

WHEN SISTERS TALK ABOUT GAMBLING

A toolkit

Raising awareness about gambling among
older African Caribbean Black women

March 2020

Brought to you by:

The Jean Tweed Centre



For Women & Their Families

In partnership with:

Across Boundaries

Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre

Black Creek Community Health Centre

Elizabeth Fry Toronto

Ontario Women's Gambling and Technology Use Network

TAIBU Community Health Centre

Prepared by: 

The logo for 'pages for good' features the words 'pages for good' in a blue, sans-serif font. The text is enclosed within a yellow outline that forms a stylized book shape with rounded corners.

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How to use this toolkit

This toolkit is a guide to help community agencies in Ontario create awareness and engagement communications about gambling among older African Caribbean Black women (older ACB women) in their communities. Learnings from a series of focus group sessions conducted in November 2019 with ACB women 50+ from various parts of Toronto were used to create this toolkit.

When to use this toolkit

Use this toolkit every time you develop communications about gambling, such as:

- information/education materials
- awareness communications or marketing materials
- responses to inquiries

To whom does this toolkit apply

The information and sample materials in this toolkit were created for public consumption. There are steps and examples to help you adapt the content to suit your desired audience:

- the general public
- ACB women at-large
- older ACB women who gamble or have a gambling problem
- loved ones of ACB women who gamble or have a gambling problem

Referencing the statistics from this toolkit

- Statistics in this toolkit were collected through surveys from a small sample size of about 40-50 women during the focus groups. Reference the source as “Source: Jean Tweed Centre focus groups 2019.”

Using the facts

- Information labelled as “fact” in this toolkit are sourced from credible organizations, such as, CAMH and Canadian Safety Council.
- You may use these facts in your communications as needed.

Key messages

The following key messages were created to communicate about problem gambling among older women who identify as African, Caribbean or Black.

Each key message comes with:

- An issue that provides context for when to use the key message.
- Finding(s) from the focus group to validate the key message.
- Related fact(s) and talking point(s) to support the key message.

Use these messages as a guide whenever you want to start conversations or engage with older African Caribbean Black women about gambling. In doing so, your communication will remain consistent and always on point.

Key messages	Page
1. You may be gambling and not know it.	5
2. Gambling can become a problem for you. Know the risks.	6
3. Set your time and budget limit before you gamble. Gamble for entertainment, not to make money.	8
4. Know the warning signs of problem gambling.	9
5. Talk to someone about your gambling concerns. Seek help before it gets worse.	10

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RECOGNIZING GAMBLING

Key Message 1:

You may be gambling and not know it.

When to use

- **The issue:** when older ACB women lack the ability to recognize or become aware of when they gamble.
- An example of when someone isn't aware of their gambling habits: *"I don't gamble, I only buy lottery tickets regularly."*

Validating the message

- **Finding 1:** Buying lottery tickets, playing bingo, and participating in raffles are the top 3 gambling activities among older ACB women.
- **Finding 2:** Over 25% of older ACB women do not consider lottery tickets, bingo or raffles as a form of gambling.

Supporting the message

- **Fact 1:** Gambling is to risk something of value for a chance of winning something of greater value.
- **Fact 2:** Gambling is a game of chance, not skill.

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RISKS OF GAMBLING

Key Message 2:

Gambling can become a problem for you.

Know the risks.

When to use

- **The issue:** when older ACB women do not know the risks associated with gambling.
- An example of when someone doesn't understand the risks of gambling: *"I'll use my pension to keep playing."*

Validating the message

Finding 1: Many older ACB women cited their start in gambling as a fun or a social occasion.

Finding 2: Nearly 60% of older ACB women believe seniors are at greater risk of problem gambling compared to less than 25% who believe they are at greater risk because they are women.

Supporting the message

- **Fact 1:** Gambling becomes a problem when it affects your daily activities, mental/physical health, reputation and relationships, and hurts your finances.
- **Fact 2:** Problem gambling is a disorder that can affect anyone, no matter your age, culture, income, job or level of education.
- **Fact 3:** Problem gambling can begin suddenly or over a period of time.

