

Games, Gambling and Generation Z

**Disruptive approaches to
awareness of gambling harms**

A practical guide to implementation



Games, Gambling and Generation Z - Disruptive approaches to awareness of gambling harms. A practical guide to implementation

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Introduction

Game On was a project that aimed to increase awareness and evaluate the impacts of gambling for communities in Salford, specifically for 16-21-year-olds who are identified as being at risk. The normalisation of gambling is leading to an increasing frequency of young people gambling weekly, particularly among young men. The rationale for targeting this age range is associated with the vulnerability of young people to mismanage their first independent income/grant/loan, an area of rising concern.

This project used research-based interventions to disrupt the normalisation of gambling for young people, and this culminated in an event in July 2022 to test our learning and interventions with young people.

We recognise that the gambling industry has resources and access to commission a significant range of multidisciplinary methodologies to make their products attractive to individuals. As such, we have built a group of researchers from diverse backgrounds to research, understand and analyse gambling harms and anti-gambling resources available to our young people. These researchers use interdisciplinary methods to carry out research with the aim to have a clear understanding of the gambling harms in Greater Manchester. Many of the methodologies used in this research have foundations in academic research, so this is why we have worked with the University of Salford to utilise these multidisciplinary approaches to create disruptive tools and approaches to challenge the gambling industry's narratives and counter normalisation of gambling. This is especially needed as Salford experiences extreme levels of deprivation, which has been compounded by COVID-19 and the impact of the cost of living crisis.

Project Aims: Game on – tackling gambling harms by harnessing gamification

Project aims and project alignment

Through the Game On project, we aimed to use behavioural research and gamification to deliver early disruptive interventions that increase awareness, and further evaluate the impacts of gambling for communities in Salford; specifically 16-21 years that are identified at risk. Building on previous practice to implement both short and longer-term interventions to increase new knowledge in this area. This guide outlines the process of development and some of the research under-pinning our approach.

The problem being addressed

With 54% of 17-year-olds participating in gambling in the last year, rising to 68% at 20 years; the normalisation of gambling is leading to an increasing frequency of young people gambling weekly, this is particularly prevalent in young men. The rationale for targeting this age range is associated with the vulnerability of young people to mismanage their first independent income/grant/loan, an area of rising concern.

A 2019 NUS report shows that around half (48%) of students who gamble do so to make money, 1 in 8 will bet more than they can afford to lose, nearly a quarter feel guilty when gambling and almost 1 in 10 have used a student loan to gamble. The reach and appeal of gambling extend far beyond students, with our workforce and young apprentices being affected.

Gamification and behavioural research are used to position and attract young people to gambling opportunities. This project proposes to use the same tools that make gambling so attractive, to generate greater awareness of the issues, providing early interventions that disrupt the normalisation of gambling.


The approach and interventions explored

The interventions include:

- A programme of awareness through ‘Crowdsourcing-style peer-led’ workshops involving communities and young people to break the normalisation effect and co-create effective strategies and tools such as campaigns, career fairs and online apps.
- The development of a series of tools to pilot across Salford and disseminate more widely across the region and nationally.

We aim to raise awareness of gambling-related harm through peer-led, shared lived experiences, workshops delivered by Salford University researchers and students, and supported by YGAM. This project uses gamification technology to develop a new app offering a disruptive intervention and alternative to the pervasive gambling apps currently on the market.

The workshops targets vulnerable groups including: those from lower income quintiles; members of BAME communities; women; and the unemployed. These



peer-led workshops encourage a wider discourse around this issue in an open and engaging manner and also inform the creation of the new gambling awareness, gamification, 'Game-On' app, shaping content and acting as a wider testbed for the technology.

The workshops are hosted at the University's Media City Campus, where attendees are able to make use of innovative green screen technology to create online digital content (TikTok videos; memes; and gifs), discussing the issue of the gambling and signposting the community to wider services available to them. Attendees are asked to consider becoming peer educators and champions, returning to their community or college armed with social media toolkits to disseminate to their peers.

The Significance of these Approaches


The project takes an effective, two-tiered, approach to the emerging issue of youth gambling:

- Peer-led interventions is a proven method within addiction studies and by maintaining a community-based, Youth-focused, technologically innovative approach, the project will actively engage with its target audience providing real-world impact and digital outputs.
- The innovative focus on technological solutions to an increasingly technological problem offers a new alternative and supplement to traditional peer-led interventions or cold-turkey methods, such as the use of Gamban gambling blocking software previously championed by the NUS.
- Our approach is active, creative, engaging and marks a step away from the more passive signposting activities of previous projects.

Recognising there's a problem

In the early stages of the project, it soon became apparent that our target group of young people may not be aware of the issue or need for intervention. In exploring this, we also uncovered more sophisticated ways that gambling harms were prolific such as through in-play activities, positing gambling as 'investment' and the social normalisation and enabling of gambling through family and friends. This made any awareness generation challenging and it vastly decreased potential participants and our target demographic motivation to actively disengage by positioning gambling as positive, acceptable and sociable. There needed to be something else offered to motivate and get young people engaged with the agenda, this lever was skills development and employability and so the makers market development day was born.

There needed to be something to drive participation and employability was the perfect vehicle for this. Furthermore, it provided a platform to really explore online safety and digital skills as anti-gambling harms tools (online gambling being increasingly concerning). The online safety and digital skills were much more than just something for the CV, they are awareness of how our behaviour online, using



games and in interactions with others and sports is being deliberately manipulated. There is also a set of 'life skills' to be developed that is often assumed and rarely taught such as budgetary management, financial safety online, understanding the difference between competitive and addictive behaviours, and when to stop.

The app development also underwent a transformation with this being developed into a competition and broadened to more general creative outputs. This was important to facilitate as many ways as possible for young people to engage with the agenda. This creative space idea was also used in the development day to build confidence and enhance wellbeing.

One of the most critical factors in the development journey was the sharing of lived experiences. This was powerful and impactful and the stories we rarely hear about. Elevating these narratives was important for generating awareness but also connected to the creative output element, whereby storytelling, physically creative expression could support both participation and understanding of the problem.



Section 1: The making of the Makers Market, and creativity behind the competition



Why a makers market?

Introduction

This project raises awareness of gambling harms and perspectives in an interactive learning environment to help contextualise and engage with the target participants. A careers workshop that supports digital skills and life skills is hosted, engaging with University students and several FE Colleges and Sixth Form student communities who are invited to participate. The workshop focuses on career development and participants explore storytelling techniques, gamification, immersive environments and disruptive activities to develop and share experiences whilst increasing personal awareness of gambling harms and online safety. These were the main aims of developing a makers market. The name 'makers' infers that participation is required and that there is a product or output at the end of it. This was the principle of the approach and in this section of the guide, we present the programme, insights into the ideas and rationale behind the different interventions that took place.

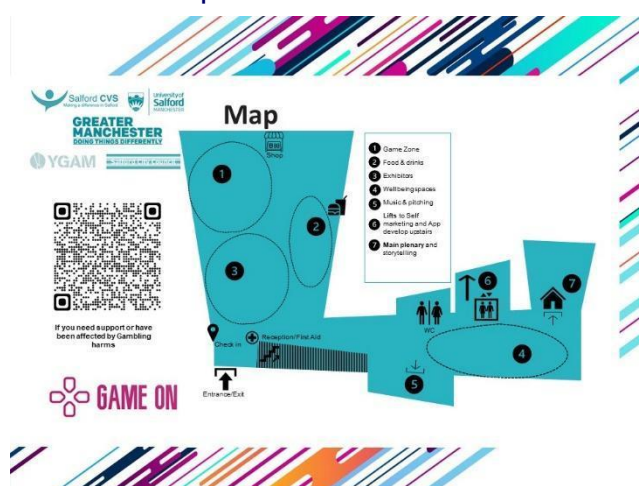
Methodologies and theoretical influences

'Knowledge of the social world must be deeper and stronger if it is co-produced with actors in that world; research is more likely to effect change if it is owned by people who have a capacity to effect change'. (Horvath, C., & Carpenter, J. 2020 on Campbell and Vanderhoven, 2010). The co-creation approach has been successful for understanding the needs in different settings such as public health, wellbeing and social change. This project utilises a similar approach in an education setting to help proliferate the messages of gambling harms. Working with those who attend to activate discussions and encourage the development of ideas and awareness.

Included in this section:

- Schedule and communication about the development day.
- Detailed programme with added information about how each workshop or session works and key learning output to be generated for both the participants and project.
- Run sheets for each activity that are facilitator guides to running the session and published so others may replicate these should they wish to.
- Slide decks or other learning materials from the sessions to help replicate the activities and act as a resource library for users.
- Outline of the creative competition to further facilitate engagement after the development day.

To support navigation around the event and promote key messages a postcard sized handout was produced:





Digital Skills Development Day Makers Market Programme and Details

This section outlines some example templates used in the development of the makers market and thoughts behind the sessions. The run sheet provides an overview of the activities and how they connect together. There's a detailed breakdown and a lesson plan that outlines what takes place during the session. A sample collection of slides is also provided.

Run Sheet

Our aim is that each activity takes between 5- 25 minutes to complete, and the average length of activity is 15 minutes.

Where an activity is 15 minutes, we used this as an opportunity to talk about gambling harms e.g. 1 in 15 people affected by gambling harms in the Greater Manchester area and all our activities have a gaming or gambling theme to help consider how you can play safely. (<https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/gambling/understanding-gambling-related-harms/>).

1. Storytelling workshop & the lived experience cinema

<p>Session title: <i>Storytelling Workshop</i></p>	<p>Time to complete/ schedule: 1.00, 1.25, 1.50, 2.15, 2.40 & 3.05 (20 mins)</p>
<p>Overview of activity: <i>This session provides a chance to watch lived experience videos and accounts, ask questions and develop your own storytelling technique.</i></p> <p>What do participants take away: <i>Raising awareness of the lived experience and considering the impact of gambling harms to self and others.</i></p>	<p>Facilitators involved: (Vashti/ Anne-Marie)</p>
<p>Activity breakdown:</p> <p><i>Introduction (2 mins):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Welcome to the storytelling workshop, we will be developing our storytelling and creation skills during the session using some of the materials based on the lived experience of gambling harms.</i> <p><i>Exercise (12 mins):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Split the room into three groups, ask each group to nominate a scribe (2 mins).</i> - <i>Review the story – this is split into 3 (beginning, middle and end) with each printed on a different piece of paper.</i> - <i>Using the folded sheet, and first square – ask participants to make a note of any ideas for a story.</i> - <i>Using the remainder of the folded paper squares, ask participants to develop the story (or part of the story) in three scenes or acts. Allow 10 mins.</i> - <i>At the end of the 10 mins, ask for volunteers to share one example or pick a group to share. (5 mins)</i> 	<p>Materials, resources and equipment needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Coloured paper and pens – suggest folding the paper into four to make four spaces to write. (Provided)</i> ● <i>Pens (Provided)</i> ● <i>Review the story handouts (Facilitator to bring – unless specified)</i>
<p>Notes: <i>Skills developed – should you wish to mention this during the session: (Reflection, writing, storytelling, self-awareness).</i></p>	<p>Additional support, instruction or comments:</p>

2. App Development workshop

<p>Session title: Dragon's Den - Develop an app in an afternoon</p>	<p>Time to complete/schedule: 1.00, 1.25, 1.50, 2.15, 2.40 & 3.05 (20 mins)</p>
<p>Overview of activity: <i>This session explores apps to help online gambling safety, this involves a gap analysis of existing apps available, identifying the core need and developing ideas. This is followed by storyboarding and presenting your app idea (app ideas developed will get to see this in action by the end of the day)</i></p> <p>What do participants take away: Exploration of key issues and prevention strategies through technologies and online approaches to reduce the impact of gambling harms.</p>	<p>Facilitators involved: (Davina/Keren)</p>
<p>Activity breakdown:</p> <p><i>Introduction (5 mins):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Welcome to the app development workshop, we will be developing an app by the end of the session to help prevent gambling harms.</i> - <i>Quick tour of key principles of app development (DW): one slide to show: identify the gaps, know your audience, connect to the audience and 8 stages of app development</i> - <i>Where are the gaps (KP): one slide to show the gaps that currently exist.</i> <p><i>Exercise (10 mins):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Split the room into groups.</i> - <i>Using the folded sheet, one square per stage of development, discuss and complete the app.</i> - <i>At the end of the 10 mins, ask for volunteers to share one example or pick a group to share with a 1 minute pitch. (5 mins)</i> 	<p>Materials, resources and equipment needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Coloured paper and pens – suggest folding the paper into four to make four spaces to write. (Provided)</i> ● <i>Pens (Provided)</i> ● <i>PowerPoint slide deck to be developed</i>
<p>Notes: <i>Skills developed – should you wish to mention this during the session: (Idea development, digital skills, problem solving, market/gap analysis)</i></p>	<p>Additional support, instruction or comments:</p>

3. The Psychology of Marketing

<p>Session title: Be empowered by the psychology of marketing</p>	<p>Time to complete/schedule: 1.00, 1.20, 1.40, 2.00, 2.20, 2.40 & 3.00 (15 mins)</p>
<p>Overview of activity: Through games, media and TV, we receive psychological messages that affect the way we live, learn and engage with the wider world. Some of these are positive and some are less so. This workshop provides insight into the psychological tools being used on you and how you can utilise these in a positive way!</p> <p>What do participants take away: Awareness of psychological tools and strategies used in marketing and opportunities to consider how to use these more positively.</p>	<p>Facilitators involved: (Violet, Andrea, Simona)</p>
<p>Activity breakdown:</p> <p><i>Introduction (7 mins):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome to the workshop, this workshop provides insight into the psychological tools being used on you and how you can utilise these in a positive way! - Presentation or demonstration <p><i>Exercise (5 mins):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working individually, participants identify one thing they can start doing and one thing they can stop doing to better protect themselves from gambling harms and the psy/marketing influences - At the end of the exercise, ask for volunteers to share one example and if all participants are happy to share with us anonymously taking a picture and emailing to themselves and handing the paper to us at the end of the session (3 mins) 	<p>Materials, resources and equipment needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coloured paper to write. (Provided) ● Pens (Provided) ● PowerPoint slide deck to be developed
<p>Notes: <i>Skills developed – should you wish to mention this during the session: (Idea development, digital skills, problem solving, market/gap analysis)</i></p>	<p>Additional support, instruction or comments:</p>

4. Music making workshop

<p>Session title: <i>Music Making</i></p>	<p>Time to complete/ schedule: 1.00, 1.20, 1.40, 2.00, 2.20, 2.40 & 3.00 (15 mins)</p>
<p>Overview of activity: <i>Create your own music to experience the wellbeing benefits and activities that are repetitive but not addictive.</i></p> <p>What do participants take away: <i>their own music and increased awareness of gambling harms.</i></p>	<p>Facilitators involved: <i>Adam Hart and Haleemah X</i></p> <p><i>Lucie/ Simon</i></p>
<p>Activity breakdown – main event:</p> <p><i>Introduction:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>As participants arrive they split into two groups – group 1 – focusing on music, group 2 – focusing in lyrics</i> - <i>Following a quick 1-2 min demo on each, the group participants pair up to develop their music and word. (10 mins)</i> <p><i>Exercise:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The exercise is a creative task and so no limits on content. At the end, the group is invited to showcase an output.</i> 	<p>Materials, resources and equipment needed: <i>iPads for music creation</i> <i>Printed templates and pens to write lyrics/verses</i></p>
<p>Notes: <i>Skills developed – should you wish to mention this during the session: (Communications and creativity skills, confidence and wellbeing)</i></p>	<p>Additional support, instruction or comments:</p>

5. Pitching, presentations & practice

<p>Session title: <i>pitching and presenting</i></p>	<p>Time to complete/schedule: 1.00, 1.20, 1.40, 2.00, 2.20, 2.40 & 3.00 (15 mins)</p>
<p>Overview of activity: Learn the secret of good presentation skills and positive body language. Learn how to develop an authentic style and how to 'sell and tell' to pitch an idea. Includes an opportunity to practise. What do participants take away: Enabling individuals with confidence and assertiveness to support empowerment.</p>	<p>Facilitators involved: <i>Jemma Gofton</i></p>
<p>Activity breakdown – main event: <i>Introduction:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Brief session overview</i> <p><i>Exercise:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Work through tips and advice on how to present.</i> - <i>(breath, slow down, plant your feet, eye contact, body language, intonation, facial expressions, pause, composure)</i> - <i>Ask the attendee a list of questions to gauge their natural presenting style.</i> - <i>(fav film, food hell, who makes you laugh, fav holiday, food heaven, first ever memory, any hobbies)</i> - <i>Feedback on their style and offer advice on how to 'fix' the issues.</i> - <i>Any questions.</i> - <i>Give out a printed document on presenting skills discussed and how to rehearse.</i> 	<p>Materials, resources and equipment needed: <i>Printed Handout</i></p>
<p>Notes: <i>Skills developed – should you wish to mention this during the session: (Communications and presentation skills, confidence and self-esteem)</i></p>	<p>Additional support, instruction or comments:</p>

6. Movement, wellbeing and motion capture workshop

<p>Session title: Attending towards to an awareness of your body-mind connection</p>	<p>Time to complete/ schedule: 1.00, 1.20, 1.40, 2.00, 2.20, 2.40 & 3.00 (15 mins)</p>
<p>Overview of activity: Motion capture technologies are increasingly used in producing high quality video games. However, more and more the art of performance for motion capture is being recognised as a creative and standardised career opportunity, and the use of motion capture within health and wellbeing. This workshop will provide useful exercises with mindful movement and how it enables you to be aware of your body-mind connection.</p> <p>What do participants take away: Increased awareness in body-mind connection and opportunities to consider how the use of motion capture technology has positive and creative outcome on gamification.</p>	<p>Facilitators involved: Lucie Sykes</p>
<p>Activity breakdown – main event:</p> <p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As participants arrive at the space, they will be introduced to the short session, also asked about any injuries as we will be moving in the space As a group they will engage with Lucie’s presentation on Motion capture technology: what it is, what it means, and how it is done, and how movement and technology work together <p>Exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short warm up – game: the castle – aiming to get heart rate up and get the body moving, also to engage participants in thinking strategy and problem-solving skills. Short analyses of the game – acknowledging the felt body – feeling, sensations and breathing (fast) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attending to breath and breathing technique attending to shapes and lines of the body, which is creating while lying on the floor, and in standing up position to mirror those actions Short movement sequence attending to body’s weight-rhythm transfer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attending to body movement through the space and being aware of the shapes and lines we make 	<p>Materials, resources and equipment needed: Tv for the short introduction PowerPoint presentation Speakers for music Lights dimmed for atmosphere</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Short exercise to warm-down by attending once again to our breath and our awareness of body-mind connection</i>• <i>At the end, the group is invited to share their reflections – your discoveries and how you are feeling and sensing your body-mind connection</i>	
<p>Notes: <i>Skills developed –physical health and wellbeing, creative skills, problem-solving,</i></p>	<p>Additional support, instruction or comments:</p>

Informal sessions – running throughout the day for information

What (and Skills developed)	Detail	Game On key messages	Start times/ (Activity Duration)	Space/ (who)
Financial wellbeing and money matters clinic (Financial management, organisation skills, self-awareness)	TBC – This could be stalls or more formal sessions? Take the opportunity to chat to our team on managing finances, getting support for gambling, tips for better money management and much more.	Financial awareness, opportunities to seek help and answer any questions.	All day	Front Foyer area (YGam, SCVS + Others TBC)
Gaming Zone (Encourages self-awareness, coordination, reflection and competitiveness)	Four different games to play: 1. VR Oculus Headset - Beat Saber: practise your sabre skills to music. 2. VR Oculus Headset - Job Simulator: reflect on jobs of the future. 3. Retro game console - PacMac: play one of the first ever computer games. 4. Retro game console - Tetris: before Candy Crush was a thing, play an earlier version.	Providing digital games that are engaging and uninterrupted by gambling company advertisements, in-play payments etc., to be more cognate of the clever tools used by gambling businesses.	5 minutes per game time limit	Front Foyer area (Andy Miah) [2 nd floor makerspace to bring game consoles to foyer]
Environmental sustainability creative space	A creative space to take a break from the technology and focus on mindfulness, wellbeing and outdoor spaces as well as those online. Create your own sustainable products to take away and find out what's happening outdoors locally in Salford.	An alternative space to the digital and online world and sample different engaging activities that support wellbeing and connection to others.	All day	Foyer near DPL (Sustainability Team, SCVS)

Example Slide Deck Collection

Storytelling session:



Greater Manchester
Salford CVB
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Greater Manchester
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Salford

Welcome

GAME ON

1



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Aim

The purpose of this session is to raise awareness through compelling storytelling of the lived experience and increase engagement with an understanding of the harms of gambling and the pathways leading to such and how to avoid them.

GAME ON

3



Greater Manchester
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Greater Manchester
Salford CVB
Salford

Topic

Story Telling Workshop-Lived Experiences

GAME ON

2



Greater Manchester
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Salford
Greater Manchester
Salford CVB
Salford

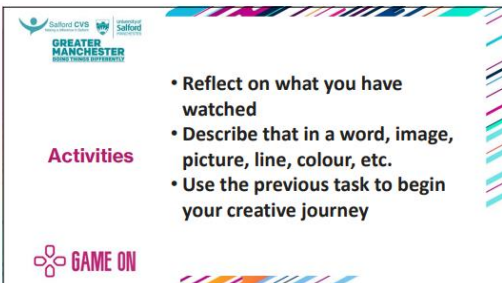
Model



Product
Reflection
Content
Stories & Podcast

GAME ON

4



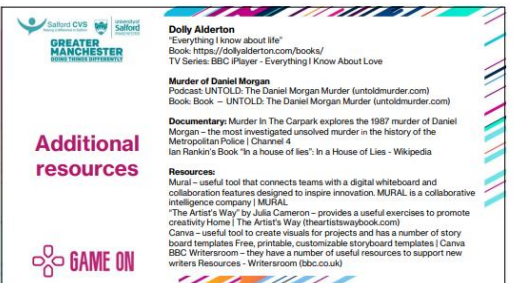
Greater Manchester
Salford CVB
Salford
Greater Manchester
Salford CVB
Salford

Activities

- Reflect on what you have watched
- Describe that in a word, image, picture, line, colour, etc.
- Use the previous task to begin your creative journey

GAME ON

5



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Additional resources

Dolly Alderton
"Everything I know about life"
Book: <https://dollyalderton.com/books/>
TV Series: BBC iPlayer - Everything I Know About Love

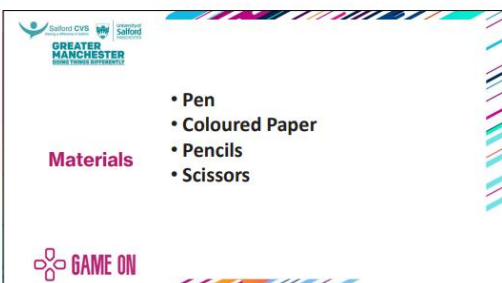
Murder of Daniel Morgan
Podcast: UNTOLD: The Daniel Morgan Murder (untoldmurder.com)
Book: Book - UNTOLD: The Daniel Morgan Murder (untoldmurder.com)

Documentary: Murder In The Carpark explores the 1987 murder of Daniel Morgan - the most investigated unsolved murder in the history of the Metropolitan Police | Channel 4
Ian Rankin's Book "In a house of lies", In a House of Lies - Wikipedia

Resources:
Mural - useful tool that connects teams with a digital whiteboard and collaboration features designed to inspire innovation. MURAL is a collaborative intelligence company | MURAL
"The Artist's Way" by Julia Cameron - provides a useful exercises to promote creativity Home | The Artist's Way (theartistswaybook.com)
Canva - useful tool to create visuals for projects and has a number of story board templates Free, printable, customizable storyboard templates | Canva
BBC Writersroom - they have a number of useful resources to support new writers Resources - Writersroom (bbc.co.uk)

GAME ON

7



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Salford CVB
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Salford

Materials

- Pen
- Coloured Paper
- Pencils
- Scissors

GAME ON

6



Section 2: Short paper collection



Context and background to short paper collection

In the energetic Media City of Salford, a diverse group of researchers, practitioners, and individuals came together to share their practices and research during the Game On event. The Game On event enabled discussion on the complex interplay between emotions, social contexts, and personal narrative – a holistic understanding of gambling behaviours and offering innovative prevention strategies through the lens of gamification. This collection of short papers provides a comprehensive overview of the various practices and activities that took place during the event. The paper collection presents the diverse range of initiatives and interventions developed and/or explored by the presenters at the event. By exploring the overall theme of the Game On event, the presenters hope to contribute to the growing body of knowledge in the field of behavioural interventions against gambling to inflict harm and promote positive behavioural change. These short papers illuminate the presenters' perspectives and practices with specific activities and the underlying methodologies, findings, and possible implications for future research and interventions.

