



# Free Professional Development Opportunities

YGAP offers free educational opportunities and guest lecturers for post-secondary students, staff and institutions.



**Duration:**

Between 40-75 minutes. Timing is flexible as needed.

**Format:**

In-person and/or virtual format; interactive, discussion-based with engaging activities throughout

## 1 - Game-Bling: When Gaming Meets Gambling

Gambling elements are increasingly integrated into video games and mobile apps, creating a blurred line between gaming and gambling. Given the risks associated with gambling, it is crucial to distinguish when a game transitions from a skill-based activity to one based on chance. This presentation delves into micro-transactions in virtual worlds and gambling-like features in video games, such as loot boxes and player pack unlocking. We will analyze the impact of excessive technology use on well-being, identify signs of problem gaming and gambling, and explore the potential risks associated with these activities. Participants will receive strategies for making safe and healthy decisions and will be given information on accessing community support services.

**It may be of specific interest, but not limited to, students in the fields of Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Family Studies, Nursing, Public Health and Education**

**Relevance to Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Family Studies, Nursing and Public Health students**

As video games are a common pastime among students, understanding the embedded gambling elements, associated risks, and safety strategies is increasingly important for all postsecondary students. This presentation aims to raise awareness about the impact of excessive technology use and promote healthier gaming habits. It will educate students on the public health implications of gambling in video games, including addiction and mental health issues, and will equip them with the skills to identify and address problem gambling and gaming behaviors. These insights are invaluable for their future careers in various fields.

**Relevance to Education students**

Educators play a critical role in identifying behavioral issues. We will educate future teachers on the public health implications of gambling in video games, including dependency and mental health concerns. It will equip them with the skills to identify and address problem gambling and gaming behaviors, provide appropriate support and referrals, and contribute to fostering a healthier school environment, thereby enhancing their students' overall well-being.

Youth Gambling  
Awareness Program (YGAP)

Learn more:  
[ymcagta.org/gambling](http://ymcagta.org/gambling)

 @YGAP.PSJJ  
 @YGAPOntario

## 2 - Gambling, Money and Decision Making

Informed financial decision-making contributes to overall positive mental health and well-being. In this presentation, we explore essential financial skills, financial motivation and financial risks especially as it pertains to the world of gambling. We challenge financial misconceptions and explore the world of stock market trading and the inclusion of gambling-like features in trading apps, as well as the implications of gambling-related bankruptcy. The importance of an entertainment budget in relation to gambling will be explored, along with safety tips and information on community support services.

It may be of specific interest, but not limited to, students in the fields of Business Administration, Economics, Mathematics, Social Work, Psychology, Sociology and Education

### **Relevance to Social Work, Psychology, Sociology and Education students**

Similar to drugs and alcohol, problem gambling can severely affect a person's physical and mental health. Those impacted by gambling disorder often attempt to recoup losses by spending more money, which typically leads to debt and further negative consequences such as depression, anxiety, social isolation, and financial distress. Given that young adults are at higher risk for problem gambling compared to other demographics, especially as many are experiencing their first taste of financial freedom, financial literacy education focusing on gambling underscores the significance of adopting healthy coping strategies and serves as a preventive measure to reduce the likelihood of developing gambling issues. Moreover, it provides participants with crucial skills to comprehend and tackle the financial and psychological ramifications of gambling disorders, enabling them to support their future clients effectively and advocate for pertinent policies in their professional endeavors.

### **Relevance to Business Administration, Economics and Mathematics students**

Given that young adults are especially vulnerable to developing gambling issues compared to other demographics, financial literacy education focusing on gambling underscores the significance of adopting healthy coping strategies and serves as a preventive measure to reduce the likelihood of developing gambling issues. Moreover, through discussion, we will enhance participant's ability to manage financial risks, understand consumer behavior, and make ethical business decisions.

## 3 - Media Impact

This presentation enhances digital media literacy and critical thinking skills by analyzing media persuasion techniques and advertisements, including on social media. With Ontario's new online gambling market, exposure to gambling media has surged. We focus on 'influencer marketing' and gambling ads that normalize gambling and misrepresent it as risk-free and a way to make easy money. Participants will learn to critically analyze online content and counter harmful narratives. We also provide information on community support services for digital literacy, mental health, and problem gambling.

It may be of specific interest, but not limited to, students in the fields of Communication, Business Administration, Media Studies, Public Health, Psychology, and Education.

