



YMCA
 Youth Gambling
 Awareness
 Program (YGAP)

YMCA
 Programme de
 sensibilisation aux
 jeux de hasard chez
 les jeunes (PSJJ)

Spring 2015

Newsletter

Online Gambling

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For our directory of site locations across Ontario: **1-877-5515** or ymcagta.org/gambling

*Building healthy
 communities*





Online Safeguard

By: Michelle MacLellan

Technology has made access to gambling and social media gaming much easier for players. In the past, people wanting to game or gamble had to leave their home and visit an arcade or casino. Now, so much of what we want to do in life is accessible via computers and/or smart phones (games, gambling, banking, reservations, online shopping, ordering fast food, communicating, etc.). Accessibility can make our lives much simpler, help us complete tasks faster, and generally allow us to be more productive but it also can cause concern for too much of a good thing. It is important for children, youth and adults to make sure they are aware of the “safeguards” when it comes to online activities.

Setting limits: It is important for individuals of any age to remember that when activities are fun, exciting and entertaining, we can easily lose track of time and/or money. Setting appropriate time and money limits allows us to enjoy the activities we love, but also be able to accomplish our school, work or family related commitments. Online gaming and gambling is extremely accessible via access to the internet providing endless access for those who do not set appropriate limits. Be aware of the amount of time and money you spend online and make sure to lead a balanced lifestyle! Online gaming and gambling is entertainment that has a cost!

Knowing the rules: Understand that online gambling is illegal for anyone under the age of 18. Be aware that youth under the age of 18 have access to reloadable gift cards where they have the opportunity to use real money online. Parents and caregivers should discuss the games and websites youth are accessing online to determine their appropriateness.

Understanding the ‘Freemiums’ model: “The ‘Freemiums’ model allows players to play for free and experience the thrill of winning and passing levels with ease. The likelihood of winning is in the players favour on the FREE sites, which provides players with a strong sense of satisfaction. These accomplishments are ex-

perienced as mini rewards in our brains, releasing the neurochemical dopamine. Despite its reputation as a pleasure chemical, dopamine also plays a crucial role in learning, cementing our behaviours and training us to continue performing them. Once players believe they are successful at the game, they can be easily tempted to pay-to-play in order to feel continued success and/or accomplishment by winning real money. This creates a perfect **blurred line**. Player’s fall into the Gambler’s Fallacy thinking that they were so close to beating the level that if they were to try just one more time they would get it. They then purchase lives and try again.”

Source: The Guardian. “This is what Candy Crush Saga does to your brain.” Dana Smith. Web. 1 April 2014.
<www.theguardian.com/science/blog/2014/apr/01/candy-crush-saga-app-brain>

Protecting YOUR information: Players must remember to protect their personal information while playing or communicating online. Players should not disclose personal or banking information online to other players and should carefully read the terms and conditions of all gaming or gambling websites. Parents and caregivers should ensure there are passwords required for all online purchases.

Remember that games are supposed to be fun and entertaining, and if they start causing hurt feelings or bad things to happen, it could be time to ask for help!

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What's New at PlayOLG

By: Melanie Dudun

As you most likely already know PlayOLG is Ontario's new online gambling site and is now available. Lottery products will be available to those persons 18 years of age and over, while casino products will be restricted to those persons 19 years of age and over. For many years now online gambling sites have been available for Ontarians to use but 'at their own risk' due to many sites being located overseas. Now that's a real gamble! Ontario is not the first Province to launch online gambling sites B.C, Manitoba and Quebec have already done so.

Before choosing to gamble online here are a few things about online gambling in Ontario that you should know:

- 3.4% of Ontarians gamble online.
- Last year in Ontario approximately \$400-\$500 Million went to offshore betting sites that are not regulated and are illegal.

Here are a few things to know about the new PlayOLG site:

2 main goals of PlayOLG:

- To provide a safe and secure online entertainment site for Ontarians.
- To generate revenue for the province that stays in the province.