As the reader flips through these short essays, they will realise that fighting gambling harms necessitates a multi-pronged approach that encompasses empathy, technology, awareness, and disruptive thinking. The Game On event and accompanying well-being papers act as a catalyst for change and ignite the collective resolve to create a safer and more responsible gaming environment. Through continued collaborative research and interventions, these interconnected narratives of each article culminated in a clear call to action, inspiring a future where determination to devise suggestions minimises the impact of gambling and empowers individuals to make informed decisions, which promotes a society that prioritises well-being and responsible gambling practices.

In order to understand gambling addiction and harms in Manchester, we have built a team of researchers from the University of Salford. Our researchers come from diverse backgrounds which give them a unique outlook on the subject. The team met regularly to discuss the aims of research, the impact on society, and the development of the Game On workshop for the young participants. Eventually, the extensive research, findings, and outcomes of the workshops have been combined in a series of short papers from each researcher, followed by short reflections on the journey in the next section. Each researcher compiled their research aims, findings, and reflections in those papers.

The first paper sets out the state of the sector, the problem and potential areas that this project aims to address and is written by the Project Lead Anne-Marie Marshall. The paper presents a unique perspective written from the lived experience and interview of a personal journey to better understand the 'life-wide' impact of gambling.

The next paper from Vashti Gbolagun-Suwa looks at *Lived experiences of gambling in the UK*. Vashti presents the harms of gambling habits by narrating gamblers' experiences. Her narratives convey how gambling harms the gamblers' relations, studies, work, social life, finance, mental health and all aspects of life. Through this



creative paper imbibed with Vashti's story-telling techniques, we are immersed in the gamblers' world through poetry leading us to engage in reflections.

In the third paper, *A phenomenological approach to Gambling: one facet of an intricate existence* by Simona Merlusca and John Obeng, we observe the link between the brain and addiction. Through a study of the subjective experiences of gamblers, Simona and John demonstrate how gambling addiction has a grasp on the gamblers. Our researchers also suggest a framework for interventions regarding gambling.

Keren Poliah's paper, *Gambling prevention apps in the UK*, highlights the normalisation of gambling. Keren analyses the attention given to gambling addiction in Greater Manchester. Through the analysis of anti-gambling apps and preventive measures, we uncover an existing gap. Keren's paper observes the need to breach the gap between what help gamblers truly need to receive in order to recover from their addiction, and encourages reflections on how we can provide gamblers with what they need to overcome the gambling harms.

Exacerbation of mental health concerns in young people by Problem Gambling by Andrea Stein analyses how problem gambling interferes with gamblers' daily functioning. Problem gambling exacerbates other problems such as drug addiction, anxiety, stress, depression, mood and personality changes as well as suicidal tendencies. In her paper, Andrea observes the behavioural, mental and physical concerns faced by gamblers.

The fourth paper by Lucie Sykes, entitled *Attending to an awareness of body-mind connection to improve well-being* offers gamblers a path towards recovery. Lucie offers an embodied approach to gambling addiction through the lens of mindful movement. She provides a different outlook on gambling addiction as she examines motion capture technologies, and the connection between the body and the mind. Lucie highlights how we can improve gamers' well-being through exercises promoting body-mind connection and physical activity.

Davina Whitnall writes our fifth paper on *Disruption deconstructed - the design, development and decision-making empowerment of the 'disruptive workshop' approach in the prevention of gambling harms*. In her paper, Davina details the Game On project and the development of the workshop through a 'disruptive' approach. She uses the development model and approaches to increase awareness of gambling harms. Her paper also explores the impact of gamification to help prevent gambling harms.

Through these papers, our researchers hope that readers can benefit from an increased understanding and awareness of gambling harms. Readers are encouraged to engage with the research findings and to get in touch with the team. This research stems from our team's desire to support gamblers and their loved ones fighting against this monstrous addiction.

Each paper is specifically written for this publication and brings together the unique insight of that area or specialism.

The Gambling Harms Journey: Unravelling Key Milestones through Danny's Narrative

By Anne-Marie Marshall

Abstract:

This paper explores the key milestones in the journey of gambling harms through the analysis of Danny's narrative, as revealed in an interview conducted in January 2022. Danny's story provides valuable insights into the normalisation of gambling in childhood, the shame associated with addiction, efforts to combat it, and the profound health impacts. Additionally, the role of significant life events, such as the death of Danny's mother, in triggering changes in gambling behaviour and the path to recovery is examined.

Interview, introductions and introspection:

The Game On project focused on the role of early interventions for 16 to 21-year-olds, and as part of this project we gained invaluable insights through an interview with Danny Cheetham to understand the intricate dynamics of gambling harms. Originally intended as an in-person engagement, circumstances forced us to adapt, resulting in a transformative 25-minute Zoom interview, serving as a pivotal resource for our research. Danny, a first-hand witness to the perils of gambling addiction, made significant life-altering decisions, including leaving university to seek employment for debt management, only to find himself spiralling deeper into financial turmoil. This narrative, captured in our interview, became a linchpin for our exploration into the multifaceted journey of gambling harms.

This paper underscores the importance of comprehending the trajectory of gambling harms for the purpose of designing effective interventions. We delve into five key themes extracted from Danny's narrative, each shedding light on different aspects of the gambling journey:

Theme 1: Normalisation of Gambling in Childhood

Theme 2: Shame and Masking Gambling Addiction

Theme 3: Campaigning for Gambling Block Intervention

Theme 4: Health Impacts of Gambling

Theme 5: Role of Life Events in Gambling Behaviour and Recovery

By unravelling Danny's narrative within these thematic frameworks, our paper aims to contribute significantly to the collective understanding of gambling harms, offering valuable insights for the development of targeted interventions and support systems.

Theme 1: Normalisation of Gambling in Childhood:

In the cultural landscape of the United Kingdom, the exposure of children and young people to gambling begins at an early age, creating a foundation that can significantly influence their perception of this activity. In this section, we delve into one prominent facet of this exposure - the Grand National, a widely embraced childhood bonding activity within families. Furthermore, it explores the broader context of early exposure to gambling, shedding light on how seemingly innocent forms of engagement can contribute to the normalisation of gambling behaviour.

Grand National as a Childhood Bonding Activity:

Growing up in the UK, children often encounter various forms of gambling, from the thrill of reality TV show betting to the excitement of the National Lottery programming. A subtle yet impactful contributor to this exposure is the Grand National, an iconic horse racing event deeply ingrained in British culture. Danny Cheetham's childhood experiences provide a poignant illustration, as he recalls watching the Grand National with his family. In these moments, the sheer enthusiasm and excitement enveloping him marked him as the most animated person in the room. Such familial activities, seemingly innocent, lay the groundwork for the normalisation of gambling in a child's psyche.

Exploration of Early Exposure and Normalisation:

The early exposure to gambling, rooted in activities like the Grand National, contributes to the normalisation of this behaviour. Children, captivated by the thrill and joy associated with these events, may inadvertently internalise gambling as an acceptable and enjoyable pastime. In the case of Danny, the Grand National served as an introduction to the world of gambling, shaping his early perceptions of risk and reward.


Link to Gaming as an Entry-Level Approach:

Through collaborative work with Oakwood School, it became evident that gaming acts as an entry-level approach to gambling. The allure of fun and excitement, coupled with the prevalence of in-app purchases, creates a seamless transition from gaming to more traditional forms of gambling. This transition reinforces the normalcy of engaging in activities that involve chance, blurring the lines between innocent childhood pastimes and potentially harmful behaviours.

In conclusion, the chapter highlights the significance of early exposure to gambling, using the Grand National as a case study. By understanding the roots of normalisation, we gain insight into the intricate relationship between childhood experiences and later engagement with gambling activities.

Theme 2: Shame and Masking Gambling Addiction

The theme delves into the complex interplay between shame and coping mechanisms in the context of gambling addiction, using Danny Cheetham's narrative as a poignant lens. As an individual grappling with the challenges of gambling,



Danny's story reveals a series of coping mechanisms that involve concealing his addiction, shedding light on the psychological toll of masking his struggles.

Coping Mechanisms: Doughnuts, T-Shirts, and Deception:

Within the realm of gambling, a pervasive sense of shame often accompanies the activity. Danny's experiences underscore this sentiment, illustrating how he strategically concealed his gambling from colleagues. Following a win, rather than acknowledging the source of his newfound resources, he adopted a facade of success. Doughnuts for colleagues and new t-shirts became symbols of victory, masking the underlying struggles. Concurrently, meticulous planning of lunchtime trips to the betting shop reflected the covert nature of his addiction, creating a façade of normalcy while navigating the complexities of his gambling habits.

Psychological Impact and Well-being:

The psychological impact of masking addiction reverberates through Danny's daily life. Financial constraints resulting from gambling losses manifested in tangible ways – walking to work due to an inability to afford bus fare and the inability to afford lunch. The profound impact extended to early mornings, with a 4 am wake-up time aligning with the moment his pay hit his bank account, signalling the resumption of gambling activities. At times, the grip of addiction led to the unfortunate outcome of gambling away an entire month's salary on payday. These stark realities, hidden beneath the veneer of success, illuminate the depths of the psychological struggle Danny faced.

Maintaining the Illusion:


The theme further explores the conscious efforts Danny made to maintain the illusion of success and financial stability. By projecting an image of prosperity to colleagues and friends, he shielded himself from judgment and scrutiny. This delicate balancing act involved not only concealing losses but also ensuring that occasional wins were celebrated publicly, reinforcing the narrative of financial well-being.

In conclusion, Danny's narrative exemplifies the intricate dance between shame, coping mechanisms, and the toll on well-being in the context of gambling addiction. Understanding the psychological complexities involved in masking addiction is crucial for developing interventions that address the underlying challenges individuals face in reconciling their public image with the private struggles of addiction.

Theme 3: Campaigning for Gambling Block

Danny's efforts to curb his gambling through a banking block:

Danny's journey to recovery from gambling addiction took a proactive turn as he engaged in campaigning efforts to establish a banking block. Recognising the need for external intervention to reinforce self-control, he embarked on a challenging mission. Writing letters to 1200 gambling websites in the UK, Danny appealed for a bandwidth block, a plea for restriction rather than personal responsibility.



Navigating through the unpredictable responses from these sites, he realised the magnitude of the personal struggle addicts face when trying to implement self-imposed barriers. Danny's objective was clear; he sought a blanket-level solution that would prevent him from accessing gambling sites, acknowledging that relying solely on personal barriers might not be effective for individuals grappling with addiction.

The journey was fraught with difficulty, with the need for someone to step in and implement a comprehensive solution at a systemic level. Danny's desperation to break free from the cycle of addiction prompted his quest for a universal block, a mechanism that would eradicate the possibility of relapse. His approach involved reaching out to problem gambling organisations that advocate for policy changes in the gambling industry.

Eventually, this led Danny to join forces with a bank called Monzo, and became a pivotal point in his journey towards recovery. Recognising that his funds were consistently flowing out for gambling activities, he initiated a dialogue with the bank through letters to the CEO. His plea for help resulted in the development of a feature that would block gambling transactions based on a unique code associated with such activities.

The breakthrough moment occurred when Monzo's developers responded to Danny's request and introduced the gambling block feature. With this new layer of protection, Danny found clarity and control over his finances. The implementation of the gambling block was akin to flipping a switch, providing him with the much-needed barrier against relapse.

Monzo Bank's response and recognition in the industry, including the award received in 2019:


Monzo's responsiveness to Danny's plea and their commitment to addressing gambling addiction at a systemic level showcased their dedication to customer well-being. The bank's initiative was not only impactful for Danny but also garnered industry-wide recognition. In 2019, Monzo received an award for their pioneering Gambling Block feature.

This recognition affirmed Monzo's position as a leader in implementing innovative solutions to tackle gambling harms. The award video serves as a testament to the bank's commitment to social responsibility and their contribution to the well-being of individuals like Danny, who found a lifeline in the form of the Gambling Block feature.

Theme 4: Health Impacts of Gambling

Examination of the Physical Toll, Such as Disrupted Eating and Sleeping Patterns:

The health impacts of gambling extend beyond the financial realm, infiltrating the physical well-being of individuals. One notable consequence is the disruption of normal eating and sleeping patterns. The stress and anxiety associated with



gambling can manifest in erratic eating habits, leading to irregular meals or even skipping them altogether. For example, there were times that Danny had to walk to work and wasn't able to make a lunch due to his levels of debt. The perpetual cycle of anticipation, wins, and losses creates an environment of heightened stress, impacting the body's natural rhythms.

Sleep patterns, a crucial element of overall health, often bear the brunt of gambling-related stress. Individuals grappling with the repercussions of gambling may find themselves experiencing insomnia or disrupted sleep, as the mental toll of financial uncertainty and the emotional rollercoaster associated with gambling can make it challenging to achieve restful sleep. The combination of erratic eating and disrupted sleep not only affects immediate well-being but also contributes to a long-term deterioration of physical health.

The Psychological Toll of Financial Uncertainty and the Wait for Wages to Fuel Further Gambling:

The psychological toll of gambling transcends mere monetary losses; it permeates the very fabric of an individual's mental health. One significant aspect is the burden of financial uncertainty. Constantly oscillating between the hope for a windfall and the dread of further losses, individuals become ensnared in a web of anxiety and stress. This chronic psychological strain can manifest in various ways, including heightened levels of cortisol and adrenaline, contributing to conditions like hypertension and cardiovascular issues.


Moreover, the wait for wages becomes a precarious period for individuals entrenched in gambling habits. The anticipation to receive income transforms into an opportunity to fuel further gambling, perpetuating a destructive cycle. The psychological toll of this waiting period can result in increased impulsivity, amplified anxiety, and a distorted perception of financial priorities. Individuals may prioritise gambling over essential needs, exacerbating the impact on their physical health and overall well-being. This was certainly the case with Danny where on payday he would run to the betting shop on his 45 minute lunch break and gamble his entire wages. Often returning to his desk thinking "I've gotten over 31 days to go with no money in the bank and I've lost in the 45 minute lunch break."

In conclusion, the health impacts of gambling extend far beyond the financial consequences, taking a considerable toll on both the physical and psychological aspects of individuals. Understanding these nuanced dimensions is essential for developing comprehensive strategies to address the multifaceted challenges posed by gambling harms.

Theme 5: Role of Life Events in Gambling Behaviour and Recovery

Danny's Mother's Death as a Catalyst for Reflection and Change in Gambling Habits:

Life events can serve as powerful catalysts for reflection and transformation in gambling behaviour. Danny's narrative underscores the profound impact of a significant life event – the death of his mother. As he recounts the moment when his



mother was in Christies Hospital in Manchester, the gravity of the situation prompted a moment of self-awareness.

The realisation struck Danny that he had neglected essential aspects of life – the missed holidays, unfulfilled dreams, and the absence of meaningful memories. His addiction had consumed him to the point where he recognised his trajectory toward a life devoid of meaningful experiences. The impending loss forced him to confront the stark reality that his compulsive gambling was not only robbing him of financial stability but also depriving him of the richness of life itself.

In the face of his mother's illness, Danny's perspective shifted. The urgency to make meaningful memories became apparent, and the triviality of his gambling habits became glaringly evident. This life-altering event acted as a wake-up call, prompting Danny to reconsider his priorities and re-evaluate the path he was on.

The Impact of Regret on Danny's Commitment to Recovery:

Regret, a powerful emotion, played a pivotal role in Danny's commitment to recovery. Reflecting on missed opportunities and the void left by his addiction, he recognised the weight of lost memories. The regret over not being fully present during pivotal life moments fuelled his determination to break free from the grip of gambling.


The realisation that his actions were not only jeopardising his financial stability but also eroding the fabric of his personal life intensified Danny's commitment to recovery. The impact of regret became a driving force, propelling him towards change. The desire to reclaim agency over his life, make meaningful memories, and forge a different path fuelled his journey toward recovery.

Danny's story illustrates the intricate interplay between life events, self-reflection, and the emotional resonance of regret in the process of overcoming gambling addiction. It emphasises the profound influence that pivotal moments can have on an individual's commitment to recovery, highlighting the importance of addressing the underlying emotional and psychological dimensions of gambling harms.

Conclusion: The Gambling Harms Journey - Insights from Danny's Narrative

In traversing the intricate journey of gambling harms through the lens of Danny's narrative, this academic exploration has unveiled key milestones that shed light on the complexities of addiction, recovery, and the broader societal impact of gambling. Danny's story serves as a microcosm, offering profound insights into the normalisation of gambling in childhood, the psychological toll of addiction, the quest for intervention, the physical and psychological health impacts, and the transformative role of life events. The normalisation of gambling in childhood, exemplified by Danny's experiences with the Grand National, unveils a subtle yet impactful aspect of early exposure. The transition from innocent childhood pastimes to potentially harmful behaviours, as illustrated by the link between gaming and gambling, underscores the importance of understanding these roots for effective preventive measures.

Shame and the masking of gambling addiction form another critical theme, exposing the intricate coping mechanisms individuals employ to conceal their struggles. The



psychological toll of projecting a façade of success and financial stability reveals the hidden depths of addiction and the impact on overall well-being.

Campaigning for a gambling block emerges as a proactive strategy in the journey towards recovery, highlighting the need for systemic interventions. Danny's collaboration with Monzo exemplifies how financial institutions can play a pivotal role in implementing measures to curb gambling harms, ultimately contributing to individual recovery and garnering industry-wide recognition. Examining the health impacts of gambling reveals a dual assault on physical and psychological well-being. Disrupted eating and sleeping patterns, coupled with the psychological toll of financial uncertainty and the anticipation of wages for further gambling, underscore the profound, multi-faceted consequences of compulsive gambling.

Finally, life events, particularly the death of Danny's mother, act as transformative catalysts. The reflection triggered by significant moments and the weight of regret propel individuals towards recovery, emphasizing the interconnectedness of personal narratives and pivotal events in the trajectory of gambling harms. As we conclude this exploration, the overarching theme that emerges is the need for a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach to address gambling harms. From early interventions and systemic measures to understanding the psychological intricacies of addiction and the transformative impact of life events, this journey exemplifies the necessity for tailored, empathetic interventions.

This paper contributes to the collective understanding of gambling harms by unraveling the intricate web of experiences and dynamics through Danny's narrative. By delving into the key themes, we lay the groundwork for more targeted interventions, informed policies, and a compassionate societal approach to mitigate the far-reaching impacts of gambling harms. As academia, policymakers, and communities unite to address this pervasive issue, the lessons learned from Danny's journey provide invaluable insights into the multifaceted nature of gambling harms, and inform strategies for prevention and pathways to recovery.

Anne-Marie Marshall

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Link to Monzo Gambling Block Award Video:
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Lived Experiences of Gambling in the UK By Dr Vashti Gbolagun Suwa

Abstract

A lot of attention is often given to the adverse effects of alcohol and tobacco, but very little attention is given to the silent and equally dreadful gambling habit. Statistics from the Gambling needs assessment report of May 2022 reveal that 1 in 15 people in Greater Manchester is affected by gambling (directly or indirectly), with about 18,100 adults experiencing gambling problems which is 1.5 times higher than the national average (Gambling needs assessment report, May 2022). It is estimated that about 2.1 billion pounds are spent on gambling each year in Manchester, which has seen an increase of about 62% in the last five years, with the police being called at least once a week over severe concerns of the risk of suicide with a direct link to gambling. (Gambling needs assessment report, May 2022).

The Gambling needs assessment report of May 2022 indicates that gambling is a subtle harm that creeps in unannounced and often affects 1 in 15 people in Greater Manchester. The report is composed of stories from people who shared their experiences and how gambling affected them and their families. These stories will serve as a catalyst for change while propelling policymakers to initiate interventions that are helpful and will protect the people from further harm. Although the report ranks the rates of gambling participation in Greater Manchester as lower than in most places in England, the few who do participate have the highest number of online participation, gamble more frequently and are involved in more gambling activities than the national average. This in itself is a significant problem that needs to be addressed. There are several headline findings from the report which reveal that; Of the about 2.8 million people living in Greater Manchester, 1 in 15 people have directly or indirectly experienced the negative consequence of gambling (Greater Manchester's Response to the Review of the Gambling Act 2021).

Lived experiences tend to reveal and bring into focus overlooked and salient human experiences in a manner that is relatable. This paper explores human lived experiences to give a better and broader appreciation of the complexities associated with gambling. This article is not just another retelling of the tale of gambling or its effects, but it is a creative way to convey the nuances of lived human experiences regarding gambling. Reading or listening to gamblers' struggles helps reveal their gambling motives which sometimes seem salient and harmless. From the stories I've heard through podcasts and interviews, it is evident that many factors are responsible for leading victims to gambling, such as friendly football or mainstream horse race betting. In addition, the paper highlights how the gamblers' relatives and friends are directly or indirectly affected by their gambling addiction through a retelling of Danny's lived experience in hopes that the struggles and triumphs of the victims of gambling will serve as a caution for others to learn from and avoid becoming victims themselves. This report presents lived experiences detailed in a creative and informative approach, with research accompanied by storytelling.

Gambling

Williams, Volberg et al. (2017) define gambling as placing monetary or material value on an event in which one is unsure of the outcome but hoping to gain extra income or possession. Most of the people involved in gambling do so in the belief that they will get some profit or entertainment out of this venture. In addition, Reith and Doobie (2011) have explained that the existence of gambling is rooted in particular environmental and cultural settings. They observe that social networks such as family, friends, work colleagues and some home situations set the tone and initiate the seeds of gambling in some people.

