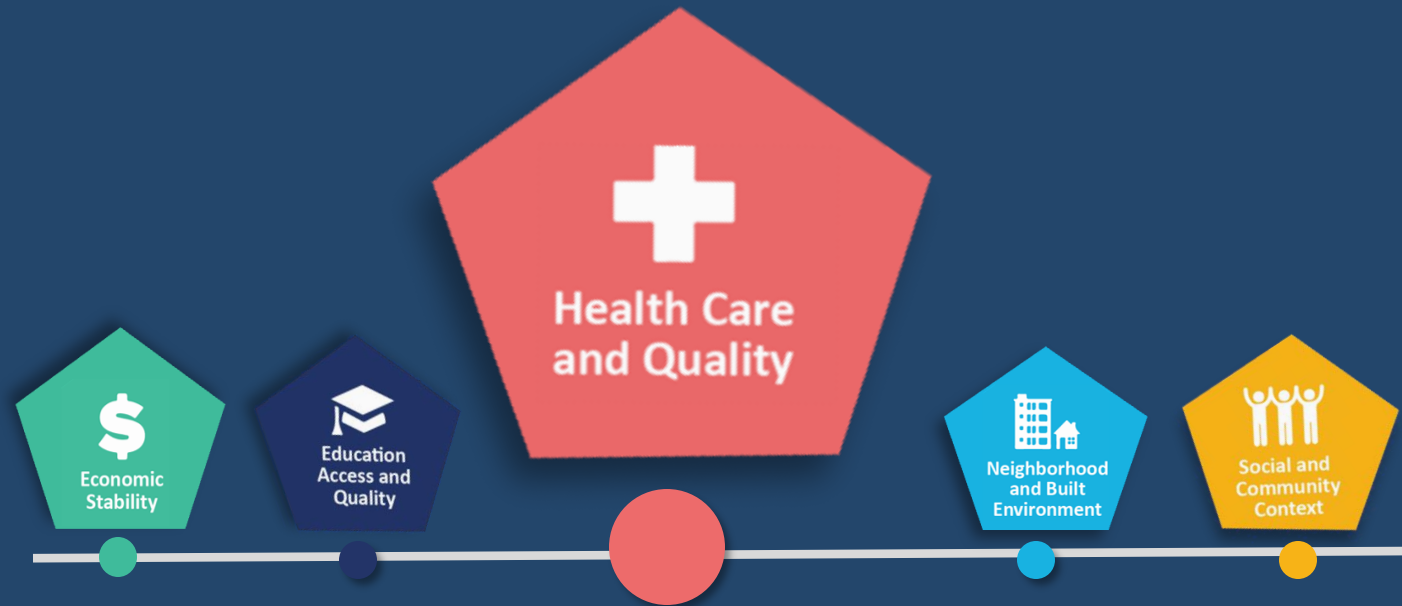
Layout, safety, and physical conditions of the environment in which people exist.



Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Public Health Professionals Gateway, Social Determinants of Health

Healthcare and Quality

Presence, quality, and affordability of healthcare.



Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Public Health Professionals Gateway, Social Determinants of Health

Health Disparities

- “Particular type of **health difference** that is closely linked with **social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage.**”
- Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have **systematically experienced greater obstacles** to health based on something about them, including:



Health Disparities

- Racial or ethnic group
- Religion
- Socioeconomic status
- Gender
- Age
- Mental health
- Cognitive, sensory, or physical disability
- Sexual orientation or gender identity
- Geographic location
- Other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion



Examples of Health Disparities

- Differences in rates of diabetes
- Differences in lung cancer rates
- Differences in obesity
- Differences in rates of problem gambling



PROBLEM GAMBLING RESEARCH

- **High Risk Populations**
- **Risk and Protective Factors**
- **Similarities and Differences between Substance Misuse and Problem Gambling**

People at Increased Risk for Problem Gambling



1. Youth
2. Male
3. People of Color
4. People who are unemployed
5. People with a disability
6. Casino Workers
7. People who experience incarceration
8. People who misuse substances
9. People with High School Diploma or Less
10. Low income
11. Older adults
12. Active Military and Veterans

