



Addressing Youth Gambling Through A Public Awareness Campaign

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, Ohio for Responsible Gambling (ORG) launched a responsible gambling prevention campaign, titled "Get Set Before You Bet", helping to grow awareness around problem gambling within our state. Addressing at-risk populations identified through a survey of 24K Ohioans, we noticed the rising trend of adolescents and youth being exposed to gambling, including through new forms of betting within video games and activities around "loot boxes" and "virtual currency", along with other traditional forms of gambling (such as cards, sports betting). We expanded our efforts to address this growing epidemic through a new campaign targeting adult influencers, titled **Change The Game Ohio**.

WHAT IS GAMBLING & WHY IS IT DANGEROUS?



- » Gambling is risking something of value on an event that is determined mostly by chance.
- » A person is gambling if he/she puts up something of value, such as money or property.
- » The outcome has an element of chance, beyond the person's control. Once a bet is made, it's not reversible.
- » With youth being vulnerable to risky behaviors and not always informed around the potential impact of their decisions, it is not always clear to them that gambling can lead to lasting consequences.
- » This creates the potential for youth to experience the negative consequences of problem gambling if they are not made aware of the dangers involved.

WHAT ARE THE STATS?

From the Ohio Healthy Youth Environments Survey (2016/2017):

- 14.7%** had gambled money or personal items.
- 4.0%** had gambled more than they had planned.
- 3.7%** had felt bad about the amount they bet or about what happens when they bet.
- 1.7%** hid IOUs and/or money they had won/lost from family or friends.
- 1.2%** lied to people important to them about how much they gambled.

CONDITIONING BEHAVIORS

- » When surveying 24K+ Ohioans around the state, male adults age 18-24 were the highest at-risk audience for problem gambling at 13%.
- » This would lead to the theory that these adults are being conditioned to gambling behaviors well before they became adults. Though, what forms of gambling are they engaging in?



Video Games
(Loot Boxes, Virtual Currency)



Cards



Internet Gambling



Fantasy Sports



Sporting Events



Dice/Craps

WHO IS AT RISK?



6.5% of 14-21 year-olds are at risk for problem gambling



Children introduced to gambling by age 12 are 4x more likely to have problems



Many gaming apps are marketed to 2-17 year-olds



A VULNERABLE POPULATION

- » Gambling-inspired gaming apps are marketed toward children as young as 2.
- » High school students find the lure of “big wins” hard to resist.
- » College students away from home for the first time have money to game with and no oversight.

A SERIOUS ISSUE

- » Those who gamble are seven times (7x) more likely to abuse substances. Nicotine and alcohol are most widely used.
- » 76% of a gambling addiction treatment group surveyed suffered from depression; 16-40% suffered from lifetime anxiety.
- » 24% of individuals with gambling disorders had a lifetime prevalence of bipolar disorder, and 32% attempted suicide.
- » Of women seen in the ER for domestic violence, they are 10x more likely to be abused if their partner was a problem gambler; 50x more likely if their partner was a problem gambler and a problem drinker.



STRATEGY & TARGET AUDIENCES

To address the issue of youth gambling in the state of Ohio, an awareness campaign was created by executing the following objectives:

- » **Research:** Conducted focus groups amongst parents and teens to identify the challenges facing youth and their families around gambling and online gaming.
- » **Campaign Strategy:** Created a powerfully branded message and campaign to be implemented into an integrated marketing strategy. This strategy educates adult influencers (parents/teachers) about the potential dangers youth are being exposed to through video games, as well as more traditional forms of gambling.
- » **Website & Education:** Developed a website that engages adult influencers with resources and education to guide their discussions with youth, empowering them to generate awareness amongst teens and children around the risks related to new and traditional forms of gambling.
- » **Digital Tools:** Crafted new digital tools to promote our message, including social media campaigns, digital advertising, and a motion graphics PSA, demonstrating the dangers of youth gambling and how to prevent negative outcomes for children, teens, and families.
- » **Outreach Strategies:** Engaged professional organizations across the state by launching the campaign through e-blast strategies within prevention networks and coalitions, as well as executed a digital media plan that helps drive adult influencers to the website to access online resources.