What's available?

- Lotto Max, Lotto 6/49 and Encore
- 30+ slot games including: Hot shot Blazing 7's, Kitty Glitter, Pixies of the Forrest and Big Vegas
- Table games including: Roulette, Blackjack, 3 Card Poker, WAR and Baccarat
- Video Poker coming soon (5 card)

Responsible Gambling on the Play OLG site, you bet!

- Mandatory Weekly Deposit Limits
- Session Limit Time (optional)

- Casino Loss Limit (optional)
- Lottery Limit (optional)
- Self-Exclusion
- Site is exclusive to Ontarians

PlayOLG so far

- PlayOLG first 4 weeks: 36,000 started the registration process.
- Hoping to generate an est. \$375 million for the Province in the first 5 years.

Where does the money go?

- \$1.8 Billion for the operation of hospitals and other provincial priorities
- \$115 Million to Ontario Trillium Foundation (to local provincial charities)
- \$39 Million to prevention, education and research of gambling and problem gambling
- \$10 Million to athletes through the Quest for Gold Program
- \$2.3 Million to sponsorship of community festivals and events
- \$13.3 Million charitable gaming proceeds distributed to participating local charities
- \$1.9 Billion in lottery prizes to players

Source: Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation.
2015. Web. <www.olg.ca>

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Online Sports Betting: A Personal Perspective

By: Christina Cowell

With the excitement of the Super Bowl, March Madness and the NHL Playoffs approaching, we hear a lot about sports betting. I had the opportunity to catch up with Krieger*, whose interests include sports betting online, to get a real world peek at what it's like. **name has been changed for privacy purposes*

Christina: "Thanks for speaking with us today and giving us some insight on online sports betting from a personal view! First question, what are your favorite sports, do you like betting on them and why?"

K: "I really like hockey and soccer and that's what I usually bet on. I have more knowledge on those sports and feel like it gives me a bit of an edge when making my bets. Although, it is never a guaranteed win no matter how much you think you know." *laughs*

C: "Do you bet against your favorite teams?"

K: "I never bet for or against my favorite teams. I'm a big Toronto Maple Leafs fan and I try and eliminate that wager every single time. Because I am a huge fan, I am emotionally attached and personal bias causes me to hope for the best not bet on realism. The same goes for rival teams; I will not bet on the Montreal Canadiens because I *need* to see them lose. Betting on your team doesn't help support them, and betting against their rivals doesn't hurt them, so I just sit back and enjoy those games!"

C: "What was your first experience with online betting like?"

K: "During FIFA World Cup one year I decided to try my hand at a few websites because you can't bet on single matches in Ontario. You see advertisements for lots of different gambling sites, some are even sponsors of soccer teams in Europe and in the UK. I know that there are shady websites out there so I figured it's better to use well known sites that have their name out in the public. It was really easy to get set up. I just had to input my personal info, like name and date of birth, billing and credit card information and I was good to go. I made my deposit of about \$60 and made a couple bets. Needless to say, I didn't win. I did have

some money left over in my account and wanted to withdraw it, but that was complicated, so I placed another bet, as a joke, on who was going to win the United States Presidency. I was shocked you could actually bet on stuff like that!" *laughs* "I lost that bet too."

C: "From your experience, what would you say are the advantages & disadvantages of online sports betting?"

K: "Delay in payout has to be the biggest disadvantage. It's a huge process to try and withdraw your money from a website and in my opinion it's really inconvenient. Most websites have a minimum balance you have to carry before you can withdraw funds, fees, and delays in getting your money to you. And there is also the risk of any money transaction online. It's never 100% risk-free when you give your credit card information through the internet. But there are some advantages too, like the convenience factor. I don't have to get up and walk to the store to buy a ticket, or if I want to bet on just one game, I can do that online but not at the corner store."

C: "What advice would you give someone who is thinking about using online sports betting sites?"

