

A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO PROBLEM GAMBLING

January 26, 2023

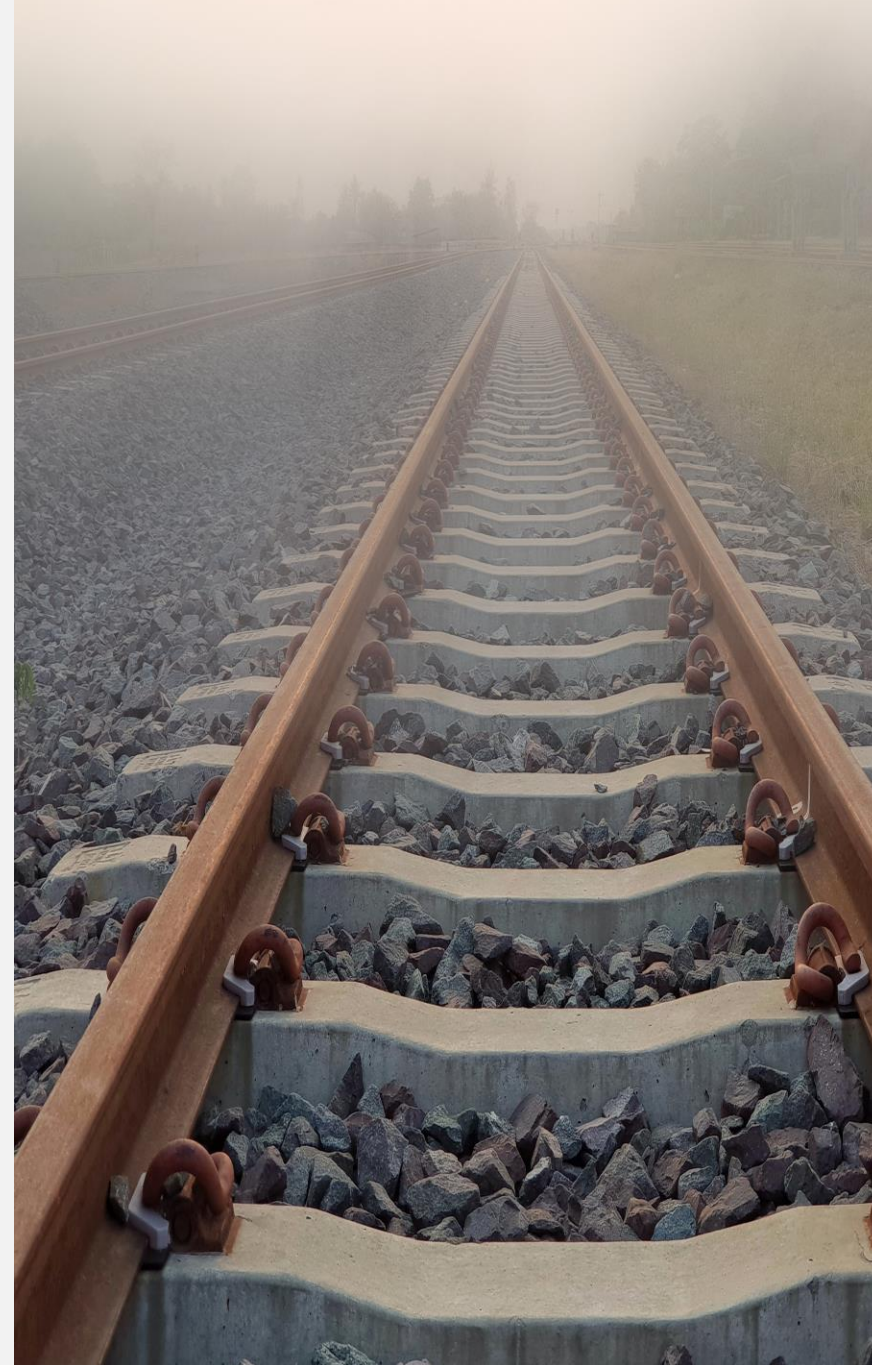
1:00pm – 3:00pm



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This training will:

- Describe a public health approach to problem gambling
- Identify risk and protective factors for problem gambling
- Identify groups at-risk for developing problem gambling
- Discuss connections between problem gambling and other health problems



TRAINERS



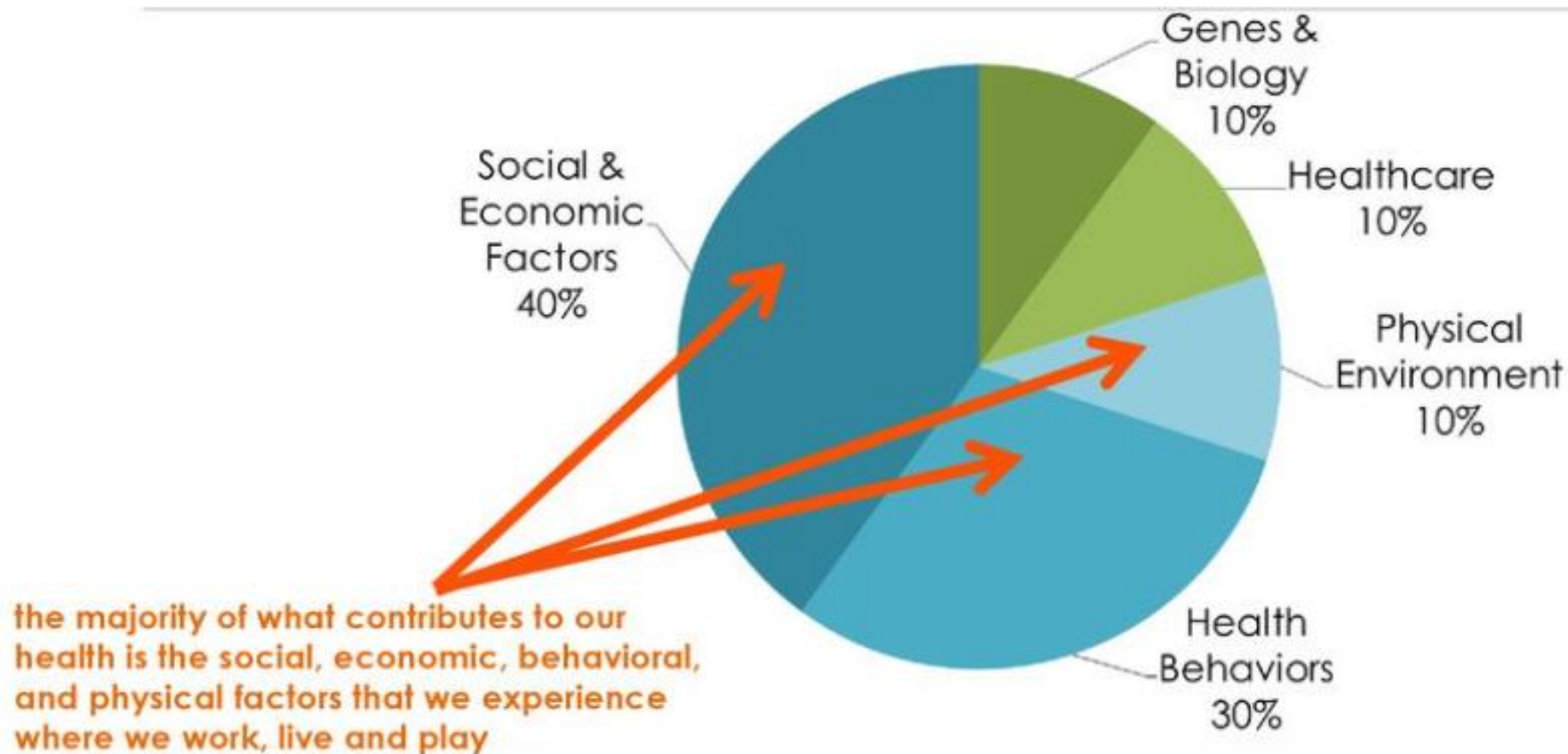
**Haner Hernandez, PhD,
CPS, CADCI, LADCI**
Trainer



Sarah Jerome, MPH
Trainer

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE A PUBLIC HEALTH PERSPECTIVE?

WHAT MAKES US HEALTHY?



Source: Tarlov AR. Public policy frameworks for improving population health. Ann N Y Acad Sci. 1999;896:281-93.

STRUCTURAL AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH



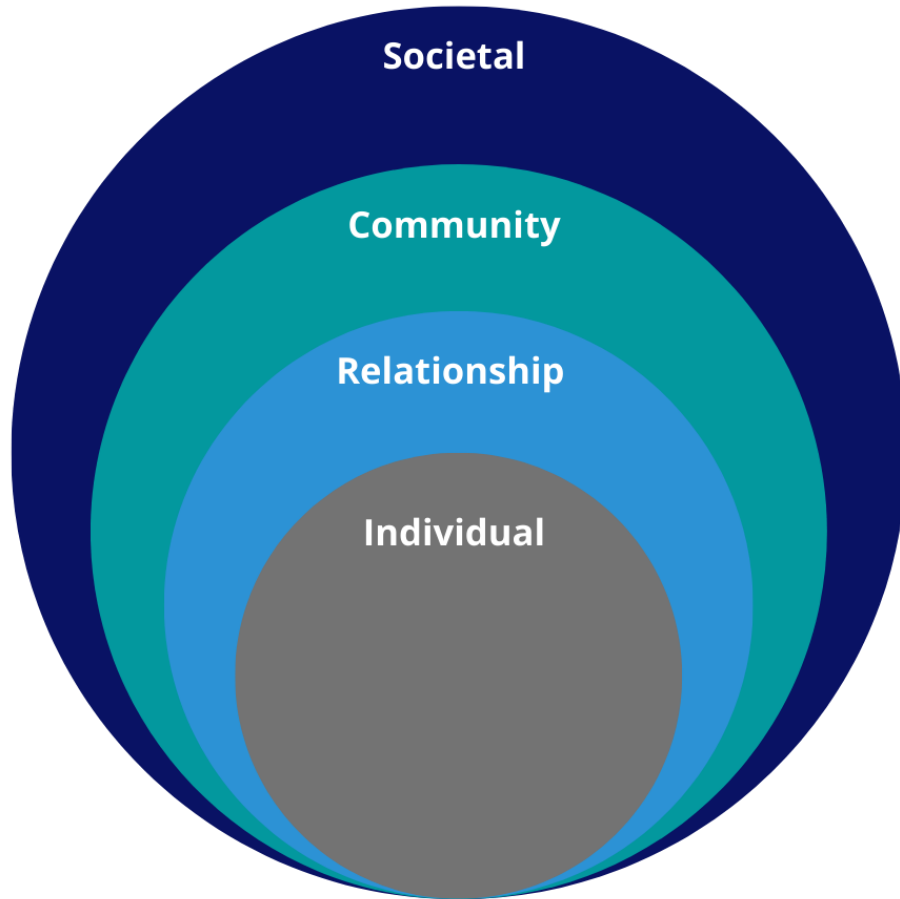
- Much of what impacts a person's health starts where he/she lives, learns, works and plays.

Source: Centers For Disease Control and Prevention



Source: Let's Get Healthy California

SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL MODEL



- This model considers the complex interplay between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors.
- Helps us understand the range of factors that put people at risk for problem gambling or protect them from experiencing negative consequences of problem gambling.

An illustration of a winding path leading across a bridge over a chasm, with various social and economic goals labeled as landmarks along the way. The path starts on the left, goes up a hill, crosses a bridge, and continues on the right side of the chasm. A person is running on the path towards the right. There are several signs along the path, each representing a goal or barrier. The signs are: 'Racism and other forms of oppression' (top left), 'Livable Income/ Good Job/Fair Pay' (top left, above the bridge), 'Quality Education' (top right, above the bridge), 'Safe and Affordable Housing' (middle right), 'Healthcare: Access and Quality' (bottom right), 'Powerlessness' (bottom right), 'Poverty' (bottom left), 'Safe and Healthy Environment' (middle left), and 'Arts and Culture' (middle left). There are also some obstacles on the path, like a red and white striped barrier near the 'Poverty' sign and a large, lit torch on the right side. The background shows a blue sky with clouds and a body of water in the chasm.

A person with a beard, wearing a light blue t-shirt, is holding a large red heart against their chest. The background is a blurred green park with trees and grass.