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- **Fact 5:** There is more risk for problem gambling if:
 - you have a big win early on (false hope for future wins)
 - your preferred form of gambling is easy to access
 - you have mistaken beliefs about the odds of winning
 - you don't track your gambling wins and losses
 - you have had a recent loss or change, such as divorce, job loss, retirement or death of a loved one
 - you often feel bored or lonely, or have a history of risk-taking or impulsive behaviour
 - you have a history of mental health concerns, particularly depression and anxiety
 - you tie your self-esteem to gambling wins or losses.
- **Fact 6:** Seniors are more vulnerable to problem gambling because they are more often isolated or bored, dealing with health problems, and coping with change such as retirement or loss of a loved one than other groups.

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RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING

Key Message 3:

Set your time and budget limit before you gamble.

Gamble for entertainment, not to make money.

When to use

- **The issue:** when older ACB women turn to gambling for reasons other than entertainment, while living on a fixed budget with limited income.
- An example of when someone is gambling for the wrong reasons: *"It's my pension. It's my time. I will enjoy it as I choose."*

Validating the message

- **Finding 1:** 70% of ACB senior women gamble.
- **Finding 2:** Nearly half of older ACB women who gamble, do so several times a year or more.
- **Finding 3:** Chasing losses, borrowing money and lying to hide time spent or unpaid debts for gambling were most commonly identified by older ACB women as a sign that a senior has a gambling problem.

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Supporting the message

- **Fact 1:** Gambling is a game of chance, not skill.
- **Fact 2:** Gambling becomes a problem when it affects your daily activities, mental/physical health, reputation and relationships, and hurts your finances.
- **Fact 3:** Seniors are less able to recover from a major financial loss than someone who is still in the work force.

PROBLEM GAMBLING WARNING SIGNS

Key Message 4:

Know the warning signs of problem gambling.

When to use

- **The issue:** ACB senior women are unable to recognize when to stop gambling.
- An example of when someone's gambling gets out of hand:
"I have to keep going to win back what I lost."

Validating the message

- **Finding 1:** Over one quarter of older ACB women who gamble do not recognize all of the warning signs of problem gambling.
- **Finding 2:** Less than 25% of older ACB women believe seniors are aware of the signs of problem gambling.

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Supporting the message

- **Fact 1:** There are behavioural, financial, health and emotional signs of problem gambling, such as:
 - withdrawing from activities you once enjoyed
 - changing patterns of sleeping and eating
 - lying or being vague about time and money spent gambling
 - thinking about gambling all the time
 - neglecting personal needs and financial responsibilities
 - experiencing mood swings and sudden bursts of anger
 - borrowing or cashing pensions, RRSPs and savings to gamble
 - having little interest in the free perks or social aspect of gambling

SEEKING HELP

Key Message 5:

Talk to someone about your gambling concerns.

Seek help before it gets worse.

When to use

- The issue: when older ACB women do not know where and how to get help with problem gambling.
- An example of when someone who should seek help:
“I got myself in this mess, it’s my problem to fix.”

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Validating the message

- **Finding 1:** 87% of older ACB women are unaware of support services available in their community.

Supporting the message

- **Fact 1:** Problem gambling is a serious disorder that not only affects you, but your loved ones too.
- **Fact 2:** There is help. Talk to your healthcare provider about your gambling concerns.
- **Fact 3:** When you're ready, these community agencies can help you start the conversation about problem gambling:
 - [Across Boundaries](#) (Toronto West)
 - [Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre](#) (Ottawa)
 - [Black Creek Community Health Centre](#) (North Western Toronto)
 - [Elizabeth Fry Toronto](#) (downtown Toronto)
 - [Jean Tweed Centre](#) (Etobicoke)
 - [TAIBU Community Health Centre](#) (Scarborough)

Frequently asked questions

The following questions were motivated by some of the inquiries and discoveries made during the focus group sessions. The response keys can help you understand how key messages and supporting facts are used to craft an effective response to questions that may arise about older ACB women and gambling.

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WHEN SISTERS TALK ABOUT GAMBLING

Question 1:

Why are older ACB women being targeted in your gambling awareness activities?

Response keys:

- While problem gambling can affect anyone, there are no known services designed specifically for older African Caribbean Black women or support programs addressing the factors that drive them to gamble. Through our awareness activities, we hope that older ACB women will be better informed about the risks of gambling, learn how to gamble responsibly, recognize the signs of problem gambling, and understand how to get help if they face problem gambling.
- We hope to reduce the gambling risks for older ACB women by creating greater awareness of problem gambling. More than 25% of older ACB women do not consider buying a lottery ticket, participating in raffles and playing bingo as forms of gambling, yet two-thirds of them participated in these gambling activities.