Such examples can be seen in Danny Cheetham's case, where he recalls (BBC Podcast, 2019) that he used to travel with his family to the Grand National, where they would go to the seaside to have fun and eventually play arcade games. Although not classified traditionally as gambling, Danny attributes the beginning of his initiation to gambling through such seemingly harmless family traditions.

*The wind threw Danny off
Into the dungeon turf
He smiled as he went down
Never thinking there could be a frown
Halfway under the dark
tunnel
The weight sifts through the funnel*

*His pastime became lost time
And daytime became night time
While others laughed heartily
He sighed heavily*

*The hole became deeper and darker
With hope seeming tighter and harder
Into the quagmire of misery and confusion
With the arms of consolation
Far from a loving compassion*

*Out of the deep and dark
Came a hope and a spark
To restore the lost glory and fame
Into a lasting legacy and name*

According to Atherton and Beynon (2018), gambling has varying effects on different individuals. For some, it is more catastrophic and drastic than others. The adverse effects of gambling can be felt on a personal level, like lack of finance as the gambler is always in debt, emotional instability and struggle to maintain relationships with friends and family members as they tend to hide their dark side.

On the societal level, some of the effects of gambling include issues of theft, low performance at work from the person addicted and the cost of treating an addicted person (Atherton and Benyon, 2018).

Lived experiences

Critchlow et al. (2020) have observed that about 430,000 people have gambling addiction or related problems in the UK. The problems associated with gambling result in a breakdown in relationships which sometimes lead to separation and divorce (Downs & Woolrych, 2010). Other offshoots of gambling are lack of trust among couples, siblings or even parents. Mistrust with finances and unhealthy habits drive the person away from his beloved people and lead to a life of pain and anger. In a BBC documentary 'Football, Gambling and Me', former football player Paul Merson recalls how he could not save enough money to buy his dream house and how his gambling addiction affected his family because he spent the money meant for decent and proper housing on gambling. In the same documentary featuring Merson, other examples of the downside of gambling reveal that gambling victims feel they are failures and struggle with mental health issues which sometimes lead to depression and suicidal thoughts.

In an allbetsareoff.co.uk/podcast (2021), the professional darts commentator Chris Murphy speaks of his struggle with gambling addiction and how he felt like a failure after his relapse and a suicide attempt. The podcast further reveals that gambling also causes strain in relationships between spouses and parents, and their children. Gambling addiction leads to low performance at work and, most of the time, financial struggles as the victim finds it hard to keep the money. In another similar podcast, Rick Benson, who is the founder of the Algamus recovery centres in the US, reveals how his gambling addiction cost him his job and marriage and brought a strain on his relationship with his father and how he struggled for years to get his life back together.


OF LIES AND BILES

*Johnny came running down the stairs
"I will get it" he said with a smile
That had become the norm at home*

*Johnny seemed a bit uptight lately
Julie thought to ask him
"I am all right," he said with a smile*

*He seemed to walk with a weight
Heavier than the bed at home
He waved to Charlie and Justin*

*As he made his way to work
Hush tones greeted him/eyes stared in his direction*



“Today is a good day,” he said with a smile

*Like a cancerous tissue in his lungs
The guilt and weight ate deep
Yet he could not come out
For he was walking on quicksand*

Most gambling victims keep gambling and use their debts as an excuse to gamble, saying they will pay them back once they win, but ultimately, it leads to deeper debt and plunges the victim into misery. This state leads to a vicious cycle of depression and mental health problems, which many struggle to escape. Some of these adverse effects affect the entire family, and even future generations as some debts are hardly ever paid or covered.


Inside Danny Cheetham’s past

Danny Cheetham was one of the many gambling addicts of Manchester. Gambling initially entered Danny’s life as a pastime, like the entertainment of a teenager that gradually ballooned and broke into an uncontrollable wave of despair. By the time he was in his early twenties, the gambling habit had become a routine he looked forward to like a bowl of ice cream on a sunny day. He was gradually getting sucked into this newfound way of life, so much that as early as 9 a.m., his day’s wage would have already been spent. Danny was heavily in debt to be able to get through the days and months. He thought the only way to reduce his indebtedness was to get more debt and make money fast to pay his already accruing debt. The most attractive option, gambling, became the steering wheel to get him out of his problems.

Misery and despair set in whenever payday arrived for Danny. While other colleagues were happy and looked forward to receiving their pay and sharing in the day’s excitement, Danny was left thinking hard and calculating how to get through the month till the next payday as he was already wallowing in debt. The truth about his indebtedness was known only to him, as such, he would join the wagon of pretence and grab lunch like other colleagues at work. He would go shopping for members of his family just to keep up with the air of pretence that his life was normal. Shopping was a disguise to cover up his fake lifestyle and particularly what he was dealing with at the time.

Danny revealed another force of attraction for gambling were the machines which tend to be addictive as they flash lights like rays of hope of hitting a jackpot. This false impression pulls the player who then becomes addicted to the cyclical illusion that the more you gamble, the more chances you get to solve your problems. Since betting is an insatiable thirst, if you become lucky the one time to cover a debt, you eventually incur more debt as you now think of the possibility of winning or becoming lucky again.

Apart from the incessant gambling, Danny’s life continues on a downward spiral when he had to add lies to his already dwindling life. He began to tell lies and makeup stories to cover addictive past. Danny would run to the door to get the mail first just so that no one saw the bills he owed. As he began to live a life of lies and deceit and tried so hard to suppress such a false life, the pressure led to him becoming short-fused.



As his bills kept increasing, he built more life and his new attitude impacted people around him negatively as he became increasingly hot-tempered.

Danny revealed in his interview with AnneMarie Marshall of Salford CVS that most of the pay loan companies contribute to this problem since they offer these loans with high interest, as in Danny's case which was more than his monthly salary. As a result of his experience, Danny has spoken to defend people who find themselves in situations similar to how he found himself in and with no knowledge or someone to help them. From his experience he wrote letters to these lending companies to explain his predicament, some wrote his debt off but others did not.

In addition to the letters that Danny had written, he spoke to parliament to get the extra interest on loans reduced (he had to pay 100%). In achieving his aim of a total turnaround, he joined in self-exclusion schemes and sent his photo to the gambling venues he usually visits so they would not serve him. He did all of these in order to get out of his quagmire.

The turnaround came for him when his mother was diagnosed with cancer. He realised that instead of wasting time gambling, he should spend more time with her as it dawned on him that he would not have her for long after the diagnosis. The painful realisation of the time he had lost with his mother and how he should cherish his life made Danny turn around for good and seek help.

FREE FROM

*Free from the shackles
That bind and keep down
Comes the air of relief
And the sweet smell of freedom*

*The guilt of pain and shame
Of letting down friends and family
The silent killer of dreams and desires
Concealed in the disguise of fun*

*From 1 dollar to 10 dollar
Daily the dollar- tree grew
Flood spiralled into £19,000
Pay lenders eager to feed the monster
Forming like a fast-growing foetus*

*Vashti Gbolagun Suwa
University of Salford
08th August 2022*

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Murder of Daniel Morgan

Podcast: UNTOLD: The Daniel Morgan Murder (untoldmurder.com)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p07gycrq>

<https://www.allbetsareoff.co.uk/podcast>

TV Series: BBC iPlayer - Everything I Know About Love Paul

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A phenomenological approach to Gambling: one facet of an intricate existence By Simona Merlusca and Dr John Yaw Obeng

Abstract

This paper offers a phenomenological approach to gambling addiction and focuses on the link between the brain and addiction, the lived experience of addiction (association with attachment, relationships, body experiences, depression, sleep, death, society etc.), and suggests a framework for interventions regarding gambling, with a particular focus on the Game On project.

Gambling as an addiction

Danny Cheetham, in the BBC podcast (2019) on gambling addiction explains:

“It’s that bad for some people that they’ve actually got rehab centres in the UK, where people go in as residents, as they are that bad at gambling that they are not eating, they’ve got no home ... you’re thinking: God, when someone’s there thinking ‘eat tonight, or put a bet on’, and someone says: ‘it’s such an easy addiction to stop’, you’re thinking: ‘if someone’s making that choice ‘eat tonight, or get that one win, it’s saying something’...”

He describes his own experiences that highlight a pattern of addiction as follows:


“I’d be staring at the screen, not speaking to anyone, just pressing that same button, over and over again ... you think: ‘I’m doing something because I need to get my money there... I can’t look away until I’ve won that jackpot, until I got money”.

This way of thinking and behaving is explained in neuroscience as a consequence of changes in the brain and neural pathways, changes that determine long term cognitive and behavioural responses.

Gambling addiction and brain structure

Neuroscience claims that addiction is a genetic neurotransmitter and a brain structure disorder (Kemp, 2018). There is growing research showing that the same brain structures that have been observed in drug addiction are also evidenced in gamblers (Bowden-Jones & Clark, 2011; Potenza, 2008), as well as other behavioural addictions (Grant et al., 2006). Hijacking the reward circuits that have developed to secure survival (Dackis & O’Brien, 2005), these so-called pleasure pathways that are strongly linked to dopamine, include the ventral tegmental area (VTA), which are directly and indirectly involved in the processes of the amygdala (Everitt & Wolf, 2002). Other areas of the brain responsible for motivation and drive (orbitofrontal cortex and the subcallosal cortex), memory and learning (the hippocampus and amygdala), and control (the cingulated gyrus and prefrontal cortex) are also affected (Volkow et al., 2003).

The striatal dopamine (D2) receptors were limited in these pathways in people with a history of drug abuse (Dackis & O’Brien, 2005), and this results in experiencing increased pleasure when taking drugs, alongside increased drug abuse and poor



impulse control. Together with dopamine, endogenous opioid pathways need to be considered, due to their involvement in pleasure, appetite, natural drive states, and sexual function. The limbic system also suffered abnormalities which correlate to reported craving, and this highlights that addicted people are more sensitive to drug cues (Dackis & O'Brien, 2005). As noted above, gambling presents similar abnormalities in the brain, together with other behavioural addictions, which all affect cerebral functioning. This can explain the reinforcing effect of pleasure (why addiction appears in the first place), why many negative health effects are seen, and why relapse occurs so often (Kemp, 2018).

One of the massive critiques of neuroscience is its reductionism (Fuchs, 2006) of addiction to brain functioning only, without bridging the gap between this and addiction as a phenomenon. Phenomenology allows for this to happen by focusing on concrete lived experience (Langdrige, 2007). The contribution of neuroscience to a phenomenological perspective are its findings, which can be easily observed in lived experience: 1) addiction processes bring a lot of pleasure, 2) this pleasure leads to certain people being strongly and time and again drawn to the processes of addiction, 3) by doing so, other life pleasures decrease, 4) there are likely to be threatening health consequences, 5) stopping addiction is painful and difficult, 6) and a relapse is very likely (Kemp, 2018). How some of these aspects are presented in lived experience is explored below.

Lived experiences of Gambling addiction


1. Addiction and attachment

Danny talked about his feelings of relief when he started sharing with other people that he was struggling with gambling.

I told my partner ... that was such a weight off my shoulders, I could sleep again at night. Didn't set my alarm at 4 o'clock in the morning on pay day. And all these little, tiny things start to fall into place and you're getting your life again.

His experience highlights that the need for addictive behaviours diminishes when the need of being cared for is satisfied (Hänninen & Koski-Jännes, 1999). This points to attachment theory and the role of feeling secure in terminating the addictive process used to seek the safety the addict had been deprived of. People with addictions experience different levels of unresolved emotional pain, shame, anger, fear, loneliness, and other feeling states which are most of the time a result of trauma (Firestone, 2017; Maté, 2012; Mate, 2017). There is a correlation between unmet relational needs and addictive behaviours of any type (Firestone, 2017; Flores, 2001, 2006; Maté, 2012). Humans and animals require nurturing from a caregiver in order to survive (Maté, 2012). Early trauma has consequences for how human beings respond to stress.

Addiction is conceptualised as a person's diminished ability to develop healthy attachments and as a replacement for meaningful interpersonal relationships, being seen as both being created in, and creating relationship dysfunction (Flores, 2001,



2006). In Danny's experience, his relationship with both his partner, as well as work colleagues involved deception and lying.

2. *Experiencing relationships in addiction: untruth versus truth*


Danny describes himself being untruthful in his intimate relationship, as well as beyond this. In addiction the other is chronically alienated, with addiction being a form of relating where the object of addiction becomes the other that is primary. Lying, as a mode of engagement acts to keep the human other out, a form of closure of the other (Kemp, 2018).

I used to make up lies.... Payday, I'd get home offering to buy a takeaway just to cover up that I had no other money for the rest of the month. ... The pressure on the people around as well... Even at work ... I always buy a dinner at work ... So, I don't take a packed lunch which would have saved me money, because I want to keep looking like I wasn't struggling.

The human community requires trust and honesty to function as community, and to be for the community; and the consequences of dishonesty can be devastating, due to reflecting the moral knowledge (good versus evil) as bound by the issue of truth and untruth (Kemp, 2018). Regarding when the lying starts, we can ask ourselves if gamblers are always being asked a question, such as: 'Are you gambling?'. However, is this what the person really hears? What if the meaning of this question for them was: 'Are you being good?' or 'Are you worthy of love?' (Kemp, 2018). And the addict is unable to trust themselves enough to tell the truth and to risk knowing what the reply will be. The relevant issue here is that of shame. The issue of shame in relation to lying has also been highlighted by psychoanalytic researchers (Deutsch, 1982; Wilkinson & Hough, 1996). Undoubtedly, issues of shame and self-worth are central to the use of lies, however, addiction is itself a form of untruth. Addiction is undertaken to alter the authentic feelings that one really feels, the addictive process is not 'real'. For instance, gambling excites, the addictive feelings cover the truth with artificial feelings (Kemp, 2018). Kemp (2018) describes addiction as a constant attempt to acquire and consume substances (drugs, food, alcohol), or experience processes (sex, shopping, gambling).

In phenomenology, Heidegger connects truth with the Greek word *aletheia*, and therefore he points at truth as a process which moves from coveredness, veiling to dis-closedness, revealing, unveiling (Kemp, 2018). Kemp (2018) continues to explain that addicts 'dwell in untruth' and defines the addiction as a form of emotional untruth. Addiction seeks to cover over the authentic truth of one's feelings and states, masking 'the real' of being, and hiding the world. It is a process of closing off the person to the truth of their being, both to themselves and to the world. The remedy is an effort, a willingness to release and reveal things, a gradual openness and acceptance of the be-ness. The courage to overcome shame and unveil the real feelings to his partner and other people, the be-ness, contributed greatly to Danny being able to deal with the challenges of gambling addiction and feel that a weight was lifted off his shoulders.

3. *Addiction as alienation*



Kemp (2018) noted that addiction is immersed in untruth. When they become an addict, the person in a sense embodies and lives out untruth. The body and their self can no longer be lived as authentically *mine*. This leads to an even greater alienation of addicts from those around them, leading one to being profoundly lonely, living in secrecy, as noted by Danny:

I've kind of always known I've had a gambling problem throughout my 20s, but I've kept it so secret.


Van den Berg (1972) states that loneliness is at the heart of all modern psychiatric illnesses, with loneliness being thrust, claimed, and insisted on individuals. They want to solve their problems on their own, thinking of themselves as fundamentally individual and rejecting help (van den Berg, 1972). Opening themselves to others and to self, opening themselves to relating and to love, walking out from behind the mask of untruth towards the truth of being and of authenticity of the feelings one feels is where the recovery from addiction happens.

4. Sleep, depression, death, and addiction

When Danny took the step to share truthfully with others, the stronghold of addiction started to weaken. He was able to sleep again at night. Sleep has played an important role in experiencing addiction and it does not play by the normal rhythms of life. Anyone who visits a casino will be met by a completely artificially lit space, and without a watch, the demarcation between day and night is non-existent. Sleep is a critical component of health, being an essential instrument of resynchronisation, of forgetting and finishing, not only an instrument of physiological regeneration (Fuchs, 2001). Involving trust in an uncertain future, sleep requires a 'letting go', closing the day for rest while opening the morning for work. The tendency of not sleeping at night creates even more separation and isolation from the rhythms of social life, leading to even more emptiness and suffering, the condition itself that it seeks to remedy. The body, a sleep deprived and tired body, cannot just be lived; it demands its rest and relief 'now' (Kemp, 2018).

Sleep disturbance, being perceived as a chronic avoidance of 'the real', is also a symptom of depression; and a continued sleeping problem can itself lead to depressive illness. Indeed, a high incidence of depression and anxiety is shown among addicts (Orford, 2001). Although addicted people complain of depression, and depression can be a consequence of gambling losses or an effect of drugs and alcohol, Fuchs (2001) names it 'melancholia', a phenomenon which is different from other forms of depression. He argues that it is directly related to the addicted person's experience of being in the world, and describes it as a desynchronisation, separation in the temporal relation between organism and environment, or between the individual and society.

A less talked about reality is the danger of physical death that the addiction experience can encounter. Heidegger (1996) placed death at the centre of his concept of authenticity. He described being in the world as being towards death (Heidegger, 1996), this being the only certainty in the future of human experience, among many possibilities that the future holds. Could it be that addicted people unconsciously gravitate towards edge experiences (gambling large amounts of money borrowed with



high interest rates, overdose, slow chronic substance abuse) that lead them to something that feels certain, in a world full of uncertainty and unknown?

5. *Gambling addiction and the society*

Paradoxically, people live in a society that encourages uncertainty even more by telling them that they need to get new things all the time. This leads to a continuous drive towards acquiring this uncertainty of the 'new' in order to be happy. Danny explains how advertising does this regarding gambling:

I really get frustrated. Every advertsad-break on TV. I won't watch live TV often just because if, advert after advert, you have a famous person telling you: 'come along, we'll give you this for free, and we'll do this', and it's constantly around you: football kits, buses you're putting bets on everything around you.

The uncertainty is also created by the confusion around what society teaches people that is good and accepted behaviour, and what is not. Danny describes his experience:

My biggest memory used to be: 'if I used to go in a usual shop and buy something that was expensive, I'd get a text from my bank saying: 'did you buy this?' ... if I went into a bookie's and spent all my wages one after the other using my card, I never got a text asking if this was normal... So, how does that work?!

Danny had to contact the banks numerous times and explain his situation before they started supporting him, such as putting blocks on gambling activities, delaying the time he could access his money to 48 hours, and requesting that he contacted them directly to lift the blocks. It seems like society wants people to be and remain addicted, it creates addicts (Kemp, 2018; Mate, 2017; Schaef, 1990). To what extent is then the individual solely responsible for becoming an addict? And if one becomes aware of how society appears to be structured to keep people addicted, to what extent can people use their own willpower to take responsibility for their own choices and lives? These are questions that could be explored further, however, for the purpose of this paper, it is suggested that addiction, including gambling addiction, is a complex process which requires multi-faceted solutions.

Conclusion

Many people don't understand that gambling is a proper addiction ... there's such a bigger picture than we realise' (Danny, 2019).

As seen in the discussion so far, addiction is not a simple disease or illness situated in individuals, a property of the drugs or process used, or an imperative of modern society; it is rather a way of being in the world. Addiction is as much a personal condition as it is a social one, with the features of addiction being contemporary aspects of our current society. The modern individual seeks desperately to know their place in a world without certainty, similar to addicts who are seeking to fix a certainty in the ambiguous and uncertain modern existence (Kemp, 2018).

Although it is not the purpose of this paper to look into treatment modalities for addiction, it is suggested that Danny's interview highlights that any form of intervention, including online gaming apps such as those designed by the Game On project, need to take into consideration aspects of both personal and societal aspects of the experience of being in the world.

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Gambling Prevention Apps in the UK

By Keren Poliah

Abstract

We live in a world in which our demons walk by our side. In truth, it is hard for a recovering alcoholic to avoid alcohol when it is served everywhere. It is hard for a tobacco addict to walk down the streets when cigarette smoke lingers in the air. It is equally hard for gamblers not to gamble when the thought is constantly in their mind and the most innocent scratch card can pull them back to the depths of gambling. “When it comes to gambling, you don’t have the next day hangover but only that flash that your life will be better if you hit the jackpot,” says Danny Cheetham in the BBC podcast (2019) on gambling addiction.

To survive without gambling, Danny uses every means possible to remain strong. Self-control, he says, is the discipline and practice that helps him keep his head out of the water by avoiding live TV and shows like the Eurovision which normalise betting. When the world constantly reminds him of gambling, Danny’s self-control needs a slight push—which he receives through his bank.

A few banks have currently set up a gambling block, preventing their clients from gambling by limiting the amount of cash they can withdraw per day. The bank also guides their clients to their savings app and regularly messages to check the purchases made at stores. If the client wants to turn off the bank’s gambling prevention, he/she has to wait for forty-eight hours before being able to physically get in touch with the bank. Eventually, forty-eight hours provide a good window for the gambler to think and manage temptations.

Such temptations thrive through sports betting; casino games; bingo; buying scratch cards, loot boxes or trading skins. These happen in licensed premises, among friends or online.

Gambling addiction has not been given the attention that drug addiction has. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) argues that “gambling is not a hidden harm, but an overlooked harm” (Greater Manchester’s Response to the Review of the Gambling Act 2021, p.3). In fact, gambling is so normalised that 18,100 adults experienced a gambling problem in Greater Manchester in 2020. The Greater Manchester Police responded to at least one incident per week involving suicidal risks directly associated to gambling.

Gambling addiction, particularly a gambling disorder, causes harm to mental health, relationships, finance, and causes poor performance at school or work. These harms seep into the life of the gamblers’ family and friends, making them the “affected others,” sometimes leaving an intergenerational legacy. The Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership (GMHSC) engages people to better understand how to take charge of their health and wellbeing, thus people with gambling problems definitely require as much help and access to services. However, we need more research on gambling harms and prevention in the UK to breach this gap between what help gamblers need to recover from addiction, and how we can provide what they need. This report presents research on apps preventing gambling and is one step towards finding solutions through technology.

Gambling is a problem

In line with the “Strategic Needs Assessment on gambling harms in Greater Manchester” (2022) by the GMCA, this report promotes “the use of terms that encourages support for [gamblers], and not just their ‘condition,’ whilst also addressing the negative impact of stigma” (Strategic Needs Assessment 2022, p.5). The GMCA stresses on how the term “problem gambler” should be avoided as it implies that individuals are solely responsible for their gambling and underplays the harm of gambling products. “People with lived experience tell us that they prefer terms such as ‘a person with a gambling disorder/addiction,’ ‘experiencing gambling harms,’ ‘experiencing a gambling problem’ or ‘in recovery/a recovering gambling addict’” (Strategic Needs Assessment 2022, p.5).