Risk and Protective Factors



Risk Factors

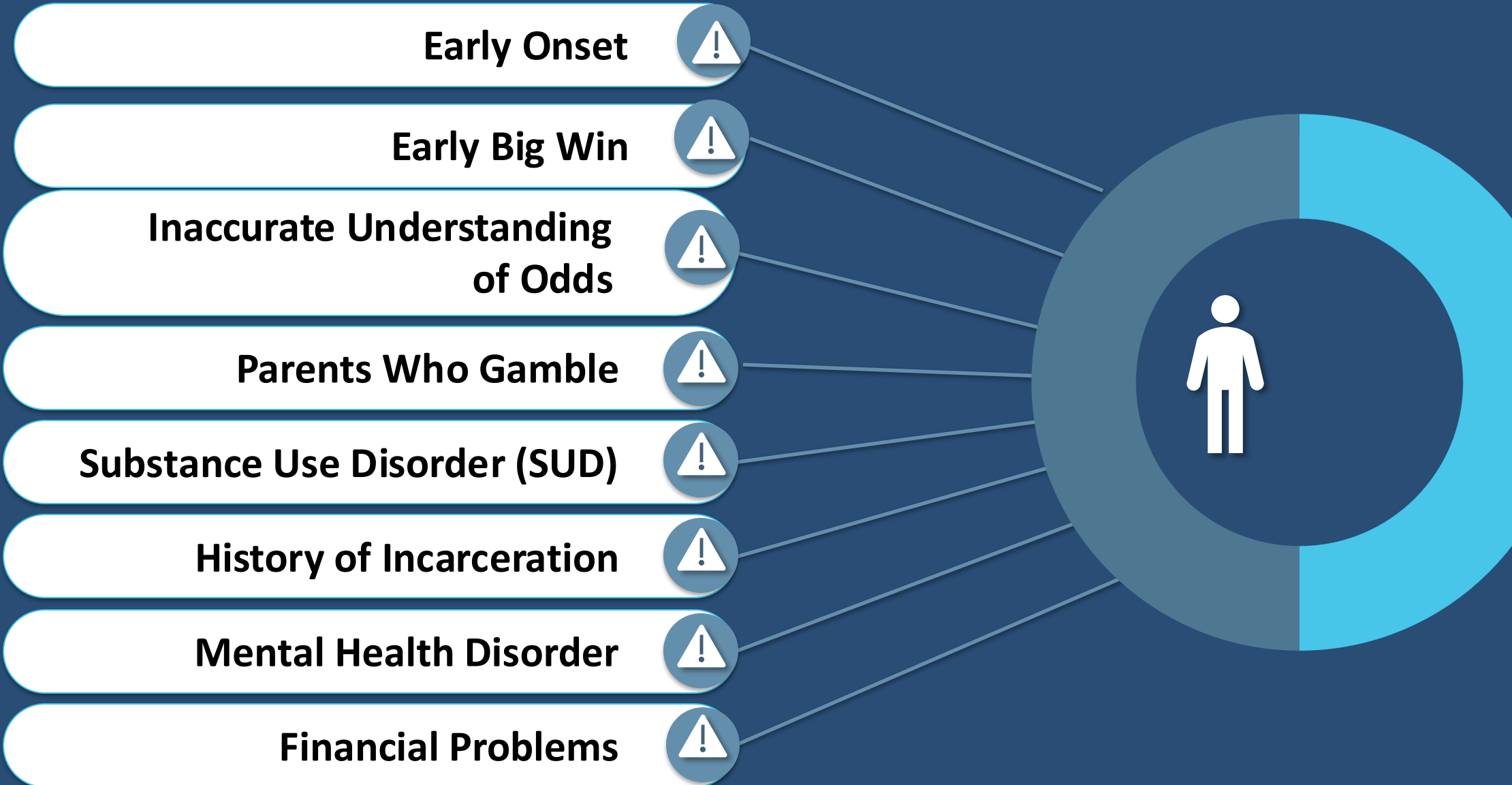
Factors that **increase** the likelihood of developing problem gambling



