

Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health webinar

# Gambling within post-secondary institutions

May 27, 2024

**Sasha Stark, PhD**, Director of Research and Evidence Services, Greo Evidence Insights

**Andrew Kim, PhD**, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Calgary

- Greo's platforms



world's largest  
international gambling  
evidence centre

research-grade  
gambling data  
repository

dedicated evidence  
hubs + stakeholder  
platforms

- Greo's products



regularly published research snapshots

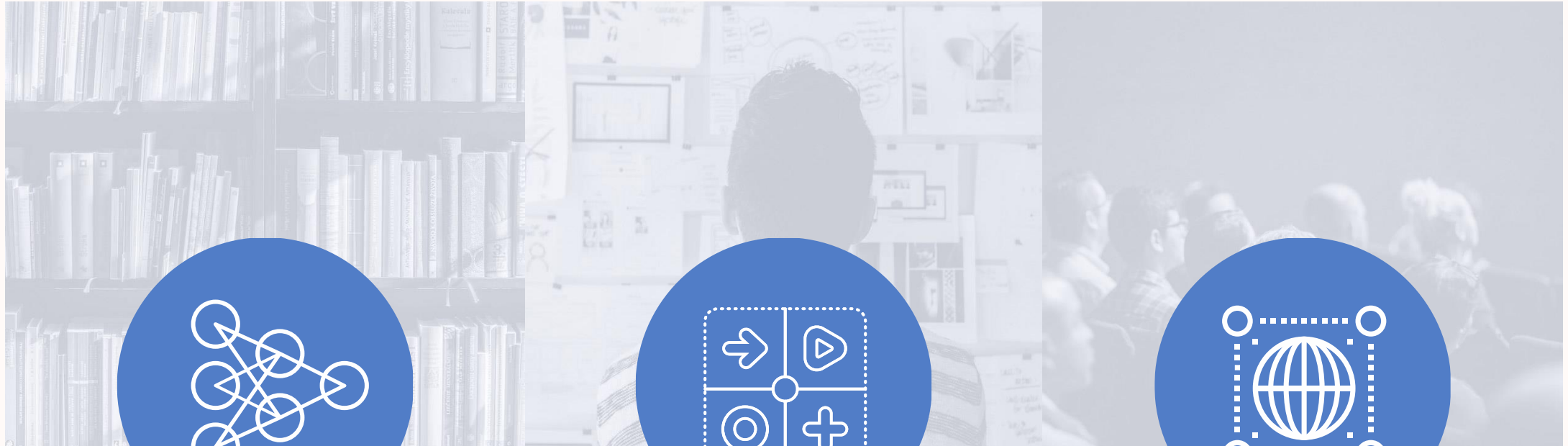


on-demand policy briefs

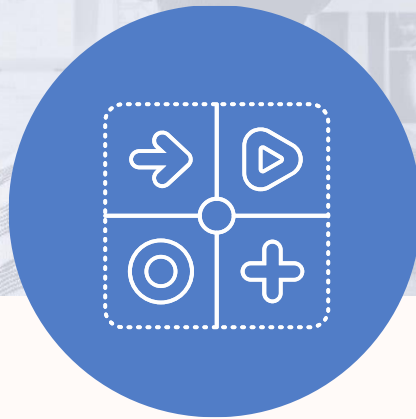


conceptual framework of harmful gambling

- Greo's services



research and evidence services



third-party evaluation



stakeholder engagement

## → Outline

- 1 Gambling behaviour and harm
- 2 The gambling context in Canada and Ontario
- 3 Gambling behaviours and harm among young adults
- 4 Young people and sports betting
- 5 Prevention and support resources



# Gambling behaviour and harm

# What is gambling?

→ Gambling is risking the **loss of money or something of value on an outcome that is based on chance** with the aim of winning something (else) of value, including:

→ Lottery tickets

→ Slot machines

→ Scratch tickets

→ Table and card games

→ Bingo and raffles

→ Sports betting

→ Betting on horse or dog races

→ Bets between friends

# Types of gambling-related harm

- For some people, their families, and the broader community, gambling creates and contributes to a **broad range of harms**, including impacts on:
  - Finances
  - Social interactions and relationships
  - Psychological wellbeing
  - Health
  - Engagement in other activities
  - Employment and education



# Drivers of gambling-related harm

Drivers of gambling-related harms are complex. Factors outside of people's direct control include:

