Teacher's slide

Key lesson information

Location	Classroom with no student access to internet
Recommended time	60 minutes
Objectives	By the end of the session, students should be able to: • Explain the reasons people may become addicted to gambling • Describe how gambling companies' tactics can lead to addiction • Identify the negative consequences of gambling company tactics and the thinking errors they create • Suggest advice for people with a gambling addiction or a developing problem
Main student tasks	1. Review statistics about gambling, including thinking errors 2. Create a mind map of the different forms of gambling 3. List the tactics gambling companies use to take advantage of people's desire for reward and recognise their impact in scenarios 4. Discuss statistics about the prevalence of online gambling 5. Identify indicators of safe and harmful gambling 6. Describe how people with either an addiction or a developing bad habit could get help to prevent further harm
Keywords	Gambling, addiction, dopamine, habit

Teacher preparation

Provide	Lined paper, exercise books or laptops to work on.
Familiarise yourself	Unifrog's **Know-how library** tool (Student side>Know-how library). Students can use this for independent research after the lesson.

Know-how library

Know-how library	Open the 'student side' of your Unifrog account and click these links: • Accessing support for the addiction of a parent or carer • How to stick to a budget Students can also search for these guides using the Know-how library tool.

Tracking progress on Unifrog

Add as an Interaction	Click Advanced view>Sort by school leaving year>[filter for specific students]>+interaction.
Track on Charts	Click Usage charts>Customise and filter> 'Know-how library: Favouriting over time'.
Tracking individual students	Advanced view>Sort by>Library profiles in Favourites

Benchmarks and standards

PSHE Association	Online harms; Mental health and wellbeing
CASEL 5	Responsible decision-making,
ISCA	SE:B1:1; SE:B1:2; SE:B1:3; SE:B1:4; SE:B1:5
Skills	Caring, Digital literacy, Accountability, Problem solving

Teacher's slide – guidance on teaching gambling

This lesson covers the risks of gambling in all its forms and how to access help. This slide gives a brief guide for teachers for handling these topics sensitively.

When social gambling turns into problem gambling. Many people will gamble in their lives but there are signs of when someone is not playing for fun anymore. Social gamblers are defined as those who only do so occasionally, hope to win but expect to lose, gamble for entertainment, and set and stick to spending or time limits. It becomes problem gambling when it starts to disrupt or damage personal, family, or recreational pursuits. Problem gamblers are defined as those who spend more time gambling and planning more gambling, expect to win all the time, keep playing to chase back losses, gamble to win or to escape problems, and continue to play even if they have spent all their own money and need to find a spending source from elsewhere.

There are a lot of common fallacies about gambling. Many gamblers often become problem gamblers due to thinking errors associated with gambling, including:

- **Superstitions:** mistakenly believing you can improve luck by repeating superstitious habits falsely connected with past wins, e.g. wearing the 'lucky t-shirt' or playing 'lucky numbers.'
- **Ignoring the odds:** people might buy lottery tickets because they know of someone who has won, yet they don't realise that it took 30 billion tickets (more than four times the earth's population) to produce 2,000 winners.
- **Forgetting the law of averages:** although short winning streaks are common, long winning streaks are impossible. People who appear to win more frequently than other people (who seem luckier) have usually just played more often. They'll also have more frequent losses than other people, but they don't brag about the losses.
- **Random events are not influenced by past history:** in most real-life situations, history does help us predict the future, so people tend to look for patterns and expect events to be predictable. However, dice, roulette wheels, slot machines, bingos, and lotteries are all random events: thus, the outcome of these games cannot be predicted or influenced by the players.

People are more at risk of becoming problem gamblers while they're young. The brain is not fully developed until around the age of 25. This means many teens and young adults are not fully equipped to make decisions about, or assess, risks accurately. They are more prone to becoming addicted to gambling, drugs, and alcohol.

Some people will be more inherently prone to reward-seeking behaviours. Research shows that problem gamblers and drug addicts often have genetic predispositions for reward-seeking behaviours and impulsivity. The two main ones are an underactive brain reward system and less activation of the prefrontal cortex. Having an underactive brain reward system means that the individual doesn't experience the same level of euphoria and pleasure from naturally-rewarding experiences as the average person does. They are therefore drawn to activities that stimulate reward pathways more than usual; ones that are enough to make them feel a satisfactory amount of euphoria and pleasure, for example, the high that taking drugs or gambling creates. The prefrontal cortex is an area of our brain involved in decision-making, controlling impulses, and cognitive control. Studies have revealed that problem gamblers and drug addicts had less activation of the prefrontal cortex than the average person.