Protective Factors

Factors that **decrease** the likelihood of developing problem gambling

Risk Factors

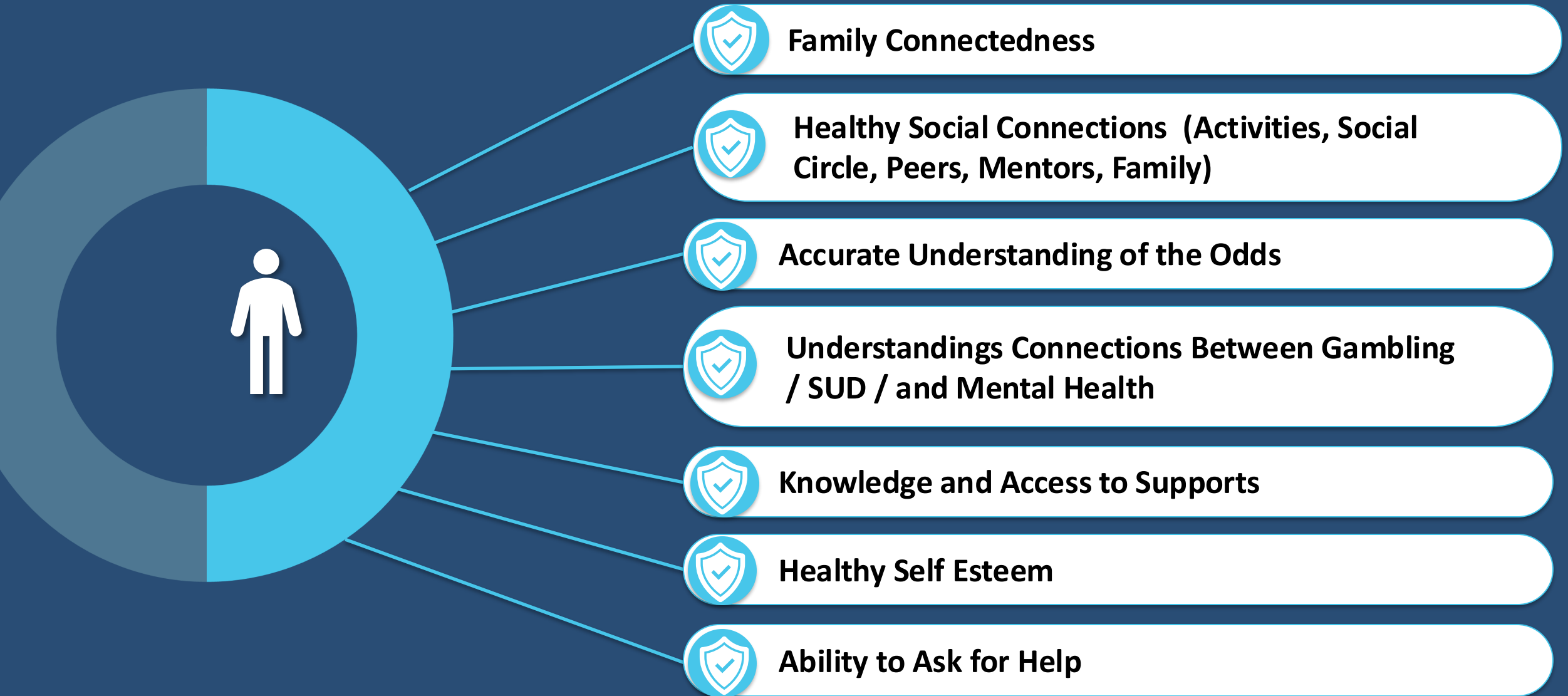




Community Level Context

- Communities are targeted by the predatory nature and tactics by gambling purveyors
- Casinos located in “minority majority” cities: Everett and Springfield
- Most services are not designed to meet community needs (access and quality of care)
- Legal forms of gambling: Lottery, casinos, internet sports betting, Keno, Bingo, video games, etc.
- Illegal forms of gambling: Animal fighting, underground casinos, street racing, etc.