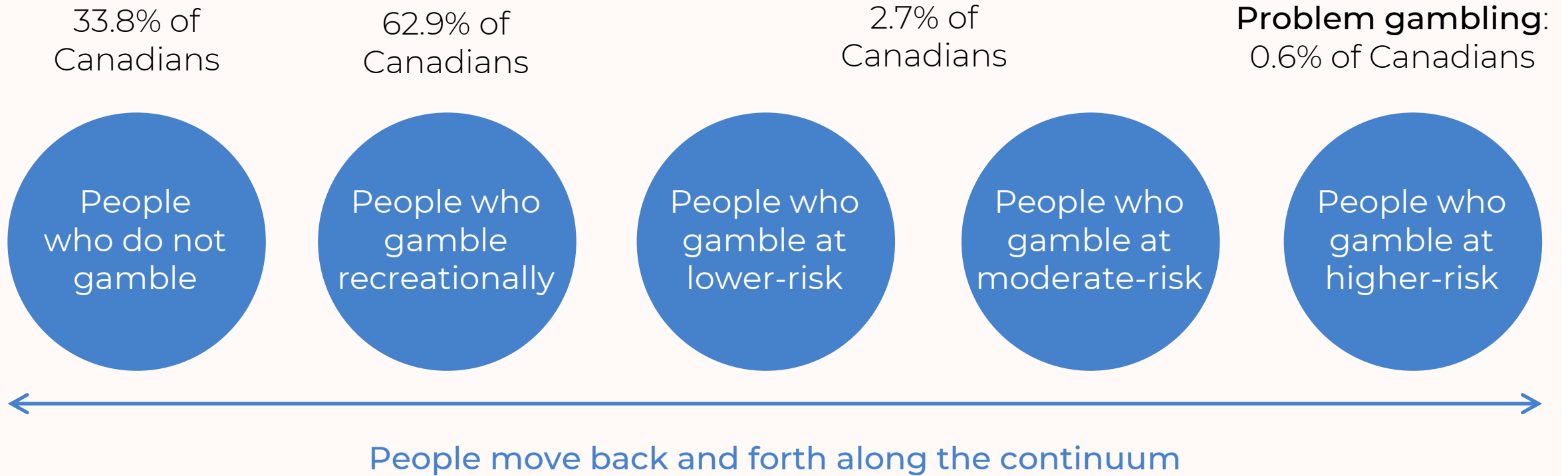
- **Biopsychosocial factors** e.g., socio-economic status
- **Cultural factors** e.g., beliefs about gambling and associated shame and stigma
- **Environmental factors** e.g., where and how policies allow gambling to be offered, the design of gambling products

# Continuum of gambling behaviour



People move back and forth along the continuum

# Continuum of gambling behaviour



Adapted from the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation; M Vander Linden

# Gambling disorder

- Clinical diagnosis included in the 5th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Text Revision (**DSM-5-TR**): Persistent gambling that leads to clinically significant impairment in **12-month period**. Nine symptoms, **4+** required to meet criteria.
- **Symptoms:** preoccupation, loss of control, concealing extent of gambling physiological, harms
- **Prevalence (problem gambling):** 1.29%<sup>1</sup>, 2-4% in adolescents<sup>2</sup>
- **Signs:** Maps onto gambling disorder criteria. Can ask whether they [or others] feel they may have a problem with their gambling

## Taking a population-focused approach

- **Primary approaches:** preventing harms from occurring in the first place in those who gamble at lower-risk.
- **Secondary approaches:** preventing the escalation to severe harms in those who gamble at moderate-risk through early intervention.
- **Tertiary approaches:** providing treatment and supports to those who gamble at higher-risk experiencing significant harms.

# The gambling context in Canada and Ontario

- The gambling context in Canada and Ontario

# Changes in the gambling landscape

- **June 2021:** legalization of single event sports betting in Canada
  - Single event sports betting now offered by all provincial government operators
- **April 2022:** opening of the online gambling market in Ontario
  - As of March 2024: 47 operators; 77 online gambling sites<sup>1</sup>
  - Q4 2023-2024 wagers: \$17.8 billion<sup>1</sup>
  - 2023-2024 wagers: \$63 billion; 78% increase over 2022-2023<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>: <https://igamingontario.ca/en/news/igaming-ontarios-fy-2023-24-full-year-market-performance-report>

- The gambling context in Canada and Ontario
- 

## What has changed?

- The **expansion of gambling** is often accompanied by:
  - New/higher numbers of gambling operators
  - New types of bets/betting features (e.g., in-play betting)
  - Increased advertising, sponsorship, promotion, and inducements
  - New potential risks, for priority populations in particular
  - The need for new or tailored prevention approaches and supports (e.g., pre-commitment, voluntary self-exclusion)



- The gambling context in Canada and Ontario

# Increased attention to gambling

- **March 2024:** Maru public opinion survey of Canadians<sup>1</sup>
  - 66% of Canadians believe sports betting advertising should not be allowed during live events/games
  - 59% believe a national ban on sports betting advertising should be implemented
- **Media coverage:** The Fifth Estate, The Agenda with Steve Paikin



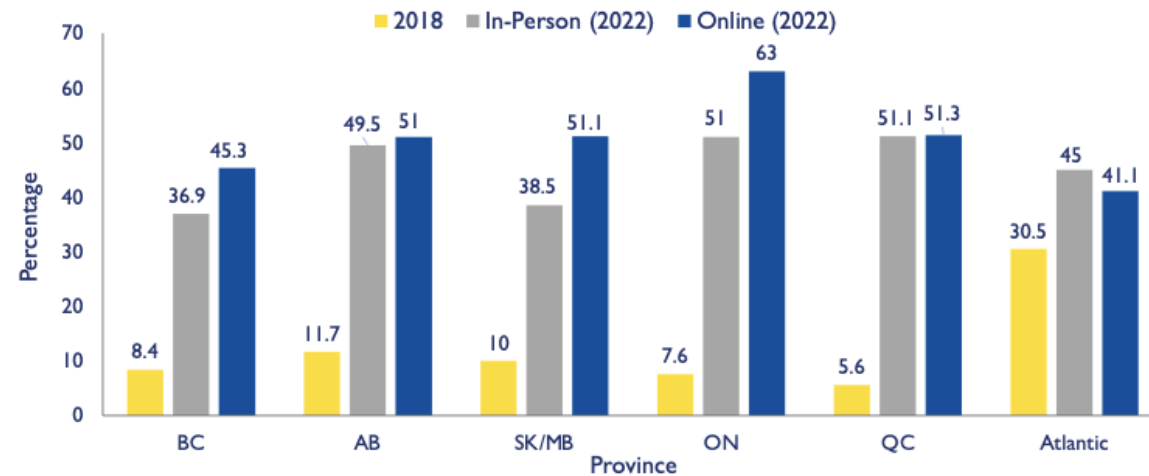
<sup>1</sup> <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6405fa1b78abf0232468c763/t/6604858428abbe5e88bca63c/1711572357055/Online+Sports+Betting+3+27+24.pdf>

