



Youth and problem gambling Is the risk really worth it?

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Adolescents have a sense of invulnerability and invincibility and as such are exposed to many high risk activities. When it comes to gambling it begins as entertainment and ends as chasing losses.

Between 3-6% of youth meet criteria for extreme problematic gambling. A further 7-10% at risk of development of problem gambling.

Characteristics for youth gambling are: being male, higher income—spending \$35 a week, and starting to smoke, use drugs or drink alcohol and being under 15 years of age.



Major modes of youth gambling are the pokies, blackjack and texas hold'em poker as they have the least cash outlay. With the introduction of Internet gambling, gambling is no longer an adult activity.

Resiliency helps combat problem gambling by developing strengths to resist and eliminate harm and the negative influences faced daily.

Just as earlier generations participated in illegal smoking and alcohol this generation is experimenting with new forms of gambling.

Most youth were introduced to gambling by family or friends.

Deliberate self harm is twice as common in young gamblers, they also reported negative views of school and lower levels of commitment.

Young people are reluctant to seek help for their gambling problems.

There are few youth orientated treatment centers available.



Young people are more likely to seek help and talk to their peers or significant others rather than formal treatment providers



Statistics

- Problem gambling amongst young people is 2 times higher than the adult population
- 60-90% of young people have gambled in some form
- Between 5–12% are at risk of developing serious problem gambling
- 6% of young people are already experiencing problem gambling behaviours
- Anecdotal evidence shows that young people are often introduced to gambling by family members
- Most problem gamblers started to gamble as early as 10 years of age

Advertising

- Messages making gambling glamorous and lucrative make youth more vulnerable
- TV advertising encourages gambling in weekly Lotto and daily keno draws
- Millions of dollars are spent hyping up big wins while gambling – so it looks like you can make easy money



Connectedness (strong positive relationships) to family and friends has been found to be protective against problem gambling for youth. In particular connectedness with a teacher or mother.

A focus group with young people in Rotorua reported:

Why do youth gamble?

Escape (forget problems)
Excitement
Entertainment
Economics (\$\$) - Quick fix!
Peer Pressure/Recognition

How do youth prefer to deal with problems?

Talk to someone that we trust
Find an expert to talk to
Spend time relaxing with family and friends
Eat well, sleep well and exercise

How to deal with problems?

Writing down ideas - sometimes burning them
Singing and music
Taking a holiday or going home for a visit
Go for a drive, walk, cycle.
Keeping your mind busy - puzzles, TradeMe
Getting some more education

Other strategies:

Choosing values we want to live by:
Honesty and integrity
Money is to be earned not won
Contentment and gratitude
Spiritual connections
Family connections
Respect and care for elders
Looking for ways to benefit others.

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