Protective Factors



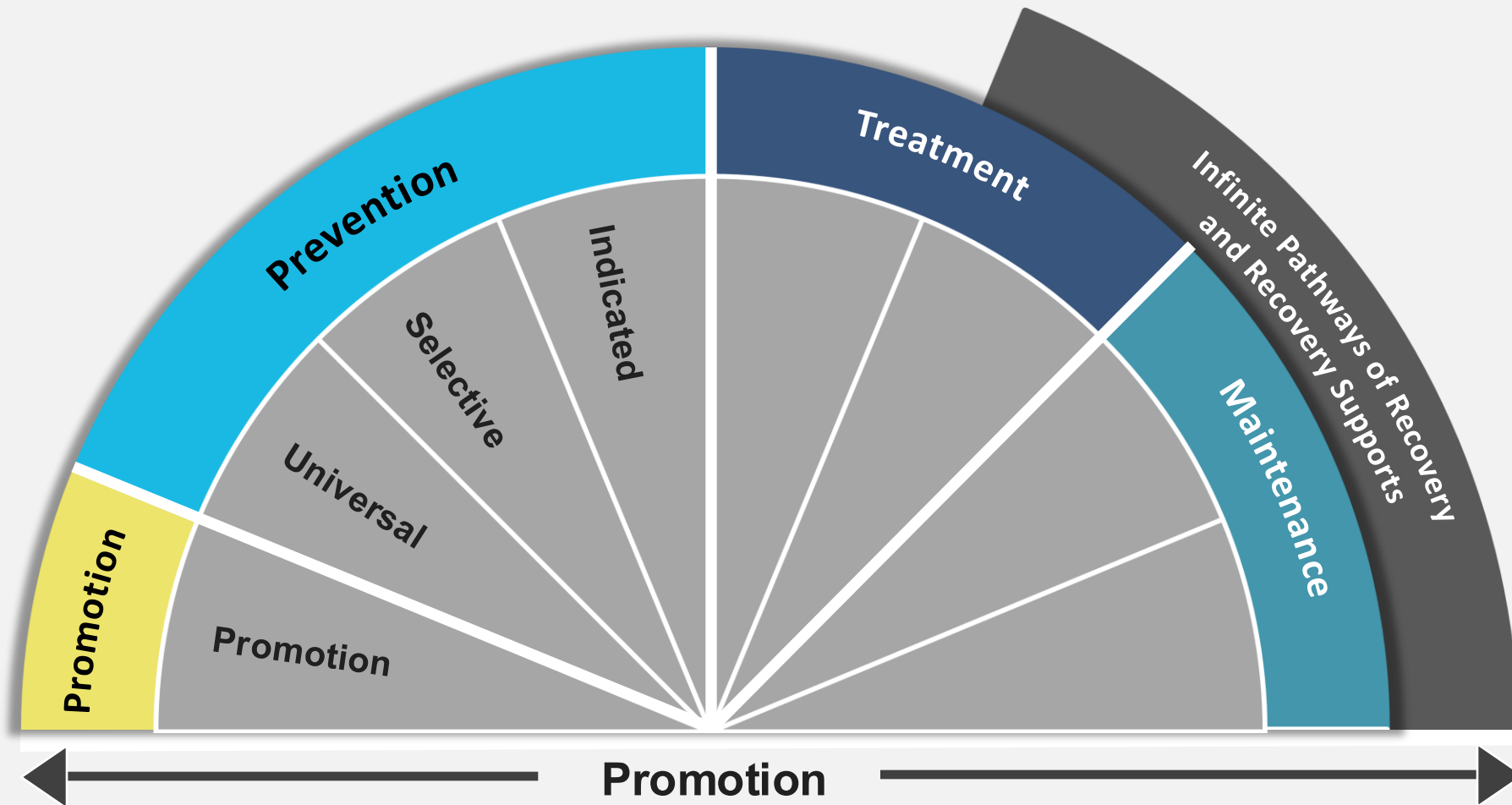
Defining Our Language: The Gambling Continuum



This is the gambling continuum, referred to as a spectrum as participation can range from not gambling to problem and severe problem gambling.