- The gambling context in Canada and Ontario

# Impacts on gambling participation

→ In 2018, 66% of Canadians reported engaging in some type of gambling, primarily lottery and/or raffle tickets.<sup>1</sup>

### Rates of Sports Betting by Province 2018 & 2022



(Ipsos Reid, 2022; Williams et al., 2020)



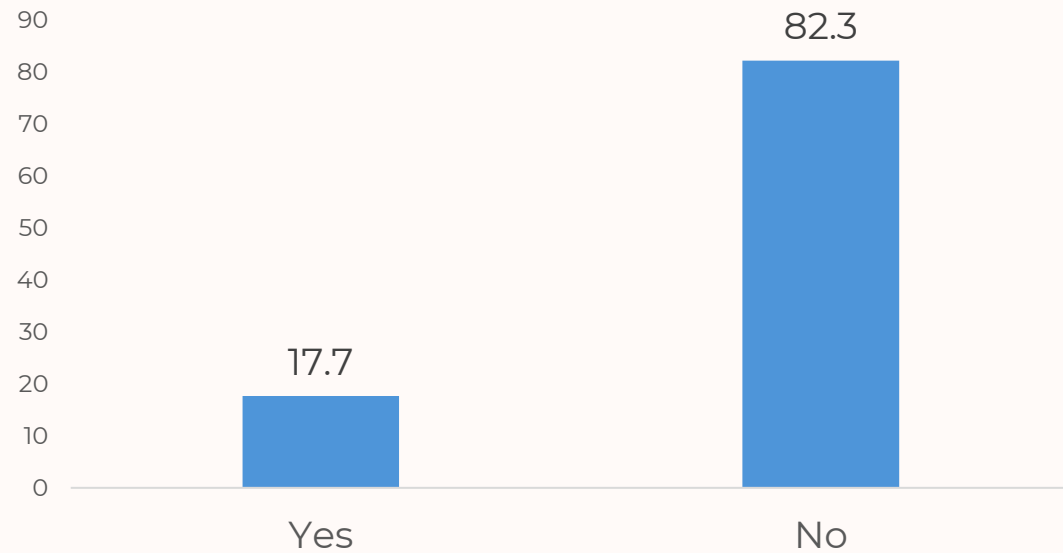
<sup>1</sup>: Williams et al, 2020

# Gambling behaviours and harm among young adults

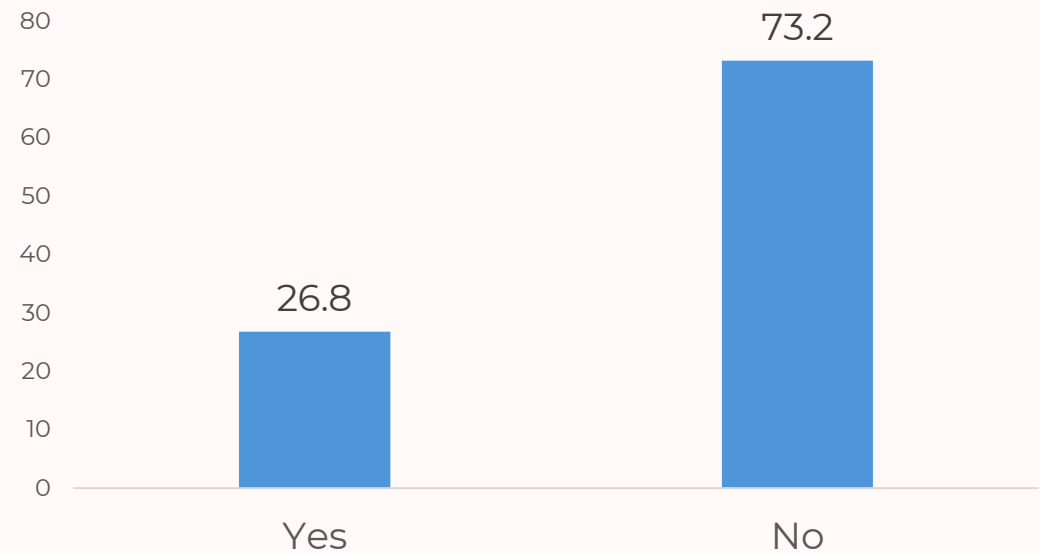
- Gambling behaviours and harm among young adults