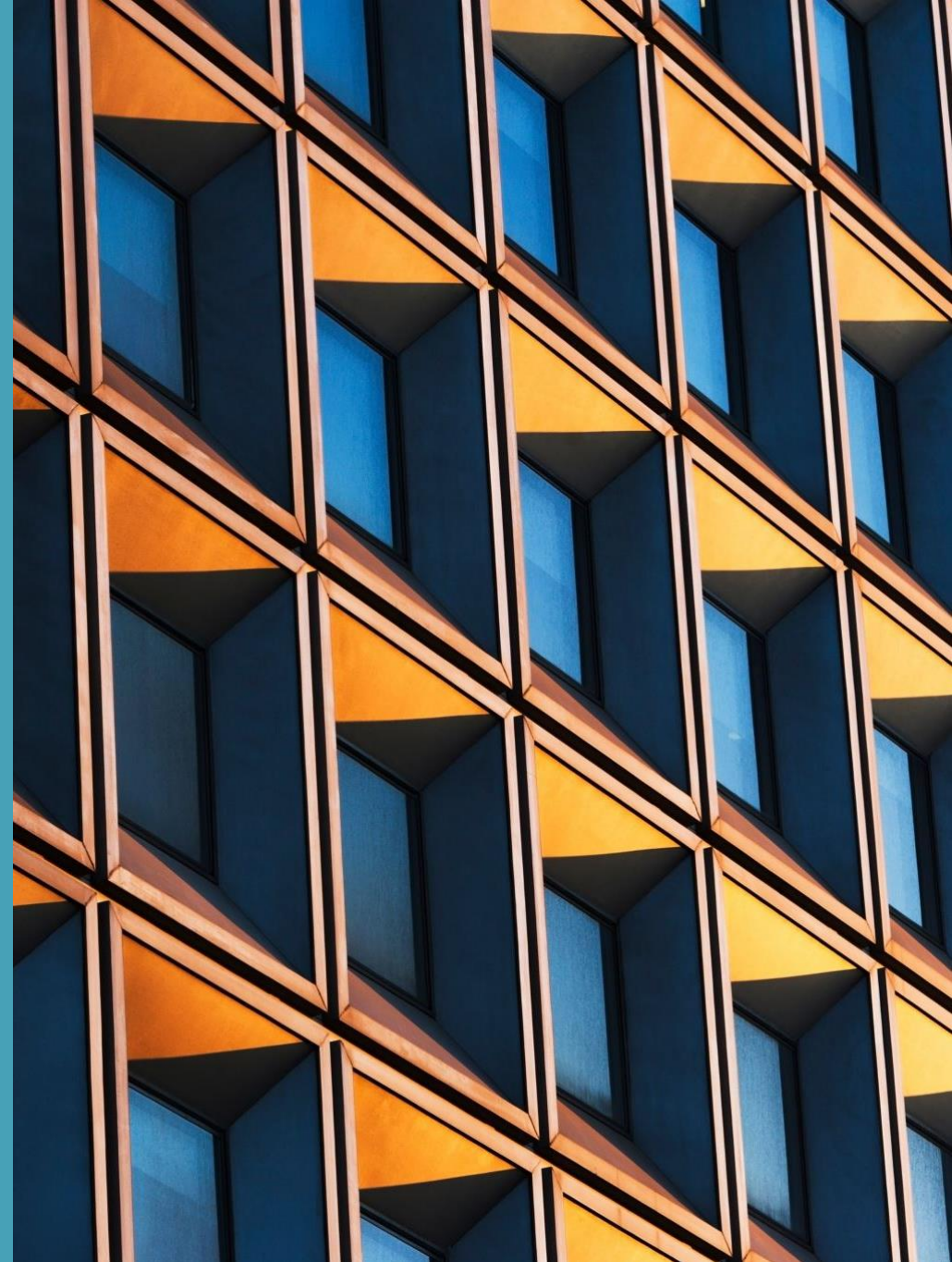
The public health approach involves:

1. Establishing true partnerships and collaborations with communities to guide the work
2. Defining and measuring health challenges
3. Identifying the sources and risk factors for health challenges
4. Identifying and understanding the resiliency, strengths, and protective factors in individuals and communities
5. Identifying and piloting equitable prevention strategies
6. Implementing effective strategies on a larger scale and evaluating the impacts

GAMBLING AND PROBLEM GAMBLING

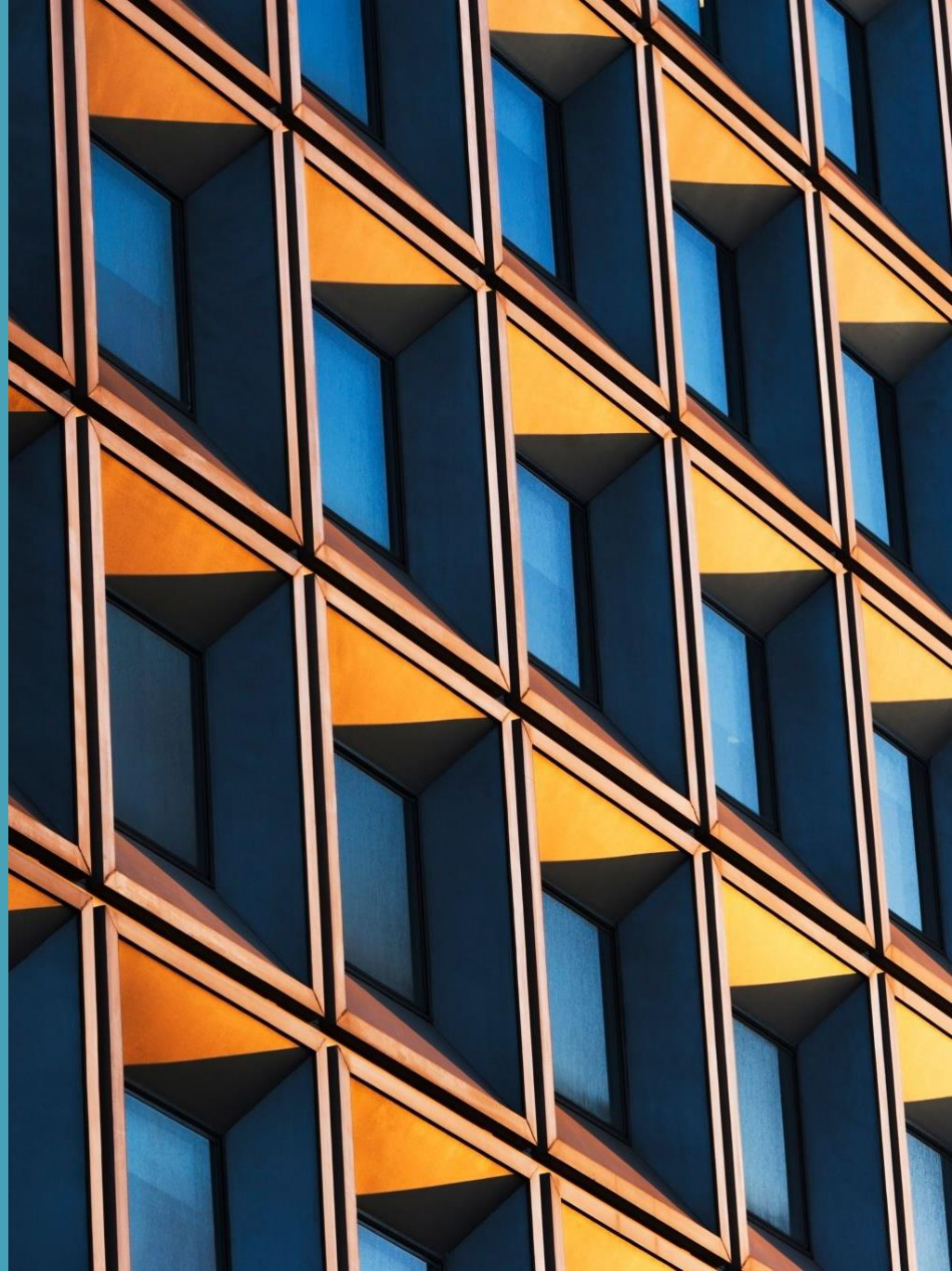
1. If you flip a penny and it comes up “heads” four times in a row, the next flip is more likely to come up “tails” than “heads.”

Disagree. There is no relationship between the previous outcomes and the next flip of the penny. They are unrelated events. The penny is just as likely to come up “heads” as it is to come up “tails.”



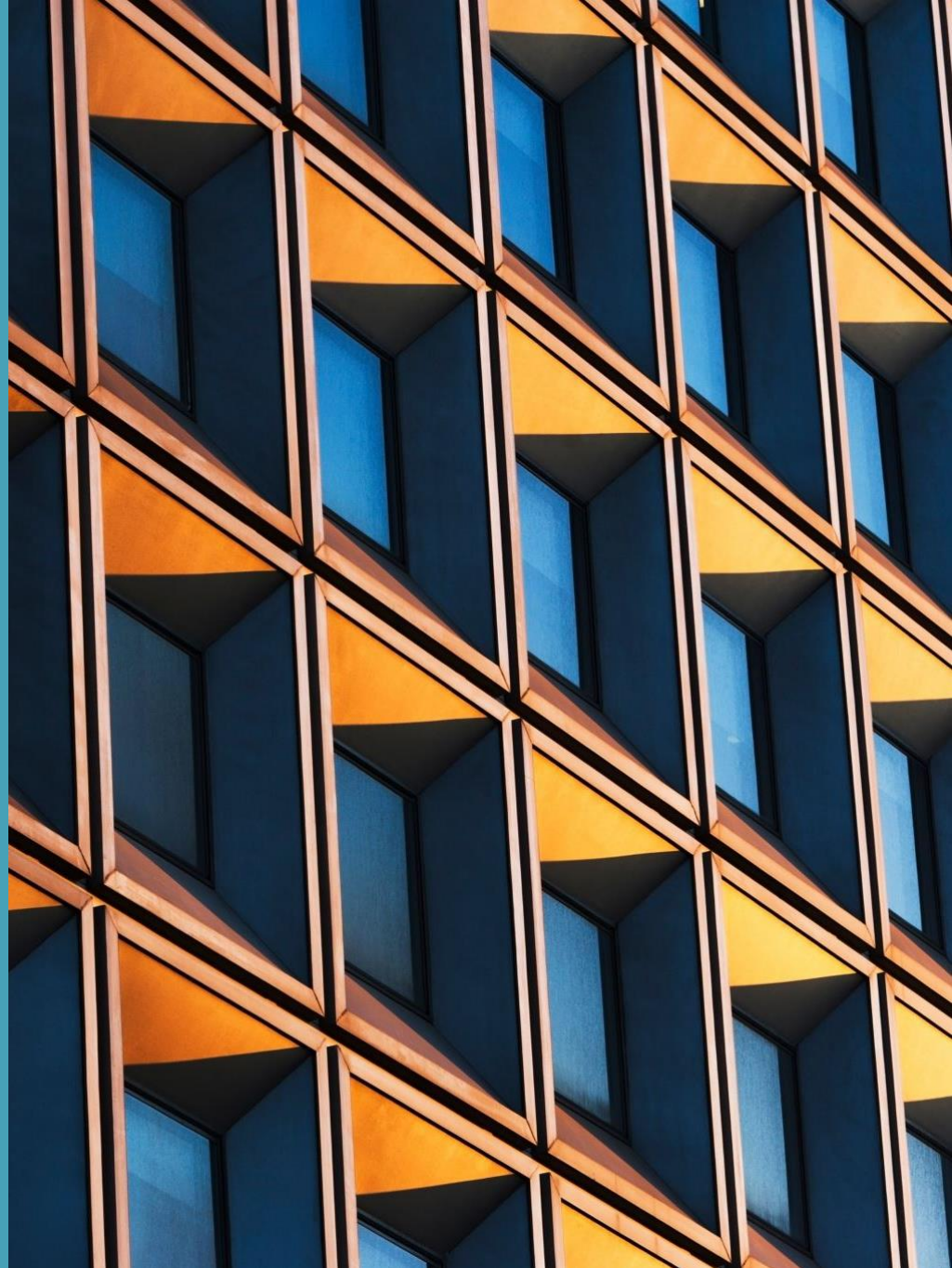
2. Buying raffle tickets and betting on school sports events are not considered gambling.

Disagree. Any time you wager money on an activity or event of uncertain outcome, you are gambling.



