

A Program to Prevent Problem Gambling

Grades 9–12



Stacked Deck

Facilitator's Guide

Robert Williams, Ph.D., and Robert Wood, Ph.D.



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What Is the Purpose of This Facilitator’s Guide?



This guide provides step-by-step instructions on how to implement the *Stacked Deck* program to prevent problem gambling. It is important that you read this guide before beginning implementation.

Throughout the guide, you will see:



RESEARCH FACT

These facts highlight important research findings about problem gambling and its prevention.

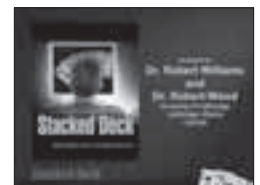


TEACHER TIP

These tips and strategies will make it easier for you to teach the *Stacked Deck* prevention program.


Thumbnails

Thumbnails of the PowerPoint slides are provided in this guide.



How to Use the CD-ROM

This facilitator’s guide comes with a CD-ROM that contains several key resources, including a digital slide show for each lesson, lesson handouts, take-home “family pages,” and other program components.

Whenever you see this icon , you'll know that the resource being discussed can be found on the *Stacked Deck* CD-ROM. The number on the icon corresponds to the number of the document on the CD-ROM.

To access these resources, place the disk in your computer's CD-ROM drive. Open your version of Adobe Reader or Microsoft PowerPoint, then click on the documents you wish to use. Except for slides 20, 23, and 26 of PowerPoint 4, the documents cannot be modified, but they can be printed for use in individual classroom settings without concern for copyright infringement. For a complete list of the resources included on the CD-ROM, please see pages 95–96 of this manual. This list is also on the CD-ROM itself.

Stacked Deck is an extraordinary effort by Drs. Williams and Wood to move the field of problem gambling prevention into the arena of evidenced-based science. This most vital resource should be included in school health programs to help teachers educate students about the various facets of gambling, including its role in today's culture, how the principles of chance are important when playing these games, and how to recognize the signs of problem gambling. The product has numerous user-friendly features. The tone of the material is educational and balanced. I trust that teachers and students will find *Stacked Deck* to be engaging, relevant, and fun.

—Ken C. Winters, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Psychiatry
University of Minnesota

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Robert Williams, Ph.D.
Professor of Health Sciences
and Coordinator,
Alberta Gaming Research Institute
University of Lethbridge
Lethbridge, Alberta
Canada

Robert Wood, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Sociology
University of Lethbridge
Lethbridge, Alberta
Canada



Introductory Materials





Introduction

Welcome to *Stacked Deck!*

Stacked Deck is Hazelden’s evidence-based curriculum for the prevention of problem gambling among teens and young adults. It is the only prevention program proven effective in actually changing participants’ gambling and problem gambling behaviors and significantly reducing their risk of becoming problem gamblers. The authors drew on years of research at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada, to create this engaging program. *Stacked Deck* teaches young people to approach life as smart risk-takers, weighing the pros and cons of their actions to determine the odds of achieving positive results.

What Are the Program’s Goals?

The goals of *Stacked Deck* are to

- teach young people the facts about gambling and related risks
- encourage responsible decision making
- prevent young people from becoming problem gamblers

What Is the *Stacked Deck* Program?

Stacked Deck is a five- to six-session school-based curriculum for the prevention of problem gambling. Key elements include

- fun and engaging multimedia delivery
- a well-structured sequence of lessons that develop an essential knowledge base and key skills

- a strong focus on teaching decision making and problem solving
- a key message that advocates for “smart gambling,” understood as sensible risk-taking, rather than total abstinence from risk-taking
- a booster lesson with emphasis on retention of knowledge and skills

The interactive lessons are organized into digital slide shows. Outlined below, the first five lessons teach the program’s core content: lessons 1, 2, and 3 focus specifically on gambling, while lessons 4 and 5 are more general.

1. Modern commercial gambling includes stacked odds that create the “house edge.”
2. Gambling is an activity that can become addictive, and there are recognizable causes, risk factors, and signs of problem gambling.
3. Two factors that contribute to problem gambling are lack of knowledge about gambling and misunderstanding about how gambling actually works.
4. Good decision making and problem solving are essential skills to practice.
5. There are ways to overcome barriers to good decision making and problem solving.