# Gambling participation in university students

**Past-year Gambling Among University Students (%)**



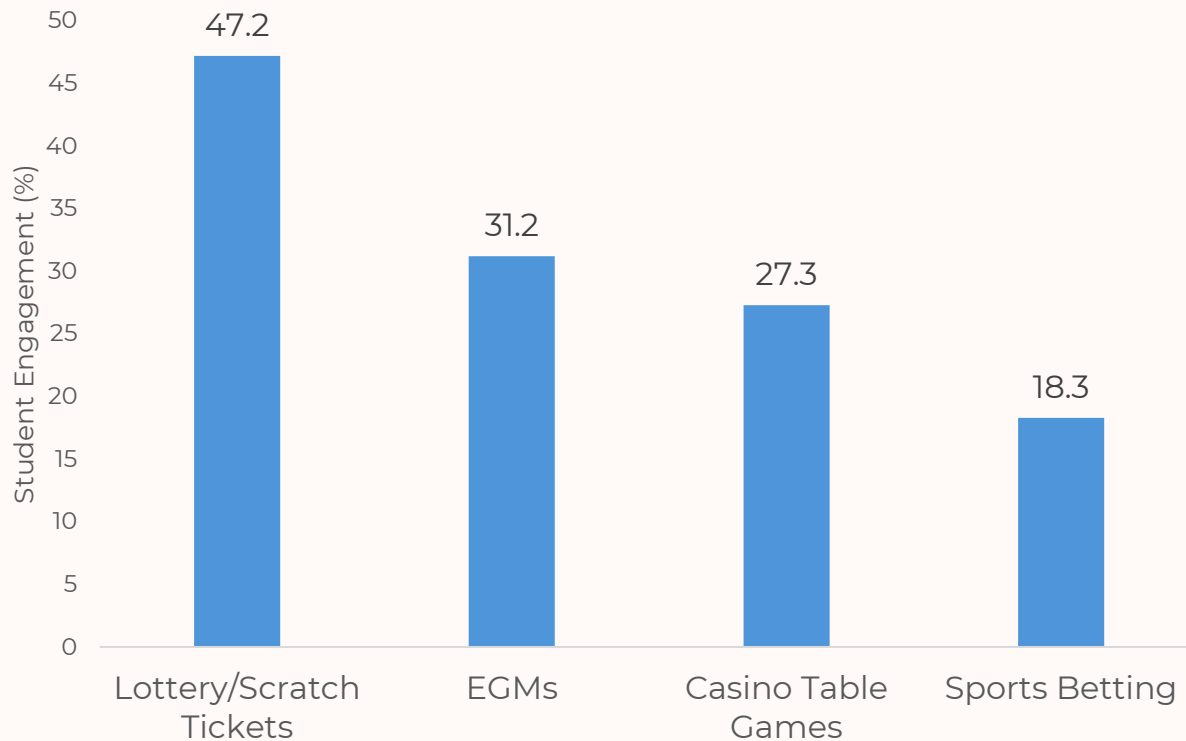
**Students Meeting Criteria for Problematic Gambling (%)**



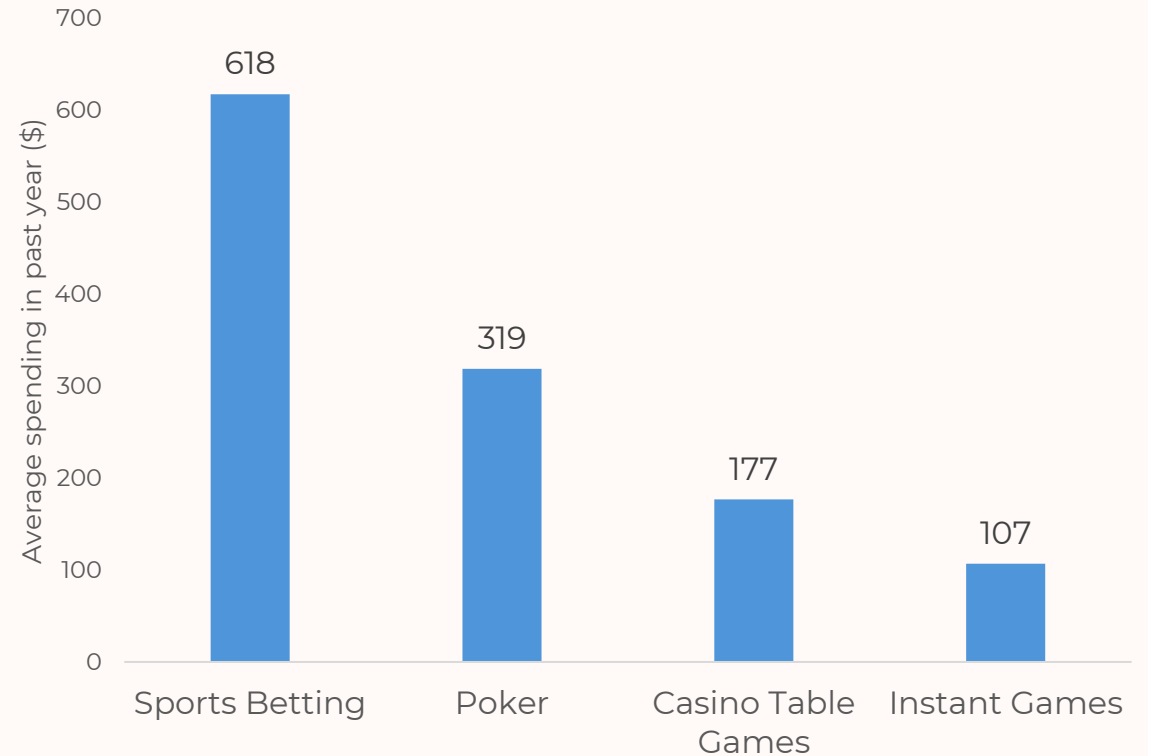
- Gambling behaviours and harm among young adults