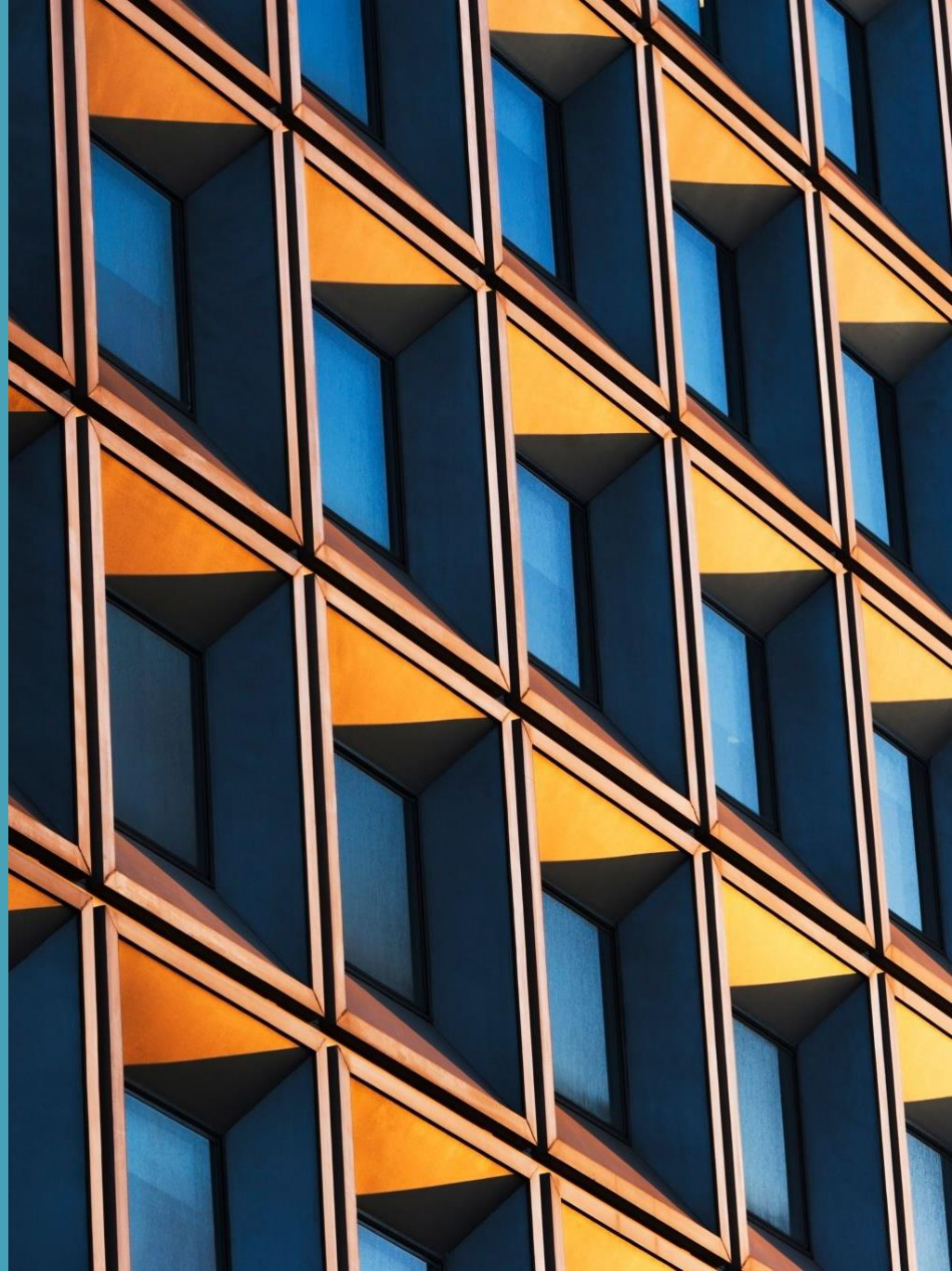
3. Youth do not participate in gambling.

Disagree. According to the latest MA Youth Health Survey 50.5% of high school and 46.4% of middle school youth have gambled in the last year. Whether it's betting on their favorite sports team at lunch, playing a game of cards for money on the school bus, or receiving a lottery ticket from a family member as a birthday gift, many children are exposed to gambling opportunities on a regular basis.



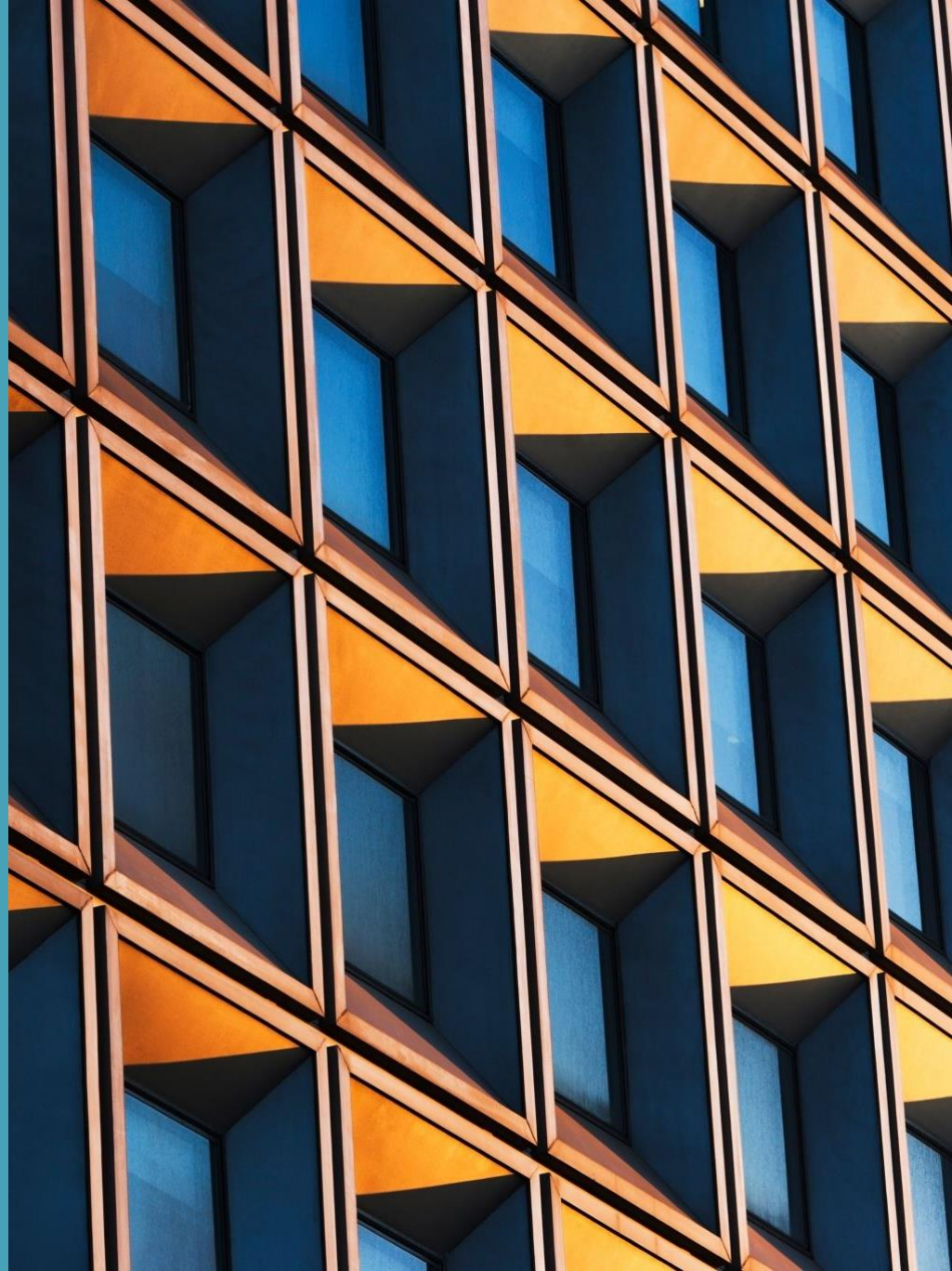
4. You must be 18 or older to legally gamble.

Disagree. The legal gambling age differs by state. In Massachusetts, the legal gambling age for the lottery is 18. To play at a gaming establishment, such as a casino, a person must be 21. In other states, it differs.

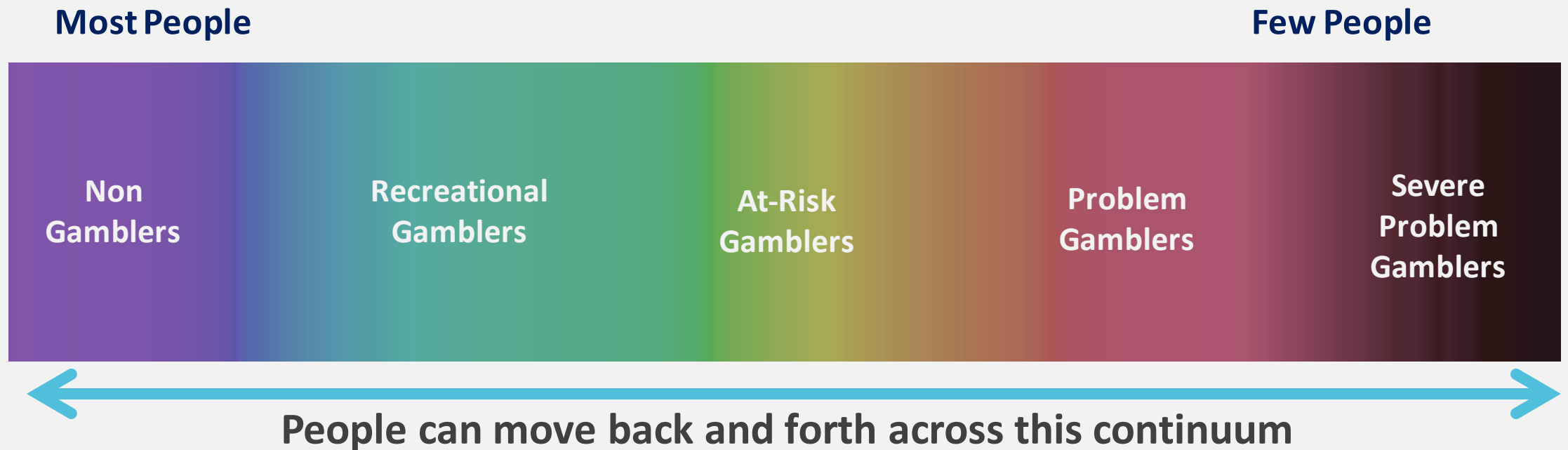


5. People gamble strictly because it's fun.

Disagree. While “entertainment or fun” is the number-one reason mentioned for gambling, the other two major reasons are “excitement and challenge” and “to win money.” Other reasons are “escape” and “glamour.”

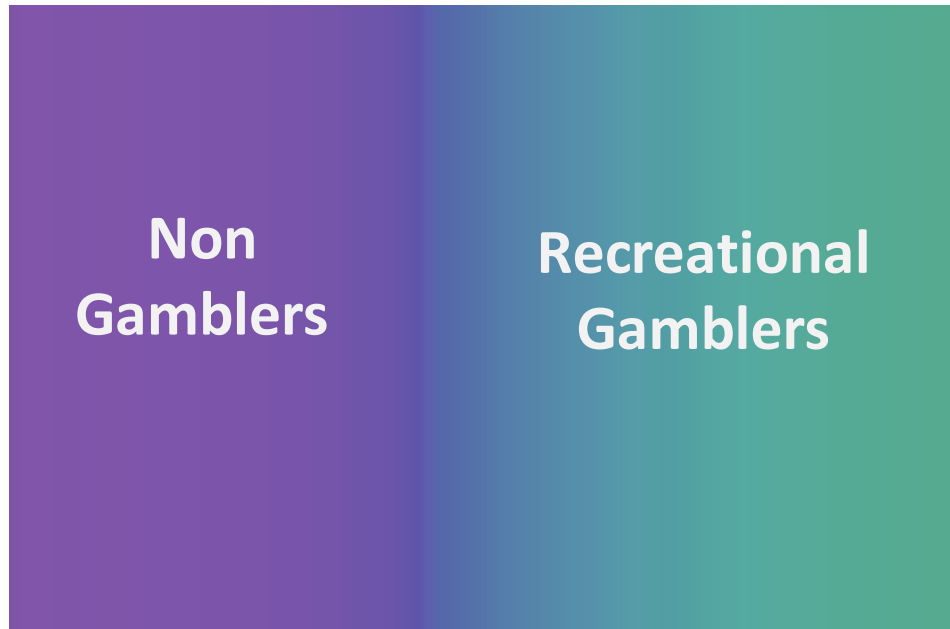


GAMBLING PARTICIPATION




GAMBLING PARTICIPATION

Most People



- Non gamblers are people or groups who choose not to gamble
- Recreational gamblers are people or groups who gamble recreationally for enjoyment, recreation or socializing.
- Most people who gamble do so recreationally.