People can move back and forth across this continuum.

The Continuum of Care



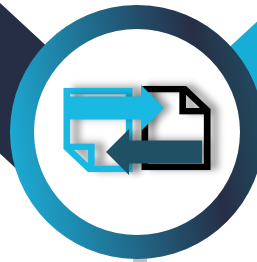
Comorbidity with Substance Misuse

Problem gambling rates among those who misuse substances are 4 to 10 times that of the general population.

Substance Use Disorder and Problem Gambling: What are some differences and similarities?

Differences

- Gambling is a hidden addiction
- Can't overdose on gambling
- Can't be tested for problem gambling
- Fewer available resources to address problem gambling



Similarities

- Legal and illegal forms
- Regulated and promoted by the state
- Produce negative consequences (finances, relationships, etc.)
- Culture influences use
- Tolerance
- Stigma
- Lack of services
- Recovery is possible!

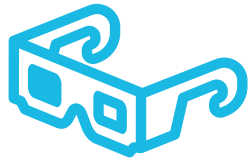
Comorbidity and Opportunities for Community Engagement



Some types of gambling may be more likely than others to co-occur with substance use disorders (slot machines).¹¹



Gender, culture, and age often impact drugs of primary use, gambling participation, and substance use patterns.¹¹



Recreational gamblers with substance misuse problems who started to gamble at earlier ages, were more likely to gamble in the hopes of winning money and gambled more heavily.¹²

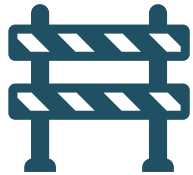


People with a history of problem gambling and substance use disorder were more likely to have attempted suicide at some point in their lives.

Health Equity



Means that everyone has a **fair** and **just** opportunity to be as healthy as possible.



This requires removing obstacles to health such as **poverty, discrimination, and their consequences**, including **powerlessness** and **lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education, quality housing, safe environments, and health care.**

Behavioral health equity builds on this definition and directs specific attention to mental health and substance use conditions and disorders.

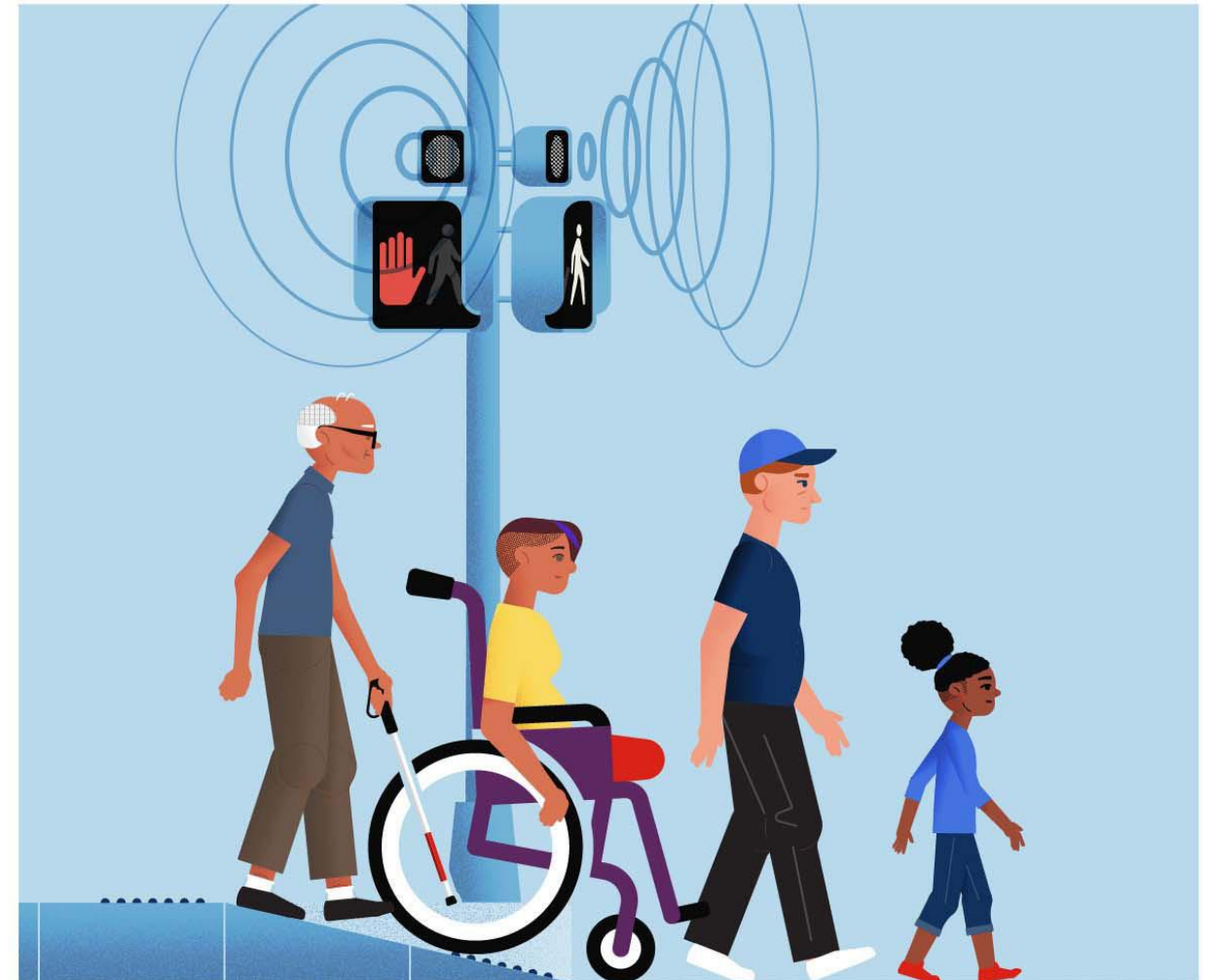
EQUALITY:

Everyone gets the same – regardless if it's needed or right for them.



EQUITY:

Everyone gets what they need – understanding the barriers, circumstances, and conditions.



Equity versus Equality



Principles of Community Engagement

1. Careful Planning and Preparation
2. Inclusion and Demographic Diversity
3. Collaboration and Shared Purpose
4. Openness and Learning
5. Transparency and Trust
6. Impact and Action
7. Sustained Engagement and Participatory Culture

Strength Based Perspective

- Decades of experience resisting racism and other forms of oppression
- Historical and present-day resiliency and strengths
- Presence of community based and driven strategies and solutions



Photo courtesy of <https://freessvg.org/fist-silhouette>

Strategies for Equitable Community Engagement

- Create and build real community partnerships
- Center the voices and experience of community
- Lead with validation of racism and other forms of oppression
- Hire, promote, and retain people representative of the diversity in communities
- Build, grow, and promote services grounded in equity – ensure an anti-racist stance and approach
- Value harm reduction as a valid approach





BREAKOUT: Community Level Context

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Examples of Community Based Programs and Care

- Ambassador Initiative
- Photo Voice
- Community Health Workers
- Youth Leadership Programs
- Project RISE (Resilient Immigrants Striving for Equity)
- AAPI Empowerment



MASSACHUSETTS
AMBASSADOR
PROJECT



“...a lot of people are like this -thorny, rough on the outside, beautiful on the inside. You have to break down these barriers to get to the piece of the person... You should take the time to get to know people. You don't always know a person's story beneath the surface.”

SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, HIGHPOINT PREVENTION SERVICES

“It's our responsibility to make sure that the problems and solutions community residents discuss with us are uplifted to city and state policymakers. They know their community and are in the best position to identify solutions.” - Springfield Community Health Worker

Questions?

Upcoming MCOE PGP Trainings – Register Now!