There are numerous tools available to protect individuals and prevent them from creating a pathological gambling behaviour. The GMCA proposes that the individual does the following:

- limit your mailing preferences and opt out from promotional messages and inducements to gamble
- block advertising on social media
- enter a gambling block arrangement with your bank
- self-exclude from online gambling with GamStop and GamBan
- self-exclude from arcade and adult gaming centres by speaking to the staff in your local centre and then joining the Bacta self-exclusion scheme
- self-exclude from betting shops and bookmakers through the multi-operator self-exclusion scheme (call 0800 294 2060)
- self-exclude from bingo venues by completing an online form for each premise you wish to exclude from
- self-exclude from casinos and join SENSE

(GMCA 2022)

As mentioned earlier, the gambler is not the one to be blamed when society normalises and promotes gambling. While the individual can fight his own gambling problems, it is important for the government to take action at a local and regional level. In the “Greater Manchester’s Response to the Review of the Gambling Act” (2021), the GMCA proposes that the state adopts a public health approach to treat gambling. In fact, I have come across a plan for medical services which I find can be tweaked and implemented for gambling harms.

In the final draft plan of “Taking charge of our Health and Social Care in Greater Manchester” (2015), the GMHSC lists health and care services they wish to prioritise for the future. While those priorities are to be implemented particularly for hospital services and the ageing population, they can be quite relevant to those recovering from addiction:

- the right to get appointments (with a therapist) promptly
- tell their story once and receive co-ordinated multidisciplinary care

- have their families and carers involved
- have things explained, their questions answered and given choices about their care (such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy)
- have emotional and practical support recognised as important as medical treatment
- not to be blamed when costs and competing priorities interfere with their ability to look after their health
- be treated with dignity and respect

(GM Strategic Plan Final 2015, p54)

These echo the sentiment that people with lived experiences consider gambling as a problem, a disorder, and see themselves as recovering from it. They have the right to be treated for their addiction, to receive medical care and attention as much as people who suffer from drug addiction. Families and carers should also be involved particularly in cases where Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is provided to the gamblers. One app from Australia, called Symptoms (more about it below), might prove to be more efficient when families and carers of the gambler support the latter during his/her recovery.

The GMCA further stresses on how it is necessary to “establish a mandatory levy to fund research, prevention and treatment of gambling related harms, free from influence of commercial operators” (Greater Manchester’s Response to the Review of the Gambling Act 2021, p.2). These lead towards further actions in banning advertising and promotion of gambling, redressing licensing powers to include local residents’ input into licensing decisions, and the creation of a gambling data hub where information on gambling prevention and harms are available to the population.

While advertisements can be blocked on Twitter and Facebook, this does not exclude children’s exposure to gambling content. It is not the individual’s responsibility to avoid harmful advertising but of legislators to remove promotion of harmful products. “The UK is one of the only countries that permit children of any age to play on the lowest level of gambling machines (category D) [...] this does serve to normalise gambling behaviours from an early age” (Greater Manchester’s Response to the Review of the Gambling Act 2021, p.27). Stake limits have been introduced on Fixed Odds Betting Terminal (FOBT) and the GMCA has noticed a decrease in the number of people accessing treatment for gambling problems related to FOBT. However, they have noticed that the primary gambling activity has shifted online as more people are now accessing treatment for being addicted to online sports betting and gaming.

Since the advancement of technology and gaming has created new pits for gamblers, it is imperative that technology redeems itself and provides a stepping stone for the gamblers to resolve their problems. In the table below, I have gathered research on apps from websites, academic journals and organisations to provide the gambler with support and a boost to his/her self-control against gambling.


Figure1. Gambling prevention apps

APPS	DESCRIPTION
<p><i>Quit Pokies and Gambling Terminator</i></p> <p>Reference: Humphry, J., & Albarran Torres, C. 2015, "A Tap on the Shoulder: The Disciplinary Techniques and Logics of Anti-Pokie Apps", <i>M/C Journal</i>, vol. 18, no. 2.</p>	<p>Location: Australia</p> <p>Quit Pokies is a mobile app using online and mobile platforms with geo-location to support gamblers by interrupting gaming sessions through a trigger. It is similar to the mobile app launched by the NSW government in late 2012 (Gambling Terminator). Classified as a "tap on the shoulder," the app emits a sound alert when the gambler enters a gambling venue. It also sends information to the gambler on his/her previous losses at that venue to discourage gambling. The app provides access to live phone and online counselling 24/7.</p>
<p><i>Symptoms</i></p> <p>Reference: Diaz-Sanahuja, L., et al. 2022, "Client's Experiences Using a Location-Based Technology ICT System During Gambling Treatments' Crucial Components: A Qualitative Study", <i>International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health</i>, vol. 19, no. 7.</p>	<p>Location: Australia</p> <p>A smartphone app customised to the patient's needs and complementing CBT. The therapist shares the treatment plan, and personalised messages are delivered when the patient approaches a place marked as a territory inducing gambling behaviour. Symptoms app is always activated and functioning upon configuration, and monitors the patient's movements through a location-based ICT system. The therapist can check the patient's progress and data on where the latter has been. This app has previously been used in the treatment of agoraphobia.</p>
<p><i>Gamban</i></p> <p>Access: Block Gambling Websites & Apps - Gamban</p>	<p>Location: UK</p> <p>The app blocks access to gambling websites and apps worldwide. It is one step to self-exclusion, and cannot be uninstalled until after the subscription</p>

	has expired. The app supports the user even if the latter goes abroad. However, hundreds of new gambling websites are launched daily, which sometimes makes them slip through. GamBan requests people to email them in case a site has not yet been banned by them. The app also does not ban gambling advertisements.
<p><i>GAMSTOP</i></p> <p>Access: GAMSTOP - Gambling Self-Exclusion Scheme</p>	<p>Location: UK</p> <p>It is a free online self-exclusion app preventing users from accessing gambling websites and apps licensed in the UK. It excludes users for a period of their choice (6 months, 1 year or 5 years) which cannot be cancelled until the period has ended.</p>
<p><i>RecoverMe</i></p> <p>Access: Mobile App To Manage A Gambling Addiction RecoverMe (recovermeapp.co.uk)</p>	<p>Location: UK</p> <p>An app providing CBT sessions; mindfulness techniques; an electronic diary; strategies and advice to manage gambling urges; a link to other users of the app or supportive organisations.</p>

The Quit Pokies and Gambling Terminator apps prevent gambling by reminding the patients of their past mistakes. They “prevent harm by anticipating the harm” (Humphry 2015) and framing the act of self-care as gamblers need to eliminate their chances of ending up at gambling venues and engaging in dangerous gambling behaviours. The app also charts the gambler’s recovery journey through a diary, writing list, strategies for change and management tips (finance). It becomes an electronic diary, a nudge away from gambling venues and encourages gamblers to engage in practices to get their life back. However, the app increases public stigmatisation of problem gamblers as it draws people’s attention to the users when the sound alarm is triggered. This can be an embarrassing and humiliating situation (Humphry 2015). It is also necessary for gamblers to be very sincere during the app’s configuration and input all the gambling venues they visit.

The Symptoms app has been classified as an app supporting a patient's self-control and conscious decision for abstinence. It gives the patient the feeling of being constantly observed, thus preventing the latter from going to gambling-related venues.



During the pilot study, one patient has called it an app that “protects me from gambling as my environment (i.e. my friends or family) does” (Diaz-Sanahuja 2022). If the patient cannot escape from the situation promoting gambling urges, the app continuously messages “you are making a mistake,” thus helping the patient achieve his/her goal of abstinence.

However, installation and configuration of the app depends largely on the patients who can lie and deceive themselves by not adding all the gambling sites and venues they are likely to visit. Diaz-Sanahuja argues that a possible improvement would be for the data added on the app to be contrasted with the information the therapist has on the patient. If the patient’s family or relative could be involved and provide information, it would be equally helpful. The information the app sends to the therapist could be improved as well. Instead of only sending an alert for when the patient is at the venue, it would be essentially helpful for the therapist to know how long the patient remained in that place. The messages sent to the patient could then be personalised, less repetitive, and more complex by using multimedia resources. They could refer to the negative consequences previously mentioned during therapy, such as “think of your partner/children” or “you have lost money and have financial difficulties right now due to gambling.” A patient even said that if the therapist or someone behind the curtains could call the patient in that moment, “it would be even better of course” (Diaz-Sanahuja 2022).

From its website, RecoverMe is an accessible, flexible, discreet app providing evidence-based therapy and emergency support. They provide “six easy to follow Cognitive Behavioural Therapy sessions to empower” (RecoverMe 2020) gamblers. Their mindfulness sessions encourage gamblers to remain focused on the present. One user stated that the app would be helpful even to someone “crossing that invisible line into addiction” (RecoverMe 2020). The other two UK-based apps, Gamban and GAMSTOP, focus on self-excluding gamblers from online platforms—as online gambling becomes an issue noted by the GMCA.

Conclusion

In fact, these apps might work better when combined to be used together. The gambler who has an online gambling addiction might find it useful to install and configure more than one app so he/she can self-exclude, as well as follow CBT, and keep an electronic diary to enter records of his/her progress.

Despite their limitations, these studies offer a starting point. Research paths on gambling need to be opened so that promising possibilities can be offered to recovering gamblers. The effectiveness of technological interventions remains to be tested. These apps, although not perfect on their own to prevent gambling, can provide support, boost self-control and highlight the importance of self-care to recovering gamblers. In a country where gambling is thriving on capitalism and remains sanctioned by the state, these apps can effectively work with therapy and other gambling prevention means. More than one app can also be installed for gamblers who have problems with venues and online platforms.

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27th June 2022

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Exacerbation of Mental Health concerns in young people by Problem Gambling


By Andrea Stein

Abstract

Problem gambling (PG) is gambling behaviour which is disruptive or damaging to an individual and or people around them, such as family members and friends. It can be problematic as it can interfere with daily functioning such as reducing quality of life by exacerbating problems and concerns. These can be social-behavioural, as they may lead to addictions such as drug and alcohol or addictive like behaviours such as obsessive and compulsive behaviours linked to gaming and gambling; mood and personality changes, low self-esteem, stress, depression and even suicide (Mental Health Foundation, 2021). PG can additionally lead to the development of financial problems, physical illness, relationship difficulties, criminal activity and possibly unemployment or difficulty at work (depending on the age of the adolescent/young adult) (NHS Inform, 2022; Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2021).

The increase in availability of gambling has led to an international recognition of problem gambling as a major concern for public health (Shaffer & Korn, 2002) due to this often incapacitating and debilitating action which can negatively influence behavioural, mental, and physical concerns. Notable research (Yücel et al., 2015) found that neither mental health symptoms such as depressive or anxiety symptoms, nor parental gambling, predicted risky gambling behaviours in late adolescents. Yet problems with Depression and Anxiety are more likely to occur because of PG (Yücel et al., 2015). This is important as this presents the argument that negative emotional states and behaviours can be made worse or exacerbated by PG, which can be distressing or empowering. It can be empowering as if this is the case in accordance to classify mental disorders with standardised criteria to facilitate current, consistent, functional, practical and reference tools for clinicians, practitioners, researchers, and students (APA, 2013).

The manual which allows this is called the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders (DSM) used by the American Psychiatric Association (APA). Its first edition started in 1952. This manual is not without controversy and therefore it is regularly updated based on peer and professional expert consensus. The latest addition, the 5th addition was in 2013 (APA, 2013). This literature can further be used to facilitate education and understanding to relevant members of the public recommended in a consultation with a trained psychological health practitioner. This literature is beneficial because these classifications can lead to interventions which could theoretically prevent these ills from occurring or reduce their severity. Conversely the UK GOV (2021) found that mixed results on whether gambling led to mental health concerns. The diagnosable disorder, Gambling Disorder involves repeated, problem gambling behaviour which affects daily functioning and can lead to disruptions to self and others (DSM-V). The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders (DSM) is used by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) This paper explores the impact PG can have to exacerbate two most common mental health issues; Anxiety and Depression; and showcases and refers the reader to important contact information for intervention of these behaviours. It is vital that charities such as The Young Gamers and Gamblers



Education Trust (YGAM) and other social, mental, wellbeing and welfare groups implement interventions such as workshops and gambling apps to reduce gambling behaviours to minimise disruptive approaches increasing awareness of gambling harms.

Adolescence

Adolescence consists of early adolescence (age 10-13), middle adolescence (14-17) and late adolescence (18-21). The Behavioral Health System Baltimore (2022) states that half of all lifetime cases of mental health conditions begin by age 14. 1 in 5 young people aged 13-18 years old live with a mental health condition.

Gambling Predictors

Gambling predictors include adolescents who smoke cigarettes, present external behavioural 'problems', have poor high school performance and/or a history of childhood sexual abuse (Hayatbakhsh et al., 2013). Men tend to be more vulnerable at developing a gambling problem than woman, as statically more men gamble than woman (NHS Inform, 2022; Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2021)

Prevalence

The Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS): Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, England, 2014 (Commons Library Research Briefing, 2021 found that over 22.5 million people in England gambled (54% of the adult population or, 40% when you exclude the National Lottery (UK Gov, 2021). For young people who reported participating in gambling in the last week of the survey, it was reduced from 23% in 2011 to 11% in 2019.

Mental Health

Mental Health embodies emotional resilience to enjoy life and survive pain, disappointment, and sadness. It includes beliefs, dignity and worth in self and others (Universities UK (UUK), 2020). Good mental health enables individuals to realise their potential and cope with typical daily stresses, work productively and contribute to their communities (WHO, 2013). Mental health and wellbeing are focused on prevention. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (HSE, 2018) reports that one in four people in the UK will have a mental health problem during their lives. Mental Health problems are common, and most are mild and can be successfully treated by psychotherapy and or psychiatric drugs such as antidepressants or counselling. The HSE focuses on work-related stress and which when prolonged can result in physical and psychological damage, which includes anxiety and depression and physical illness (Ganster & Rosen, 2013: 1087). Mental health is fundamental to the World Health Organisation's (WHO) definition of health denoting that there is "no health without mental health" (WHO, 2013, p 6). Good mental health enables individuals to realise their potential and cope with typical daily stresses, work productively and contribute to their communities (WHO, 2013). Mental health and wellbeing are focused on prevention (Storrie et al., 2010).

Gambling Disorder

Knowledge is power and thus it is important to be aware of The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health (DSM-V)'s definition of Gambling Disorder so that one can detect it in oneself or in others. Recognition can assist communication and can lead to co-constructed formal and informal treatment strategies. Below are criteria used in diagnosing PG. This information should be used for educational purposes only and if you feel that you or anyone needs assistance please go to your General Practitioner for advice.

DSM-5 criteria for PG

A. Persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behaviour leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as indicated by the individual exhibiting four (or more) of the following in a 12-month period:

- a) Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement.
- b) Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling.
- c) Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling.
- d) Is often preoccupied with gambling (e.g., having persistent thoughts of reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble).
- e) Often gambles when feeling distressed (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed).
- f) After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even ("chasing" one's losses)
- g) Lies to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling.
- h) Has jeopardised or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling.
- i) Relies on others to provide money to relieve desperate financial situations caused by gambling.

B. The gambling behaviour is not better explained by a manic episode.

Specify if:

Episodic: Meeting diagnostic criteria at more than one time point, with symptoms subsiding between periods of gambling disorder for at least several months.

Persistent: Experiencing continuous symptoms, to meet diagnostic criteria for multiple years.

Specify if:

In early remission: After full criteria for gambling disorder were previously met, none of the criteria for gambling disorder have been met for at least 3 months but for less

than 12 months. In sustained remission: After full criteria for gambling disorder were previously met, none of the criteria for gambling disorder have been met during a period of 12 months or longer.

Specify current severity:

- Mild: 4–5 criteria met.
- Moderate: 6–7 criteria met.
- Severe: 8–9 criteria met.

Common mental health concerns: Depression and Anxiety

Anxiety & Anxiety disorders

'Psychological stress is an unfavourable person-environment relationship' (Lazarus, 1993:8). The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (2019) defines stress as the adverse reaction an individual experiences in response to excessive pressures (work) and other demands. Occupational stress on the other hand is the adverse reaction that an employee experiences in response to excessive pressures at work rather than other daily stressors (HSE, 2019). An individual can experience stress, when they are unable to sufficiently cope with pressures and other issues.

Depression and Depressive disorders

The UK GOV (2021) found that mixed results of whether gambling led to mental health concerns The UK GOV (2021) examined Mental Health in 48 studies and found that people with gambling disorder have an increased risk of dying (cause not specified) compared to non-gamblers and this risk was greatest in gamblers from 20-49 years of age. A close examination of the literature presents that vulnerable groups, such those from ethnic minorities and young people may experience increased symptoms and harms.

Impact of COVID-19 on gambling

There are some emerging findings on the initial impact of COVID-19 on gambling. The UK Gov (2021) conducted a Rapid Review on the impact of COVID-19 Restrictions on gambling. Their findings indicate that, one UK study reported an overall reduction in gambling after the first lockdown and either no change or a reduction in frequency of gambling. There was additionally a small increase in online gambling where 1.5% to 2.3%. 4% of participants reported increased gambling in lockdown and 20% of PG reported gambling more (no figure was provided).

Increase in mental health concerns due to COVID-19.

One study (Gov, 2021) reported no change in psychological distress, high risk alcohol consumption or smoking status. What was interesting was there was an increase in increased psychological distress and increased alcohol consumption in ethnic minority gamblers (10-20%). There was additionally an increase in psychological distress in more vulnerable groups such as young problem gamblers aged 18-34 from 20-31%. Furthermore, the proportion of people affected by someone else's gambling increased from 6-7% (UK GOV, 2021).

Problem gambling harms and exacerbation of common mental health concerns

Lee et al. (2011) determined that early adolescence depressive symptoms seem to be connected to late adolescence problem gambling when compared to early adolescence impulsivity. This data was collected from a study investigating the combined effects of depressive symptoms and impulsivity in early adolescence on late adolescence gambling behaviours in a longitudinal group of students from Baltimore, Maryland (USA). The sample consisted of early adolescents from a study using a combination of psychological assessments. These were the South Oaks Gambling Screen-Revised for Adolescents (SOGS-RA) (Winters, et al., 1993) and the Baltimore How I feel- Adolescent version (Ialongo, & Kellam, 2002) along with Teacher observation of Classroom Adaptation – Revised (TOCA-R)(Werthamer-Larsson, 1989). They discovered that adolescent PG were more likely to become adult PG and be prone to increased chance of at-risk substance abuse and development of psychiatric disorders Lee et al., 2011; Messerlian et al, 2007.

Gambling Harms


According to UK Gov (2021) these harms can be divided into:

- Financial
- Relationship disruption, conflict or breakdown
- Mental and physical health
- Cultural
- Employment and education (referred to as reduced performance at work or study)
- Criminal Activity

Interventions reducing PG harms:

YGAM's social purpose is to inform, educate and safeguard young people against gaming and gambling harms. Their vision and strategy are guided by and contribute to the Gambling Commission's National Strategy to Reduce Gambling Related Harms (YGAM, 2022). They offer the following free workshops and programmes:

- Young People's Gambling Harm Prevention Programme's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training and resources for teachers and youth workers
- Mindful Resilience training for healthcare professionals in Primary Care Networks in London. This is a psychologist designed and academics, health professionals and individuals with first-hand lived experiences informed programme.
- YGAM for parents
- YGAM for students
- Safer Gambling Training, directed at customer-facing employees in the gambling industry designed to strengthen player protection standards and effectively safeguard consumers from harms.
- Preventing Gambling Harms in Diverse Communities aimed at safeguarding young people from ethnic minority populations. It is designed to assist an understanding of socio-cultural and religious contexts on shame and stigma related to gambling harms. This is being piloted in London and the Home Counties.



The University of Salford in conjunction with YGAM developed a pilot workshop entitled: Disruption deconstructed - design, development and decision-making empowerment of the 'disruptive workshop' approach in the prevention of gambling harms.

This programme was run by the University of Salford, in July 2022. Please read the relevant papers for a full detailed account of this workshop.


Conclusion

A close examination of the literature presents that vulnerable groups, such those from ethnic minorities and young people may experience increased symptoms and harms. This means that it is vital to be able to recognise and gambling harms and to refer young people as they are especially vulnerable to the ill harms of gambling abuse such as anxiety, depression, and suicide. If one thinks that they may show signs and symptoms of PG, it is vital that you discuss this with your health care professional. Gambling harms can affect the body (behaviours that either lead to excessive or insufficient dietary and sleep behaviours, associated with symptoms of common mental health issues, such as Depression, Anxiety and associated symptoms. Mental Health ill-health brought on by gambling can lead to stress and organisational stress in the workplace, which may lead to work, job, and family disruptions. Mental and Healthcare professionals such as those at YGAM offer services to assist young people to overcome gambling harms. YGAM offers free services to assist teachers, youth workers, psychologists, health professionals, care-workers, parents, student's employees in the gambling sector and communities to inform, educate and safeguard young people against gaming and gambling harms. The University of Salford, along with YGAM, and Salford Community and Voluntary (Salford CVS) Manchester arranged a pilot intervention workshop to prevent gambling harms and more information is provided in the relevant papers. It is hoped that this report will offer some guidance and direction to individuals in need of assistance. Please contact your GP or YGAM on <https://www.ygam.org/> for further information.

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Attending to an awareness of body-mind connection to improve well-being By Lucie Sykes

Abstract

When playing a video game, you engage in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose. However, game players who play video games over the Internet are more likely to develop an addiction. While gamers play video games at home (online or offline), they limit their movements and their mental and physical health.

This paper offers an embodied approach to gambling addiction through the lens of mindful movement-body-mind connection and how motion capture technologies offer a different outlook on gambling addiction, with a particular focus on the Game On project.

The taster workshop I delivered, part of the Game On event, offers a creative approach to the use of motion capture technologies, which are used in the film and video game industry to create immersive gaming experiences. Over the last few years, there has been research on using these technologies to improve health and well-being. The participants experienced mindful movement exercises to explore their body-mind connection through the Range of Coupling (ROC) exercises. These ROC exercises were developed over three phases of my PhD (practice as research) exploring the embodied improvisatory approaches—*sculptural qualities* of actual and virtual bodies—within motion capture environments. These exercises include attending to their breathing, tensions-relaxations, and shapes their bodies are making in space, with T-pose and stillness. These exercises promote body-mind connection and physical activity at the same time. Therefore, I saw an opportunity to share my initial research findings with wider audiences and to offer another perspective on how to improve addicted gamers' well-being.

Introduction

Computer and video games (online and offline) have developed over the last ten years due to technological and innovative advancements. Video games are becoming increasingly complex in their strategic storyline. For example, detailed with better graphics to achieve more photorealistic avatars with a variety of body features such as choices on hairstyle, colour, body shape, and sex; selection of clothing, weapons, or sometimes magical/special powers. Thus, video games offer attractive, intense, and profound content through technology and new media while contributing to a game design with a 'hook' - to make players more conscious of their experience and to enable deeper immersive engagement for players 'replayability'. These attributes contribute to the growing global audience of players, whose desire is sometimes immersed within these compelling environments and storytelling. And some games, mainly role-playing games, can become a substitute for 'real life' where players' living experience is embodied in an imaginary world. These realistic games offer escapism, an alternative universe, from reality like family disagreements and work-related or personal problems like drugs or alcohol (Kuss et al., 2012). Although Pete Etchells, lecturer in biological psychology at Bath Spa University suggests that "there's a lot of uncertainty around whether it's best to frame it as

something akin to a substance abuse disorder, or whether it's best looked at in terms of something like an impulse control behaviour" (Reynolds, 2018).