Teacher’s slide – FAQs

Students may have additional questions after completing this lesson. This page is intended to give you answers to questions that aren’t covered in the main lesson.

Are you saying I can get addicted to gambling from going to the bingo with my nana? Many forms of gambling that are done socially and feel fun can all end up becoming addictive if you play them too much. It's when it stops becoming fun and you feel like you have to play that there is a problem. As long as the gambling is not starting to affect your mental health in a negative way and you know when to stop, social gambling can still be fun without becoming addictive.

I know someone who gambles almost every day. Is this bad? Gambling every day could be harmful if the person can't afford to lose the money they're gambling. They could be betting very small amounts which isn't affecting their ability to afford necessities in life. However, they could also be gambling more than they can afford and not talking about their problem because they think they could win back their losses to fix the problem. If you're worried about someone who is gambling a lot, talk to them and let them know you're worried. If you're unsure about what to do, you could also try talking to a trusted adult or one of the organisations listed at the end of this lesson.

If gambling companies are designed to make money from our losses, why do people gamble? The chance of winning and the dopamine that is stimulated in our brain when we win provides a great feeling of satisfaction and joy. This is what makes gambling feel fun and exciting and like we want to keep playing. However, to make sure it stays as a fun experience, gambling is not something which should be done for long periods of time. People will keep playing in order to try and keep stimulating that hit of dopamine which makes us feel good, but increased playing doesn’t increase the odds of winning.

Someone I know who gambles seems to win quite frequently. What's the harm? This is a common false belief with gambling and is all to do with the laws of averages. People who appear to win more frequently than other people, and who seem luckier, have usually just played more often. They’ll also have more frequent losses than other people, but they don’t brag about the losses. If someone seems to be winning more often than others, then they will have to be betting an awful lot in order to make those wins. It might be worth talking to them to see how often they are gambling in case they are starting to develop an addiction.

Can I get addicted to gambling from playing once? If you gambled for the first time and won, the dopamine stimulated in your brain from that win would make you feel like you wanted to repeat the action again in order to achieve the same outcome. This does not mean you would definitely start repeating the action over and over again but our brains are wired to make us feel the desire to do so. Many people believe in superstitions like 'beginners luck' or that you can have a 'winning streak,' forgetting about the odds and that gambling isn't designed to provide long-term wins. The guidance is normally that once you've had a win, stop playing. The longer you play, the more likely you are to lose money.

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Gambling: risks, consequences, and safety

Gambling: the facts (5 mins)

Write down your predictions to answer the four questions below:

1. What is the **percentage** probability of a flipped coin landing on heads, after landing on tails for the past three flips?

2. What is the probability of winning the National Lottery? **1 in _____ million.**

3. In a survey of young people aged 11-16, what **percentage** of people do you think had spent their own money on a gambling activity in the past year?

4. In a survey of young people aged 11-16, what **percentage** of people do you think agreed with the statement that gambling makes them feel happy?

Gambling: the facts

How accurate was your prediction?

1. What is the **percentage** probability of a flipped coin landing on heads, after landing on tails for the past three flips?

50% - *It doesn't matter what it landed on last time, this will not impact the probability of the next flip. This is the same when gambling: every game is a new game. The chance of winning or losing stays constant, and isn't influenced by past events, even if you seem to be 'on a lucky streak' or 'surely due a win soon!'*

Gambling: the facts

Write down your predictions to answer the four questions below:

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Gambling: the facts

How accurate was your prediction?

2. What is the probability of winning the National Lottery? **1 in _____ million.**

1 in 45 million.

There are much higher chances of rare occurrences like being struck by lightning or giving birth to identical quadruplets!

Gambling: the facts

Write down your predictions to answer the four questions below:

1. What is the **percentage** probability of a flipped coin landing on heads, after landing on tails for the past three flips?

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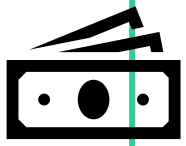
Gambling: the facts

How accurate was your prediction?

3. In a survey of young people aged 11-16, what **percentage** of people do you think had spent their own money on a gambling activity in the past year?