Lesson 6 is a booster to help students consolidate learning and retain the skills and knowledge gained. It is best to administer lesson 6 a few weeks after the end of lesson 5. Although it is an optional part of the program, research indicates that it significantly enhances outcomes.

How Much Time Is Required to Teach *Stacked Deck*?

Each lesson is designed for a 35- to 45-minute class period. Most can be extended to 60 minutes if needed. It is best to teach the five core lessons over two or three weeks, although they can be condensed into as little as one week (five consecutive days). Either way, the booster lesson should follow a few weeks after lesson 5.

Do All Five Core Lessons Need to Be Taught?

Stacked Deck is known to be effective when the *entire* program is delivered; only then can you expect similar results in your classroom or school. None of the particular lessons are known to be any more or less important than the others. Therefore, although lessons 1 through 3 could be delivered on their own, there is no guarantee that they would achieve the same result as the entire program.

What Materials Are Needed to Teach *Stacked Deck*?

To implement the program, you'll need this facilitator's guide and the materials on the accompanying CD-ROM. That disk contains both a digital slide show and a take-home "family page" for each lesson. You'll find instructions for using the disk on pages iii–iv, and a complete list of the CD-ROM materials on pages 95–96. Additional items for the teacher to prepare are detailed in the chart on pages 15–17.

Each lesson in this guide begins with a session description, list of learner outcomes, summary of lesson parts, and checklist of materials and preparation needed. Specific background information for the teacher is provided as well. The lesson plans include scripted text for the teacher and detailed instructions for presenting each slide show and activity. Teacher instructions are also included in the digital slide show.

Who Is the Intended Audience?

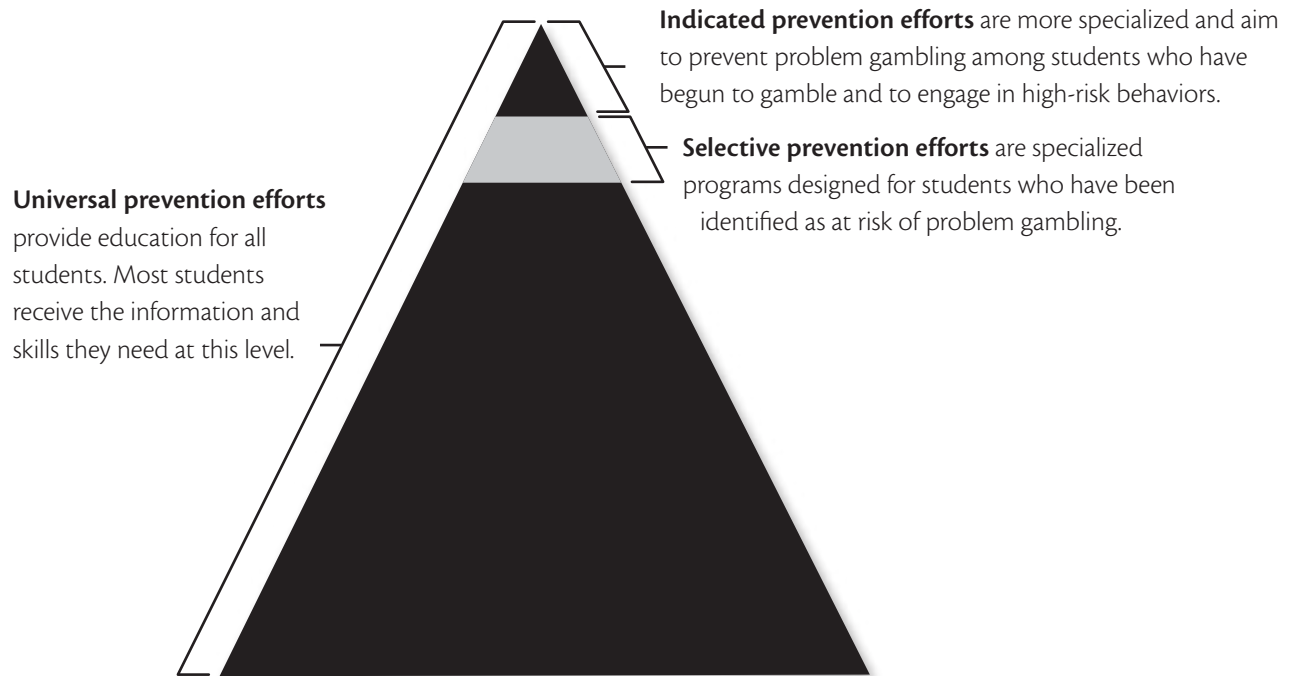
As a whole program, *Stacked Deck* is proven effective with grades 9 through 12 (ages 14 to 19). Some of the material is flexible: lessons 1, 2, 4, and 5 are also appropriate for grades 7 and 8. Lessons 1, 2, and 3 are suitable for college and university students. Local data may help you determine which grade level would most benefit from the curriculum at your site.