GAMBLING PARTICIPATION



At-Risk Gamblers

- At risk gamblers are people or groups who are at increased risk of developing problem gambling and therefore gambling is a risky activity for them. When people or groups in this category gamble, they may exhibit the following behaviors:
 - Betting more than planned
 - Spending more time gambling than planned
 - Borrowing money to gamble
 - Illusions of control


GAMBLING PARTICIPATION



Problem Gamblers

- Problem gambling refers to any kind of gambling that results in **negative impact(s)** on the person's or group's life or on the lives of their family, friends, and/or co-workers.
- The negative impact can occur occasionally, or it can be ongoing and serious situation.

GAMBLING PARTICIPATION



Severe Problem Gamblers

- Severe Problem Gamblers are people or groups who have been diagnosed as having a gambling problem found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)
- The DSM-5 categorizes severe problem gambling as: “persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behavior leading to clinically significant impairment or distress.”
- Compared to the number of people who gamble, very few people are diagnosed with severe problem gambling (2%).



TRADITIONAL DEFINITION OF GAMBLING

“Risking something of value on the outcome of an event when the probability of winning is less than certain.”

Source: David A. Korn & Howard J. Shaffer, *Journal of Gambling Studies*, Winter 1999, vol. 15, no. 4, pg. 292

DEFINITION OF GAMBLING FOR GROUPS AT HIGHER RISK

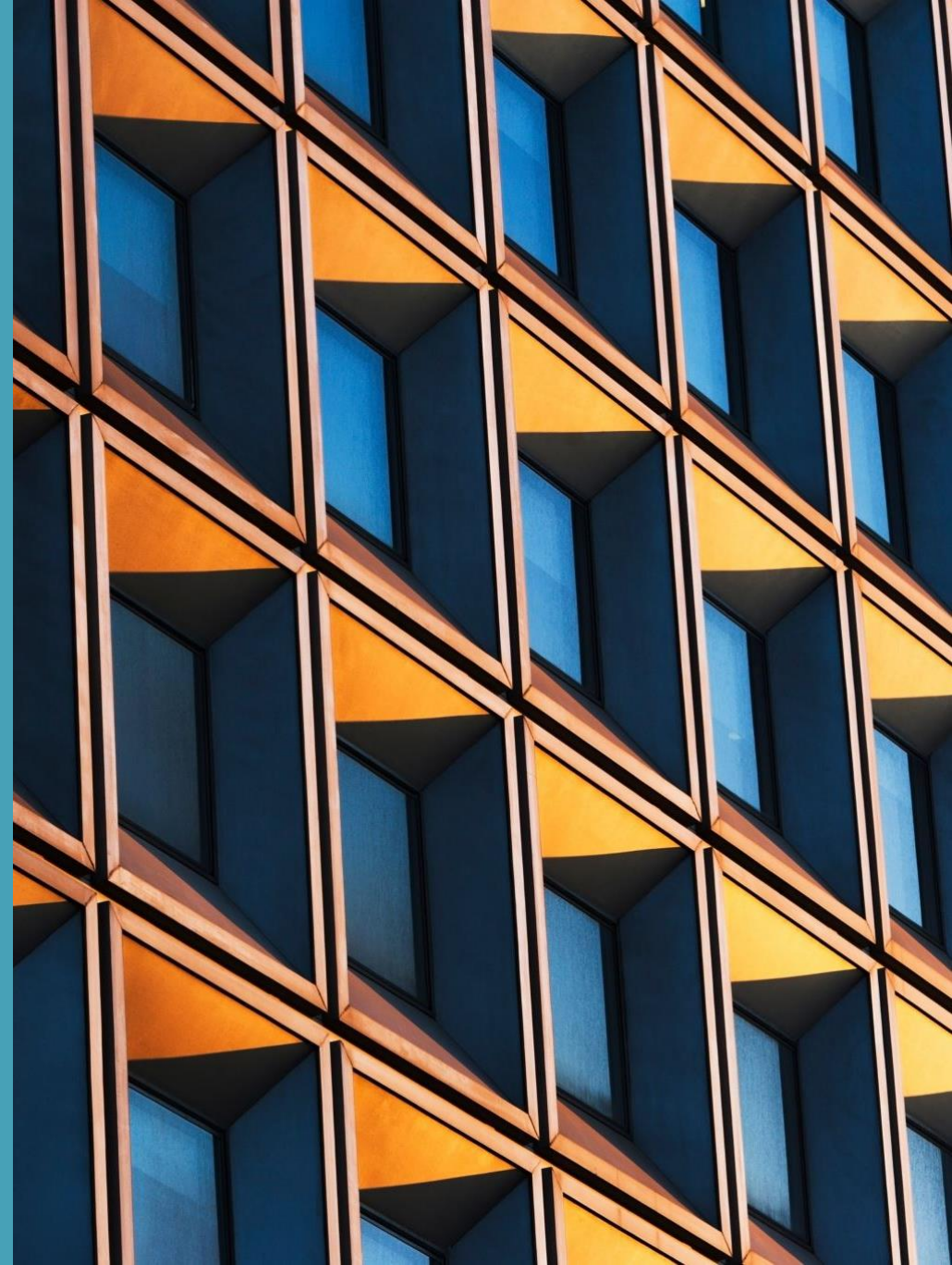
“Any betting or wagering for self or others, whether for money or not, no matter how slight or insignificant, where the outcome is uncertain or depends upon chance or ‘skill,’ constitutes gambling.”

Source: Gambler's Anonymous



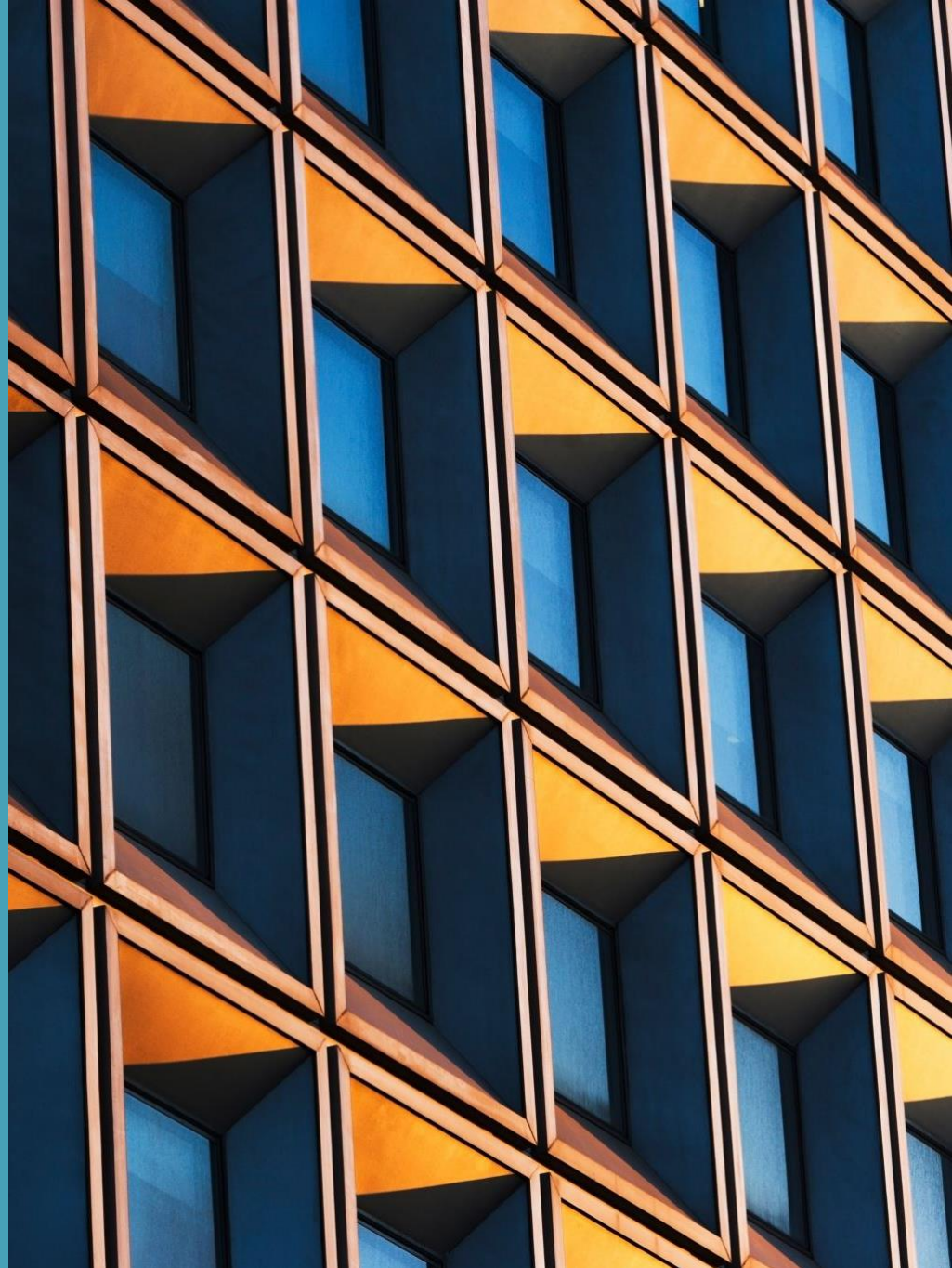
6. Gamblers who lose large amounts of money just don't know how to gamble.

Disagree. Skill and knowledge play a small part in some types of gambling, such as certain card games, but for the most part gambling is a game of chance, and the gambler has very little control over the outcome.



7. “Chasing” is gambling to win back money that has been previously lost through gambling.

Agree. Gamblers can become desperate to cover their losses and become convinced that if they keep on betting they’re bound to win, sooner or later.



RISK FACTORS



- Early Onset
- Early Big Win
- Inaccurate Understanding of the Odds
- Parents Who Gamble
- Substance Use Disorder (SUD)
- History of Incarceration
- Mental Health Disorder
- Financial Problems

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

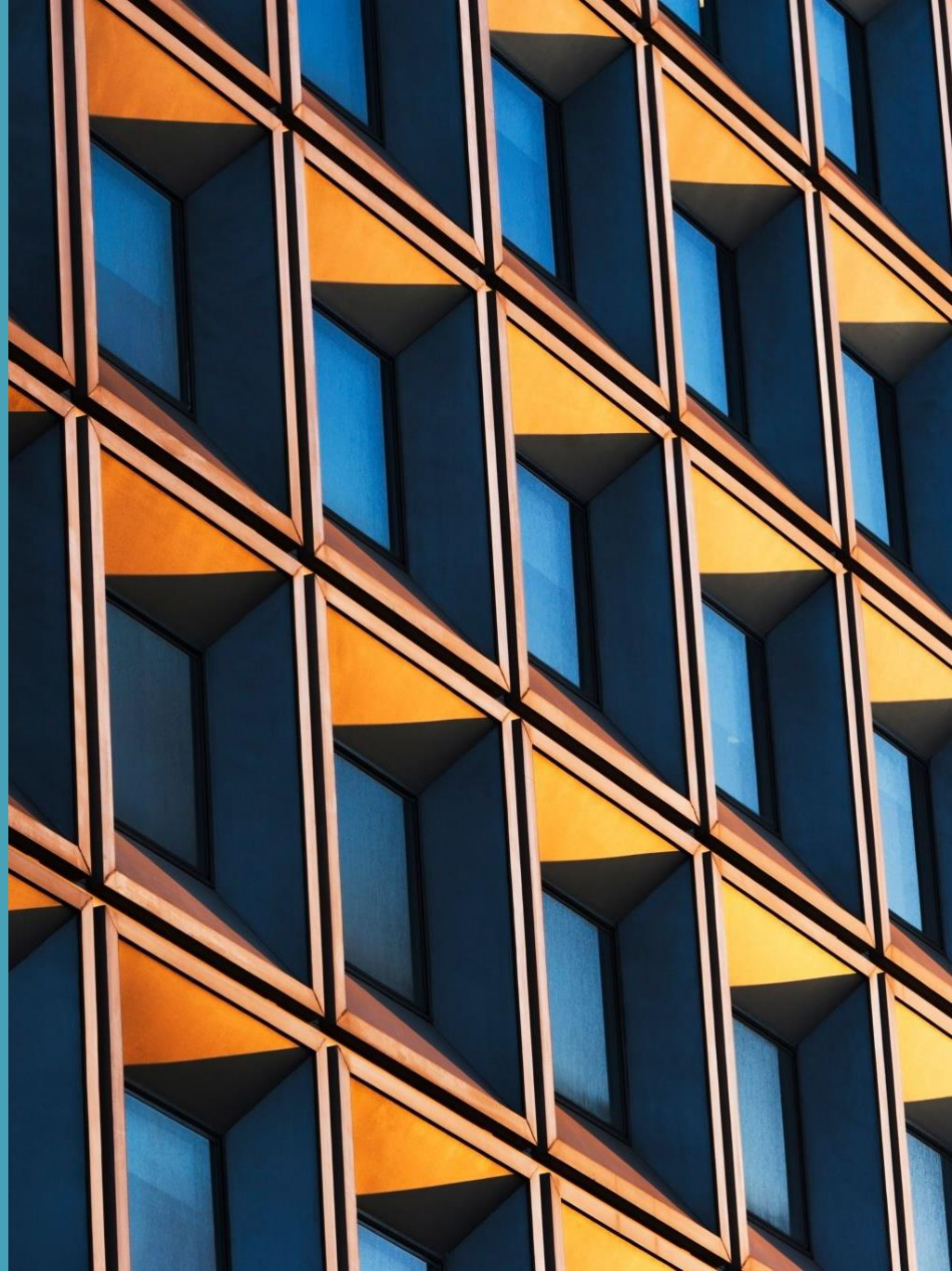


- Family Connectedness
- Healthy Social Connections (Activities, Social Circle, Peers/Mentors, Family)
- Accurate Understanding of the Odds
- Understanding of the Connections Between Gambling , SUD, and Mental Health
- Knowledge and Access to Supports
- Healthy Self-Esteem
- Ability to Ask for Help