31% - *50% had experienced gambling in the past year, with 31% having spent their own money to do so. The most common forms of gambling amongst young people included arcade gaming machines and placing bets for money with friends and family.*

Gambling: the facts

Write down your predictions to answer the four questions below:

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Gambling: the facts

How accurate was your prediction?

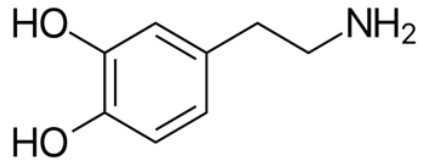
4. In a survey of young people aged 11-16, what **percentage** of people do you think agreed with the statement that gambling makes them feel happy?

21% - *There were actually more people who disagreed with the statement (28%) alongside lots of people who neither agreed nor disagreed or weren't sure.*

Why take the gamble? (5 mins)

One reason people gamble is due to the brain releasing **dopamine.**

Dopamine is a **'reward'** chemical. It creates feelings of joy and satisfaction which motivate you to **repeat** a specific behaviour.



Create a mind-map of the different **types of gambling** that could stimulate dopamine.

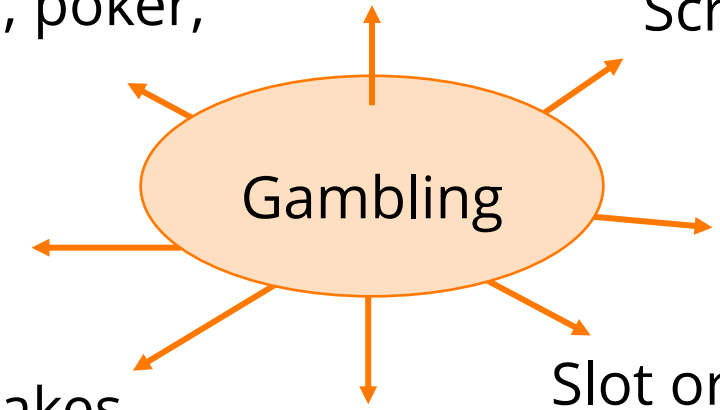
Why take the gamble?

Many types of gambling may seem fun or harmless but all of them can also become **addictive**.

Casino games: roulette, poker, blackjack, etc.

Online gaming, like loot boxes

Scratch cards or lottery tickets



Online gambling

Betting in a bookies on lots of different sports or scenarios

Sweepstakes

Bingo

Slot or games machines

Gambling companies are designed to take advantage of our desire for reward.

Name **one** tactic used by gambling companies to make us want to gamble.

Gambling – why do we do it? (20 mins)

Gambling companies can increase the chance of addiction by:

Using advertising to make it seem fun and exciting.

Using films or TV shows portraying gambling as fun and exciting in the storyline.

Offering reward schemes or special offers like ‘free first bet’ or ‘buy two loot boxes get one free’ deals to encourage people to gamble.

Creating a false sense of achievement by using an algorithm that makes you win when you first start playing (but then decreases the more times you play.)

List **three** negative consequences these tactics could lead to for people.

Gambling – why do we do it?

1. Which gambling company **tactic(s)** can you spot in this scenario?
2. What **impact** are these tactics having on Oliver?

Oliver purchased a loot box in a video game for £5 and he was really impressed with the contents. Oliver decided to purchase a second loot box, but he noticed the price had increased to £5.50 and the contents weren't as good this time. Oliver wants to buy a third (costing £6) to see if the contents will be as good as the first box.

Advertising

Films or TV shows

Reward schemes or special offers

Algorithm: false sense of achievement

Gambling – why do we do it?

1. Which gambling company **tactic(s)** can you spot in this scenario?
2. What **impact** are these tactics having on Raj?

Raj is watching his favourite TV show about a glamorous and wealthy family. In the show, the characters regularly go to a casino, where they drink cocktails and socialise whilst gambling. Raj notices they often play blackjack and he decides to download a blackjack app on his phone. He can choose to bet with virtual coins or real money.

Advertising

Films or TV shows

Reward schemes or special offers

Algorithm: false sense of achievement

Gambling – why do we do it?

1. Which gambling company **tactic(s)** can you spot in this scenario?
2. What **impact** are these tactics having on Layla?

Layla is using her laptop to do homework when she receives an email saying 'BET £10 TODAY FOR A 1 IN 3 CHANCE OF TRIPLING YOUR MONEY!' Layla clicks the link to look at the gambling website. The website says there are only five days remaining to place the bet advertised in the email.