The World Health Organisation (WHO) classified gaming "disorder as a condition" (Reynolds, 2018). In response to this claim, the Entertainment Software Association issued a statement where they suggest that the WHO report is not final and highlight the importance of ongoing discussions as well as understanding of the proposed "game disorder as it may lead to misdiagnosis of real mental health conditions" (2018). The 11th edition version 2 of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) published in 2022, classify gaming addictive disorder if it manifests by three classifications over an extended period of time (e.g., 12 months):

1. impaired control over gaming (e.g., onset, frequency, intensity, duration, termination, context);
2. increasing priority given to gaming to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other life interests and daily activities; and
3. continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences ((WHO), 2022, p. 6C50).

In other words, players, who find it difficult to control the intensity and frequency they are playing, and increase their gaming activity over a longer period will develop an intention to prioritise the video game and will likely lose interest in daily activities. For example, Danny Cheetham began placing bets in his early 20s. He discusses his journey when he would set up an alarm for 4 a.m. to place his morning bet. He started to plan his route to work via bookies to play on commuters before work. The increased intention to bet grew and he found himself on slot machines, online gaming, and football bets. However, the financial losses encouraged him to try his luck repeatedly. Over the years, he believes he has lost more than £50,000 (Whitworth & Beazley, 2018). With the tendency to escape his debt, he continued to bet in hopes that he would be able to pay it back. He started to rely on his overtime at work and loan companies and sank into depression. As the result of ongoing stress, he had to move out of his rented accommodation back to his father's place. The realisation of his gambling addiction happened when his mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer and passed away in 2015. He says, "My lowest memory will always be watching a match online through a live feed whilst sat with my mum as she lay in hospital" and "I thought, what am I doing? I should be talking to my mum" (Blake, 2020). The grieving experience made him aware of his actions and addiction. He tried to find a way to deal with it and felt hopeless until he signed up to a gambling block with his bank, Monzo, which enabled him to activate a block. The activated block spots any transaction made to a bookmaker, online or offline, and it instantly stops the transaction with a 48-hour cooling-off period as well as limit on daily cash withdrawals. Since Danny started to use the block application, he feels less depressed and helpless. He has now a positive outlook on his life and feels he has a future.

Signs and Symptoms of video game addiction

Computer and video game addiction is only one area of the spectrum of addictions. Video game addiction symptoms are often ignored or misinterpreted for something else as other underlying conditions may manifest with a similar sign. However, no



matter how these symptoms are expressed in one's body-mind, the important fact remains the same: video game addiction can negatively impact a player's life and health. Video game addiction renders the body-mind unrecognisable. The symptoms appear physically, behaviourally, and psychologically.


Firstly, physical symptoms are associated with sleep deprivation where body and mind are overstimulated by the plot of the game and the actions you need to complete. The gamer may have headaches and develop a 'digital eye strain' from hours of looking at the blue screen (PC or mobile). There may also be muscle strain from sitting and slouching in the game chair or bed resulting in neck and back pain and additionally wrist and palm strain from using a controller and console. Moreover, as the body stays mainly in rest while playing a video game, the player's metabolism slows down while consuming unhealthy food and drinks, thus resulting in weight gain (Doan et al., 2017).

Secondly, behavioural symptoms are connected to poor performance at work or school as the gaming addiction progresses. Players tend to neglect responsibilities, and in extreme cases, forget to attend work or school altogether. Furthermore, addicts neglect hobbies, daily activities and reduce spending time with family and friends. They isolate themselves from real-life relationships to invest in creating online ones. And thirdly, psychological symptoms lead to mistaking the gaming world for reality with addicts making dangerous and careless decisions to elicit harmful choices and financial losses, thereby developing fantasising associations with the gaming world and feeling anxious or exhilarated by the thought of playing again.

The physical and mental withdrawal symptoms lead to long-term depression with some severe signs of paranoia, nausea, and feeling empty or sad with no purpose in life. These same withdrawal symptoms are associated with drug and alcohol addiction.

Treatment and support

The key component for addiction recovery is to look at the situation objectively, i.e. looking at the facts from a perspective which is not your own. The objective consideration enables the player to assess the situation and evaluate their current lifestyle. Each gamer has different triggers, living situations, and ways of dealing with their addiction. Thus, there is a variety of support and approaches to treat the symptoms discussed above. For example, for Danny it was the block application of his bank while for others seeing a therapist and receiving therapy might start the journey to recovery. For example, cognitive behaviour therapy offers a structured approach to tackling video gaming addiction, by analysing how the player thinks. The examination of their thoughts, through a variety of cognitive exercises, guides the player away from the obsessive thoughts and habits of addiction, and makes small incremental changes for healthier thinking patterns. The therapy session can be in person or online. For example, in a case study in Sweden, the trial of Internet Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (iCBT) has been offered in a primary care setting. The two programs offered "were basic, but effective, consisting of text on a webpage and a secure system for communication" (Vernmark, 2017).



Another technique as part of therapeutic approach is mindfulness (translation of the ancient Indian word *Sati*-awareness, attention, and remembering (Alidina, 2020). Mindfulness is a psychological technique, originated in ancient times, that enables the player to become aware of their actions in the present moment. The shifting of attention-focused awareness to sensations in the body the player is experiencing in the present moment enables acceptance of everything that happens 'here and now'. The addictive cravings are lived expressions of how the gamer animate the addiction—it becomes their way of being-in-the-world. With mindfulness approach, players become curious about how they experience those addictive cravings and are mindful of their physical sensations. The attention-focus is practised in a non-judgmental manner. Thus, being mindful is about creating relationships with players' own body-mind and focusing attention towards sensations. In doing so it refocuses players on 'being present' with those felt sensations of cravings. Through the process thoughts might arise from that heightened awareness. Within mindfulness you only note those thoughts without being concealed by them (Alidina, 2020).

Based on these two therapies, Mindfulness-Oriented Recovery Enhancement (MORE) (Garland, 2013) offers group treatment for video game addiction, and “combines mindfulness training, Third Wave cognitive behavioural therapy, and positive psychological principles that specifically addresses addictions and co-occurring mental distress” (Garland et al., 2016; Li et al., 2018). The study proposes that participants “engage in a higher-order process of metacognitive evaluation in which the individual consciously contemplate the consequences of excessive playing (e.g., neglecting daily obligations) as well as the benefits of reducing video game playing (e.g., improving school performance by spending more time on homework)” (Li et al., 2018, p. 941). Therefore, the MORE approach encourages participants to be attentive to their actions when excessively playing video games and increases their control over their video game behaviours.

A creative understanding on motion capture technologies

Motion capture technologies are used by the military, in sports science (to improve athletes' performance), in robotics, film and video games, and more recently in health and wellbeing practices from clinical trials for life-threatening conditions to rehabilitation applications with the additional component of virtual reality (VR) and/or Augmented Reality (AR) to help improve patient's mental and physical health. Owens et al. (2020) suggest that advancements in physical therapy utilising motion capture technology “improve movement quality, increase lower limb loading, improve adherence to weight-bearing restrictions, and beneficially alter gait mechanics”. An example of a research study by Hirzallah (2013) used a costumed built treadmill acting as a motion capture device to “implement a simple way to let video game players exercise in order to play” and by being active while playing they propose that the player becomes healthier, thus reducing the chance of addiction.

What is a motion capture and how does it work?

Motion capture (Mocap) is a process where the movement of people or objects is recorded in real-time and captured for archival post-production purposes. The motion data are constructed only from a skeleton data of the performer (not the muscles and skin) and rendered into a three-dimensional digital model (the digital skin is applied to the digital model to create a character), sometimes called an avatar, or a prop in the virtual space and world (Dower & Langdale, 2022). There are three types of motion capture systems, which are OptiTrack, Inertial, and Markerless systems utilising marker sets or sensors, cameras, and specialised software to record the motion data into a computer. On one hand, the OptiTrack system requires the performer to wear specialised suit (usually a Velcro suit) markers (passive and active markers), a small spherical retro-reflective surface, which is considerably placed on the performer's body suit. The usual number of marker sets used is between 41-53 depending on the system. The markers enable tracking by an array of cameras (can be between eight to fifty or even more in larger motion capture studios) and are placed around the volume space (space the person or object is tracked and captured). On the other hand, the Inertial systems require the performer to wear a specialised lycra suit or harness with sensors or magnets (accelerometers and gyroscopes all within a contained cable system), which tends to zip into the suit (or placed on the harness), with a receiver unit rather than an array of cameras. And lastly, the markerless mocap does not require any suit. Instead, it requires special computer algorithms designed to allow the system to analyse multiple streams of optical input and identify human forms, breaking them down into constituent parts for tracking (Delbridge, 2015; Dower & Langdale, 2022).

Apart from health and science experts, these technologies are utilised by creatives. For example, performance for motion capture (PeCap) is a technique applied by actors whose motion is captured and rendered on a three-dimensional character within a video game or a film character. The physical action and facial expressions of the actor Andy Serkis, who played Smeagol, were captured to create computer-generated imagery (CGI) of Gollum in the Lord of The Rings trilogy (2001-2003) (Delbridge, 2015). The video game God of War (2018) used actor Christopher Judge's size in the motion capture for the main character Kratos, and animators carefully crafted a much different-looking character model than the actor (Izuniy, 2018). Dower and Langdale (2022) suggest that motion capture is demanding for an actor as he/she needs to "deliver a performance that is psychologically motivated and physically embodied" (p.96). Thus, the mind-body connection mostly referred to as psycho-physical awareness, is highly trained by movement practitioners (actors and dancers) and is not necessary just for performance capture. Stanislavsky's approach draws on the psycho-physical to create an inside-out system which enables the actor to be in 'the creative state'. The inside-out "relies on a mix of mental analysis, personal experience, research and instinct to guide the actor to try behavioural choices" (p.99). Additionally, Dower and Langdale (2022) suggest incorporating the outside-in system based on the physical behaviour influenced by the school of mime or movement analysis practitioners such as Marceau and Decroux, Lecoq, and Laban.

Game On event sessions

Within my PhD, I focus on a holistic approach of a performer who embodies sculptural qualities of improvising bodies within motion capture environments. The holistic dancer experiences improvisation as a whole: the body-mind extensions intertwined with the world. I define the term sculptural as a process of shaping body-mind and qualities as means of their expressive and aesthetic qualities. My research examines how to access and activate sculptural qualities through feedback loops by 'being attentive' to the process of shaping and extending the body-mind of actual and virtual bodies within motion capture environments.

During the Game On event, participants experienced a short taster session applying a Range of Coupling (ROC) exercises. The ROC is a term and approach I have developed through extensive workshopping within the studio-practice with the motion capture suit and markers during the last three years. The aim is to 'couple' body-mind with the felt sensations of the texture of the motion capture suit, markers, and the relationship between the body-mind within motion capture environments.

Range of Coupling has three stages:

1. warm-up stage
2. sequence of movements focusing on the weight-rhythm changes body-mind and space relationship (performed without the suit and once suit on performed with the suit on)
3. final stage performed again once the physical body is calibrated into the digital model/avatar.


Calibration requires the performer to hold a T-pose shape with their bodies in space and the press action of a button in the software creates the digital model.

Due to the non-availability of the motion capture, setup for this workshop took place without it. Therefore, within the short session participants experienced firstly:

Game Play: The Castle. The playful explorations of acknowledging the felt body through fast-paced exercise in the form of fun. You, as the villain, must run away from the castle guard. When the guard is about to catch you (tag you on the shoulder), you can hide in front of the other villain who will take your place and must run away from the guard. It is a fast-paced game that focuses attention on the sudden physical outburst of energy, quick and directional action to stand in front of the other villain and prepare for a sudden stop—rest/stillness (not for too long). The focus is on physicality and how it makes us feel enables the participant to be attentive to these sensations.

Secondly, the elements of shaping lived experiences:

As the body is comfortably resting on the floor and attending to the breathing pattern, you notice how rising-sinking and widening-narrowing sensations of the ribcage make you feel. You are mindful of any tensions within the body and how it makes you feel. With every breath out, try to focus on that tension and release it into the floor – it might make the body move to change position and that is fine. Just attend to it. Now attend to the shape you are making with your body, how your arms are placed either alongside your body or slightly away from the body, creating an A-



shape, or even higher almost to shoulder level creating the T-shape. The opening body focuses on the relationship between the body and space. Now close the body into a ball shape turning onto one side, attend to how the weight of the other side of the body is shaping your ball shape, and how it changes when you are opening into A-T-shape. Just attend to it. Remember the T-shape, and slowly find your way into standing where you will mirror that T-shape when standing up. Focus on the journey from the floor to standing, and how it feels when you take the T-shape. How and what sensations you might have—here and now. How is your breathing? Attend to tension in your shoulders and arms (perhaps). With every breath out, swing your arms in front and behind you and swap to the other side. Take that T-shape into a wide, opening, wall-like shape and take the shape for a walk around the space...the physical and virtual space.

And thirdly, attending body-mind towards the points in the space shaping experiences of *moving-sensing-connecting-dancing*.

Lastly, the warm-down exercise: standing up-right in the space attending once again to our breathing and our awareness of body-mind connection.

Conclusion

Video games are becoming realistic and immersive to draw players' attention and encourage replayability. These video games offer escapism from real life and players may lose control over the intensity and frequency of playing. Over a period of twelve months, it may lead to addiction. There are different approaches to help through recovery from addiction such as mobile applications, a gambling block from the bank, but also treatments like cognitive behaviour therapy and mindfulness. Motion capture technologies are increasingly used in producing high-quality video games. However, the art of performance for motion capture is being recognised as a creative and standardised career opportunity, and further use of motion capture is found within health and wellbeing. The short taster session I delivered as part of the Game On event enabled the participants to be mindful of the present, attend to their outside-inside or inside-outside. The session enables them to be aware of their body-mind connections. When gamers spend time in their bodies 'being mindful' and 'being physically active' it enables them to embody the body-mind connection that fights addiction.

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Disruption deconstructed - the design, development and decision making empowerment of the 'disruptive workshop' approach in the prevention of gambling harms
By Davina Whitnall

Abstract

This paper explores the 'disruptive' approach of the project and focuses on two areas specifically - 1) the development model and approaches used to increase awareness and, 2) the impact of gamification to help prevent gambling harms. The emphasis is on the design and development process to support outcomes of the project.

The lived experience as an actor of change

'Knowledge of the social world must be deeper and stronger if it is co-produced with actors in that world; research is more likely to affect change if it is owned by people who have a capacity to effect change' (Horvath, C., & Carpenter, J. 2020 on Campbell and Vanderhoven, 2010) ^[1]. The co-creation approach has been successful for understanding the needs in different settings such as public health, wellbeing and social change. This project utilises a similar approach in a learning context to address gambling harms.

'Fighting fire with fire' – using gamification to increase gambling harm awareness

Gamification is utilised by the gambling industry to encourage usage, engagement, addiction and habit forming behaviours through incentivising and competitiveness. In this project we use gamification positively to disrupt gambling habit forming and generate self-awareness and mindfulness of gambling.

1. The Development model - Career development as a vehicle to increase awareness

Developing an activity that is informative, thought-provoking and delivers both skills and learning was challenging as we didn't want participants to feel misled but see the genuine connection between skills development, awareness and potential gambling harms. To help focus and pitch this correctly, we used a process of identifying training needs through a framework called TRIAaGE ^[2]:

TRIAaGE:

Training texture

Requirements

Identification


Assessment

and

Goal-setting

Exchange

All aspects of TRIAaGE should be considered to accurately identify and address training needs. This is a tool to ensure i) quality, ii) all possibilities are covered, and iii) training needs are accurately captured. It also helps identify what provision is needed and what are the barriers and constraints that should be addressed. In the same way



a Triage nurse would assess a patient and prioritise their treatment. By working through TRIAaGE as a checklist, it's possible to prioritise what activity will have the biggest impact and inform the approach.

Training

There may be a preconception of what training should 'look like' and understanding the practical limitations can help inform the approach, for e.g. a lack of opportunity or barriers to learning may exist. The project embodies a 'disruptive' approach and this aspect is firmly rooted in the way the development has been designed and positioned. Considering the potential barriers to engagement, we deliberately placed all of the learning opportunities under 'one roof.' The advantage of presenting training all in one place is that the 'single stop shop' approach helps to promote an open dialogue between participants. Eventually, discussions that develop organically help address 'real' training needs that are self-identified and self-led by the learner. By co-creating activities with experts of lived experiences with gambling, we established early on that many people do not recognise they have a problem with or are exposing themselves to gambling harms. The process of gambling is so ingrained and embedded into society norms that identification of the issues is as much of a challenge as addressing the need itself. We wanted to address the training need but to do this the learner has to recognise the issue. A Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach was used to help learners identify their own potential learning requirements, and delivered through the challenges presented on the day.

Requirements


Often there are emotional reasons why we identify or fail to identify training requirements. This idea of emotional drivers is based on the Transformative Learning Theory that was developed by Jack Mezirow^[3]. Challenging assumptions and personal reflection are core to the theory and form the process of understanding change from a personal perspective. Changing personal beliefs and behaviour are all part of 'perspective transformation.' It may not be fully possible to create this level of personal transformation in a day but our aim was to 'plant the seed' and encourage participants to challenge, reflect and develop their own learning pathway.

Identification

Social psychologists have documented how the presence of others can improve or hinder performance. 'Two heads better than one' is a thoughtful article by Rebecca Thompson in *The Psychologist* ^[4] that discusses how group input can generate less favourable outcomes than individual efforts. However, getting the right group of people can enhance performance. As part of the project, we aimed to get the right people together to facilitate and empower these discussions. These discussions further support the identification of training and learning needs.

Assessment

'If you can't measure it, you can't improve it'
Peter Drucker



How can we get to where we are going if we don't know where we are now? An important part of the development is not just to impart learning but to better understand and assess the needs of the target audience, this is particularly important as the gambling and gamification landscape is so fast changing. To facilitate this we staggered what was presented, tried to make it feel relevant and split it into smaller chunks.

Goal-setting

Goal-setting is an integral element of identifying training needs and working toward them. One of the most enabling actions is to encourage participants to write down their goals to start achieving them. The design of the development day deliberately encouraged the setting and writing down of goals as outputs. In addition to the setting of goals, motivation plays a key factor. If individuals are not motivated to work towards goals, then goal-setting loses its effectiveness. Therefore, it was important that the development day contained opportunities to maintain and increase motivation. This was provided in the form of powerful lived experiences shared by (ex-)gamblers; physical activities to liven and enhance participation; opportunities to test, try and explore areas of discussion.

Exchange

The last point of TRIAaGE is Exchange and is part of a two-way process as the name would imply. Using personal experience and the exchange of experiences can help as participants may find support and tips from others in the room. The last point and most important one was to facilitate exchanges on the day and this meant learners learnt from each other and we could learn from them.

The development day was also an opportunity to support and help those who may need it, particularly recovering gambling addicts. Thus, a second approach called CLUES^[5] was adopted to facilitate this process. CLUES refers to Care, Listen, Understand, Evidence and Sign-post.

- *Care* - demonstrating that you care and have enthusiasm to support participants helps them feel more confident in their own abilities. This could be the difference for them to make the extra effort to speak and engage with the activities and feel 'brave' enough to seek the help or support they need.
- *Listening* - listening to the community is essential to help understand perspectives and challenges. Part of the development day is to gain insight into needs, concerns and issues so these can be better supported moving forward.
- *Understand* - Trying to understand the participants' concerns, supporting them individually and generating engagement with the training provision. The development day is a dynamic environment and it's possible to better understand how theories and ideas translate in practice.

- *Evidence* - Assisting participants to evidence their skills helps them to build their CV, focus on their personal development, encourage reflective practice and build confidence. This becomes part of their motivation for attending the development activity and is a critical product of the day.
- *Sign-post* - It may not be possible to deal directly with all issues which arise but being able to sign-post individuals quickly to the support they need is key. Having information points and sources of support throughout the event was important to embed within the programme.

2. Gamification - Using gamification as a learning and prevention tool

The Gamification element is embedded into the design as a learning vehicle as well as gamified activities. This section explores the approaches underpinning the Gamification aspect such as Dynamic Development, immersive environments and social online learning.

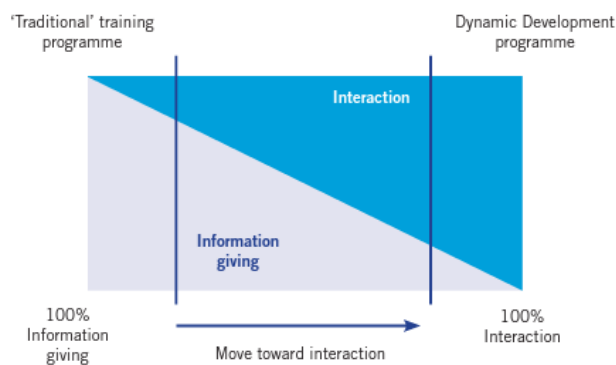
Dynamic Development – enabling self-discovery

The Dynamic Development Model is an approach for personal and professional development. It enables development to be active and self-directed rather than passive. Dynamic Development aligns with the stages in Knowles' model of andragogy aimed at the way adults learn, instead of pedagogy that focuses on how children learn. Even though the target demographic for this project is young people aged 16-21 years, gambling affects people of all ages. The model of development is based on andragogy as both self-direction and independence are important here, not just in developing essential life and digital skills but to encourage resilience against gambling harms.

'Knowles describes four stages in his concept: (1) adults are 'self-directing' and independent; (2) their life experience becomes a 'resource for learning'; (3) learning is increasingly harnessed 'for the development of social roles'; and, (4) there is immediacy of application, meaning that learning for problem solving takes over from the learning that in the child was more formally devoted to a subject area' (Bromley 2017 on Knowles).

The problem-based approach is inherent in most games, thus there's a natural alignment to gamification. The act of solving a problem allows the learner to apply the learning in context and readily grasp the significance of the problem being solved.

'In this involvement in conscious learning, attributes, competencies and behaviours, environmental contexts, constraints and situations are all part of learning discovery. It is, of course, a perpetual process as human beings learn all the time.' Bromley, Dynamic Development^[6]




This approach is not just informative but requires a high level of interaction and participation that helps embed the learning. Dynamic Development, doesn't require a facilitator to be the agent of change as with many examples of andragogy, participants are on their own journey of self-discovery.

Immersive environments

Gaming is an immersive environment and in using this tool to explore gambling, we were able to increase participation and awareness of key messages. Research undertaken by the National Literacy Trust (NLT) and the Association of UK Interactive Entertainment (Ukie)^[7] explored the effects video games have on children's literacy at school. Nearly 5,000 11 to 16-year-olds in the UK were surveyed for the study which revealed that playing video games can support young people when it comes to their literacy skills, creativity and empathy. 76% of those who took part in the study talk to their friends about gaming and this can help build better social connections. Gaming has also had a positive impact on the mental health of those surveyed. Lots of young people felt playing video games helped them deal better with stressful situations and negative emotions. Given the risk to mental health and isolation reported by those affected by gambling harms, gaming provided an engaging vehicle to deliver key messages whilst developing a much wider skillset.

