Developing and Testing Messages about Cannabis and Gambling for Young People

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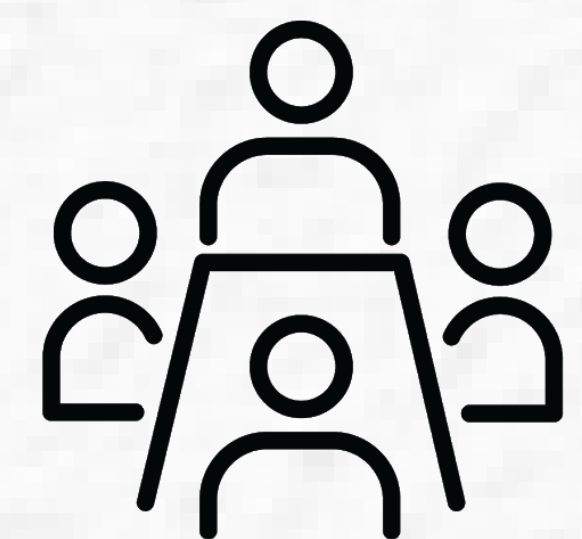
ABSTRACT

Background: Young people report both more cannabis and gambling-related problems than older age groups. Education and awareness initiatives are critical, particularly in the context of gambling expansion and cannabis legalization. The current project mobilized knowledge about cannabis and gambling among adolescents and young adults to develop evidence-based key messages. **Methods**: An online survey was conducted with 59 representatives of provincial organizations that work with young people, with a focus on addictions. One social media message about link between gambling and using cannabis was piloted among adolescents in Ontario. **Results**: The stakeholder survey found that information on the links between gambling and cannabis, the risk associated with gambling following cannabis use, and strategies to reduce risk would be useful for young people. The 256 viewers who completed the pilot message evaluation survey reported that the message increased their knowledge of the risks of gambling and cannabis use, and discouraged their likelihood of gambling or using cannabis. **Conclusions**: Young people have deficits in knowledge about the risks of cannabis and gambling. Social media messages can be a useful tool for increasing awareness.

OBJECTIVE

Develop evidence-based key messages about cannabis and gambling for adolescents and young adults for delivery as part of the Responsible Gambling Council's educational programming.

METHODS

Advisory Committee
Young adult advocates from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's National Youth Action Council helped guide the work

Online Provincial Stakeholder Survey
59 Representatives of Provincial Organizations