Advertising

Films or TV shows

Reward schemes or special offers

Algorithm: false sense of achievement

Online gambling (15 mins)

Make your prediction to complete the statistics about online gambling.

1. 2023, the global casinos and online gambling industry was estimated to be worth over **279** billion USD.

a. 179

b. 279

c. 379

Online gambling

Make your prediction to complete the statistics about online gambling.

2. Approximately **40%** of Europe's online gambling revenue comes from sports betting.

a. 40

b. 50

c. 60

Online gambling

Make your prediction to complete the statistics about online gambling.

3. In 2021, the global online gambling market size was valued at over **57** billion USD.

a. 35

b. 46

c. 57

Online gambling

Make your prediction to complete the statistics about online gambling.

4. The most commonly reported reasons for gambling online are money, fun, and **the lure of winning.**

a. Peer pressure

b. Convenience

c. The lure of winning

Online gambling

Make your prediction to complete the statistics about online gambling.

5. In 2021, 28% of men and **22%** of women in the UK participated in online gambling.

a. 22

b. 28

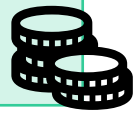
c. 34

Online gambling

Discuss the three questions in a pair and note down your answers.

1. Why do you think that the global online gambling market is growing?

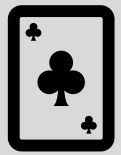
2. Why might some people spend more money gambling online compared to gambling in person?



3. What can people do to gamble online in a safer way?

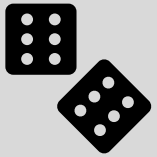
Do you think online gambling is **safer** or **more harmful** than gambling in person?

Harmful gambling vs. safer gambling (10 mins)



Sort the examples into two categories:

Harmful gambling and **safer gambling**



a) Setting spending limits

b) Using overdrafts to gamble

c) Setting time limits

d) Staying up late to gamble

e) Gambling instead of work/school/socialising

f) Treating gambling as a way to make money

g) Borrowing money from friends and family

h) Treating gambling as an entertainment cost

i) Never bet more than you'd be ok with losing

Can you add any of your own examples to the two categories?