A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

With the goal to create a message that could resonate amongst parents and teachers, we created the branded campaign message of Change The Game Ohio, generating a positive approach towards empowering Ohioans to educate themselves on the dangers of video games and youth gambling. This gave opportunity to expand our message to different forms of betting, working to inspire individuals to engage in our message and advocate responsible practices and behaviors to the children and teens in their life, no matter what form of gambling they choose.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE & ONLINE TOOLKIT (ChangeTheGameOhio.org)

Our main call-to-action was for adult influencers to visit a newly developed campaign website, which was designed to engage and educate these audiences around resources and tools to help them positively impact the decisions and behaviors of youth in their life. Resources and content included are:

- » Posters & Print Ads
- » Digital Ads
- » Social Media Graphics
- » Online PSA Video
- » Fact Sheets
- » Discussion Guides
- » Media Literacy
- » Educational PowerPoints



THE RELATIONSHIP OF VIDEO GAMES, LOOT BOXES, & GAMBLING

- » Video games are being sold at a lower price, but provide opportunities for players to purchase random-reward boxes (or loot boxes) through "micro-transactions".
- » Loot boxes provide the chance to win weapons, skins, or other competitive prizes to enhance their play.
- » With the knowledge that their parent's credit card info is stored into the device, youth are able to engage in these activities that reflect similar emotions and behaviors of gambling.
- » This can lead to dangerous consequences, as experiencing these emotions of "highs" and "lows" around loot boxes can lead to users chasing their wins and losses – a common result of problem gambling.
- » Players can also bet real currency or "virtual currency" (assets of value acquired in the environment of the game) when battling other players, resembling the behaviors and emotions of gambling.



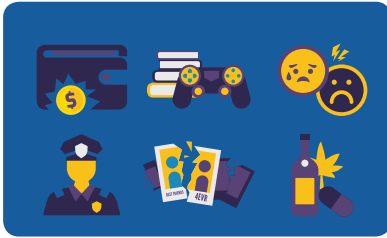
EXAMPLE: In a recent incident, four children spent nearly £550 in three weeks buying player packs to play the FIFA soccer video game online on the family's Nintendo Switch console, trying to win their favorite player, Lionel Messi, and maxing out their parent's credit card.

CAMPAIGN MESSAGING



THE WARNING SIGNS OF YOUTH PROBLEM GAMBLING

- » Students miss classes or entire school days with no explanation.
- » Grades suddenly drop or assignments aren't being completed.
- » Disinterest towards extracurricular activities.
- » Behavior becomes more secretive, defensive or aggressive.
- » There's an increased interest in money and value of possessions.
- » They speak openly about an interest in gambling or borrowing money.



KNOW THE CONSEQUENCES

- » Students may lose money they need for school materials or meals.
- » Students may neglect their studies or part-time jobs.
- » Emotional stress and depression can build in children and teens.
- » Increased risk for delinquency and crime.
- » Students may end up with damaged relationships.
- » Increased risk for substance use and abuse.



CAMPAIGN MESSAGING

- » **Be A Role Model:** We all have a role to play in preventing problem gambling among young people. It starts with knowing the facts about online gaming.
- » **Control Devices:** Have you set parental controls on all devices? Utilize Parental Controls on devices to limit use of credit cards, PayPal, Apple Pay, etc.
- » **Set Limits:** Create rules for your household around setting time limits for use of devices.
- » **Go Analog:** Create activities that don't involve devices or screen time, including family board game nights.

RESULTS

To connect adult influencers around the problem of youth gambling, we launched a pilot campaign from April through June of 2019, implementing digital tactics to drive our audience to the campaign website and online tools. Results were as follows (from a \$26K budget over 3 months):

- » Page Views: **3,494 (72% From Mobile Devices)**
- » Digital Display Advertising: **815,826 Impressions (.14% CTR)**
- » Pre-Roll Video: **269,349 Impressions (.15% CTR)**
- » Social Media Advertising: **615,477 Impressions (.5% CTR)**

TOTAL IMPRESSIONS: 1,700,652 Impressions (.2% CTR)

CONCLUSION

With males ages 18-24 being at the highest risk of problem gambling, there seems to be a link to the activities and behaviors they are engaging in before becoming an adult. By addressing these gambling behaviors early on, we are working to help prevent problem gambling in the future, educating young individuals on the realities, warning signs, and consequences around the issue of problem gambling.

