



# Against All Odds- Native American Youth and Problem Gambling

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**Pokégnek Bodéwadmik**  
POKAGON BAND OF POTAWATOMI  
GAMING COMMISSION





# Agenda

- **Historical Trauma and Risk Factors in Native Communities that lead to the high rates of addiction.**
- **Adolescent Brain Maturity and their susceptibility to Problem Gambling**
- **Prevention strategies for:**
  - **Parents/Guardians**
  - **Community Members**
  - **Community Organizers or Tribal Services employees**



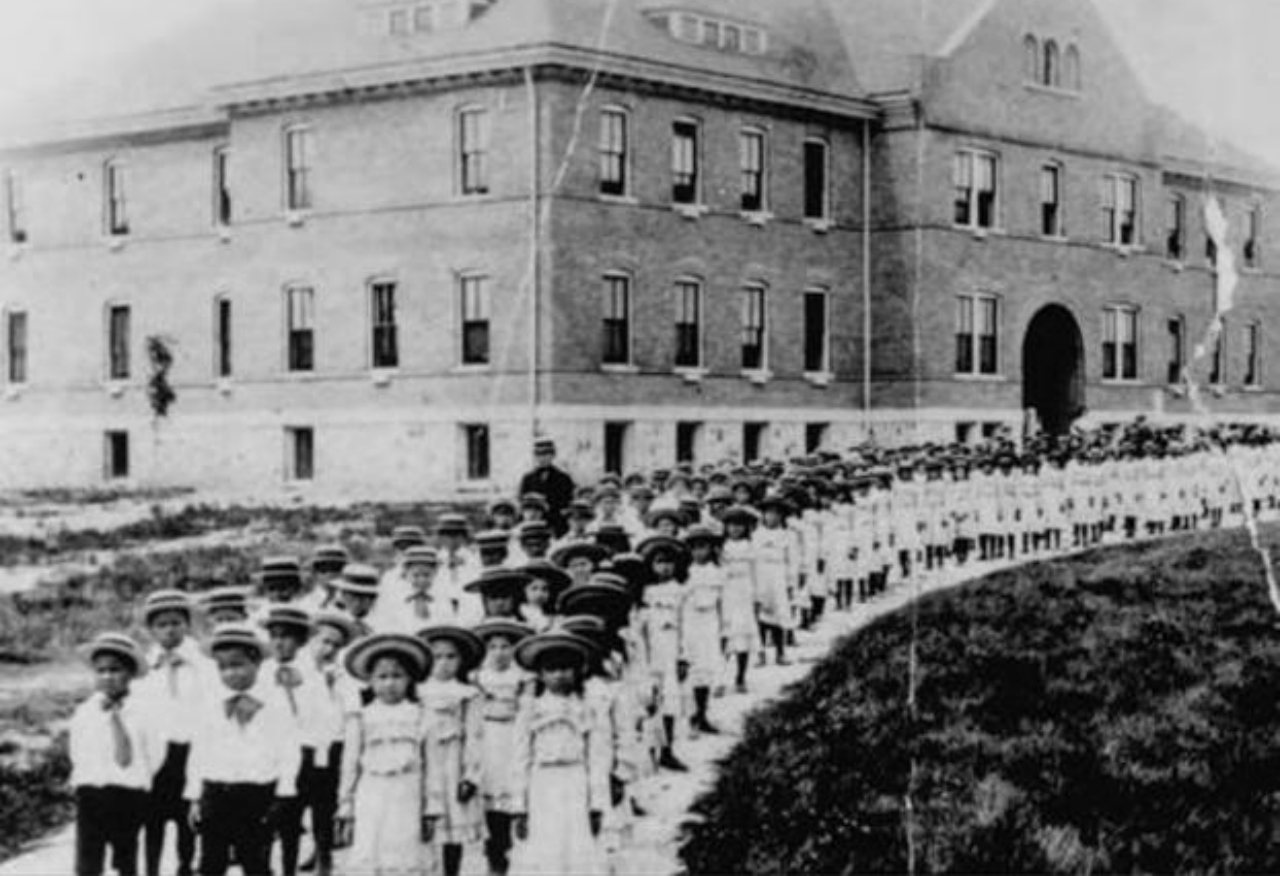


# Environmental Factors That Increase the Risk of Addiction

- Easy access to substances.
- Exposure (at home, school, work etc.) to substances.
- Socioeconomic factors.
- Minimal access to treatment and/or education
- Stress at home.
- Trauma.
- Domestic violence.
- Sexual abuse.
- Lack of supervision.