# Gambling participation in university students

**Most Popular Gambling Forms**



**Most Money Spent (\$)**



- Gambling behaviours and harm among young adults

# Advertising and normalization

- Young people's exposure to gambling advertising, which often shows gambling as an easy way to make money, can make them **more aware of gambling and change how they feel about gambling.**<sup>1</sup>
  - However, research finds that exposure to advertising does not lead to increased gambling in a consistent way.<sup>1</sup>
- Young people's repeated exposure to **gambling advertising in mobile and online games can normalize gambling** – making it seem like a fun, everyday activity for young people to do.<sup>2</sup>

- Gambling behaviours and harm among young adults

## Game type and beliefs

- Young people are more likely to experience problem gambling if they play **games with gambling-like features** (like video games with loot boxes and social casino games) and engage in **new types of gambling** (like online sports betting and e-sports betting).<sup>1</sup>
- Young adults 18 to 24 years endorse more **false beliefs about gambling**, like believing that random outcomes will occur if they have not for a while.<sup>2</sup>

- Gambling behaviours and harm among young adults
- 

# Gender

- Young men **gamble at higher rates and participate in higher-risk types of gambling** (like gambling online and on a mobile device) than young women.<sup>1</sup>
- **Young men** are more likely to experience problem gambling than young women.<sup>2</sup>
- **Impulsivity, faulty or biased ways of thinking, emotional vulnerability, and risk-taking** are linked to increased risk of problem gambling in young men.<sup>2</sup>





# Young people and sports betting

# Young people and sports betting

- Age is a predictor of participation in sports betting, with **younger age being linked to greater engagement in sports betting.**<sup>1</sup>
- Younger age is associated with engaging in **newer and more harmful forms of sports betting.**<sup>2</sup>
- People who bet on sports tend to be **more educated** and have post-secondary education.<sup>3</sup>
- People who play sports may be more likely to bet on them, **with young people more likely to feel it is a safe way to win money.**<sup>4</sup>

1: Winters & Derevensky, 2019

2: Vieira et al., 2023

3: Valenciano-Mendoza et al., 2023

4: Deans et al., 2017; Pitt, et al., 2017

- Young people and sports betting

# Young people and sports betting advertising

- Sponsorship affects young **people's awareness, attitudes, and intentions to gamble.**<sup>1</sup>
- Among those 16-24 years who bet on sports, spending more than planned is associated with **receiving direct marketing and following operators on social media.**<sup>2</sup>
- Among those 18-25 years, **ads with betting odds may trigger more impulsivity**, due to the appeal of quick, intuitive decision making.<sup>3</sup>

# Young men and sports betting

- Young men are often **highly engaged in sports betting** and may also have low safer gambling knowledge and behaviours.<sup>1</sup>
- Young men are frequently part of **online gambling communities and engage with gambling operators on social media.**<sup>2</sup>
- Sports betting has become closely **tied to young men's sports fan rituals.**<sup>3</sup>
- People who bet on sports, particularly young men, can be **motivated by group belonging or praise** they receive from gambling.<sup>4</sup>

- Young people and sports betting

# Self-regulation strategies among those who bet on sports

- **Self-regulation strategies:** spending limits (68.6%), time limits/breaks (21.1%), self-exclusion (6.7%), seeking treatment (1%), education (0.9%)<sup>1</sup>
- Setting **financial limits** is associated with *reduced* spending and harms; setting **time limits** is associated with *increased* spending and harms.<sup>2</sup>
- Yet, only **39.4%** of young adults report frequently or always setting limits. When limits are set, **77.5%** report frequently or always adhering to limits.<sup>1</sup>
- Reasons: **avoid financial difficulties** ("so I can make rent and buy groceries), **minimize losses** ("only bet what I can afford to lose), **maintain self-control** ("to not get carried away")<sup>1</sup>



# Prevention and support resources

- Prevention and support resources

# Prevention

→ **Keys to successful prevention** of gambling-related harms among young people include:

→ Informed by a theoretical framework

→ Multi-session, with follow-ups into adulthood

→ Universal delivery among all young people

→ Focus on building skill (not just knowledge); inclusion of complex mathematical concepts; prevention of gambling-related harms (not gambling)

→ Early age (early high school)

→ Interactive



# LRGG

## Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines

These guidelines were developed using the most current and highest quality scientific evidence available.

To reduce your risk of experiencing harms from gambling, follow all three of these guidelines:

1

### HOW MUCH

Gamble no more than **1%** of household income before tax per month

Yearly household income	Maximum monthly amount
\$10,000	\$8
\$30,000	\$25
\$50,000	\$42
\$70,000	\$58
\$90,000	\$75
\$110,000	\$92
\$130,000	\$108
\$150,000	\$125

and

4

### HOW OFTEN

Gamble no more than **4 days** per month

and

2

### HOW MANY

Avoid regularly gambling at more than **2 types** of games

#### WHAT YOU PLAY MATTERS

- ▶ Fast-paced games that involve quick and repeated betting can more quickly and easily lead to problems.
- ▶ For example, with many forms of online gambling, slot machines, electronic gaming machines and poker, people can spend large amounts of money in a short time.

#### GAMBLING TYPES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:



**HOWEVER**, these limits may not be suitable for you. You should consider gambling less than these guidelines recommend or not at all if you ...