RESEARCH FACT

When social norms change—when the “social environment” shifts—prevention programs are more likely to succeed. Research shows that the more people who are exposed to an intervention, particularly in the targeted population's peer group, the greater its overall impact will be. That means involving entire grade levels, rather than individual classrooms. In the schools where *Stacked Deck* was tested, the authors encouraged such broad participation.

The *Stacked Deck* program is a **universal** prevention effort, designed for all students: it provides the information and skills most students need at this level. The program may also be used in **selective** prevention efforts, which target students at risk of problem gambling, and in **indicated** prevention efforts for students already experiencing problem gambling (see figure on next page).



Stacked Deck provides universal prevention education. The program may also be used as part of selective and indicated prevention efforts in a variety of settings.

Stacked Deck fits well into a variety of classes: advisory, health education, home-room, career and life management, social studies, science, or general life skills. Lesson 3, “Gambling Fallacies,” may be taught in mathematics class. Related academic standards are listed on pages 13–14. Classroom teachers, prevention specialists, health educators, volunteers, or others may deliver the curriculum.



RESEARCH FACT

Outcomes vary somewhat as a function of who provides the program. This variability is probably related to the teacher’s ability to engage with the students. Stronger outcomes also seem to correlate with greater enthusiasm demonstrated by a site’s administrators and staff.

What Does Research Show about the Effectiveness of *Stacked Deck*?

Research shows that *Stacked Deck* has these significant effects:

- changes participants' attitudes toward gambling
- improves participants' knowledge of gambling and problem gambling
- improves participants' resistance to gambling fallacies
- improves participants' general decision-making and problem-solving skills
- decreases the frequency of gambling behavior among participants
- decreases rates of problem gambling among participants

While a handful of other school-based programs have been shown to change gambling attitudes and knowledge, *Stacked Deck* is the only program that is proven to actually change students' *behavior*, decreasing both gambling and problem gambling.¹ The program is unique in achieving this level of success.

How Was the Program Developed?

The nature and content of the *Stacked Deck* program are derived from leading research about the causes of problem gambling and careful study of behavioral change strategies that have been effective in other primary prevention programs.² Research on effective teaching strategies has been incorporated as well.³ The authors refined the program through feedback and data gathered over six years of early studies. More information about the research behind *Stacked Deck* is available on the CD-ROM.



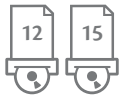
Why Is Problem Gambling Currently of Special Concern?

The past thirty years have seen a dramatic increase in the availability of legalized gambling opportunities worldwide. With this availability have come higher rates of both gambling and problem gambling. (“Problem gambling” occurs when a person has trouble limiting the money and/or time spent on gambling, and this difficulty leads to significant adverse consequences.)⁴ Severe forms of problem gambling are also known as “pathological gambling” or “compulsive gambling.” Among adults, the prevalence of problem gambling in North America increased significantly from 1977 to 1993.⁵

Though problem gambling rates among adults are of concern,⁶ the prevalence among youth is even higher. National studies in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Sweden have found that problem gambling peaks among 18- to 24-year-olds.⁷ Similarly, a comprehensive review of North American prevalence studies found that lifetime rates of problem gambling were highest in college and university students

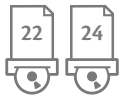
(16.4 percent), followed by adolescents (11.8 percent).⁸ The elevated rates among youth are likely due to the fact that young adults typically have the highest rates of risky behaviors (substance use, reckless driving, unsafe sex, and so on).⁹ Moreover, today's youth comprise one of the first generations to have been raised in an environment of extensive legalized and government-sanctioned gambling.