GROUPS AT RISK FOR DEVELOPING PROBLEM GAMBLING

8. It's okay to spend your paycheck on gambling, because you might win even more than you earned.

Disagree. It is your choice, of course, but the odds of winning a pile of money are stacked against you



PEOPLE WHO ARE AT HIGHER RISK FOR PROBLEM GAMBLING

Research shows that some groups are at higher risk for developing problem gambling, including:

- Youth
- Males
- People of color
- People with a high school diploma or less
- People with an annual income of less than \$15,000
- People who are unemployed
- People with a disability
- Casino employees
- People with a history of incarceration
- People who misuse substances

Youth Are Exposed to Gambling...

- Early in life
- By family and friends
- Exposure connected to tradition and nostalgic memories
- Exposure can be legal or illegal
- Exposure is normalized in families & communities



Brain Development

- Because the youth brain is not fully developed until age 25, gambling can be dangerous
- A 2001 study at MGH found that gambling has a drug-like effect on the brain (2001)

“The brains of people anticipating a win at the roulette table appear to react much like those taking euphoria-inducing drugs.”



PERCEPTION CONCERNS



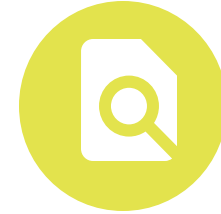
- Teens view gambling as a socially acceptable
- Enjoyable form of entertainment
- Significantly less harmful than alcohol, drugs or cigarettes

Derevensky, J. L. (2012). Youth gambling: An important social policy and public health issue. In J. A. O'Dea (Ed.), Education in a competitive and globalizing world. Current issues and controversies in school and community health, sport and physical education (p. 115–130). Nova Science Publishers.



- In a study about parental perceptions, gambling consistently scored the lowest of 12 serious youth issues

Campbell, Colin & Derevensky, Jeffrey & Meerkamper, Eric & Cutajar, Joanna. (2011). Parents' Perceptions of Adolescent Gambling: A Canadian National Study. Journal of Gambling Issues. 25. 36-53. 10.4309/jgi.2011.25.4.



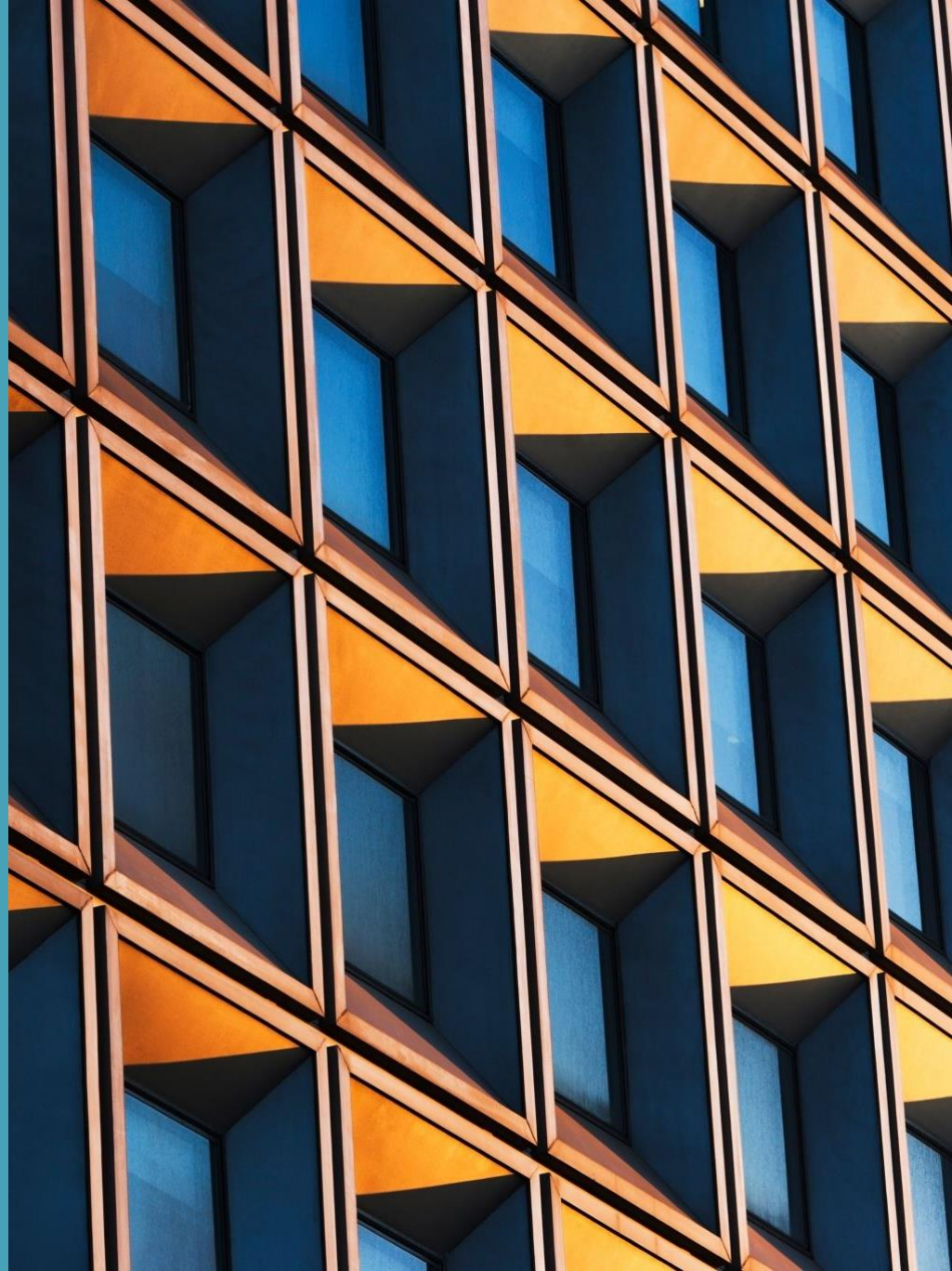
- In a comparison of parent and teacher perceptions concerning adolescent risk behaviors, gambling was perceived to be a least serious issue among both parents and teachers

Derevensky, J. L., St-Pierre, R. A., Temcheff, C. E., & Gupta, R. (2014). Teacher awareness and attitudes regarding adolescent risky behaviours: is adolescent gambling perceived to be a problem?. Journal of Gambling Studies, 30(2), 435-451.

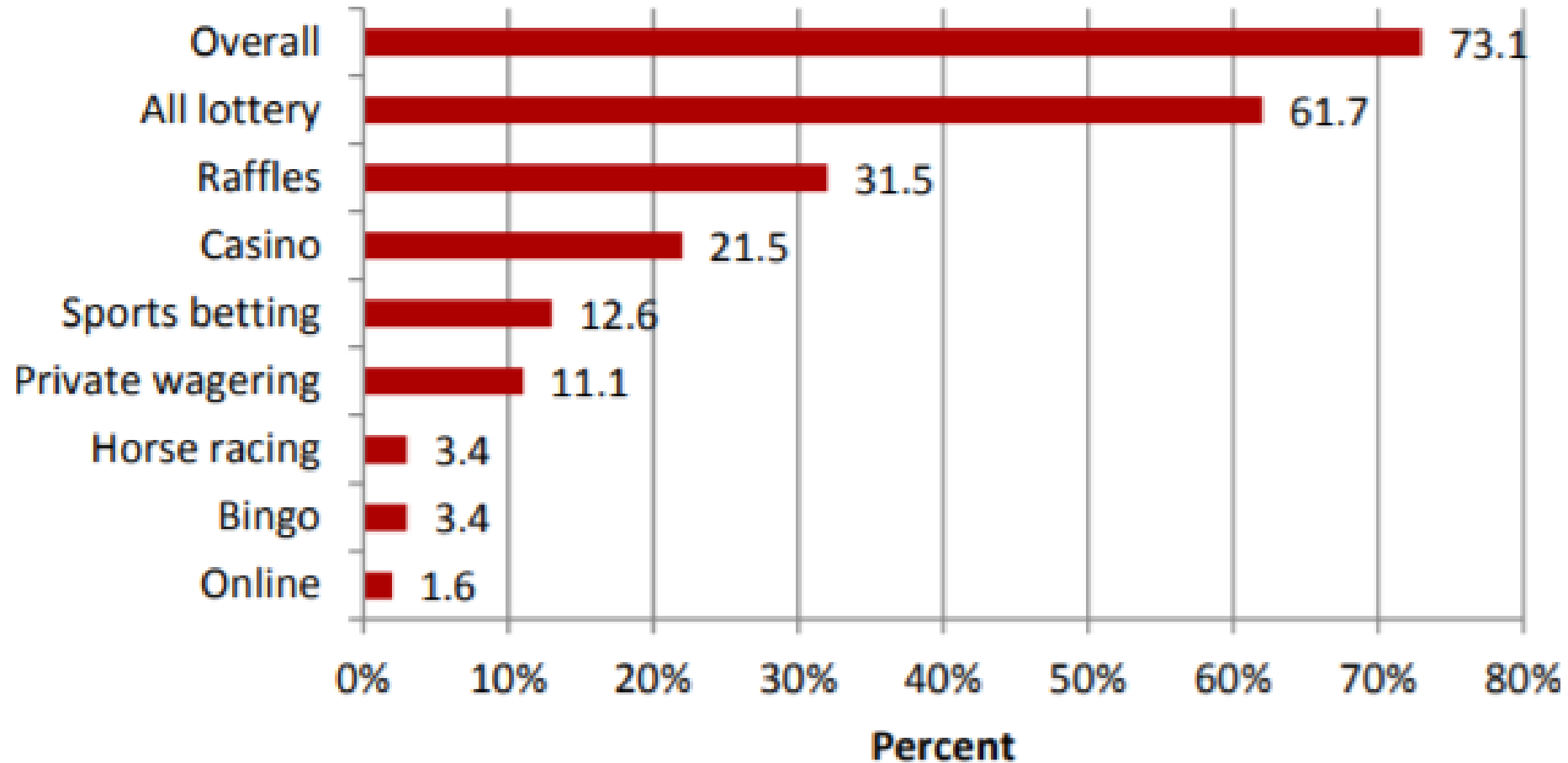
MASSACHUSETTS GAMBLING DATA

9. Problem gambling isn't a serious problem like drug or alcohol addiction. If people really want to stop, they will.

Disagree. For most people, gambling is a social activity or form of entertainment. But for people with a problem gambling addiction, it's much more. Gambling becomes a compulsion and something they can't just stop. They're driven to gamble, just like a person who is addicted to drugs or alcohol. When left unaddressed, problem gambling can have the same dangerous consequences as other addictions. Just because there aren't physical symptoms associated with problem gambling, this doesn't make the addiction any less serious