MOOCs (Massive Open Online Course) have been a popular mode of learning since 2008 and are based on free and open, community or shared learning. This approach encourages greater levels of engagement and public interest compared to more traditional 'classroom' style learning. MOOCs often engage users in problem based learning and problem solving that use real-life situations rather than theory or abstract concepts. *'Increasing a learner's perceived co-presence increases learner satisfaction and motivation to engage with material.'* (Fitton, Finnegan & Proulx). Using a similar framework to MOOCs—open, participative, problem-solving, and shared learning experience—could increase engagement with the content and gambling awareness concept.

Virtual Reality (VR) offers additional benefits of engagement as well as a more immersive experience. *'Applying immersive VR to education may engage students better than MOOCs, removing distractions outside of the learning environment, mimicking the experience of traditional learning experiences'* (Lessick & Kraft, 2017;



Pirker et al., 2018). Existing examples of educational applications of VR have focused on non immersive desktop-VR and have shown that simulating learning environments is highly effective. For example desktop-VR has been successfully used for social cognition training in children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and for assessing procedural skills such as dissecting frogs in a laboratory study (Didehbani et al., 2016; Merchant et al., 2014).’ (Fitton, Finnegan & Proulx)^[8]. Therefore, application of the VR approach could offer additional immersive learning for participants.

These immersive environments for learning and theories to increase engagement were brought into the project through the ‘makers market’ activities. For example, a large proportion of the day and activities were dedicated to games and the exploration and discussion of these topics. The day involved sharing experiences, playing games to raise awareness of potential harms such as in-play purchases e.g. ‘loot boxes’ and how these are an unidentified form of gambling.

New research, commissioned by the GambleAware charity, examines the strength of links between the in-game random prizes and gambling behaviour. Of the 93% of children who play video games, up to 40% opened loot boxes. Young men are the most likely to use loot boxes - with young age and lower education correlating with increased uses. The report identified that many games use a "psychological nudge" to encourage people to buy loot boxes - such as the fear of missing out on limited-time items or special deals. ^[9]

It became increasingly important to highlight to participants of the markers market day not just the gambling harms but psychological tools and subtle (or obvious) ways that gambling is being presented in everyday life, particularly in the games. During the day, we spent time discussing loot boxes to gain further insight into motivation.

We live in the age of social and online learning

The interactive component also refers to the learning taking place in a physical and social environment as well as an immersive virtual space.

Albert Bandura’s social learning theory (SLT) suggests that we learn social behaviour by observing and imitating the behaviour of others. Bandura realised that direct reinforcement alone could not account for all types of learning, so he added a social element to his theory, arguing that people learn by observing others (Nabavi, 2012). ^[10]

The observation of others is important, particularly in tackling gambling harms as through the lived experience accounts, we explored how gambling was normalised and part of social and family activities. These early encounters and experiences of gambling through social environments seem to have shaped perspectives of those reporting them. Although this observation may have contributed to the gambling harms, a similar approach can be used to address and raise awareness of it. The philosophy behind the Game On project is ‘treating like with like’ to disrupt the process

of normalisation and encourage young people to challenge and explore their own path with confidence. In the context of Bandura's social learning theory, the learning is reinforced by others in the environment. Positioning the lived experience within the maker's market and encouraging peer discussions contributed to deeper learning.


Conclusion

We've begun to explore some of the approaches and theories behind disruptive learning and awareness. Producing a makers market development day to increase awareness of gambling harms started to bring together some of these ideas that had been successful in different contexts such as in learning, marketing, generating awareness or by simply making things more memorable. We used a range of creative methods to tackle an increasingly complex problem. The development model and approaches used aim to increase awareness of gambling harms and the use of gamification further supports this. The emphasis is on the design and development process to support outcomes of the project. A major driver has been positioning activities around the lived experience as an actor of change that has made learning and awareness social and active. 'Fighting fire with fire' or 'treating like with like' through gamification has enabled us to make participants more conscious of the ways gambling is infiltrating the gaming space. We provided life skills and other development opportunities to focus on the importance of awareness and support decision making and confidence. There's much more to do to raise awareness of gambling harms and disruptive interventions may form part of this in the future.

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Figure: Dynamic Development by Tony Bromley: <https://tonybromley.com/dynamic-development>





Section 3: Reflections on the project



Reflections on the project and lessons learnt

The measurable effects

We hoped to engage 100-200 attendees in our in-person interventions (1-2% of targeted engagement within demographic across all target groups.) This was a targeted intervention and therefore adding value for those engaging with the intervention is important and we anticipate that the above group will represent those most affected/engaged. The reality was that we engaged with only 10% of our target but we were able to work with young people with learning difficulties that represent some of the most vulnerable groups affected by gambling harms, switching from a quantitative approach to more qualitative.

The development of intervention outputs such as an awareness app and in-person events to engage and connect to young people who are at risk developed into two key interventions, the maker's market development day and competition. Reflecting on the timing of this, the interventions may be better positioned to be launched earlier in the academic year but were impacted to a certain degree by Covid and confidence in being in-person at a physical event. As a pilot intervention and opportunity to test and try ideas, both activities were incredibly successful and this will inform future approaches.

The research and development of a specific approach to addiction in young people – using gamification to address gambling harms. This unfolded as a more complex situation and a more creative approach was needed. The outputs from this project begin to explore this but more development work is needed.

The project will monitor numbers downloading the app providing awareness and support and this will help reveal the true impact of the issue and help inform future support in a targeted way. We will use social media to track the proliferation of interventions and research.

The longer-term change as a result of the project includes:

- Greater awareness of problematic gambling within the age group and identification of behavioural patterns and intersections that could help support future interventions.
- Brand awareness around the app and pilot of such an approach that could be scaled up to other groups or across other locations.
- Increased knowledge that could contribute to a larger preventative project in the future.

Wider Effects:

- The facilitation of cross-agency working between Salford City Council; experts from the VCSE sector, and The University of Salford. This coalition mixes research expertise with lived experience and offers future large-scale collaboration, creating the opportunity for the further development of resources.
- Widening Participation: The project will engage with 16-21 years from under-represented groups including: lower-economic quintiles and BAME communities. These groups will have access to a HE setting and through collaboration on the creation of the app will gain additional digital skills promoting employability and opening the door to HE progression.
- The app developed as part of this project can be used more widely across the GM area. The University of Salford co-developed the FanFit app, which used a similar community-led project model, and is now used nationally. [out of scope]

Learning:

'Knowledge of the social world must be deeper and stronger if it is co-produced with actors in that world; research is more likely to effect change if it is owned by people who have a capacity to effect change'. (Horvath, C., & Carpenter, J. 2020 on Campbell and Vanderhoven, 2010). The co-creation approach has been successful for understanding the needs in different settings such as public health, wellbeing and social change. This project utilises a similar approach in an education setting.

The learning we hope to gain is to provide insights into real-world problems across a wider socio-economic and cultural demographic. This will be developed through the process of co-creation and evaluation.

The evaluation process is based on iterative design methodologies, Rapid Evaluation Methods, and Gibb's Reflective Cycle that will ensure that every stage of the project's activities will be rigorous and robust. This is underpinned by significant academic expertise that will allow co-created innovative approaches and original insights to be incorporated at every step of the design and implementation process. Using the SPICE methodology for evaluating impact, we envisage qualitative feedback as well as process-based evaluations that focus on the strengths and weaknesses in place for specific interventions. This approach will better help us to provide disruptive interventions that actively engage with young, opening the door to further collaborative cross-agency research opportunities.

Reflective piece from Danny's Lived Experience and workshop

I never knew gambling had such effects on gamblers and their relatives until I immersed myself in this project. I remember I had a friend whose husband often bet on the outcome of football matches. He would use the last penny to go to the nearby shopping mall to play on the betting machines. One day I visited my friend and found her crying her eyes out. She said she was afraid her husband was going to mortgage their future. My friend explained that each time her husband had money, he would spend it on betting. That was the closest I came to knowing anything about gambling before I began this research. My friend and I talked to her husband as she knelt down in tears for her unborn child. That act humbled him and made him realise he needed to turn his life around and combat addiction.

In conjunction with Salford CVS, we were able to come up with a pilot programme to spread awareness of gambling harms and seek ways to mitigate the negative consequences of gambling. We used Danny's story (as referred to above) to dwell on the power of lived experiences and to encourage participants to share their thoughts and take moral lessons from Danny's podcasts. The learners were also encouraged to understand the gambling harms through any creative means, be it through a drawing, song, or poem. When we held the workshops, Anne-Marie and I guided the participants through a session on recreating Danny's story through a creative medium like a song, poem, painting or drawing.

The purpose of the session was to raise awareness through compelling storytelling of the gamblers' lived experiences and increase engagement with an understanding of the harms of gambling and the pathways leading to such, and how to avoid them. We asked participants to reflect on what they had watched and then describe that in a word, image, picture, line, colour, etc. We challenged participants to use the previous task to begin their creative journey.

While working on this project and hearing about the grave consequences gambling has on its victims and their family members, I was relieved to know my friend's husband escaped the vicious addiction monster on time.

The project has made me realise how important it is not to be engaged in simple bets, as they have the tendency to escalate into habits that will become incurable in the future. I have learnt to be cautious and empathetic to anyone who struggles to yank off the weight of addiction. It has been an eye-opener and a rewarding experience. I have learnt a lot, and I watch every move my husband and sons make to prevent them from going down the drain.

The participation from the audience was encouraging as the participants heard first-hand the struggles Danny went through due to his gambling addiction and learnt from Danny's story. It was an excitingly rewarding experience for me.

-Vashti

The Black Art of Gambling: A Reflective Experience


I was not aware of the subtle ways gambling can enter in someone's life, like buying a lottery ticket or betting on a game among relatives. When Davina described what our roles would be, being a writer, I was looking forward to connecting with gamblers to slip into their shoes, understand what they go through, and figure out a way to help them. I admit I was nervous when I heard of my responsibilities which were unknown territory: app development to help fight gambling addiction.

During the first month, I familiarised myself with the universe of gambling, the council's data, and gamblers' lived experiences (particularly Danny's) through research carried out by my colleagues. I read about existing research on apps developed in the UK and abroad. I browsed and downloaded some apps to test, and noticed the gap in research that needs to be addressed. The gap in research lies within the cultural, emotional, and literal truth of gamblers and societal perception of gambling. Where I come from, religion presents gambling as a sin, and my entourage treats it like a disease. In contrast, in the UK, gambling is so normalised that we need more research to understand the reasons why this is so.

My doctoral research and novel (work-in-progress) is on occult experiences in Mauritius. I found similarities in researching the occult in my home country and gambling in the UK. The similarity is that both have social stigma attached to it. In Mauritius, witchcraft seeps into homes but people prefer not to speak about it, because it is perceived as evil and taboo. Mauritians will pretend that they are against witchcraft while practising it behind closed curtains. They will also not speak about their experiences to everyone, but rather keep the trauma within, because of the shame surrounding witchcraft.

I noticed that gambling is treated the same way in Manchester. People are aware that gambling is an issue hanging in the middle of society, yet do not fully educate the younger generation about small habits that may induce a gambling addiction. Often, people avoid addressing the issue because gambling is established as a recreation with bountiful rewards. Gamblers seem to be in a daze during their gambling addiction as they are not able to make sense of what is good and bad. They remain unconscious of how the magic of gambling subtly works over them, which creates yet another gap in research. By understanding the trauma and experiences of gamblers, we might be able to alleviate their pain and provide them with the support they need to get rid of their addiction.

During the workshop session Davina and I led, we shared our research on gambling and existing apps supporting recovering gamblers. In line with the session held by our colleagues Vashti and Anne-Marie, we guided learners to reflect on gamblers and their daily struggles. The learners were then invited to reflect on gamblers' struggles and develop an app which would help them fight their addiction.



The engagement of our participants created a pleasant personal experience for me. Our young participants confessed that they knew how to gamble, and recognised it was an issue in Manchester. I was glad that the young learners were responsive, and looking at them, my heart swelled with the desire to protect them from gambling. Eventually, Game On was about researching, understanding, challenging, documenting, raising awareness, and above all, it became a personal learning experience.

-Keren

Playing-Moving-Creating Positive Attitude to Support Gambling Addiction Recovery: A Reflective Experience

I joined the Game On team in the late stages of development. It was hard at first to navigate how I could contribute to the event itself. My practice as a research PhD is exploring embodied approaches with the use of dance improvisation and motion capture technologies. Motion capture technologies are used within the film and video industries to record actors' physical movements and then render into virtual animation a character within the game. Thus, I felt that the growing popularity of using motion capture has an impact on the gaming industry by creating new and engaging video games attracting more and more people to play. Therefore, there is an ethical challenge to overcome within the gaming and film industry.

However, the more I thought about it from the creative practice perspective, as a dancer and movement practitioner, the art of movement is rewording for improving health and fitness and overall mental well-being. After speaking to Davina and the team, it became clear that the session on mindful movement will contribute to the overall aim of the event.

Like in my PhD research working with motion capture technologies has a playful and creative element within the studio practice. Thus, the workshop aimed to show how motion capture technologies have a creative side, where a group of participants can experience 'what it is like to be an actor who provides the physical movements for the game, to open up the process of making the animation in a creative, playful and mindful way. Through creativity participants use imagination and through mindfulness, participants become aware of their bodies. The attentive focus on the breathing pattern enables the body ribcage to expand-narrow, widen-shrink and shift the attention of these two processes connecting with the mind. Like other approaches to support the recovery of gaming addiction cognitive behaviour therapy, mindfulness allows for deepening the internal-external experiences.

During the workshop, I felt connected to all participants. They all responded to the exercises well, for some it was a challenge and for some, it was easier. And that is fine. The whole point of that workshop is to have the time and space to explore new ways of approaching recovery support. Once all participants stood up and created a T-shape pose with Stillness the art of movement began to open up for everyone. I also saw and felt warm smiles, happy sparks in their eyes, and an overall positive attitude during the workshop.

Overall, the Game On event was a learning experience not only for the participants but also for me. It has opened the discussion on gaming addiction and how the art of movement can support recovery.

- Lucie



The New Wild West: 21st Century Gambling in the UK

Game On has been an exciting and thought-provoking project to work on as I did come to it having no prior knowledge of gambling harms. However, I did have knowledge of Salford, its communities, and its vulnerabilities.

Through this project I have become acutely aware of the level of gambling advertisement there is in the UK, especially on the internet and television. There is a Wild West approach in the gambling sector, especially as the laws governing gambling are lax in the UK in comparison to other countries. There is legislation due soon, however, it is apparent there has been heavy lobbying from the gambling sector and a conflict of interest within the current government. So whether this legislation will make a real difference is another question.

In addition, the feedback from the young people involved has opened my eyes to the potential of gaming to normalise gambling behaviour through the designs of games, the paying for credit, and in particular the loot box phenomenon. Essentially the gaming sector is grooming the next generation of gamblers, which is a serious concern.

Through this project, I have had several conversations with people impacted by gambling harms. There is a significant amount of pain and disruption caused to people's lives that still impact them beyond the active addiction stage. This can be managing high levels of debt, broken relationships, and life choices that have limited their opportunities.

Finally, this project has made me reflect on my work in the VCSE sector and the ethics of fundraising, philanthropy, and corporate fundraising. Given that the National Lottery is the largest grant giver in the UK and money is raised through gambling, means that it is much embedded in UK culture. Several gambling corporates donate to charities or have their own charities where they donate profits through grant giving. This has made me question how ethical is it for VCSE organisations to accept donations from gambling when you consider the pain this has caused people and as an organisation, you may be dealing with the impacts of gambling harms. You would not expect a climate change charity to accept a donation from an oil producer, so why would it be okay for a charity working with the most vulnerable in society to accept a donation from a gambling company?

- Anne-Marie

The Build it and they will come fallacy - Reflective poem

*Build it and they will come
An event both educational and fun
Addressing Gambling harms through development
The challenge was making the topic memorable and relevant
Gamification and disruptive technologies were explored
To be cognitive and aware, so subtle messages couldn't be ignored
Raising the narrative and impact of the activity
Exploring the subtle, subliminal psychology
From loot boxes, to cultural normalisation
In-play gaming or part of a celebration
Our relationship with gambling is woven into every day
Making it so challenging to break away
Threaded into so many different forms
On our phones, adverts and social media platforms
We learnt from the lived experience
And how important it is to create an interference
Highlighting the key strategies used by the gambling industry
How these are already embedded into our society
Reflecting on how the Game on Makers Market went
Quality not quantity was the outcome of the event
There wasn't large numbers but deeper conversations
Leading to app development and revelations
Niche needs for young and vulnerable groups
The next generation of gambling recruits
Timing and topics to attract and engage
Appealing to our target demographic and age
Career aspirations and positioning
To inform further activities and timing
Lots of lessons learnt and ideas to take forward
From awareness to reward
If we build it again – they may come
But it's important to make it engaging and fun
In world of marketing and addiction through play
We're supporting prevention in an alternative way.*

- Davina



Hearts & Minds: Bridging the gap between Academia and VCSE's

The Game On project has been a journey that has been about bringing together two important worlds: The Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSEs) sector and academic institutions. I've spent 25 years working in the VCSE sector, where I've seen countless groups and organisations working tirelessly to combat social injustices and discrimination and make a difference in the communities they serve. These groups have a special ability to touch people's hearts with their actions and stories of change, inspiring us all.


But it's not all smooth sailing in the VCSE sector. We often struggle with unstable funding and limited resources. The demand for our services often exceeds what we can provide, and we constantly feel the pressure to prove our impact. Lately, there's been a push for more evidence-based approaches, especially in fields like health and social care. While this is important, it can sometimes divert resources away from our core mission of creating real change in people's lives. We find ourselves walking a tightrope between doing good and meeting the demands of funders.

This is where the partnership between academia and the VCSE sector becomes crucial. Through my involvement in this project, I've had the privilege of learning from researchers and university academics. Their insights and innovative ideas have made a real difference in my work. For example, we adapted a tool originally designed for app development, called the "Crazy 8" tool, into a facilitation tool at Salford CVS, which proved popular and has been shared with other VCSEs. Additionally, delving into the world of artificial intelligence (AI) has completely changed how I see its potential to increase our capacity and impact.

Academia brings its own set of advantages. They're at the forefront of research and development, offering fresh insights and innovative solutions, especially in fields like technology. Their rigorous research methods and ethical considerations, overseen by ethics committees, are invaluable. Plus, they have access to research funding that we in the VCSE sector often don't. This gives them credibility with institutions like the government, the NHS, and government agencies that value evidence-based approaches, making it more likely for them to secure additional funding.

But the VCSE sector has its strengths too. We're deeply embedded in our communities, providing vital support to help people overcome the barriers they face. We've built trust and relationships with those who have experienced harm, giving us unique insights and expertise. We're agile and can adapt quickly, unlike larger institutions burdened by bureaucracy. We bridge the gap between academia and the real world, offering direct insights into the pressing issues society faces. We're also skilled at raising awareness and support for our causes through powerful storytelling, which drives campaigns, fundraising efforts, and advocacy.

What this project has shown me, as someone working in the VCSE sector, is that we need to collaborate more closely with academia. We should share our knowledge and lived experiences, tackle the challenges facing society together, and take a multidisciplinary approach to finding solutions. This partnership has the potential to address some of the most critical issues of our time.



Of course, there are challenges to navigate, with the most significant being the power dynamics between the VCSE sector and academia. Unfortunately, lived experience doesn't always receive the same recognition as academic experience. In many research partnerships, VCSEs have less power and influence, partly because academic leads often lead project bids. This can mean that funding doesn't adequately compensate VCSEs for their contributions, including their time and lived experiences.

Academic culture can also be status-driven and sometimes reinforce class distinctions. Working-class individuals may not have the same access to higher education as those from more privileged backgrounds, creating an internal class bias within academia. Siloed structures within universities hinder collaboration between different approaches, and VCSEs may not be aware of new developments that could assist their work.

On the flip side, universities may lack the deep relationships with local communities that VCSEs have nurtured over time. On the other hand, VCSEs may struggle to integrate research into their work due to constraints related to time, money, and resources.

This project has shown that collaboration between academics and VCSEs can benefit both parties and the communities they serve. By working together and addressing power dynamics, expectations, and communication styles, we can produce grounded research that tells compelling stories capable of driving real change in people's lives. This approach is especially impactful when it is co-produced, with lived experience at its core. When we share the common goal of creating a fairer and more compassionate society, hearts and minds align.



Section 4: Lessons learnt



Lessons learnt

There was an incredible amount learnt from the project and this section sets out what this was aligned to the objectives of the project. The table below outlines intentions and aims for the project in the ‘we said’ section followed by what took place in the ‘we did’ section and the key learning in the ‘learning’ section.

WE SAID	WE DID	LEARNING
Summary of project		
<p>Using behavioural research and gamification to deliver early disruptive interventions that increase awareness, and further evaluate the impacts of gambling for communities in Salford; specifically 16-21 years that are identified at risk. Building on previous practice to implement both short and longer-term interventions to increase new knowledge in this area.</p>	<p>Use disruptive interventions to increase awareness but through physical and virtual environments rather than through an App. We quickly discovered through the storytelling research that the App wouldn't work unless people recognised there was a problem. In using disruptive interventions, we were able to draw awareness to gambling harms and that there could be an issue. This was done through interactive activities such as wellbeing activities, dance, trying to play a game for five minutes without interruption of an add or betting prompt.</p>	<p>This remains a valid area of research. Further research on the role of gaming as a gateway to gambling would be beneficial. An App needs a motivator and reason to engage, therefore, if people are not aware of the gambling harms they are exposed to – this is a major challenge for engagement and adoption.</p>
Project Delivery The core beneficiaries		
<p>The core beneficiaries of this project will be 16-21-year-olds across Salford, this equates to 19,525 young people within the area. <u>With 54% of 17-year-olds participating in gambling in the last year, rising to 68% at 20 years;</u> the normalisation of gambling is leading to an increasing frequency of</p>	<p>The groups involved are hard to reach and through this project and our Makers Market day, we were able to reach some of this group. Interestingly, students from the University didn't engage despite the event being on campus and accessible to them. This could indicate that they</p>	<p>Not the easiest group to engage with, given the education and training commitments of this age group. Since gambling is not seen as a harm by this age group (unless they have lived experience through parents and carers) we had to approach this through a</p>

young people gambling weekly, this is particularly prevalent in young men. The rationale for targeting this age range is associated with the vulnerability of young people to mismanage their first independent income/grant/loan, an area of rising concern.

A 2019 NUS report shows that around half (48%) of students who gamble do so to make money, 1 in 8 will bet more than they can afford to lose, nearly a quarter feel guilty when gambling and almost 1 in 10 have used a student loan to gamble. The reach and appeal of gambling extend far beyond students, our workforce and young apprentices are affected, Gamification and behavioural research are used to position and attract young people to gambling opportunities. This project proposes to use the same tools that make gambling so attractive, to generate greater awareness of the issues, providing early interventions that disrupt the normalisation of gambling. The interventions include:

- A programme of awareness through 'Crowdsourcing-style peer-led' workshops involving communities and young people to

wouldn't want to engage with such an intervention (didn't see why or that they don't have a problem). Perhaps there way a fear this could impact on their studies or results. The lessons learnt from this was to more deeply consider the environment and any impacts or barriers to engagement.