School-based programs are an important part of a general gambling prevention strategy. Therefore, *effective* school-based programs for the prevention of problem gambling, such as *Stacked Deck*, must be identified and put into place.



Does *Stacked Deck* Provide Materials for Families?

Yes. A take-home “family page” called *News from Stacked Deck* is provided for each lesson. Sample letters introducing the program to families are also included. These materials are on the *Stacked Deck* CD-ROM.



Are Tools for Evaluation and Assessment Included?

Yes. An optional gambling questionnaire is shown on pages 89–94. You’ll also find it on the CD-ROM, along with instructions and the answer key. It may be used for grading and assessment as well as for program evaluation.



What Special Challenges May Come Up While Teaching This Curriculum? How Can I Meet These Successfully?

For a variety of reasons, some teachers may be reluctant to talk about gambling with their students. Some may feel that the topic is not appropriate in the school setting. Some may question whether prevention education truly has a positive impact on students’ health and well-being. Teachers may also feel unsure of their own competence with the subject matter or pressured by myriad demands on their time.

Problem gambling is a topic that needs to be addressed by teachers in schools. With this program, teachers can learn along with their students. Teachers don’t need any prior knowledge of gambling issues. The program’s design and format make it easy for teachers to share this important information with their students. For the greatest ease of delivery, it is recommended that teachers review each lesson in advance and prepare any materials needed.

Teaching about gambling may reveal that some of the students in your class live with related issues in their homes. It may also reveal that some students have begun gambling themselves. For example:

- Students who gamble may be reluctant to deliver the family pages to their parents.
- You might overhear students discussing, or even flaunting, gambling experiences.
- A student caring for a parent who is a problem gambler may approach you for help.

Students often do not understand their own personal challenges clearly enough to ask for help when they need it, and they may simply act out due to feelings of confusion, shame, or anger. As caring adults who want to help these students succeed, teachers can keep these suggestions in mind.

Be Professionally Responsible.

Use the appropriate channels to follow up on questions and concerns, and find accurate and helpful information for yourself and your students. Let students know the degree to which you can keep their information confidential. Ask an administrator, guidance counselor, school nurse, or colleague to help you as needed.

Know Your School's Policy for Reporting Concerns.

To whom and in what situations are you required to report? Is there an established policy for addressing this type of concern? What actions can you expect others will take to follow up on your report? Will confidentiality be maintained? What other resources are available to help? Ask an administrator or trusted colleague. Let students know ahead of time that you need to report to the appropriate authorities if their well-being is in danger.

Remember, You Are One Person, and There Are Limits to What You Can Accomplish!

As the teacher, you are doing your job by teaching *Stacked Deck*, by helping all students participate, by providing clear and accurate information, and by being available to answer your students' questions. It is in a teacher's nature to care and want to do more, but make sure that the expectations you place upon yourself are reasonable.

Does Hazelden Provide Additional Prevention Resources?

Yes. Hazelden Publishing is the leading publisher of evidence-based programs. An annotated resource list is included on the CD-ROM. Hazelden offers a comprehensive line of K–12 prevention materials, as well as other resources for youth and families. For complete information, visit www.hazelden.org/bookstore.



Stacked Deck



A Program to Prevent Problem Gambling

Today's youth—raised amid legalized gambling and immediate online access to the games—show alarming rates of problem gambling. National studies in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Sweden show the problem peaks between ages 18 and 24. In North America, problem gambling occurs in more than 16 percent of college and university students and nearly 12 percent of adolescents.

Stacked Deck is the only prevention program proven to reduce gambling behavior in students.

This uniquely engaging, evidence-based curriculum incorporates core subjects including math, history, and life skills. **Stacked Deck** has been shown to produce these results among young people:

- Change attitudes toward gambling
- Build knowledge about gambling
- Explain common pitfalls and gambling fallacies
- Improve decision making and problem solving
- Decrease gambling
- Decrease problem gambling

Stacked Deck teaches teens and young adults how to approach life as smart risk-takers, weighing the pros and cons of their actions to determine the odds of achieving success.

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