- ▶ Experience problems from **alcohol, cannabis or other drug use**
- ▶ Experience problems with **anxiety or depression**
- ▶ Have a **personal or family history** of problems with gambling





## HOW MANY



**Which of the following types of gambling do you regularly play? Please check all that apply.**



**Lottery and  
raffle tickets**



**Electronic  
gaming  
machines**

including:  
- slot machines  
- video lottery terminals  
- electronic racing  
machines

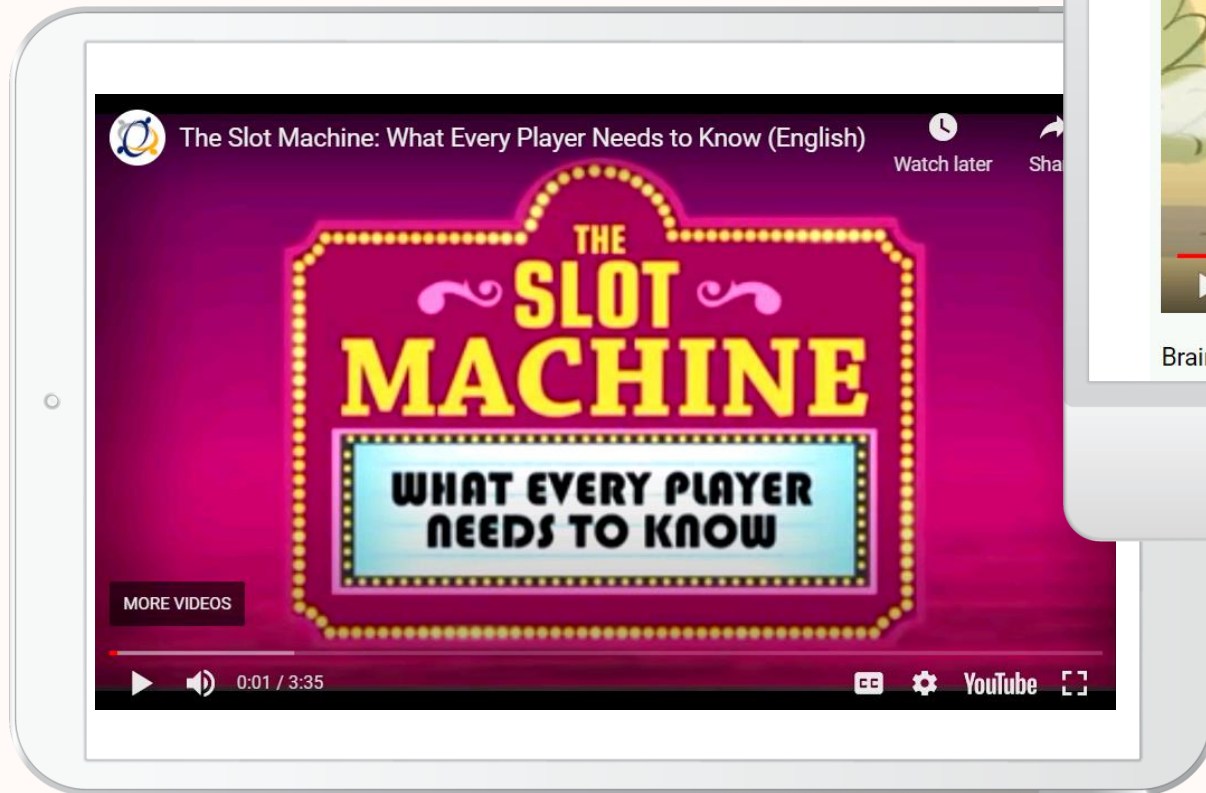


**Sports betting**

including:  
- professional sporting  
events  
- sports pools  
- fantasy sports betting