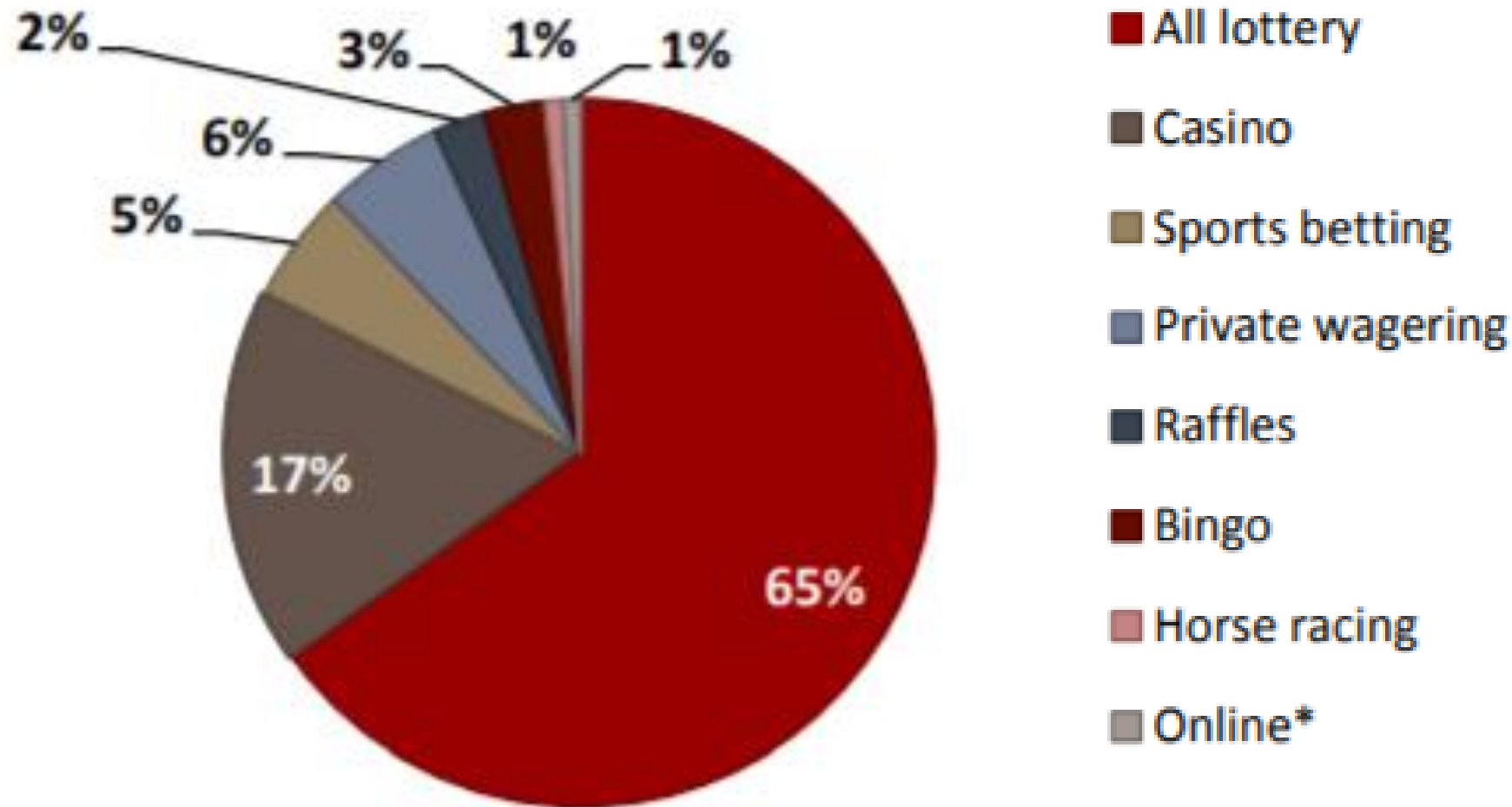


GAMBLING PARTICIPATION



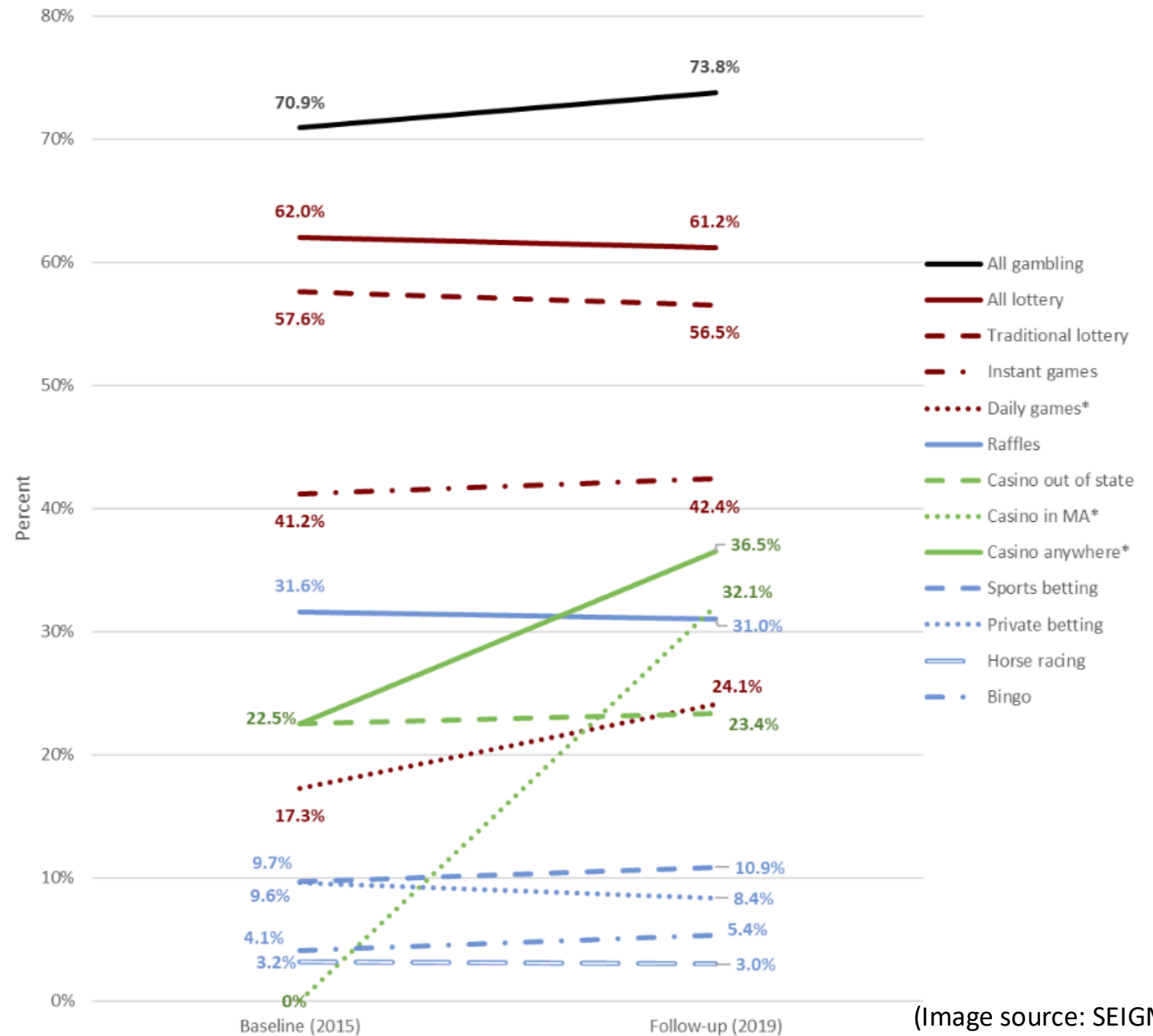
(Image source: SEIGMA, 2015)

GAMBLING SPENDING



(Image source: SEIGMA, 2018)

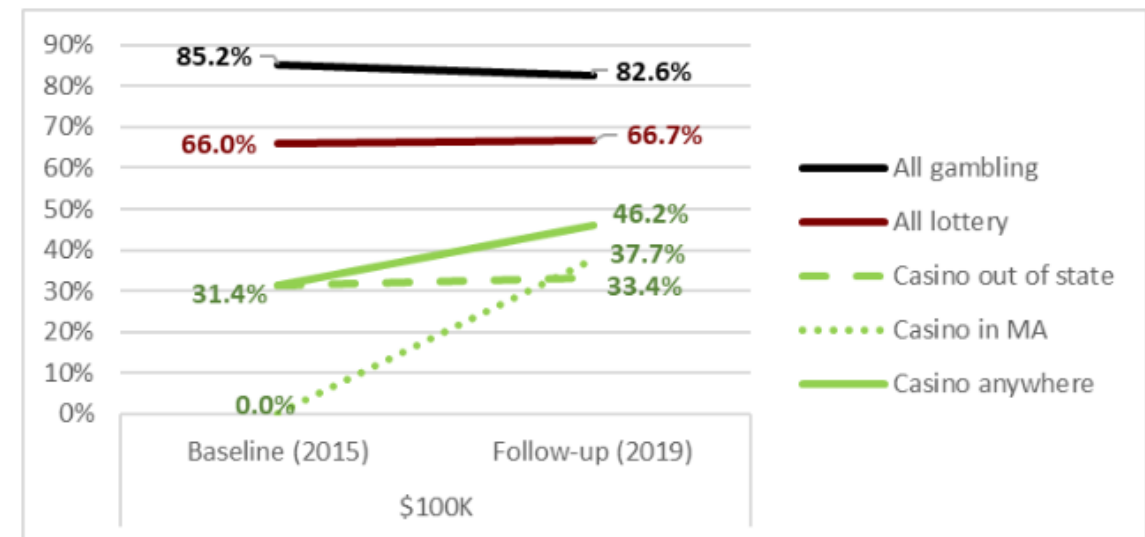
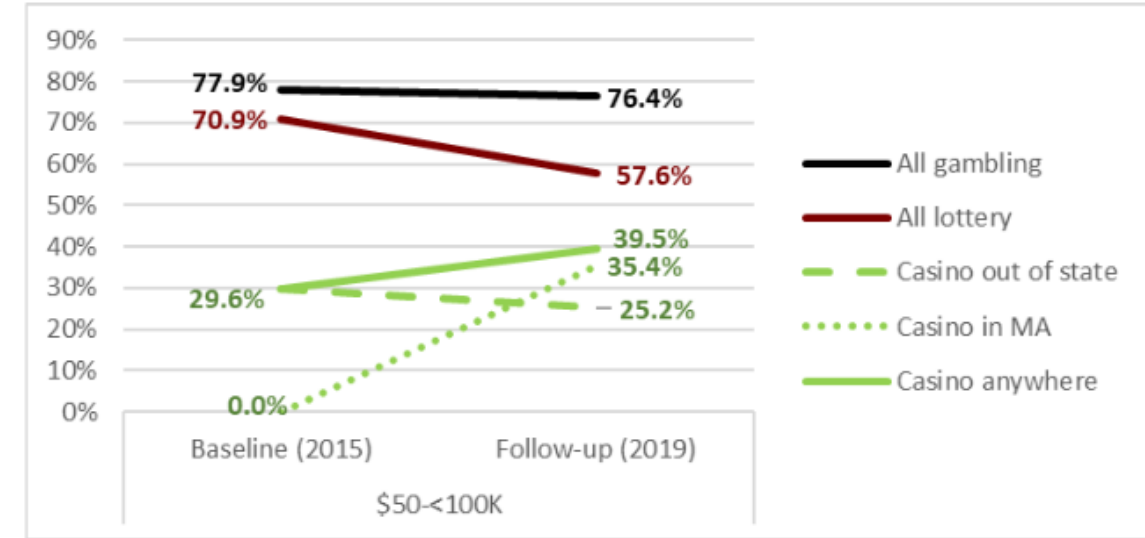
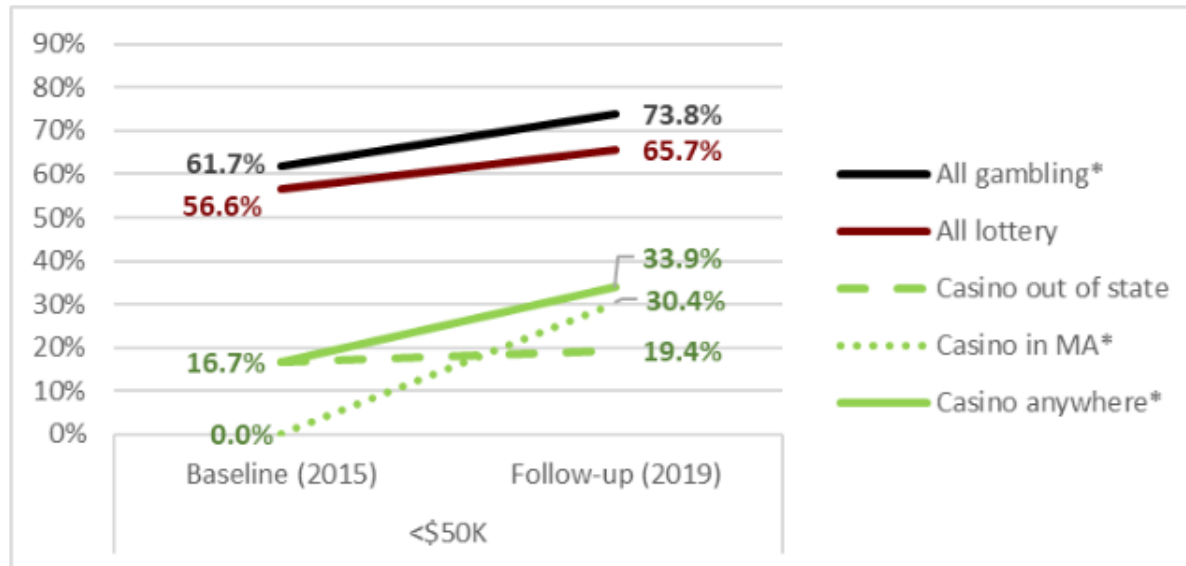
CHANGES IN GAMBLING PARTICIPATION FROM 2015 - 2019