Question 2:

Why are you telling me about problem gambling when I don't gamble?

Response keys:

- Anyone can develop a gambling problem. It is a disorder that can begin at any time and it can lead to loss of money and possessions, cause problems at home and at work, and harms your mental health.

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- You may be gambling and not know it. Buying a lottery ticket, participating in raffles and playing bingo are all forms of gambling. Participating in gambling activities is common among older ACB women with 70% taking part in gambling at least once this past year.

Question 3:

Are older ACB women at greater risk of problem gambling than other groups?

Response keys:

- Problem gambling is a disorder that can affect anyone. Seniors are more vulnerable to problem gambling because they are more often isolated or bored, dealing with health problems, and coping with change such as retirement or loss of a loved one than other groups.
- Among older ACB women, 75% believe that seniors are unaware of the signs of problem gambling.
- We encourage older ACB women to gamble for entertainment, not to make money or to solve other problems. Nearly half of older ACB women gamble several times a year or more often.

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Question 4:

What's the harm if I gamble every now and then?

Response keys:

- Gambling is low-risk if you play strictly for entertainment with no expectations to win or that it will solve your problems – financial, social or psychological.
- Anyone can develop a gambling problem. It can begin at any time and it can lead to loss of money and possessions, cause problems at home and at work, and harms your mental health.
- Seniors are more vulnerable to problem gambling because they are more often isolated or bored, dealing with health problems, and coping with change such as retirement or loss of a loved one than other groups.
- Many older adults live on a fixed budget with a limited income. As a senior, you are less able to recover from a major financial loss than someone who is still in the work force.
- It's important to know the warning signs of problem gambling, yet 26% of older ACB women are unaware of what they are.

Warning signs of problem gambling include:

- Withdrawing from activities you once enjoyed.
- Valuables disappear.
- Lying or being vague about the time and money you spent on gambling.

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- Neglecting your personal needs and financial responsibilities.
- Having little interest in the free perks and social aspects of gambling activities.
- Playing again to win back what you've lost.

Question 5:

I have a gambling problem or know someone who does, what should I do?

Response keys:

- Talk to someone about your gambling concerns. You must get help before it gets worse.
- There is always something you can do to help someone you know with a gambling problem. Reach out to one of the community agencies that offer programs, counselling or provide access to the appropriate resources for support specific to women.
- The following community-based agencies have someone you can talk to or can refer you to the right type of help:
 - [Across Boundaries](#) (Toronto)
 - [Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre](#) (Ottawa)
 - [Black Creek Community Health Centre](#) (Toronto)
 - [Elizabeth Fry](#) (Toronto)
 - [TAIBU Community Health Centre](#) (Toronto)
 - [The Jean Tweed Centre](#) (Toronto)

A guide to raising gambling awareness

Follow these simple steps to create communications that catch the attention of your intended audience and drive them to take action.

OBJECTIVE

Step 1:

Know what you want to accomplish.

Set objectives for your communications activities. They will ensure that you choose the right message, channels and timing to drive the action you're hoping for.

For example, your objectives could be to:

- **Inform/educate:** drive attention to the risks of gambling, the harms and warning signs of problem gambling, or how to gamble responsibly.
- **Engage:** trigger conversations/dialogue (online or in-person) on various topics related to gambling among older ACB women.
- **Drive action:** empower your target audience to take a specific action. For example, seek help by calling a hotline.

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AUDIENCE

Step 2:

Choose your target audience.

The audience will dictate the style of language, visuals, and message in your communications.

For example, your target audience could be:

- ACB women in general
- older ACB women
- ACB women who gamble
- ACB women with a gambling problem
- loved ones of ACB women who gamble or have a gambling problem
- the general public

MESSAGE

Step 3:

Create your message + add a call-to-action.

With the key messages as your guide, use clear and plain language with a casual and nonjudgmental tone to bring attention to the action you want people to take.

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Don't forget to:

- Keep your main message short and simple.
- Use high-resolution images or other rich media to drive the message home.
- Choose visuals that reflect your target audience and the message – select the appropriate age range and feelings being depicted.
- Add only one call-to-action per communication.
- Always include a website URL and/or phone number or hyperlink

CHANNEL

Step 4:

Pick the best channels for your communications.