We did learn from Oakwood – the class of students who came to the Makers Market day. They actively engagement with workshops and spoke openly about what would 'engage' them with gambling and/or harms prevention. This enabled us to transform the 'peer-led' style workshop into something more personal, with many students sharing their experiences that were 'in game-based' and their stories of 'loot boxes' which was 'hidden information' or a 'hidden problem' prior to the Makers Market.

In the development of the Makers Market, we were able to create a series of tools, learning and interventions as part of this toolkit.

careers event style approach.

We even struggled to get researchers on board with this subject matter, partly due to the normalisation of gambling and not being aware of the social harms it causes.

The research took a very different approach and aligned to our disruptive theme. Rather than bring together researchers in a specialised space such as learning, technology and phycology. We broadened this to storytelling, marketing and wellbeing which enabled us to look more holistically at the problem and also realise that this was a much broader and embedded issue.

The truly transdisciplinary research that took place, facilitated options and opportunities across areas and a disciplinarity that would reveal critical learning and thinking through raising the lived experience, the use of dance and movement to support reflection, the alliance of gaming to raise awareness of gambling but structuring this through 'marketing tools and research' as well as the psychology and sociological approaches.

<p>break the normalisation effect and co-create effective strategies and tools such as campaigns, career fairs and online apps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of a series of tools to pilot across Salford and disseminate more widely across the region and nationally. 		
<p>Project Delivery Activities</p>		
<p><u>16–21-year-olds are increasingly engaging with gambling apps and in other gambling activities.</u> We aim to raise awareness of gambling-related harm and through peer-led, lived experience, workshops delivered by YGAM and supported by Salford University researchers and students.</p>	<p>We held a Careers event shaped around the theme of gambling harms. We didn't work with YGAM on the workshops, however they were involved in the event and offered critical support and information to those who presented and/ or were concerned. The Salford University Researchers delivered their own workshops based on the research they undertook.</p>	<p>These workshops successfully piloted ideas and told us more about the levels of engagement and strategies that worked or would not work. Getting people to engage with the event is the biggest challenge and continues to be a theme as we discovered, gambling is so normalised, it's difficult to break through this.</p>
<p>This project will use gamification technology to develop a new app offering a disruptive intervention and alternative to the pervasive gambling apps currently on the market</p>	<p>We engaged with the University on this. Whilst we didn't develop a workable app, we used the Crazy 8 methodology to work through ideas. Unintended outcome – Salford CVS has used this Crazy 8 approach and used this as a framework to develop ideas as part of an</p>	<p>The process and methodology was effective in helping unpack a problem and potential solutions. It helped reveal the issues of look boxes and the potentially damaging impact this could have on young people. The methodology used did bring us closer to an app</p>

	<p>Access to Primary Care Workshop, as well as used it for internal planning purposes. Oakwood High School – fed back that they have used this approach with their young people to develop ideas.</p>	<p>but at the same time highlighted the problem of engagement, that engagement is poor if you don't have a reason to engage or feel that there isn't a problem.</p>
<p>The workshops will target vulnerable groups including: those from lower income quintiles; members of BAME communities; women; and the unemployed.</p>	<p>Some of the key things we did include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We engaged with Oakwood High School. - We promoted through the VCSE sector. - Salford Foundation engaged in the first event. - YCA provided us with a connection to Josiah who has lived experience of gambling harms. - GAM Hive – engaged with Danny who has lived experience of gambling harms and recorded a Zoom interview which provided a primary source for research. 	<p>A multi-channel approach was essential to ensure reach to all of the groups we aimed to target. This approach worked well and very much helped us to learn more about the different experiences of those affected by gambling harms. These were not just compelling stories but the lived experiences that helped shape the approach and outcomes of the project through bringing these voices into the project narrative.</p>
<p>These peer-led workshops will encourage a wider discourse around this issue in an open and engaging manner and will also inform the creation of the new gambling awareness, gamification, 'Game-On' app, shaping content and acting as a wider testbed for the technology.</p>	<p>University of Salford Researchers held workshops at the event to engage with the attendees. Particularly in the marketing workshop – we found that the young people through gaming were getting into "Loot boxes".</p>	<p>It became clear that gaming is a gateway into gambling. This was very present through exploration of the Loot boxes as a real lived experiences of the students from Oakwood. Gaming would be a good platform to raise awareness moving forward, considering a</p>

		virtual gaming event to engage those potentially affected.
The workshops will be hosted at the University's Media City Campus, where attendees will be able to make use of innovative green screen technology to create online digital content (TikTok videos; memes; and gifs), discussing the issue of the gambling and signposting the community to wider services available to them.	Some of the key activities include, we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Held a careers event - Had workshops – presenting and movement to build confidence and explore ideas. - Had retro gaming for the young people as well as VR. 	This series of workshops and activities, provided a forum to safely explore gaming and social interaction without the gambling prompts or interruptions. Participants were able to be immersed in the game and understand how this feels. This approach was designed to increase mindfulness of gaming and the gambling interruptions, so they may better recognise this in their next independent gaming experience.
Attendees will be asked to consider becoming peer educators and champions, returning to their community or college armed with social media toolkits to disseminate to their peers.	No. Not realistic. We were able to have conversations with the young people to raise awareness of gambling harms.	
<p>The Significance of these Approaches</p> <p>The project takes an effective, two-tiered, approach to the emerging issue of youth gambling:</p>		
1. <u>Peer-led interventions is a proven method within addiction studies</u> and by maintaining a community-based, Youth-focussed, technologically innovative approach, the project will actively	Some of the impacts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of gaming as a gateway to gambling. - Opportunity to explore possible interventions and critical points when gambling harm is 	We felt it important to connect with the audience on their terms and so a peer-led intervention that offered community-based, interactive and technological approach fitted well. As part of this we were able to generate real outputs in the



<p>engage with its target audience providing real-world impact and digital outputs</p>	<p>triggered or resolved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploration of a transdisciplinary approach and key learning that could be harnessed elsewhere in the sector or beyond. <p>Some of the outputs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Makers Market – career development day. - Co-created ideas and outputs to inform future practices and approach. - Workshops and session plans to replicate the event. - A publication that is collection of learning and tools to utilise in current or diverse settings. - Stories, developed through videos, sound, paper and pictures that tell the story of gambling harms from a number of different perspectives. 	<p>workshops, some of which are shared in this document. The biggest ‘take-away’ message is the impact of ‘loot boxes’ and how the gaming gateway is leading into a gambling space.</p>
<p>2. The innovative focus on technological solutions to an increasingly technological problem offers a new alternative and supplement to traditional peer-led interventions or</p>	<p>We were able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the key apps and potential for further development of these through the exploratory paper included in this guide called ‘Gambling Prevention Apps in 	<p>Despite setting out to find a technical solution, we found this may have not provided the best approach. We began to explore why an app to fight the problem may not be the best approach through gathering the feedback of our key audience in the</p>

<p>cold-turkey methods, such as the <u>use of Gamban gambling blocking software previously championed by the NUS</u>.</p>	<p>the UK' by Keren Poliah.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide a video of the lived experience of this. Danny did identify there were already tools developed by Monzo banking to reduce gambling harms and spoke about this in his interview piece. 	<p>workshops and input into potential app development. This largely pointed towards not moving in this direction as the underlying issue was that people wouldn't engage with it if they believed they didn't have a problem. Furthermore, the technological and AI advancements meant that anything created would need much more support and funding to bring this to market and as the technology moved on, so would the gambling companies, rendering the development obsolete. What we did discover was a range of ways to improve this engagement and generate awareness of the issue that would not normally have been explored in detail.</p>
<p>Our approach is active, creative and engaging and marks a step away from the more passive signposting activities of previous projects.</p>	<p>The role of enabling conversations with young people was integral to this approach. For example, the Marketing Idea discussion – facilitated conversation approach to gambling harms.</p>	<p>These conversations provided critical learning for the project and beyond. The challenge remains as to how to get these conversations started in the first place?</p>
<p>To deliver this project we will need the following resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Management support from Salford CVS. • Small grant funding for University of 	<p>The resources and small investments generated the following outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A competition with a musical piece, providing the voice and connection to the intended age-group. 	<p>We learnt that we had only scratched the surface of the issue, that it was s engrained within social and societal norms, to tackle the problem a mutli-prong approach was needed.</p>



<p>Salford University students who will work with Salford CVS and YGAM using co-created approach to further build on this research and practical interventions with digital online solutions and in-person engagement projects to increase awareness and support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small investments to enable VCSE groups and organisations to participate in the research.• Consultancy services from YGAM to support the sessions and create learning resources based on the research outcomes.• Cover the costs of events including venue hire, equipment hire, food and travel expenses for participants.• Contribution to the event costs for the Festival of Learning including equipment hire, food, travel expenses and entertainments.• Marketing and promotion support including	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A small exploratory paper collection of key learning through different discipline lenses.- A Makers Market event to support career development underpinned by raising awareness of gambling harms.- Increased understanding of the problem through the lens of lived experiences.	<p>Our transdisciplinary approach went some way towards this but only went as far as identifying what's needed and testing approaches, further research is needed. A successful 'proof of concept' exercise but more work is needed to explore this.</p>
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<p>promotional resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • App development costs – server hosting and app hosting for downloads. • Volunteer expenses for the Volunteer Peer Educators. • Project evaluation including recommendations for next steps 		
<p>The impact of this project</p>		
<p>The measurable effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We hope to engage 100-200 attendees in our in-person interventions (1-2% of targeted engagement within demographic across all target groups.) This is a targeted intervention and therefore adding value for those engaging with the intervention is important and we anticipate that the above group will represent those most affected/engaged. - The development of intervention outputs such as an awareness app and in-person events to engage and connect to young people who are at risk. 	<p>Some of they key outputs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We achieved only 10% of this but this reflects the challenge identified through this project that if you are not aware that there could be a problem, why would you engage with any support or development? What we did find are new ways to increase this such through online platforms and gaming itself. - Our awareness app ended up being an awareness approach. Although a step away from a technical solution, the opportunity to generate 	<p>Some of our key learning includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We thought at the start of the project, we needed to reach high numbers to make an impact. Whereas as the project developed, we discovered that it was the personal connections and relatability to the lived experiences that made a difference which was embodied by the storytelling. - The approach generated (rather than the app) is a unique transdisciplinary approach that could have further application in continuing to explore gambling

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The research and development of a specific approach to addiction in young people – using gamification to address gambling harms. - The project will monitor numbers downloading the app providing awareness and support and this will help reveal the true impact of the issue and help inform future support in a targeted way. We will use social media to track the proliferation of interventions and research. <p>The longer-term change as a result of the project includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater awareness of problematic gambling within the age group and identification of behavioural patterns and intersections that could help support future interventions. - Brand awareness around the app and pilot of such an approach that could be scaled up to other groups or across other locations. - Increased knowledge that 	<p>awareness and explore possibilities was useful as this gave a better picture of how target users would or would not engage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This was explored through the series of papers in this publication but went further than just the cycle of addiction and gamification. The transdisciplinary approach provided new lenses and fresh insight into existing problems. - As the app wasn't taken forward, this didn't happen but we did follow up with the students from Oakwood who used the exercise in class to explore the harms of technology further. The fact that this triggered a further conversation and class discussion is a massive impact in creating awareness of gambling harms. <p>The longer-term changes delivered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of behaviour patterns and other indicators through 	<p>harms or in other areas outside of the remit of this project. It represents a holistic and multipronged approach that gives a more comprehensive picture of the problem and possible solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The lesson learnt through the discussion are far richer than the statistics alone that the app would generate. There's other routes to being able to gain metrics but very limited opportunities and gain such qualitative information and compelling stories to change hearts and minds and generate awareness. <p>The longer-term changes lessons learnt include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The knowledge from the transdisciplinary approach, written up as a series of papers – each through a different lens. - A practical toolkit and ability to use and adapt this in a
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could contribute to a larger preventative project in the future.

Wider Effects:

- The facilitation of cross-agency working between Salford City Council; experts from the VCSE sector, and The University of Salford. This coalition mixes research expertise with lived experience and offers future large-scale collaboration, creating the opportunity for the further development of resources.
- Widening Participation: The project will engage with 16-21 years from under-represented groups including: lower-economic quintiles and BAME communities. These groups will have access to a HE setting and through collaboration on the creation of the app will gain additional digital skills promoting employability and opening the door to HE progression.
- The app developed as part of this project can be used more widely across

transdisciplinary lenses as to what contributes towards gambling harms.

- Although an app wasn't developed, the approach of the Maker Marker and toolkit could be replicated and scaled up or down for others to utilise. The class at Oakwood used some of these materials in their classroom discussion.
- This contributes knowledge as we know the trigger points towards harm and significant life events that facilitate recovery.

Wider Effects:

- Partnerships and ways of working have been established to utilise the transdisciplinary approach for other projects and community activities.

Learning:

The Gibbs learning cycle has been used as part of an iterative process and SPICED methodology for drawing out both the voice and lived experience.

context that is meaningful for the user as Oakwood did in their classroom.

- Knowledge that could help schools, colleges and universities to better raise awareness of gambling harms and how gaming can be used as a gateway to gambling harms. This knowledge could contribute to bespoke and contextualised ways to support and prevent gambling harms.

Wider Effects:

These partnerships established, enable a more agile approach to future projects, building on what is there rather than starting from point zero.

Learning:

The SPICED methodology was used to ensure that all voices were heard. SPICED is Subjective, Participatory, Interpretable, Cross-Checkable, Evaluable, and Disaggregated. This helped us to transfer Danny's voice and learning into different events, outputs and key messages.



the GM area. The University of Salford co-developed the FanFit app, which used a similar community-led project model, is now used nationally.

Learning:

The learning we hope to gain is to provide insights into real-world problems across a wider socio-economic and cultural demographic. This will be developed through the process of co-creation and evaluation.

The evaluation process is based on iterative design methodologies, Rapid Evaluation Methods, and Gibb's Reflective Cycle that will ensure that every stage of the project's activities will be rigorous and robust. This is underpinned by significant academic expertise that will allow co-created innovative approaches and original insights to be incorporated at every step of the design and implementation process. Using the SPICE methodology for evaluating impact, we envisage qualitative feedback



<p>as well as process-based evaluations that focus on the strengths and weaknesses in place for specific interventions. This approach will better help us to provide disruptive interventions that actively engage with young, opening the door to further collaborative cross-agency research opportunities.</p>		
<p>Involvement of lived experience</p>		
<p>We plan to work with the EbE Reference Group, along with YGAM’s own network of people with lived experience of gambling-related harms, with the view that this will provide valuable insight to inform the direction, delivery and evaluation of the programme. We propose to build a ‘panel’ of 4-6 representatives, including affected others and underrepresented groups</p> <p>The project will also be informed from within the University, by <u>Professor Andy Miah</u> who will contribute his Manchester Science Festival <u>GameLab</u> experience to lead the gamification aspects and who is often invited to speak about philosophical and ethical issues concerning technology in society. Support will also</p>	<p>Yes we did work with the EbE Reference Group – Met with Danny. He played a critical role in the project by sharing his story and this became a primary source.</p>	<p>The learning was to really challenge assumptions about the lived experience. So much was revealed about the journey of a person exposed to gambling harms including stereotypes, experiences and behaviour.</p>

be provided by Dr Alex Fenton, Head of Disruptive Technologies Research Cluster, who developed the FanFit app to support behavioural change to fitness and wellbeing and brings app development experience, leading on digital audiences and impacts.

In addition, we would like to work with local young people from all backgrounds to inform the programme content, as well as the app development and any related events.

5. Sustainability

The aims of this project are consistent with Salford’s Great Eight strategic objectives, most specifically around work to tackle local poverty and inequality. They are also consistent with Greater Manchester’s objectives around safer and stronger communities and young people being better equipped for life. Any learning derived from this project (in terms of the nature of gambling behaviours, level of need and most appropriate intervention) can and will be used to inform future strategic development. Although national data is indicative of problematic gambling among young people in Salford, this issue is largely hidden. As

The project exploration identified that Tangible products of the project, such as the app and marketing materials, would need:

1. Further evidence base to enable the development and useful adoption.
2. Aimed at developing knowledge and data to support shared learning across the entire GM footprint, it is the knowledge and learning that needs to be sustainable rather than the product itself.

This reflection was valuable and moved the project underpinning from

The learning development from the project spans multiple disciplines, each providing a critical part to make a whole picture of the harms and how we might intervene or mitigate against them. This has included approaches from marketing, sociology, psychology, the arts and wellness, gamification in it’s purest form to help support the identification of conscious and unconscious actions.

the objective of this project is partly to better understand local gambling behaviours, derived learning about such behaviours will survive beyond the lifetime of the project. Additionally, evidence of what works and the resources developed to support awareness-raising will also be a legacy of the project. Collectively, this learning will be catalogued by Salford University and added to the evidence base.

However, in order to maximise both the sustainability of the project and its capacity to be delivered at scale, then the evaluation of impact will be critical to the development of a future business case to attract ongoing investment in support of this work. Tangible products of the project, such as the app and marketing materials, can of course be shared across the entire GM footprint but further work can also be undertaken to consolidate developments and link to other provision in cases where prevention has failed.

purely sustainable outputs and products to sustainable knowledge and understanding of the gambling harms. Coupled with the multi-disciplinary approach, we've been able to develop a series of learning that un-picks the motivation, rationale and even pin-points the exact movement when gambling becomes more harmful and when victims of gambling harms take an active decision to move out of the harmful situation. This learning is compiled into the publication along with our journey so that it can be replicated, adopted or avoided as part of sharing practice with the wider community tackling gambling harms.





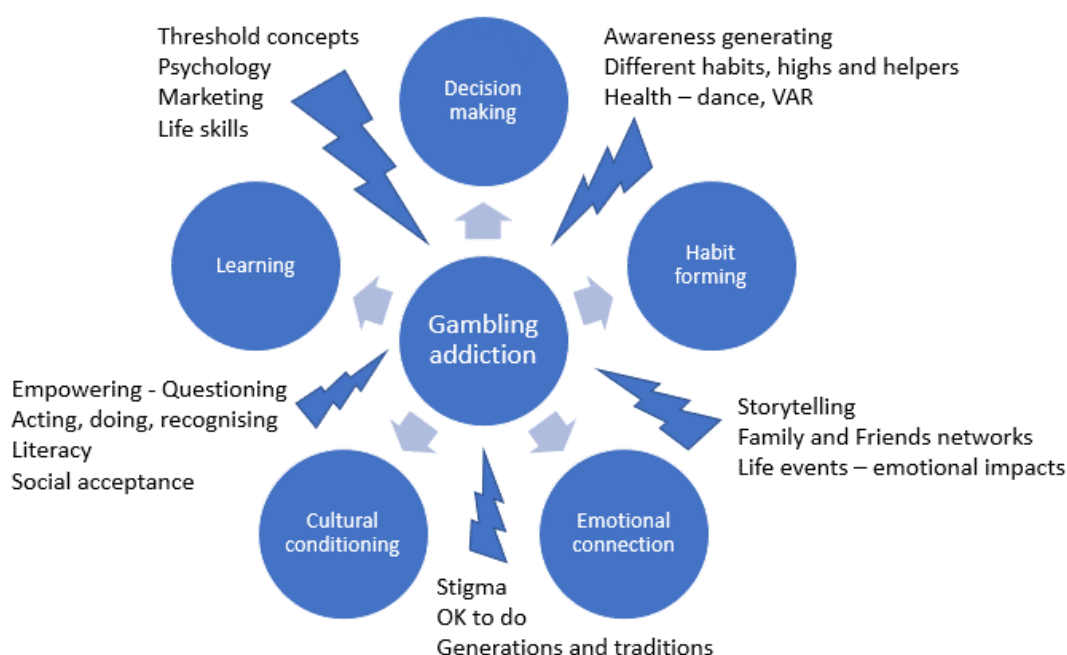
Section 5: Conclusion



Conclusion:

From the Unconscious to the Conscious

Bringing together the key findings of the project, we have uncovered some of the early detection trigger points into gambling harms and those that act as a catalyst out of the 'harm' situation. This section explores each one in turn and can be best summarised through this illustration:



There are five major influences towards gambling harms taken from the project observations, these are:

1. Decision making
2. Habit forming
3. Emotional connection
4. Cultural conditioning
5. Learning

This section draws together the key learning with further exploration of the research in this area outlined in the small paper collection in the chapter [XXX](#). [Each strand could be evolved into a research project individually, but in revealing the complexity of the contributing factors, would be difficult to isolate a single impact or cause and effect.] Embracing a storytelling approach, let's look into each area further, starting at the beginning through the 'gateway to gambling' as a threshold concept.[Reference needs adding [Threshold knowledge - Wikipedia](#)]



Gateway:

In the bustling city of chance and fortune, the gambling industry has woven its intricate web, casting a wide net to capture the attention of the masses. The allure of gambling is painted in vibrant hues by marketing strategies that cleverly normalise it. The industry's fun spin on gambling, with its glitz and glamour, makes it seem like an exciting pastime rather than a risky venture.

The role of family, friends, and colleagues in this narrative cannot be understated. They unknowingly contribute to the cultural normalisation of gambling. It's seen in the casual bets placed on events like the Grand National, or the scratch cards gifted as birthday or Christmas presents. Even public competitions like 'Strictly Come Dancing' and 'Britain's Got Talent' are not immune, with betting becoming a part of the viewing experience.

Parallel to this runs another narrative - that of the gaming industry. It has become a gateway for young people, subtly introducing them to the concept of spending money for virtual gains. The monetisation of gaming normalises spending money to acquire extra lives or hacks to progress to the next level.

This strategy employed by the gaming industry exploits the dopamine effects, making gaming sticky and habit-forming. The thrill of advancing a level or achieving a high score triggers a dopamine rush, similar to winning a bet. This clever manipulation makes gaming not just an entertaining diversion, but a habit that's hard to break.

Through the writing of this publication, we have been exploring the scope and use of AI as an alternative to app development and we have found that AI itself is not free from gambling bias. We have experimented with AI generating gambling harms content, but either it does not recognise gambling harms or the narratives the algorithms used cannot distinguish it from the gambling industry narrative. This suggests that AI has its limitations and as AI is driving tech development this is certainly an area prime for research. In particular, using a disruptive approach to AI to reconfigure it to understand the bias and find alternative voices would be an intriguing area for research.

In conclusion, both the gambling and gaming industries have mastered the art of normalisation and monetisation, making their offerings appear harmless and fun. However, it's crucial for individuals to recognise these tactics and make informed decisions about their engagement with these industries.

When gambling becomes a problem:

In the world of gambling, the role of dopamine, a neurotransmitter often referred to as the 'feel-good hormone', is significant. The thrill of placing a bet, the suspense of the game, and the exhilaration of a win all contribute to a surge of dopamine in the brain. This rush of pleasure and reward can be addictive, leading individuals down a path where they seek out these experiences repeatedly.