(Image source: SEIGMA, 2020)

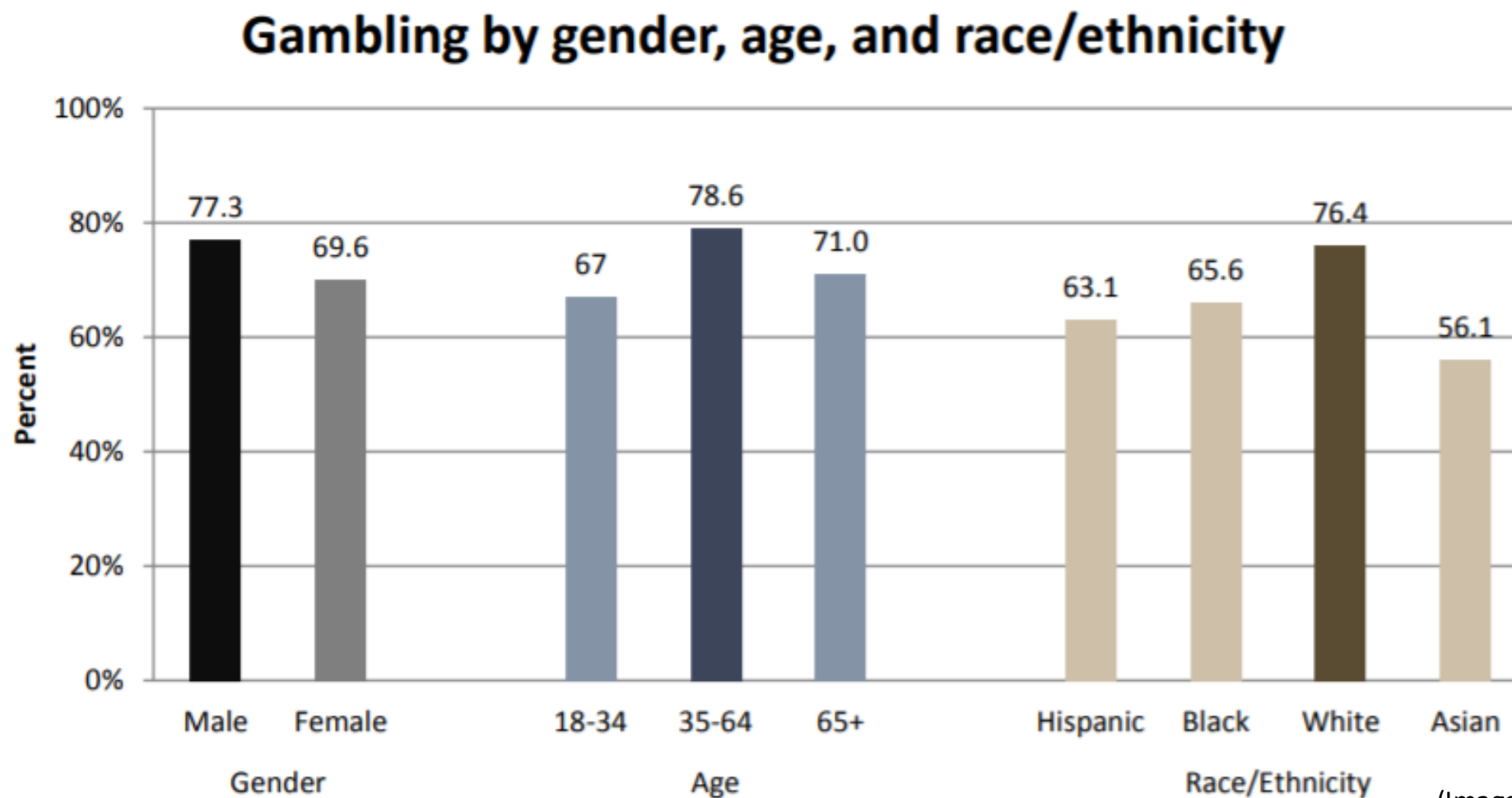
GAMBLING PARTICIPATION BY INCOME

(2015 -2019)



(Image source: SEIGMA, 2020)

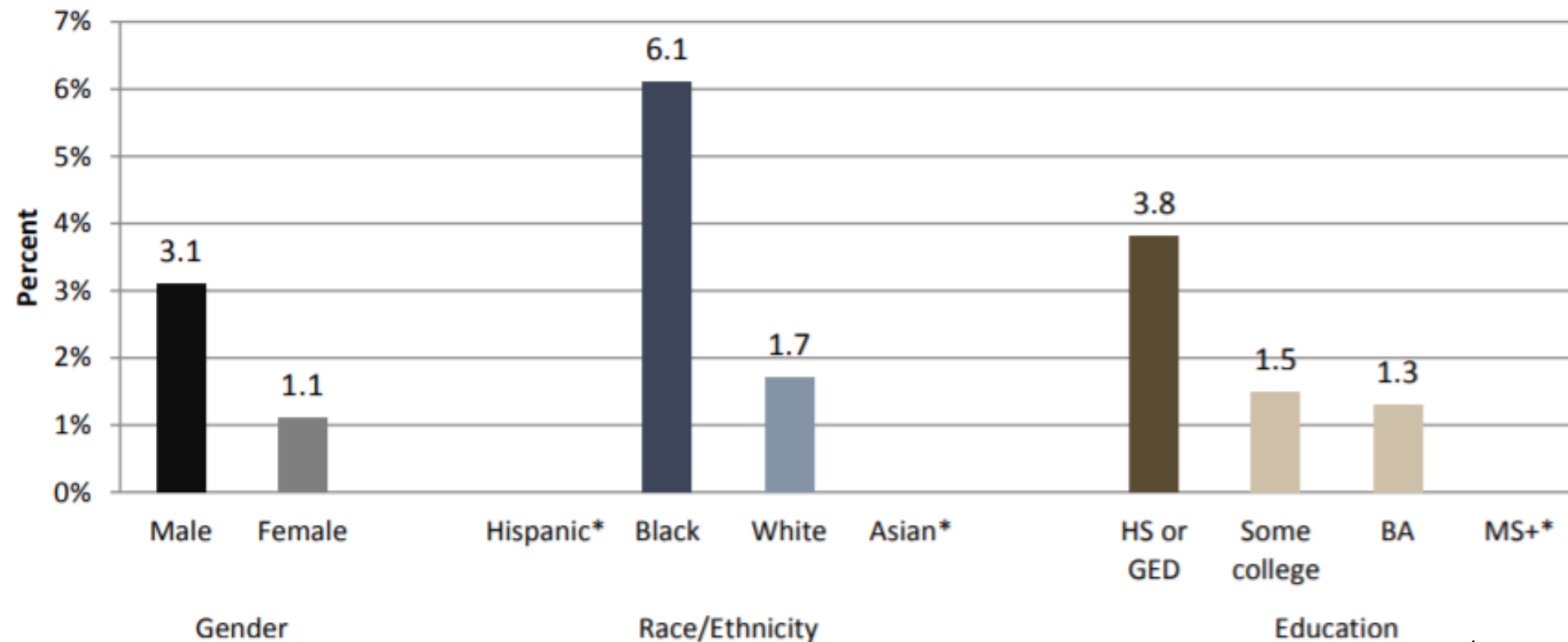
GAMBLING PARTICIPATION BY DEMOGRAPHICS



(Image source: SEIGMA, 2017)

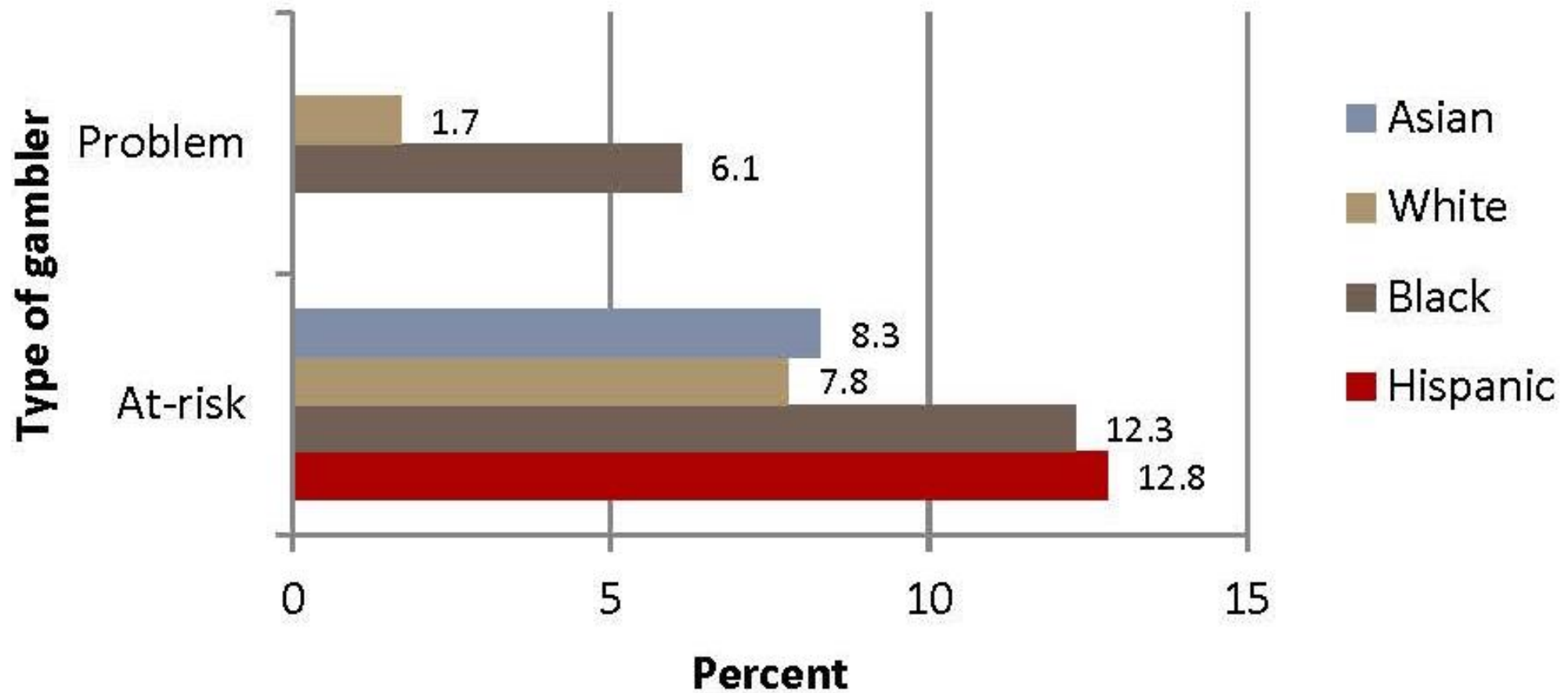
PROBLEM GAMBLING PARTICIPATION BY DEMOGRAPHICS