The channels you choose should match how and where your target audience receives information.

Audience	Channels
ACB women in general, Older ACB women	Emails Social media ads Your website Group discussions Flyers/posters at cultural centres Community news article or ads Face-to-face conversations or presentations at cultural or leisure events

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ACB women who gamble or,
Have a gambling problem

Flyers/posters at cultural centres, churches, community centres...

Posters or print ads in/near places where they gamble (bingo halls, convenience stores, casino, etc.)

Face-to-face conversations at cultural or leisure events

Loved ones of ACB women who gamble/have a gambling problem or,
The general public

Emails

Social media posts and ads

Your website

Advertising (bus shelter, TV, radio)

Print ads/posters at cultural centres, churches, etc.

Community news articles or ads

TIMING

Deliberate timing will keep your message relevant at various points in time.

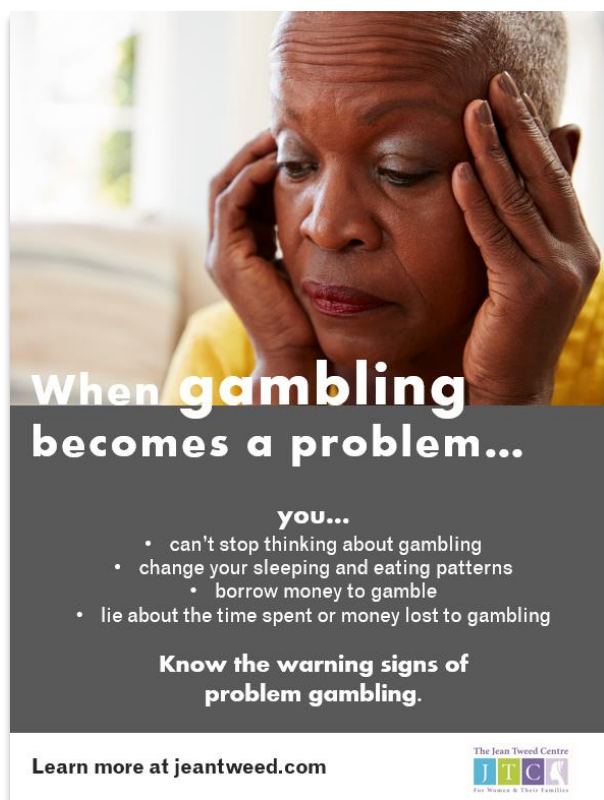
Awareness days

Consider tying your communications with an awareness day, such as:

- Bell Let's Talk Day (January)
- Family Day (February)
- International Women's Day (March)
- Community Living Month (May)
- Mental Health Week (May)
- Seniors' Month (June)
- Women's History Month (October)
- Addiction Awareness Week (November)

Sample communications

Flyers/posters



Inform/educate



Drive action

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Social media



Jean Tweed Centre
@jeantweedcentre

Do you recognize this person?
In debt. Thinking about the next game.
Losing sleep. Neglecting responsibilities.

What's your experience with
#problemgambling?
Continue the conversation at
@jeantweedcentre



The Jean Tweed Centre

Gambling is low-risk when it's used for
entertainment, not to make money.

Can you tell when gambling becomes
#problemgambling?
[insert link to website or poster]



Engage

Appendix – fact sheet

Gambling at-a-glance

among African Caribbean Black women aged 50+

Gambling: a game of chance, not skill.

Top 3 gambling behaviours

- buying lottery tickets
- participating in raffles
- playing at bingo halls

Gambling habits

- 70% gambled in the past-year
- almost 50% gamble several times a year or more

Source: Jean Tweed Centre focus groups 2019

Problem gambling risk goes up when you:

- win big early on
- have easy access to gambling
- have had a recent divorce, job loss, retirement or death of a loved one
- often feel bored or lonely
- have a history of mental health concerns

Harms of problem gambling

- cause problems at home and at work
- loss of money and possessions
- affects your mental health

Where to go for help

Toronto:

Across Boundaries, Black Creek Community Health Centre, Elizabeth Fry Toronto, TAIBU Community Health Centre

Ottawa:

Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre

Talk to us about your gambling concerns.

JEANTWEED.COM