K: "Do your research. It's important to understand terms and conditions of each website, especially things like deposits, withdrawals and fee structures. Only use websites that are reputable and verified. Understand it can be risky to give your credit information online. It is also really important to set your personal limits. Gambling is supposed to be fun and entertaining, and you have to be responsible when doing it to make sure it stays that way. "

C: "Thanks so much for sharing with us!"

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Too Much of a Good Thing?

By: Sherry Sheffield

Since the beginning of time we have asked ourselves when is too much of a good thing really too much of a good thing?

We live in a wired world where everyone from all walks of life, the young and the old, the rich and the poor are plugged into our high-tech gadgets 24/7.

For some of us, cyber space and the tools we use to access it are very helpful for managing day-to-day life and alleviating the stressors that our everyday life can bring. For others these “virtual worlds” can cause problems in the real world and can become too much of a good thing.

Dr. Bruce Ballon, an associate professor in the University of Toronto’s Department of Psychiatry explains that “in my clinical practice, I help people with addictive behaviors such as overusing social media connections, obsessive online pornography, problem gambling or compulsive video gaming. Most of these online behaviors can be addictive because they are designed with intermittent reinforcements to hook vulnerable people.”

How can we know if we are one of those vulnerable people when it comes to our online activities?

For starters we need to be aware of how we deal with technology and media as individuals, as members of a family and as members of our various social circles.

Computers, tablets, smartphones and every techno gadget you can think of is all around us. They are in our homes, they travel with us to school and to work. They are never more than an arm’s length away from us and leave us completely out of sorts if they are somehow misplaced or not working.

For those of us who may already have underlying issues around depression, anxiety, trauma or other compulsive or social disorders our virtual worlds may be causing serious problems for us in the real world.

If you are noticing that your use of technology is starting to have some very real negative consequences in one or more of these key life areas: job or school, family life, your finances, your relationships or with your overall health and well-being than guess what... too much of a good thing really has become too much of a good thing!

Here are some strategies to help you to stay safe while living in our wired world.

1. Set limits on how much time and money you spend online.
2. Keep doing the other activities you enjoy and plan techno-free time with family and friends.
3. Know the rules, rating systems, and terms of sites/apps or video games you use.
4. Spend only what you can afford on games, apps, in-app purchases and downloadable content.
5. Be aware of the real world around you and those who share it with you.

Have fun with technology but stay in the real world!

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YGAP In Your Community

Youth Create Graffiti Styled Canvas

Promoting Healthy Decision Making

Each year outreach workers facilitate youth driven initiatives designed to promote youth expression and community action in regard to gambling awareness. Outreach workers connect with youth clubs, group homes, alternative and mainstream classes as well as leadership programs to promote youth voice on the aspects of gambling awareness that are important to youth.

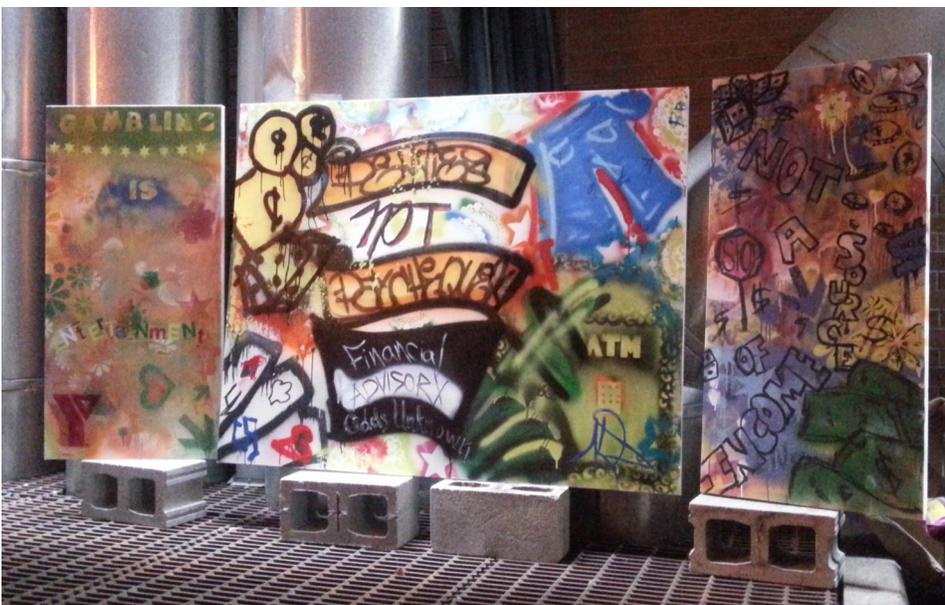
Over the course of 2014 the Sault Ste. Marie YMCA Youth Gambling Awareness Program worked in cooperation with Algoma Family Services' Genesis Program to support participants in exploring the issue of youth gambling.