Title	Date and Time
<p> New Training!</p> <p>Empowerment Through Data: Using What we Know to Make Smart Decisions</p>	<p>Wednesday December 3, 2025 10 am – 1 pm EST</p> <p>Roxbury Community College Free breakfast and lunch will be provided!</p>
<p>Stronger Together: Partnering to Prevent Problem Gambling at Its Roots</p>	<p>Tuesday December 16, 2025 1 – 3 pm EST</p> <p>Virtual</p>

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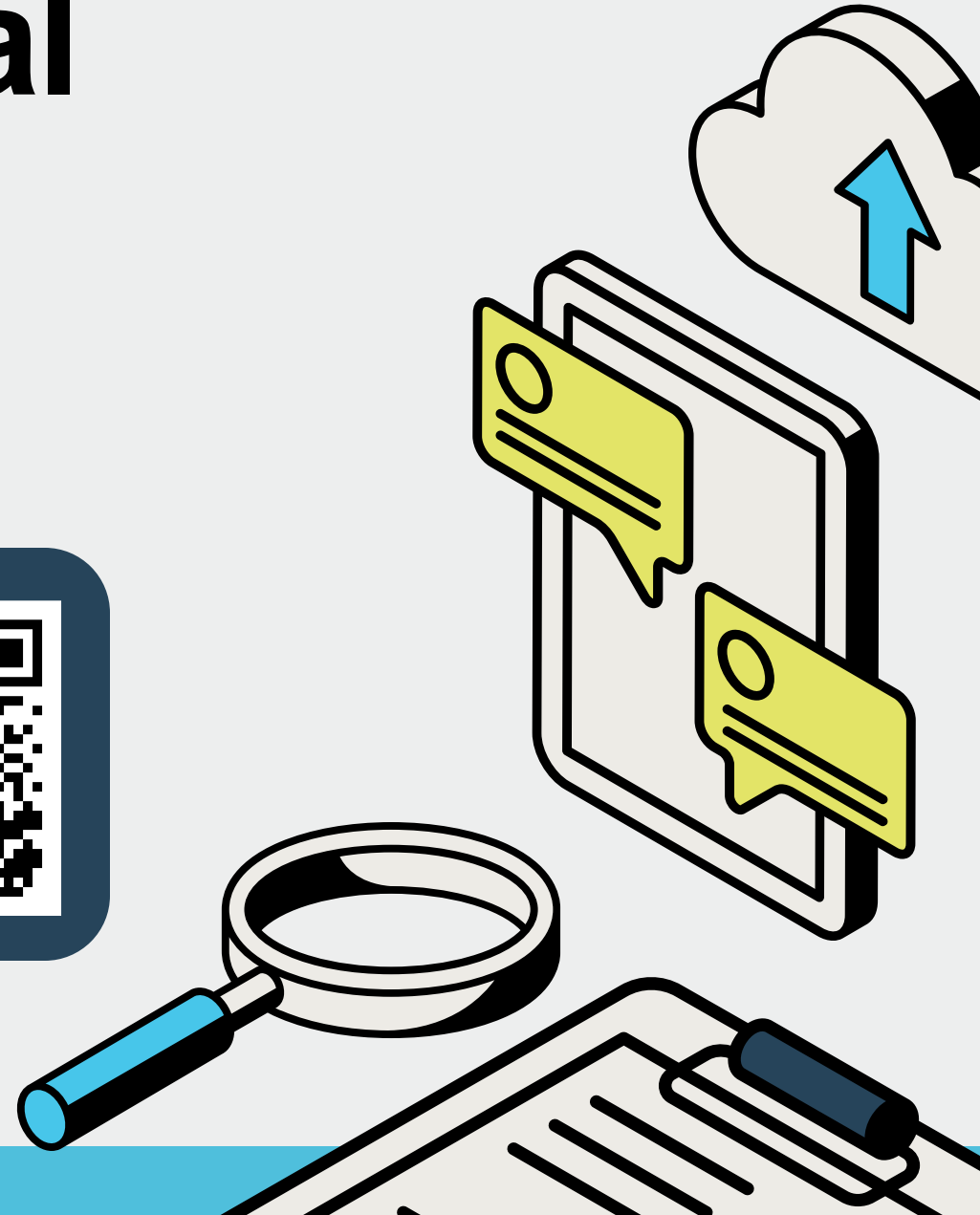
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Muchas Gracias

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