However, this pursuit of dopamine-induced happiness can have detrimental effects. As individuals become more engrossed in gambling, they may find themselves trapped in a vicious cycle. Financial resources that should be allocated for necessities such as bills are instead used for betting in the hope of making more money. This cycle can lead to financial instability and exacerbate the stress and anxiety that may have led to gambling in the first place.

The allure of a potential win and the subsequent dopamine rush overshadows the reality of their financial situation. The more they lose, the more they feel compelled to bet in an attempt to recoup their losses and experience the 'high' of a win. This pattern can lead to chronic gambling issues and significant financial hardship.

While gambling may initially seem like an exciting pastime, it's important to understand the potential harms associated with it. The role of dopamine in addiction and the vicious cycle of financial instability are just two aspects of these potential harms. Awareness and understanding of these factors are crucial steps in preventing gambling-related harm.

Critical Life Event – when the unconscious becomes conscious:

In the realm of gambling, there often comes a critical life event, a moment of stark realization when the unconscious becomes conscious. This is a point where a person hits rock bottom, and the veil of denial lifts, enabling them to see that there is a problem.

These life events can be varied - a significant financial loss, the breakdown of relationships, or the loss of a job. It's at this juncture that the individual is forced to confront the reality of their situation. The thrill and allure of gambling fade away, replaced by the harsh truth of its consequences.

It's important to note that it's not necessarily gambling that is identified as the root cause. Instead, it's the recognition that there is a problem, a disruption in their life that needs addressing. The gambling might be a symptom, an escape or coping mechanism for other underlying issues such as stress, anxiety, or depression.

This moment of realization is often the first step towards recovery. It paves the way for seeking help and making changes to break free from the cycle of gambling. It's a



painful yet crucial part of the journey, turning a critical life event into an opportunity for growth and change.

Recovery Process - Conscious

If you are struggling with gambling addiction, you may feel overwhelmed and hopeless. However, there are steps you can take to overcome your problem and regain control of your life. Here are some of the recovery options you can consider:

- Recognising gambling is the key problem. The first step is to admit that you have a gambling problem and that it is affecting your health, finances, relationships and happiness. You can use self-assessment tools, such as the Problem Gambling Severity Index, to measure the severity of your gambling behaviour and its impact on your life.
- Financial recovery. Gambling addiction can cause serious financial problems, such as debt, bankruptcy, loss of assets and legal issues. You can seek help from financial counsellors, who can help you manage your debt, create a budget, negotiate with creditors and access self-exclusion schemes, such as Gamstop, and banking tools, such as blocking gambling transactions or setting spending limits.
- Counselling and Therapy. Gambling addiction is often linked to underlying psychological issues, such as stress, anxiety, depression, trauma or low self-esteem. You can benefit from counselling and therapy, such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), which can help you identify and change your negative thoughts and beliefs about gambling and yourself. You can also learn coping skills and strategies to deal with triggers, urges and cravings to gamble.
- Self-help communities. You are not alone in your struggle with gambling addiction. You can join self-help communities, such as Gamblers Anonymous, online and in-person support groups, where you can share your experiences, feelings and challenges with other people who understand what you are going through. You can also receive support, advice and encouragement from peers and mentors who have recovered from gambling addiction.
- Support from NHS services and Gambling Addiction Charities. You can also access professional help from NHS services, such as the National Problem Gambling Clinic or the Northern Gambling Service, which offer specialised treatment for gambling addiction, including medication, psychotherapy and group therapy. You can also contact Gambling Addiction Charities, such as GamCare or BeGambleAware, which provide free and confidential helplines, online chat services, self-help resources and information on local services.

Theory of change

Through this project this has informed our theory of change. Gambling addiction is formed through:

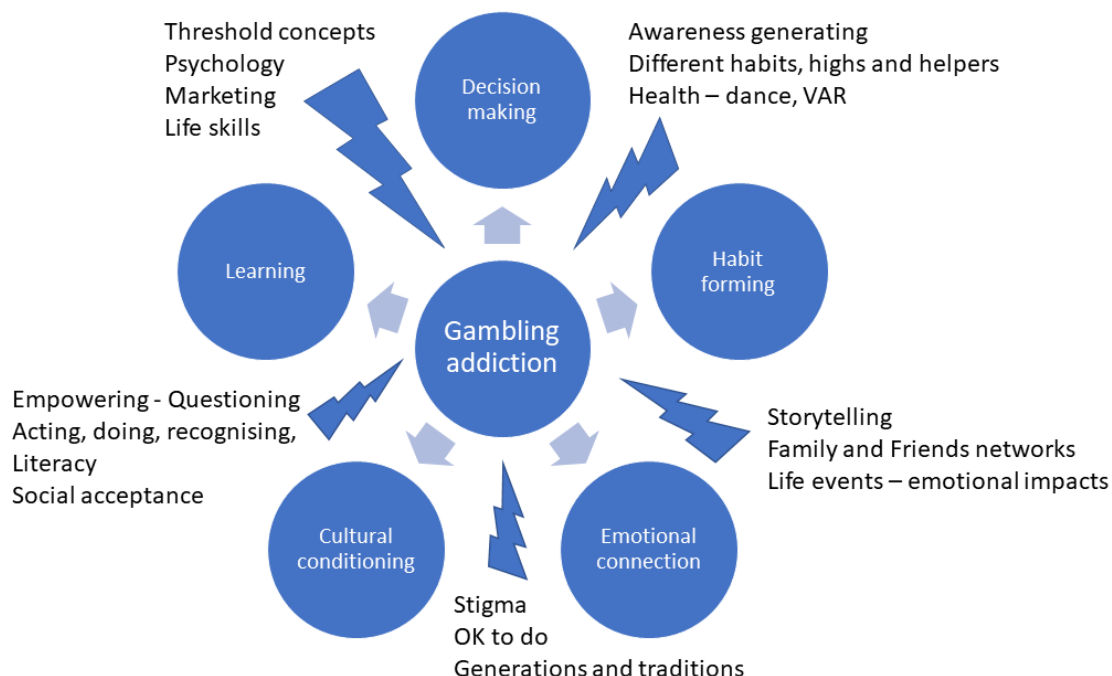
- Learning about gambling and how you can do it and how gaming is a gateway entry to gambling.
- Decision-making and how marketing is used by gambling companies to manipulate decision making
- Habit forming and the role of dopamine in making it enjoyable and addictive, IT and lack of gambling regulation make it easy to gamble
- Emotional connection to gambling
- The cultural conditioning that normalised gambling in the wider community – it's not a problem

However, these key areas that make gambling problems, can be used to disrupt the habit of gambling:

- Learning - Empowering people through questioning, acting, doing and recognising. Learning as an active experience through creativity, conversation and fun. Gambling and financial literacy as life skills. Social acceptance.
- Decision Making– adapting threshold concepts, marketing and psychology as life skills using gambling as a framing tool. This helps to inform decision-making.
- Habit Forming – raising awareness of the issues of gambling, different habits highs and helpers. Alternative healthy dopamine-generating habits e.g. dance, VAR.
- Emotional Connection – role of storytelling to shine a light on the damages of gambling harms. Has been used in TV for storylines on sexual abuse of males, domestic violence, coercive control, self-harm and mental health. Role of friends and families to support loved one's struggling with gambling addiction.
- Cultural Conditioning – subverting the role of stigma and challenging traditions. E.g. drinking in young

Bing: According to a report by **The Guardian**, alcohol consumption among 16- to 24-year-olds in the UK has been declining, with more than a quarter of that age group being fully teetotal¹. The same report suggests that the trend for British youth shunning alcohol has been bubbling away for some time, and there could be many explanations for this. One factor may be that alcohol is becoming more difficult for young people to get hold of, and pubs and clubs are also getting better at challenging under-age drinking². Researchers conducting interview-based studies with young people in a range of countries have identified four main reasons for declining youth drinking. These are: uncertainty and worry about the future, concern

about health, changes to technology and leisure, and shifting relationships with parents³.




“Just say no” Approach does not work

The effectiveness of the "Just Say No" approach has been called into question, particularly in its application to addressing gambling. Instead, there is a growing recognition of the significance of engaging in meaningful conversations with young people to delve into the complexities of gambling behaviour.

Furthermore, it is important for young people to gain an understanding of the manipulative techniques employed in marketing. Comprehending how marketing strategies are used to influence spending decisions proves highly beneficial for young people, as it sheds light on the factors that underlie their decision-making processes. This component assumes a pivotal role as a disruptive force within the project.

Storytelling emerges as an indispensable tool for highlighting the challenges faced by individuals grappling with gambling addiction. It transcends passive observation and listening, by offering an avenue for the creative expression of these narratives through art, music, poetry, and written forms. Simultaneously, it enables an analytical exploration of the critical moments within an individual's journey.

The inclusion of a Video Assistant Referee (VAR) and the absence of in-game purchase messages in gaming experiences provide young people with a real means to discern the distinctions in their gaming encounters.



The cultivation of an equitable power dynamic between facilitators and young people is of utmost importance. Through active listening and meaningful dialogues, young people can articulate their experiences of being targeted by the gaming industry and explain the tactics being used to manipulate them.

Transitioning from the traditional "chalk-and-talk" educational approach to one that nurtures facilitated discussions framed within the realms of creativity (as shown by storytelling), life skills (such as marketing literacy), or gaming (via VAR) is vital to the success of this project.

Additionally, the potency of storytelling, particularly within television, has been shown through collaborative efforts with charitable organisations, people with lived experiences, and advocacy groups addressing social issues. Notable instances include the collaboration between We Are Survivors Charity and popular television series like Hollyoaks, Eastenders, and Coronation Street, which spotlighted the issue of sexual abuse of men. Additionally, the BAFTA-winning drama "Three Girls," based on the Rochdale Child Sex Abuse ring, engaged closely with individuals involved in the case, effectively disseminating the narrative to a national audience. This dramatization played a pivotal role in encouraging victims to come forward, culminating in the recent conviction of five men in the Rochdale child sex offences case, as documented in BBC News.


Next Steps - picking your fight

Gambling harms are a serious and widespread problem that touch many aspects of our lives. They are not simply a result of individual decisions or random events, but a product of multiple and interrelated factors that shape our society. Gambling harms can affect our physical and mental health, our relationships, our finances, our work and our communities. That is why we need to act collectively to prevent and reduce them.

However, we face a difficult task when we try to raise awareness and educate people about gambling and its consequences. The gambling industry is a powerful and influential force that uses various tactics to market their products and services, to entice new customers and to retain existing ones. They also influence the government and other decision-makers to defend their interests and to oppose any regulation or intervention that might reduce their profits.

To address the social and economic impacts of gambling, we need to take a comprehensive and collaborative approach. We need to raise awareness of the risks and harms of gambling, educate and empower individuals and communities, and advocate for policy and practice changes. We need to base our interventions on sound evidence from research, practice and lived experience. We need to engage with diverse stakeholders from different fields and sectors, such as psychology, IT, marketing, health, education, social work and community development.

One of the strategies we can use is to reframe gambling as a health issue rather than a social problem. This is similar to what Portugal did with drug addiction in 2001 when they decriminalised all drugs and shifted their focus from criminalisation and



punishment to treatment and harm reduction. This led to significant improvements in public health outcomes, such as reduced drug-related deaths, infections, overdoses and crime. According to a report by the Transnational Institute, one of the greatest achievements of the Portuguese drug policy is the decrease in consumption among the most at-risk age group of 15- to 19-year-olds¹. Portugal has some of the lowest usage rates in Europe among those between the ages of 15-34².

We have been experimenting with various ways to engage different audiences, especially young people, in learning about gambling harms and how to prevent them. One of our initiatives was a Job Skills event, where we engaged young people through the essential skills and qualities for the workplace, such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving and resilience. We used gambling as a context to discuss these topics and to inform them about the risks and harms of gambling.

This is just a glimpse of how we can address gambling harms in innovative and effective ways. There are many more potential strategies and opportunities for further research and action. Going forward a space to create a forum to share ideas, expertise and experience would be valuable to continue the work to challenge and address gambling harms.

Conclusion


This project was a learning experience for us, as we realised how complex and multifaceted the issue of gambling harms is. We thought we could apply a simple method, but we soon found out that it was not enough. On reflection, this project made me think of a paper by Keith Grint, titled “Wicked Problems and Clumsy Solutions: the Role of Leadership”. The paper explores the challenge of change and how different types of problems (Tame, Wicked and Critical) require different types of responses (Management, Leadership and Command). It also examines the influence of default cultures and how they tend to favour ‘elegant’ solutions that are internally consistent, but may not work for Wicked problems. Wicked problems, according to the paper, need ‘Clumsy Solutions’ that use the creativity of bricoleurs to pragmatically deal with whatever is available to solve these complex problems.

Gambling harms is a Wicked problem that demands a multidisciplinary approach, substantial investment and constant awareness of the changes in the gambling industry, academic research and technology.

What are the next steps? Gambling is not going to disappear and neither are gambling harms. But what can we do about it?

We need to keep doing what we are doing, such as more research projects, collaborative learning activities, and working together to co-create Clumsy Solutions.

We need to make sure we involve people from diverse backgrounds, lived experiences, academia and professions in the same space to learn from each other and to spark conversations, connections and collaborations.



However, what stood out in this project was the importance of conversations and connections among people to understand the difficulties, share insights and develop knowledge to tackle gambling harms.

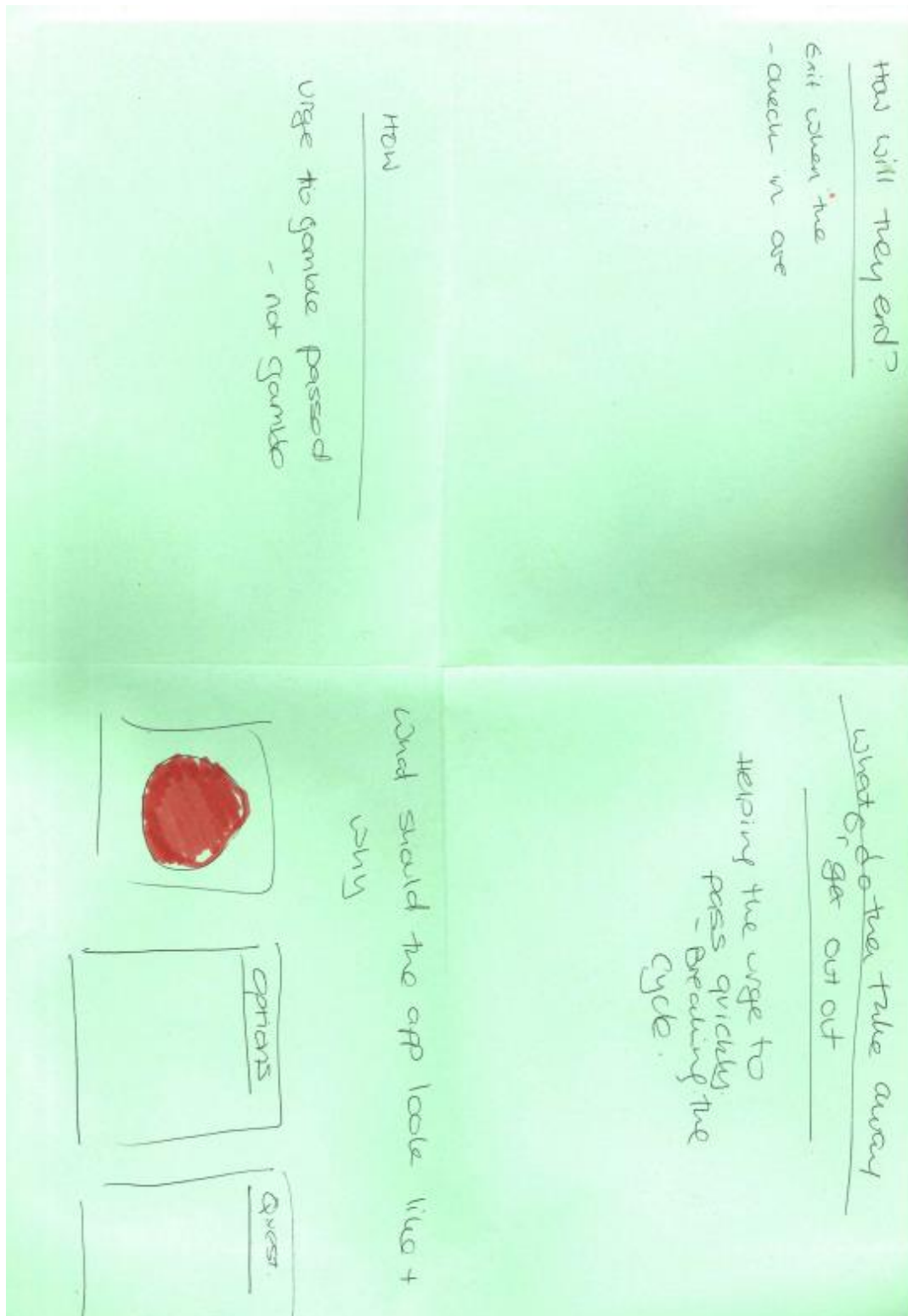




Section 6: Outputs and opportunities



There are a number of handwritten notes and outputs from the maker market and contributions from the school participants. This section is dedicated to showing these and the effort, enthusiasm from the event.



WHO IS YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE?

18-25 University Students.

How will they begin?

Hit the panic

Button

What is the issue they are trying to address or problems to be solved

Breaking the cycle of the urge to gamble.

What happens once they start

Self soothing

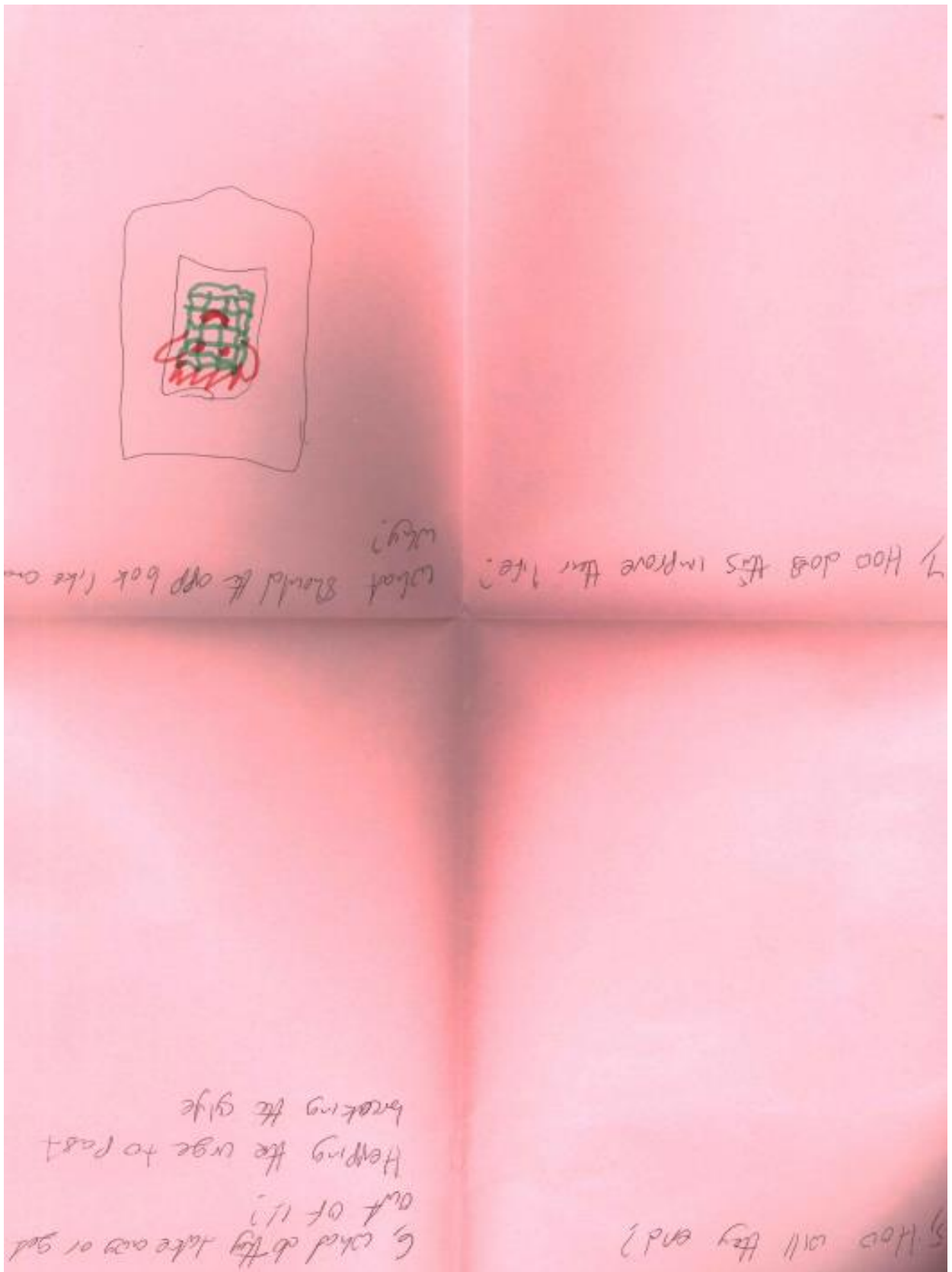


1/ What is the issue they are trying to address or problem to be solved?
Breaking the usage / Cycle of the problem

2/ What happens once they start?
Panic button

3/ How will they begin?

4/ Forget audience
Start 10-25



① What do you think of gambling?

Something that might seem fun but can be an issue for people with addiction issues.

② What experience have you of gambling?
online/Lottery.

③ How could you make it safer for you.

- Blocking Software/apps

④ How could it be safer for others?

Share knowledge of how ~~researched~~ gambling companies use psychology to manipulate you...

Start

- Horses
- 13 years old

middle

- Gambling his transport money
- Making excuses not to attend uni
- Gambling his wages
- taking loans

Shift

- His mum was sick
- realisation of gambling
- Effects of gambling

change

- He emails gambling companies to help him stop

1. Hard to avoid gambling
- it seems to be everywhere
2. I have been to the races and placed the odd bet on football I have also bought lottery tickets and scratch cards
3. Ensure everyone is aware of what the signs of harm are and where to get support
Make it a regular conversation - increased awareness like drugs and alcohol.
4. Same as above plus ~~to~~ greater controls on advertising.

BUS fares
Dumplings
T-shirts
Waking at 4 am

Loans

Memories
Rather than
making them

Started Gambling
before 18

↳ Grand National

Winged by Day Rent

We win when we win,
But what happens then,
A loss is not recorded,
Despite being afforded,
The loss is felt in pocket,
And in the pain in my
pocket,

My memories are lost
But at what cost!

1. Gambling is an addictive form of escapism that manipulates people to spend money in return for a reward which is ultimately futile.

2. I have played in arcades before where you put in money in order to receive more money.

3. Information on the dangers that gambling poses.

4. Putting a limit on how much time is spent gambling.





Section 7:

Resources and links



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