### **Relevance to all educational streams:**

Understanding media persuasion and analyzing advertisements are crucial skills in today's media-saturated environment. By honing critical thinking abilities, students can effectively navigate and interpret the vast array of information they encounter daily, protecting themselves from misleading or exaggerated claims. These skills are invaluable not only for academic research but also for contributing to public health efforts aimed at mitigating the negative effects of advertising on mental and physical well-being. Media literacy plays a vital role in academic success and enables informed engagement with digital content, helping students resist harmful influences such as those from gambling advertisements.

## 4 - Stigma

Stigma creates barriers and prevents individuals experiencing mental health issues, substance use disorder and gambling-related problems from accessing treatment. Overcoming stigma in recovery is also an ongoing process that requires effort and support from both the individual in recovery and their community. To improve access to treatment and support services and bolster mental health and overall well-being for people with lived and living experience of mental health issues, this presentation explores the cycle of stigma, dispels myths, uses real case study examples to facilitate open dialogue and provides practical strategies that break stigma and supports recovery.

It may be of specific interest, but not limited to, students in the fields of Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Family Studies, Nursing, Public Health and Education.

### **Relevance to Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Family Studies, Nursing, Public Health and Education students**

This presentation prompts future professionals to examine their own attitudes and biases while providing them with the knowledge and skills needed to challenge and counteract stigma related to gambling disorder, substance use and other mental health issues. By fostering a deeper understanding, your students will be empowered to make a meaningful impact in people's lives, create supportive environments and excel in their future careers across various settings.

## 5 - Exploring Crypto Assets, Gambling, and Gaming

If you are intrigued by the world of cryptocurrencies, NFTs, and their impact on gambling and gaming, this presentation offers an overview of crypto assets and related key concepts such as cryptocurrency, NFTs, blockchain, and crypto wallets. It examines how these digital assets are transforming investment, online betting, and gaming. We will discuss the risks of crypto investment compared to traditional stock market investing and delve into the potential harms of crypto gaming and gambling. This includes distinguishing between traditional games and NFT/Crypto games (e.g. GameFi, P2E games), exploring the relationship between cryptocurrency trading and problem gambling, and analyzing the influence of crypto influencer marketing on market fluctuations.

Additionally, it provides resources on crypto laws, scams, and investments, as well as community support services available for mental health issues related to gambling.

It may be of specific interest, but not limited to, students in the fields of College Level Economics, Business Administration and Student Wellness.

### **Relevance to all educational streams:**

As young adults are gaining more financial independence, it is important to equip them with necessary financial literacy and digital awareness to be able to navigate the rapidly evolving digital economy. Given the unregulated nature of crypto assets/platforms, security concerns and lack of consumer protection measures, understanding the risks and potential harms of crypto investments, gambling and gaming can help students critically analyze digital content and market trends, make informed decisions, and protect their health and financial well-being when engaging with these technologies.

## 6 - Sports Betting: Separating Skill from Illusion of Control

The opening of Ontario's regulated gambling market to private companies has significantly expanded sports betting opportunities. Ontarians can now bet on various aspects of a game, including in-play betting, which can lead to continuous betting with no clear stopping point, akin to slot machines. This presentation examines several facets of online sports betting, including esports betting and daily fantasy sports. It explores how sports knowledge influences the accuracy of match predictions and highlights the extensive media exposure of sports betting and the impact of betting content on social media. Additionally, it addresses community support services available for mental health issues related to sports betting.

It may be of specific interest, but not limited to, students in the fields of Addictions and Mental Health, Recreation, Social Studies, Education, Sports Management and Leadership.

### **Relevance to Addiction and Mental Health, Social Studies and Education students**

With increasing access, youth are exposed to sports betting advertisements, platforms and various opportunities ranging from esports, fantasy sport leagues to online in-play betting. Young adults engaging in sports betting are at a higher risk of developing gambling problems compared to other forms of gambling. This heightened risk is due to an exaggerated belief in their predictive abilities, leading to impulsive decision-making, excessive betting, and significant financial losses (Winters & Derevensky, 2019; Cooper, Olfert & Marmurek, 2022; RGC, 2023). It is crucial for young adults to understand the link between sports betting, mental health, and substance use. Becoming more aware of persuasion techniques such as welcome bonuses and appeals to team loyalty, can also help mitigate the risks among post-secondary students. Sports betting knowledge also equips students to address gambling issues by recognizing risk factors, and implementing effective interventions, advocate for social responsibility, and promote mental health and well-being in their future careers.

### **Relevance to Sports Management and Leadership students**

With the growing partnerships between major sports leagues and sports betting operators and media organizations, participants will develop a broader understanding of fan engagement, regulatory framework, and career opportunities in sports analytics, marketing, and compliance. This preparation equips them for real-world scenarios at the intersection of sports management and sports betting, while also addressing social issues in sports and recreation.

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