Harmful gambling vs. safer gambling

Harmful gambling

b) Using overdrafts to gamble

d) Staying up late to gamble

e) Gambling instead of work/school/socialising

f) Treating gambling as a way to make money

g) Borrowing money from friends and family

Harmful gambling vs. safer gambling

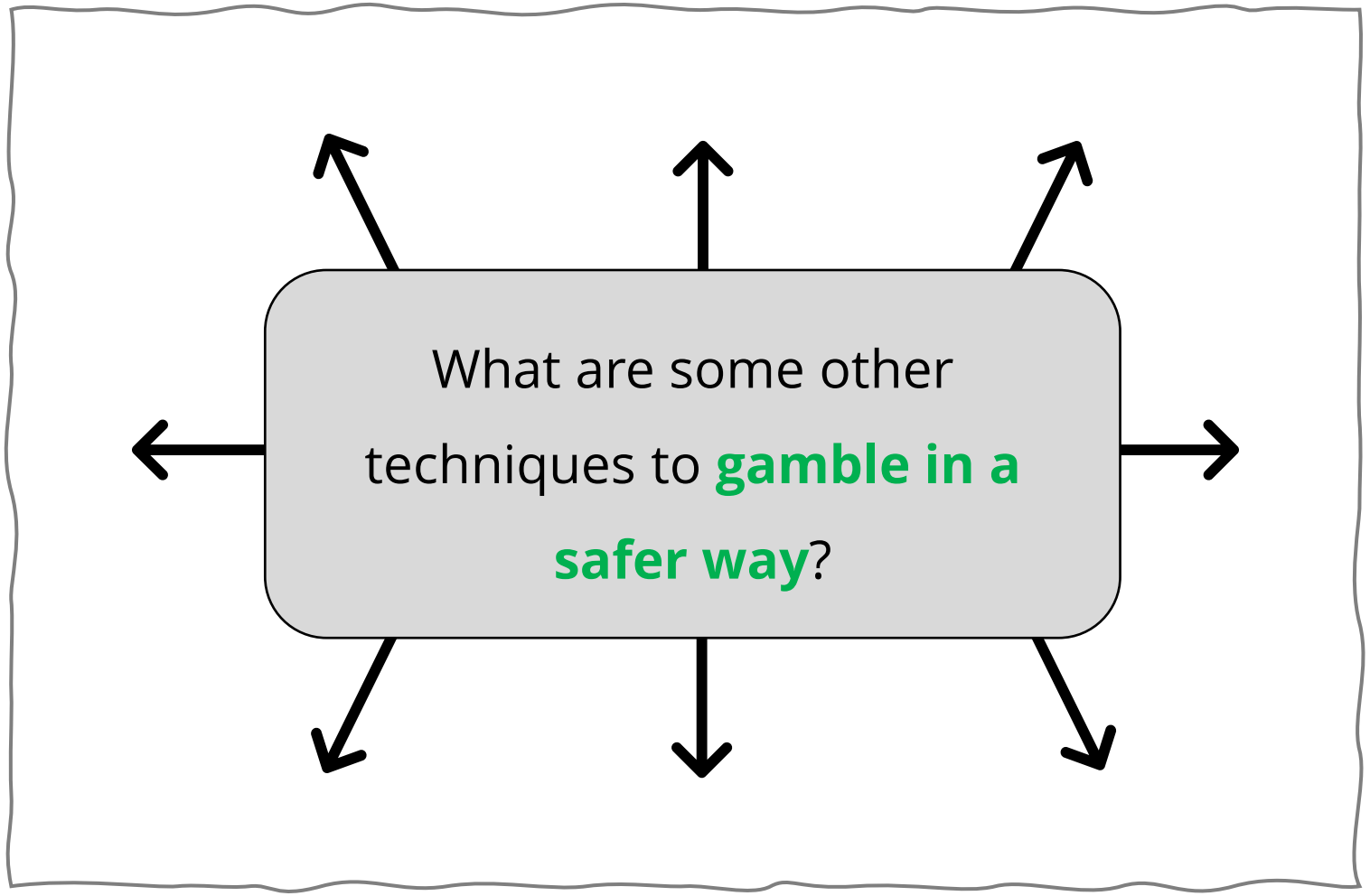
Safer gambling

a) Setting spending limits

c) Setting time limits

h) Treating gambling as an entertainment cost

i) Never bet more than you'd be ok with losing

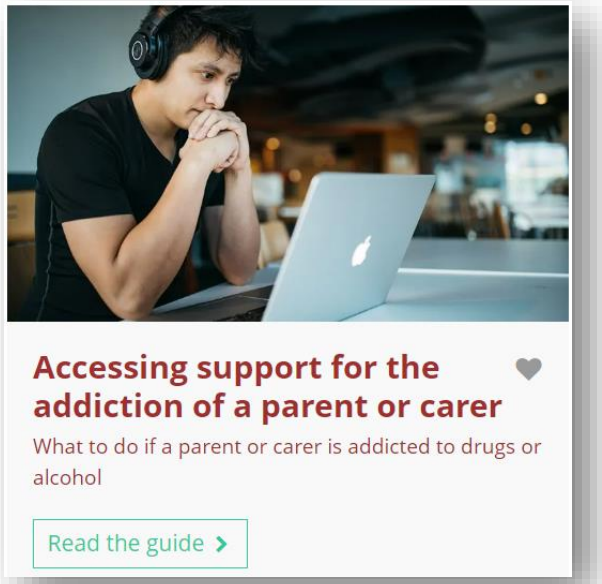


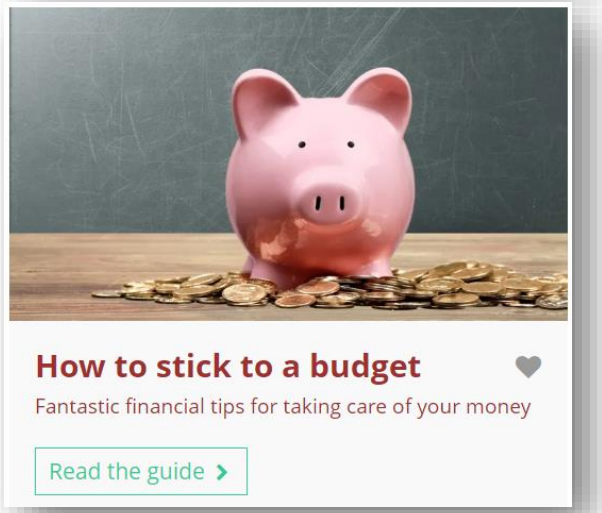
Independent learning

It can be difficult to know which information you can trust online!

