

A Program to Prevent Problem Gambling
Grades 9-12



Stacked Deck

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

Scope and Sequence



What Is *Stacked Deck*?

Stacked Deck: A Program to Prevent Problem Gambling is the only curriculum proven effective in changing youth gambling behaviors. *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. In six interactive lessons, the program teaches about the history of gambling; the true odds and the “house edge”; gambling fallacies; the signs, risk factors, and causes of problem gambling; and skills for good decision-making and problem-solving. Each lesson includes a PowerPoint slide show and a family page.

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

Is *Stacked Deck* an Evidence-Based Program?

Yes. The clinical controlled trial that evaluated *Stacked Deck* is published in a peer-reviewed journal (Williams, Wood & Currie, in press). The authors’ research shows that *Stacked Deck* significantly:

- changes participants’ attitudes toward gambling
- improves participants’ knowledge about 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 demonstrate an ability to change gambling attitudes and knowledge, *Stacked Deck* is the only program that has been proven to actually change behavior and to decrease both gambling and problem gambling (Williams, West, & Simpson, 2007a; 2007b; Williams, Wood, & Currie, 2008). The program is uniquely effective in achieving this level of success.

What Are the *Stacked Deck* Program Components?

Stacked Deck is a self-contained package that contains two main parts: the facilitator’s guide and the CD-ROM. For each of the six lessons, the CD-ROM includes both a PowerPoint slideshow (for classroom use) and parent information. The CD-ROM also includes all student handouts and additional resources.

Facilitator's Guide

The first page of each lesson has a brief description, learner outcomes, an at-a-glance summary of the lesson parts, and a checklist of all the materials and preparation needed. Specific background information follows. The lesson plans include scripted text for teachers and detailed instructions about how to present each slide show and activity. For the facilitator's convenience, the same instructions are also included in the notes section accompanying each slide in the digital slideshows.

Slide Shows

The interactive lessons are organized into digital slide shows. The first five lessons teach the program's core content:

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. Gambling fallacies and muddled thinking contribute to problem gambling.
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.

Booster Lesson

Lesson 6 is a booster, designed to help students consolidate learning and retain the skills and knowledge gained.

Reproducible Materials

Reproducible resources and communications are included on the CD-ROM and may be printed as needed for easy professional use at no additional cost. These materials include:

- student handouts
- family materials
- gambling questionnaire for assessment and evaluation

Why Should Schools Address the Issue of Problem Gambling?

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 an individual experiences difficulty in limiting money and/or time spent on gambling and this difficulty leads to significant adverse consequences (Gambling Research Australia, 2005).) 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 (Shaffer & Hall, 2001; Shaffer, Hall, & Vanderbilt, 1997).

Though problem gambling rates among adults are of concern (Shaffer & Hall, 2001; AGRI, 2008), the prevalence among youth is higher. National studies in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Sweden found that problem gambling peaks among 18- to 24-year-olds (Gerstein et al., 1999; Productivity Commission, 1999; Statistics Canada,

2003; Ronnberg et al., 1999). 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) (Shaffer & Hall, 2001). The elevated rates among youth are likely due to the fact that young adults typically have the highest rates of involvement in most risky behaviors (substance use, reckless driving, unsafe sex, and so on (Eaton et al., 2006). 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.

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Stacked Deck Scope & Sequence

LESSON	LEARNER OUTCOMES
Lesson 1 Gambling History and “The House Edge”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know gambling has occurred all over the world since ancient times • understand how modern commercial gambling differs from other forms of gambling • recognize that “the house” uses strategies to establish “the house edge” • realize the house edge assures that players cannot win over the long haul
Lesson 2 Problem Gambling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe some negative consequences of gambling, including problem gambling • understand that gambling can be as addictive as drugs or alcohol • recognize signs and symptoms of problem gambling • name some risk factors for problem gambling • know how to find more information and/or get help for problem gambling
Lesson 3 Gambling Fallacies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand that problem gamblers’ thinking is muddled by incorrect beliefs • identify examples of gambling fallacies in the media • consider how government can prevent problem gambling
Lesson 4 Smart Gambling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognize that risk is part of life • learn to identify potential gains and losses of choices involving risk • know the three indicators of a “smart bet” • evaluate situations involving risk
Lesson 5 Barriers to Good Decision Making and Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand some reasons smart people sometimes make poor choices • know some strategies for overcoming barriers to good decision making • practice resisting peer pressure
Lesson 6 (Optional Booster) Stacked Deck Quiz Game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • choose accurate responses to gambling awareness questions • describe how to recognize a “good bet” • identify appropriate ways to manage stress and solve problems • give examples of barriers to good decision making • list symptoms of problem gambling

Related Academic Standards*

Life Skills Standards

Life Work

- manages money effectively

Self-Regulation

- considers risks
- restrains impulsivity

Thinking and Reasoning

- applies decision-making techniques
- applies basic trouble-shooting and problem-solving techniques
- understands and applies basic principles of hypothesis testing and scientific inquiry
- understands and applies basic principles of logic and reasoning
- evaluates major factors (e.g., personal priorities, environmental conditions, peer groups) that influence personal decisions
- analyzes the impact of decisions on self and others and takes responsibility for consequences and outcomes of decisions
- engages in problem finding and framing for personal situations and situations in the community

Mathematics Standards

- understands and applies basic and advanced concepts of probability
- understands and applies basic and advanced concepts of statistics and data analysis
- uses a variety of strategies in the problem-solving process

Arts and Communication Standards

- knows how to detect emotional appeals in various media messages and productions

History Standards

- understands the historical perspective

Geography Standards

- understands the nature and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics

Health Standards

- knows the availability and effective use of health services, products, and information
- knows environmental and external factors that affect individual and community health
- understands the relationship of family health to individual health

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