Problem gambling by gender, race/ethnicity, and education



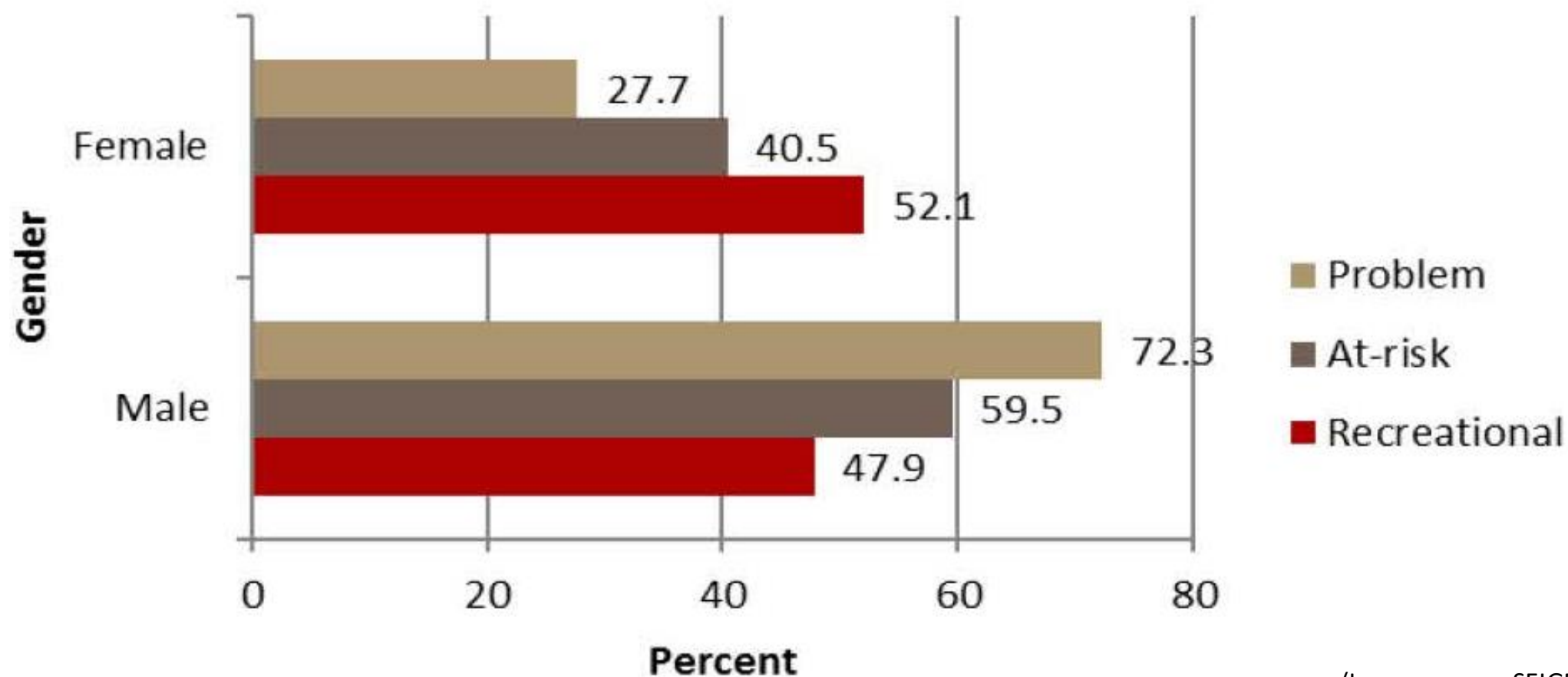
(Image source: SEIGMA, 2015)

PROBLEM GAMBLING STATUS BY RACE/ETHNICITY



(Image source: SEIGMA)

RECREATIONAL, AT-RISK, OR PROBLEM GAMBLER BY GENDER



(Image source: SEIGMA)



POPULATIONS AT RISK FOR DEVELOPING PROBLEM GAMBLING

- These groups are 2x as likely or more to be at-risk gamblers:
 - Populations with a **high school education or less**
 - Populations with an **annual income of less than \$15,000**
 - Populations who are **unemployed**
 - Populations who have a **disability**
 - Populations who have a **history of substance misuse**
 - Populations who have a **mental health disorder**

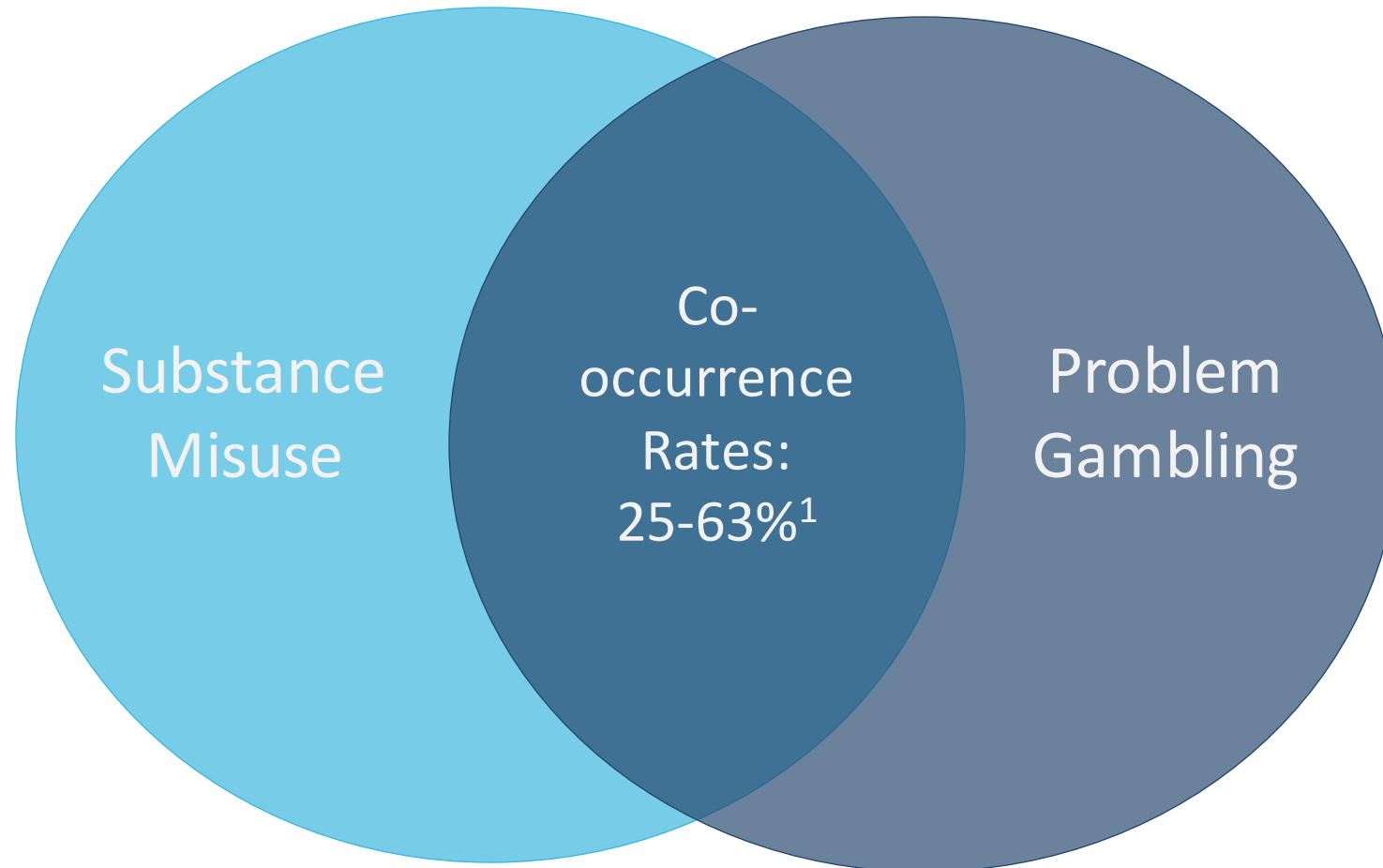
(Source: SEIGMA)

POPULATIONS AT RISK FOR DEVELOPING PROBLEM GAMBLING

- At-risk and problem gamblers were *significantly more likely* to:
 - Use **tobacco**
 - **Binge drink** in the past 30 days
- Problem gamblers had *significantly higher* past-year use of **illicit drugs**



Co-occurrence



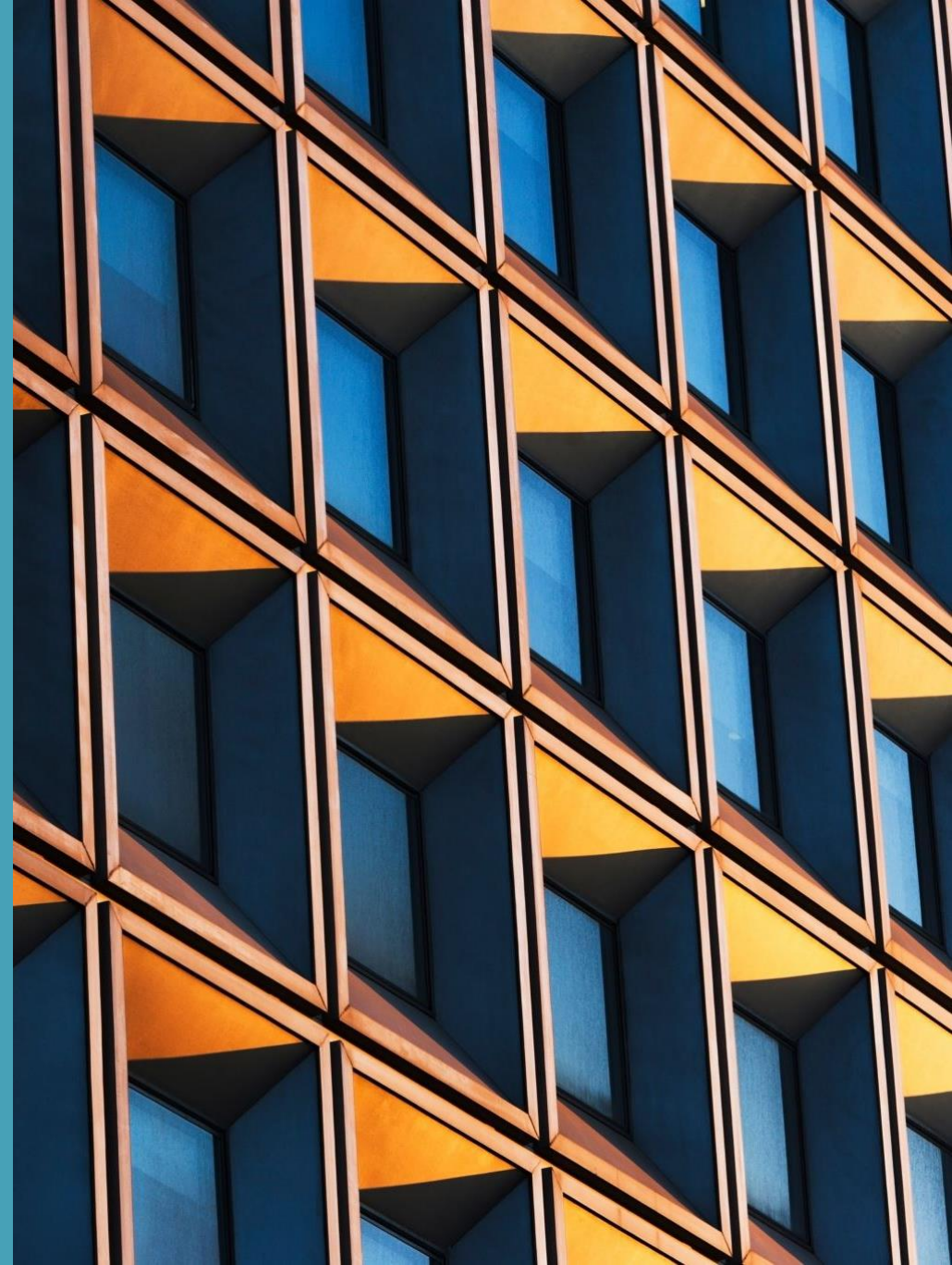
POPULATIONS AT RISK FOR DEVELOPING PROBLEM GAMBLING

- At-risk and problem gamblers were *significantly more likely* to:
 - Identify their **physical health status as poor or fair**
 - Experience serious problems with **depression, anxiety, or other mental health problems**
- Problem gamblers are at *higher risk* for **suicide**



10. Some people who gamble have higher than average intelligence.

Agree. It is true that some gamblers have higher than average intelligence and some gamblers have lower than average intelligence, just as it is true that some lawyers, or educators, or accountants have higher than average intelligence and some have lower than average intelligence. The point is, intelligence has nothing to do with it—winning at gambling is primarily a matter of chance!



Please visit our website, mcoepgp.org for additional resources and trainings.



THANK YOU

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