The **Know-how library** is a reliable source of information about this topic and lots of others.

Search by the keyword ‘addiction’ in the Know-how library to find guides on this topic. Remember to favourite guides you’d like to come back to later!





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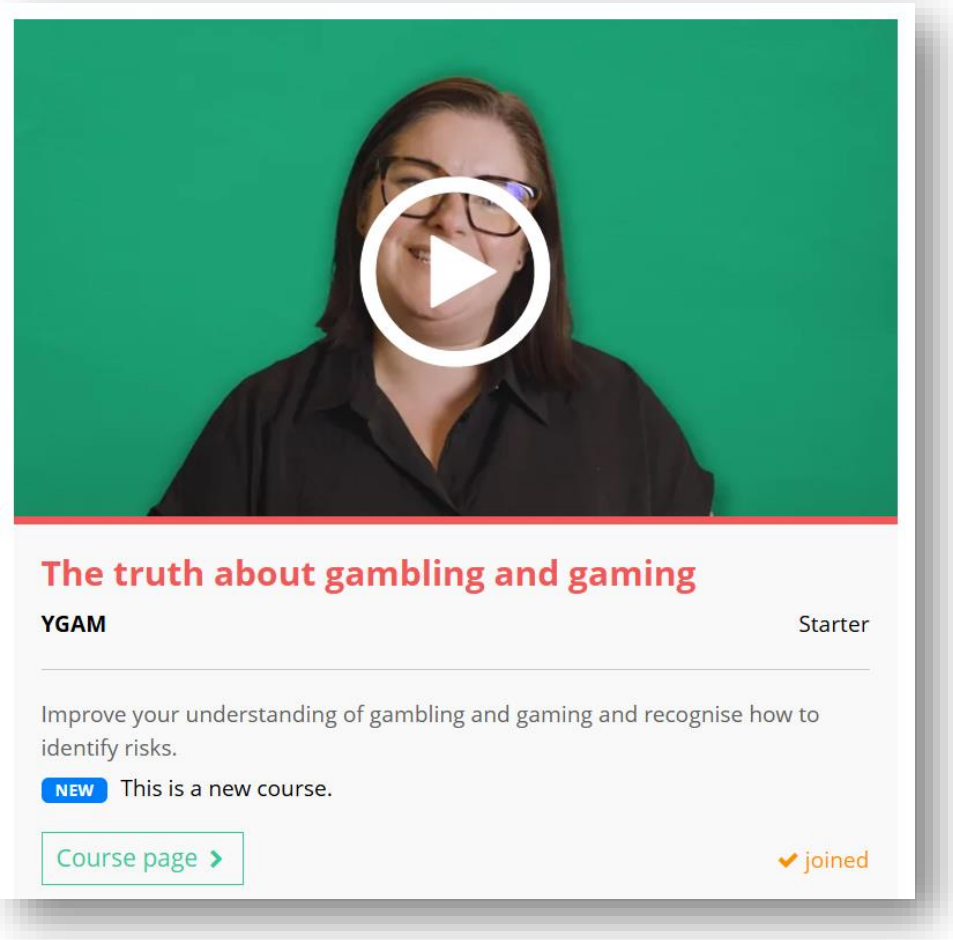
Independent learning

Interested in learning more about gambling and gaming and how to identify the risks?

The **Courses tool** has a selection of self-paced online courses about this topic and lots of others.

When you complete the course, you'll receive a free completion certificate!



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Gambling guidance (5 mins)

For some people with gambling addiction, choosing to spend their last £2 on food or more gambling is a reality. So, what can be done to help?

1 I can't afford to pay my rent or bills. I don't care about going out with friends or where my next meal comes from. That's money I could be using on gambling. I just need my next win to help me out.

2 I like playing on the slot machines with friends, but online casinos are even better! They're just a bit of fun and always have free offers. The more I sign up to spend, the more offers I get. It's great!

For each person, write down **one** way you could help them and **one** piece of advice about what they could do next to avoid any further harm.

Gambling guidance

If you think someone has an addiction:

- Talk to them. Tell them you care about them and that gambling is not a good way to make or recover lost money.
- Remind them that gambling companies are designed to take your money.
- Advise them to talk to an organisation or support group to get help.