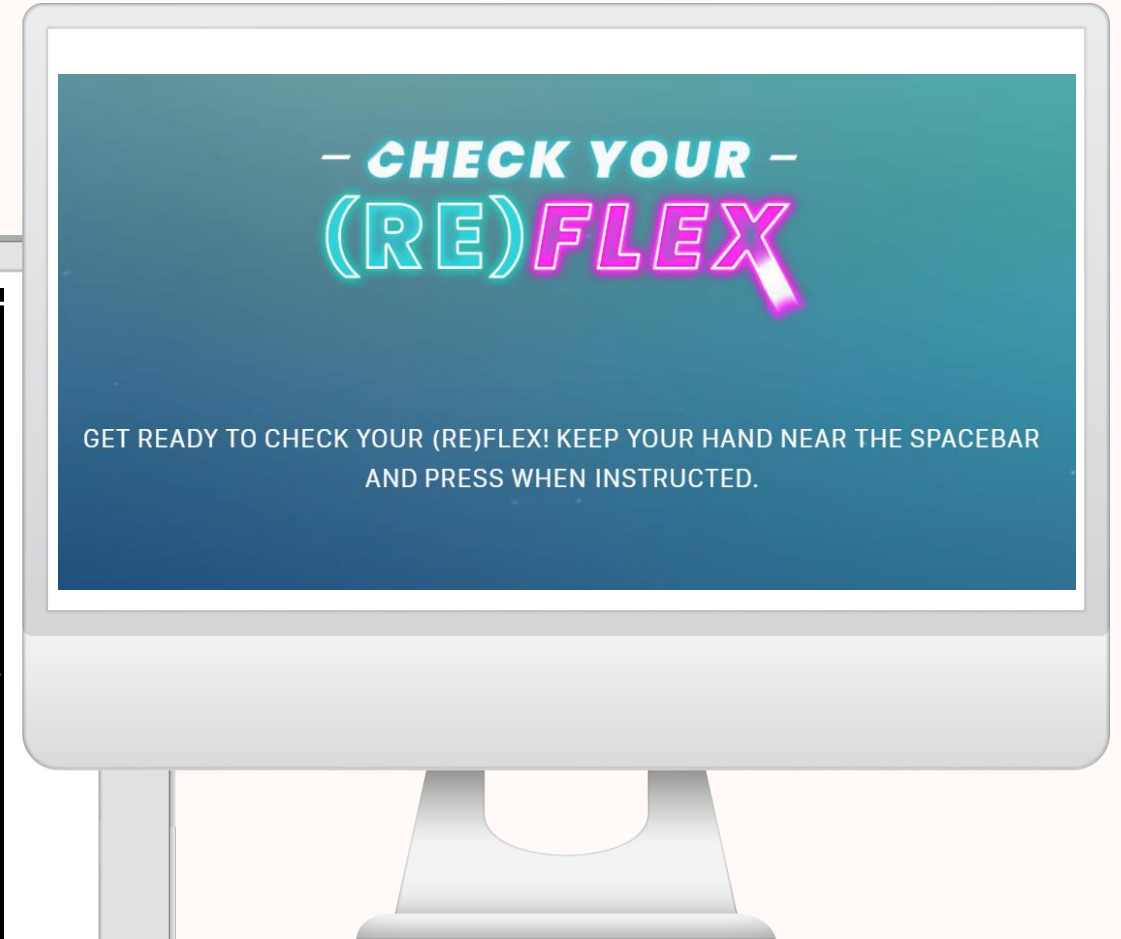
brainconnections.ca

[www.youtube.com/@greoconsulting](http://www.youtube.com/@greoconsulting)



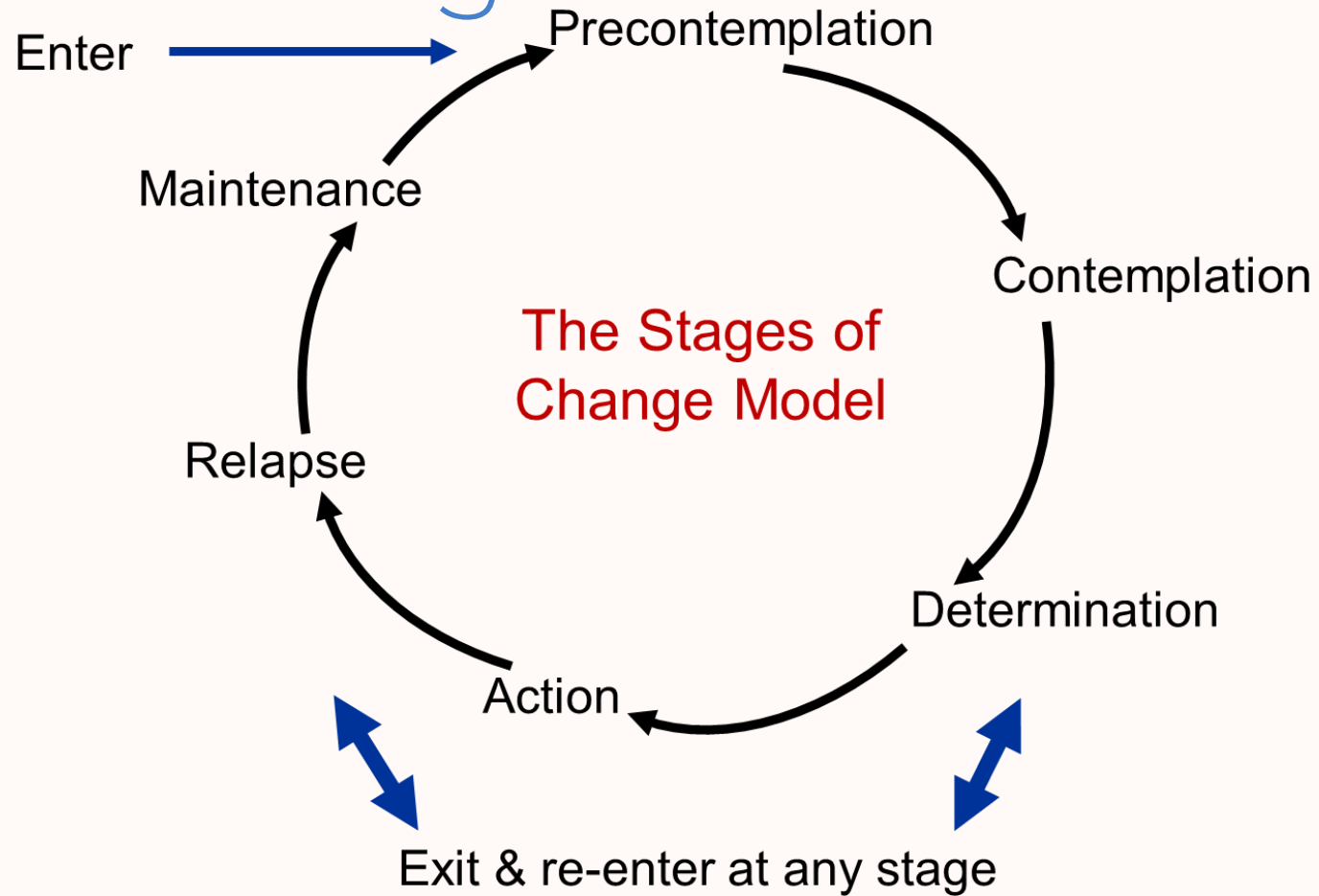
checkyourreflex.ca/

ymcagta.org/youth-programs/youth-gambling-awareness-program



- Prevention and support resources

# Stages of Change



- Prevention and support resources
- 

# Supports and professional treatment

- **Self-help:** online resources, self-help books, self-guided interventions, support groups
- **Professional treatment:** inpatient (residential), outpatient treatment (counselling, psychotherapy)
- **Medication:** not strong evidence, opioid antagonist (e.g., naltrexone) seems to have most promise<sup>1</sup>

Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

## Gambling Quiz

This self-assessment is based on the Canadian Problem Gambling Index. The higher your score, the greater the risk that your gambling is a problem.





