

Signs of Adolescent Problem Gambling

Did you know that in many communities the rates of problem gambling among youth are higher than those reported by adults?

Youth problem gambling is correlated with other addictive behaviours (smoking, drinking, drug use/abuse), and with emotional problems such as psychological distress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and increased risk for suicide.

Youth that may be experiencing significant events in their lives such as feeling lonely, being bullied, social and/or cultural isolation and prejudice, or dealing with parental divorce can also be at risk.

Many studies identify adolescent problem gamblers take more risks, show lower inhibition and are more impulsive than non-gamblers. These youth may be more likely to use alcohol and other substances and to experience problems with these substances. Evidence suggests that criminal or delinquent behaviour such as stealing with rates of gambling problems appears substantially elevated among incarcerated adolescents.

Youth Gambling Activities

Prevalent gambling activities among the youth include:

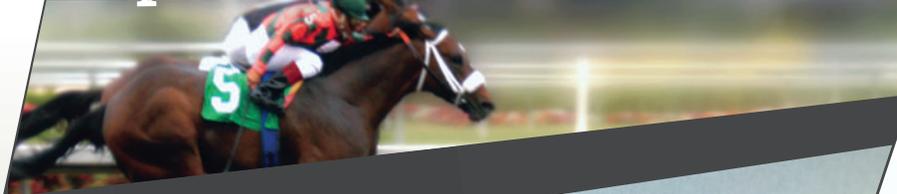
Internet Poker



Dice



Sports Pools



Cards



Bingo



Video gambling machines



Internet Use and Gambling

Internet use and online habits interact with a person's unique makeup that determines what behaviours may become problematic over time.

Most of our youth do not go on to develop unhealthy behaviours as a result of Web connections. For those who do, it's important that they be assessed by health-care professionals.

Internet use becomes a problem when it begins to cause a decline in terms of what healthy adolescents are expected to achieve, such as maintaining grades, school attendance, participating in family life and keeping up friendships outside of cyberspace.





Contact

For more information, workshops, assistance, assessments or referrals please contact a Métis Nation of Ontario G-GAP specialized team member at ggap@metisnation.org www.metisgaming.com

Acknowledgements:

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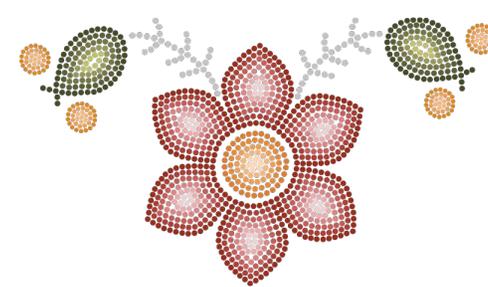
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Steps to Take

Steps parents can take to intervene early and help prevent problems from growing include:

- Spend time learning about Internet and gaming materials popular with youth. Become credible so your children take you seriously.
- Encourage “offline” activities such as participating in sports, cultural activities, social events or meetings with peers.
- Encourage relationship development and activity participation with Métis elders, community council, trusted citizen(s) and/or health staff.
- Communicate openly and honestly with your children. Discuss possible dangers and impacts of Gambling Risk Behaviours and Internet use, and take the time to know what they’re doing on and off-line.
- Parents who know their children have pre-existing psychiatric conditions should monitor gaming and computer use even more closely and discuss possible Internet risks and dangers.
- Be aware of your children’s Internet activities.
- Resist the temptation to break into personal e-documents, e-mail or browser history. You might find evidence of a significant problem, but you will also create a serious breach of trust that could inhibit open communication between you and your child. If you feel driven to this extreme, chances are you have already seen enough clues to attempt talking to your child about your concerns or even to consider approaching a health-care professional.
- Consider using a shared computer in the family room of your home.
- When in doubt, call a youth agency or addiction program for guidance and support for the entire family.



Métis Youth Gaming & Internet Gambling



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