In addition to writing and recording a rap which details the signs of problem gambling and incorporates harm reduction strategies to support youth in making healthy choices, participants decided to develop a

graffiti canvas to express their thoughts and ideas about gambling with the support of local artist Cameron Dutchak of CTD Designs.

The artwork participants designed and created with the support of local artist Cameron Dutchak from CTD Designs, is an impressive 4 foot by 9 foot canvas that is now proudly displayed in the window of the Neighbourhood Resource Centre – a centre through which a team of organizations led by Sault Ste. Marie Police Services are committed to working towards a safe and healthy neighbourhood in downtown Sault Ste. Marie.

Attached is a photo of the original artwork created by participants. Messages such as *"pennies not pay cheques"* and *"gambling is entertainment not income"* were complemented by the visuals to promote harm reduction and raise awareness.



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Genesis Gambling Rap

By: Algoma Family Services' Genesis Program



Gambling is an addiction
It's true, this ain't fiction
Always felt like the great bambino
When I walked up in the casino
Now I'm blowing all my money
I have no more to spend on my honey

Lost all my money on the slots
The whole time thinking this was my spot
Just dropped a couple grand down the drain
Now I'm starting to feel the pain

I lost my kids, my wife, and my house
Y'all don't even know what this is about
Though my dreams were always the next pull away
Now all of a sudden I'm all alone with nothing left to say

What you know about losing your life
A stab in the chest like the sharp edge of a knife
Roulette tables spinnin' one armed bandits rollin' dice
Now I realize this ain't no way to live life

I wish I would have known to set limits
But I couldn't see past all the flashy gimmicks
Should of kept it to what I could actually spend
Not always asking friends and family for what they would lend

Now I'm hoping to win but expecting to loose
Should of known the casino would have me singing the blues
If I can give you one piece of advice
Play safe and play smart, don't make sacrifice



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Myths & Facts

About Online Gambling

Q: Offshore operators are illegal and unregulated.

False: Online gaming operators who provide services globally (and in regulated environments) do so under licenses granted by their home jurisdictions.

Q: It is easy for kids to gamble online?

False: On proper online web sites, players need to produce a credit card and answer detailed questions before they are cleared. There are a series of checks and balances, including verification of age, that have to occur before any player can deposit, play or withdraw.

Q: You can't overcome the odds with skill and knowledge.

True: For a few games, like poker and blackjack, your skill can affect the outcome of the wager. But a winning outcome is not assured, even if the statistics are in your advantage. Nothing can control the cards that are dealt or how others may play against you. In the vast majority of games, skill plays absolutely no role and you can do nothing to become "better" at them.

Q: I'm great at video games, so I'm sure I'll be good at online gambling.

False: Video games follow set patterns and scripts whereas gambling involves risk and is based on randomness. The skills involved in video games do not translate to gambling.

All services are free!

For our directory of site locations across
Ontario: **1-877-525-5515** or
ymcagta.org/gambling

Ontario Problem Gambling Help Line:
1-888-230-3505

Next Issue:
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 **YGAP.PSJJ**  **YGAPOntario**