**When you think of the past 12 months, how often...**

- Have you bet more than you could really afford to lose?  
 Never (0)    Sometimes (1)    Most of the Time (2)    Almost Always (3)    Don't Know (0)
- Have you needed to gamble with larger amounts of money to get the same feeling of excitement?  
 Never (0)    Sometimes (1)    Most of the Time (2)    Almost Always (3)    Don't Know (0)
- Have you gone back another day to try to win back the money you lost?  
 Never (0)    Sometimes (1)    Most of the Time (2)    Almost Always (3)    Don't Know (0)
- Have you borrowed money or sold anything to get money to gamble?  
 Never (0)    Sometimes (1)    Most of the Time (2)    Almost Always (3)    Don't Know (0)
- Have you felt that you might have a problem with gambling?  
 Never (0)    Sometimes (1)    Most of the Time (2)    Almost Always (3)    Don't Know (0)
- Have you felt people criticized your betting or told you that you had a gambling problem, regardless of whether or not you thought it was true?  
 Never (0)    Sometimes (1)    Most of the Time (2)    Almost Always (3)    Don't Know (0)
- Have you felt guilty about the way you gamble, or what happens when you gamble?  
 Never (0)    Sometimes (1)    Most of the Time (2)    Almost Always (3)    Don't Know (0)
- Has your gambling caused you any health problems, including a feeling of stress or anxiety?  
 Never (0)    Sometimes (1)    Most of the Time (2)    Almost Always (3)    Don't Know (0)
- Has your gambling caused any financial problems for you or your household?  
 Never (0)    Sometimes (1)    Most of the Time (2)    Almost Always (3)    Don't Know (0)

Add up your score: \_\_\_\_\_

## Gambling Quiz

**Here are the explanations of the scores:**

PGSI score pyramid	Definition:	Probable life consequences:
	High-risk gambler 8-27	A person scoring in this range may be gambling dependent and is experiencing a substantial level of gambling related problems.
	Moderate-risk gambler 3-7	A person scoring in this range will already be experiencing some problem related to their gambling.
	Low-risk gambler 1-2	Experienced one or two minor problems related to their gambling.
	Non-problem gambler 0	Experienced no problems in the last year

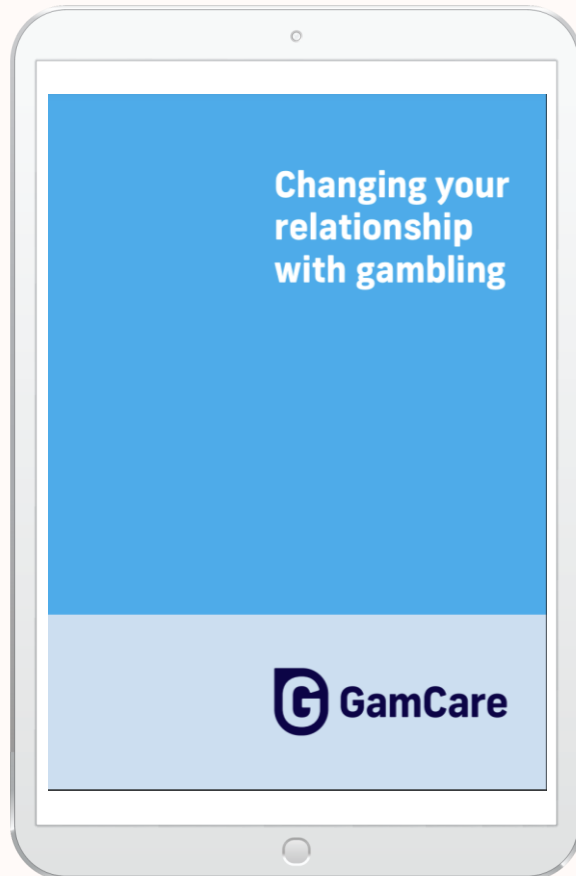
The PGSI score shows whether a person's gambling should be considered a problem. High scores usually mean serious problems. The chart above is in the shape of a pyramid to show that there are more people with low scores than high scores.

If your score indicates that you might be at risk, there are options available to you:

- Register for anonymous online tools [click here](#)
- Contact the Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline **1-888-230-3505** for other resources and treatment options.

- Prevention and support resources

# Self-help and professional resources



- Self-evaluation
- Enhancing motivation
- Identifying and managing triggers
- Modifying unhelpful thoughts
- Effective coping strategies (e.g., emotions)
- Behavioural strategies

- Prevention and support resources
- 

# Supports

- **CAMH:** <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/problem-gambling>
- **Ottawa Public Health:** <https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/problem-gambling.aspx#safergamblingtips>
- **Connex Ontario:** <https://www.connexontario.ca/en-ca/>





Questions?

---

# For more information



Sasha **Stark**, PhD  
Director of Research and Evidence Services, Greo Evidence Insights  
[sasha@greo.ca](mailto:sasha@greo.ca)



Andrew **Kim**, PhD, C, Psych  
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Calgary  
[andrewh.kim@ucalgary.ca](mailto:andrewh.kim@ucalgary.ca)