If you think someone is developing a bad habit:

- Stop signing up to gambling websites.
- Set spending limits you can actually afford.
- Avoid spending money online.
- Avoid social situations that involve gambling.

Organisations that help with gambling

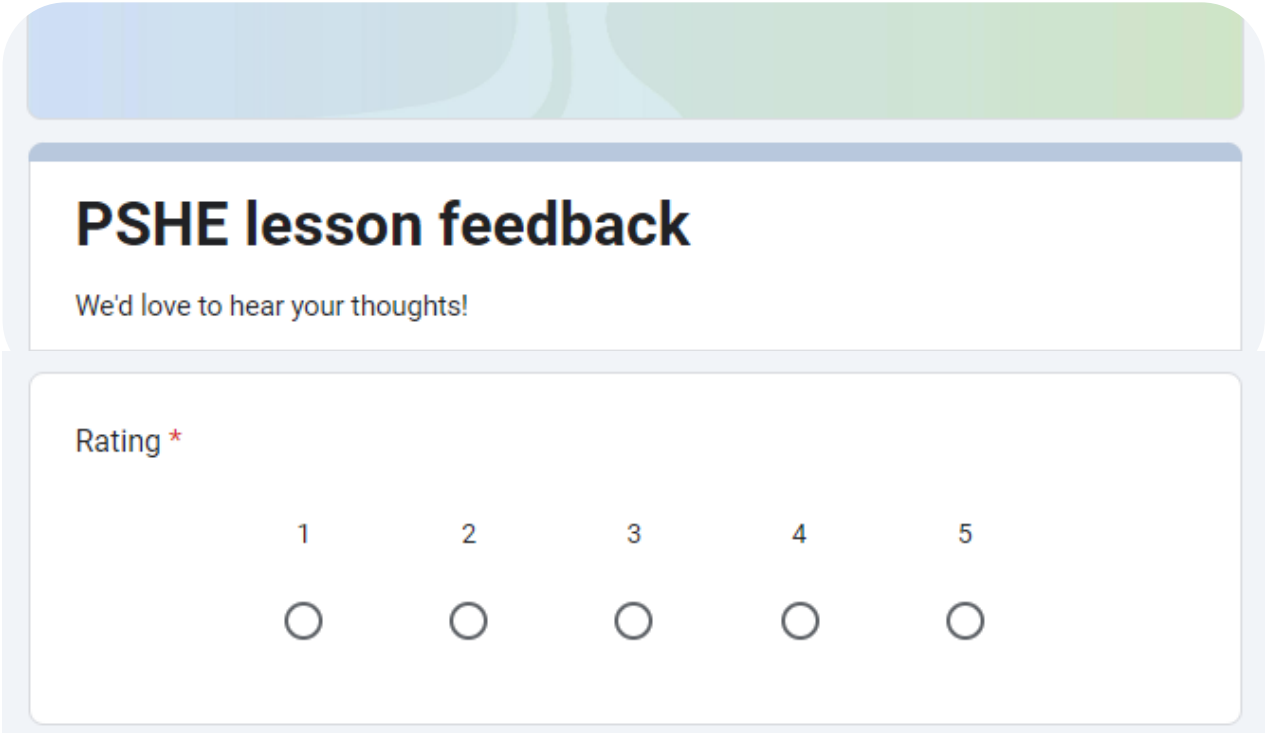
Searching ‘gambling support’ or ‘help with gambling’ in your internet browser will bring up helpful resources and guide you with the first step in finding support.

- **NHS** (support for gambling addiction) - nhs.uk/live-well/addiction-support/gambling-addiction
- **Big Deal** (gambling information, advice, and support for young people) – bigdeal.org.uk
- **Be Gamble Aware** (support and advice with gambling) – begambleaware.org
- **Gamcare** (information, advice, and support for anyone affected by gambling) – gamcare.org.uk
- **Samaritans** (free 24-hour helpline) - samaritans.org
- **The Mix** (support for under 25s) themix.org.uk/money/gambling
- **The Young Gamers and Gamblers Education Trust** (gaming and gambling charity) – ygam.org
- **Mental Health Foundation** (advice about gambling and mental health) – mentalhealth.org.uk
- **Childline** (information about addiction) - childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/feelings-emotions/addiction/

We’d love your feedback!

What did you think of this lesson? We’d love to hear from you!

Click here to rate this lesson out of 5. You can also add a comment if you have time!



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