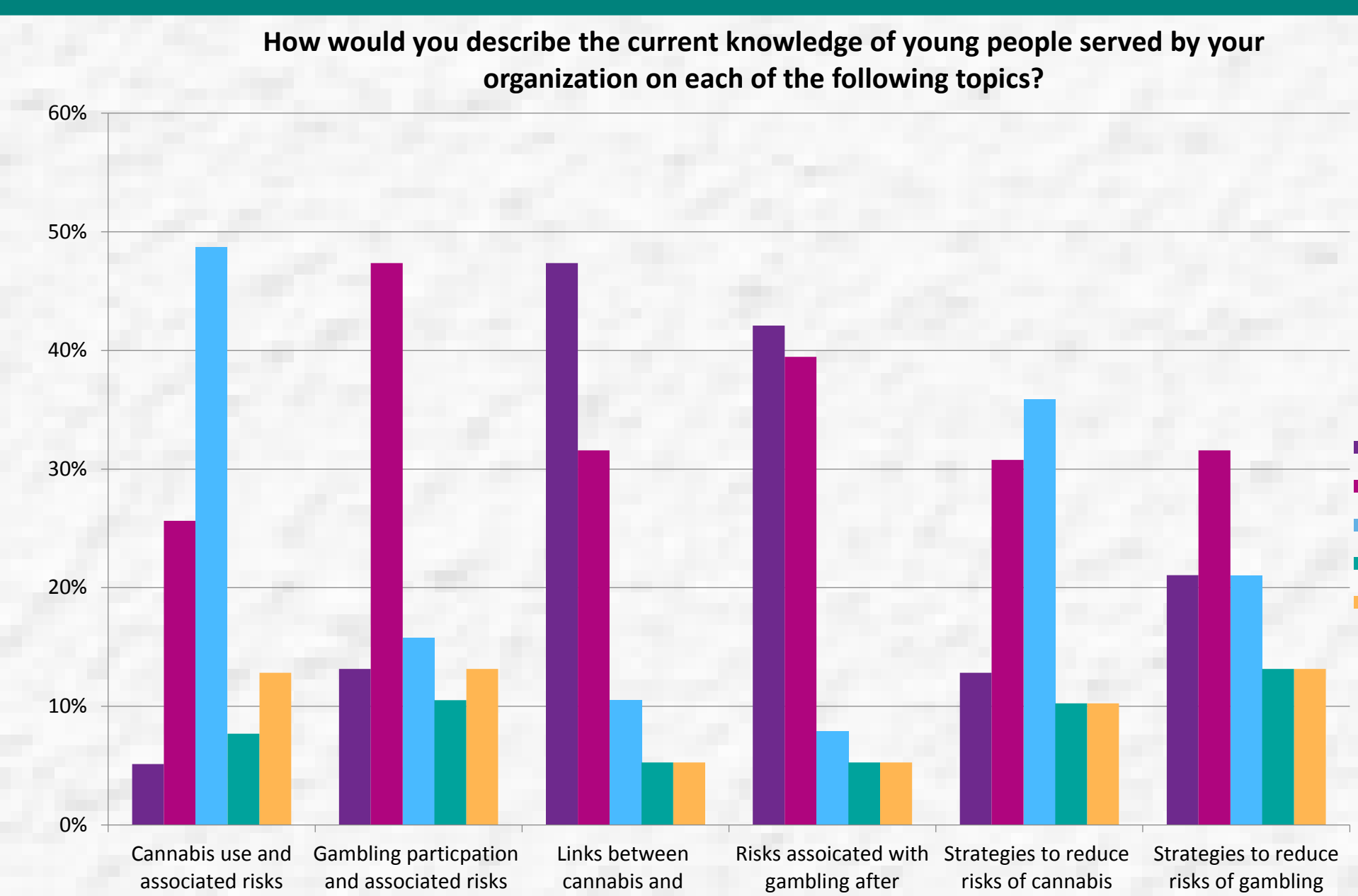### Social Media Message Pilot Targeting Adolescents in Ontario
256 Completed Evaluation Surveys

DID YOU KNOW??

Teens who *GAMBLE* excessively are more likely to use *WEED* excessively and vice versa

RESULTS

Stakeholder Survey

How would you describe the current knowledge of young people served by your organization on each of the following topics?

(legend: Not at All, Very Little, Somewhat, Very Much, Extremely)

Categories: Cannabis use and associated risks; Gambling participation and associated risks; Links between cannabis and gambling; Risks associated with gambling after cannabis use; Strategies to reduce risks of cannabis; Strategies to reduce risks of gambling

Limited Knowledge
1. Gambling
2. Gambling & Cannabis
3. Risks Associated with Gambling following Cannabis use

Relevant & Impactful
"Very Much" or **"Extremely"** **Relevant and Impactful for Young People**
1. Information on the risks of cannabis use
2. Information on the risks of gambling & cannabis use
3. Information on how to manage risks

Young people gamble more frequently and experience more gambling-related harms than any other age group
(legend: Relevance, Impact)

Young people use cannabis more frequently and experience more cannabis-related harms than any other age group
(legend: Relevant, Impact)

Risks for harm from gambling and cannabis are closely linked
(legend: Relevance, Impact)

Multiple strategies exist to reduce risks for harm from gambling and cannabis use
(legend: Relevance, Impact)

Pilot Test

Key Numbers

105,000 → 13 – 18 Year Olds Reached

800+ Clicks   **50+** Shares

Did this message increase your knowledge about the risks of gambling and using weed?

73% YES   **19% NO**

Is knowing this information likely to discourage you from gambling or using weed?

60% YES   **26% NO**

CONCLUSION

According to stakeholders, young people have knowledge deficits about gambling and cannabis use and can benefit from education on risks and risk mitigation strategies. This work shifts attention to the need to educate young people about gambling while high, not just intoxicated on alcohol, and highlights the positive impacts of using social media messages for increasing awareness on these topics among young people.

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