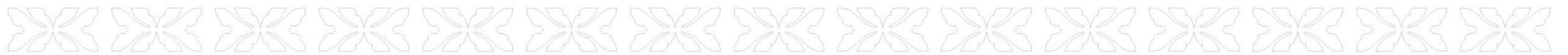






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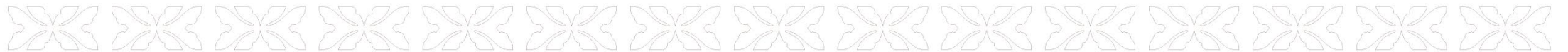
# Historical Trauma





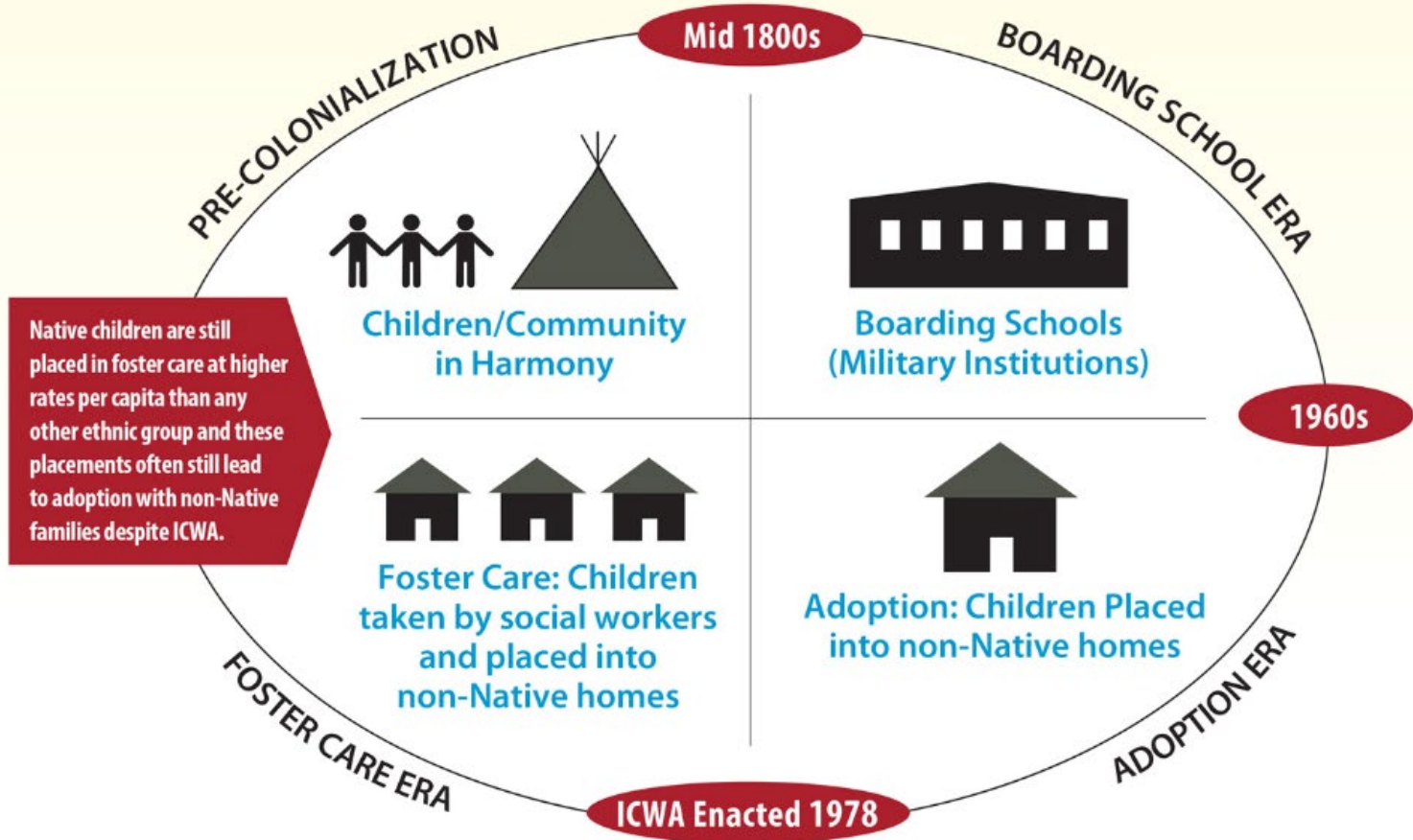
# Historical Trauma

Historical trauma is multigenerational trauma experienced by a specific cultural, racial or ethnic group. It is related to major events that oppressed a particular group of people because of their status as oppressed, such as slavery, the Holocaust, forced migration, and the violent colonization of Native Americans. While many in such a group will experience no effects of the historical trauma, others may experience poor overall physical and behavioral health, including low self-esteem, depression, self-destructive behavior, marked propensity for violent or aggressive behavior, substance misuse and addiction, and high rates of suicide and cardiovascular disease. Acute problems of domestic violence or alcohol misuse that are not directly linked to historical trauma may be exacerbated by living in a community with unaddressed grief and behavioral health needs. Parents' experience of trauma may disrupt typical parenting skills and contribute to behavior problems in children. Compounding this familial or intergenerational trauma, historical trauma often involves the additional challenge of a damaged cultural identity (Sotero, 2006).

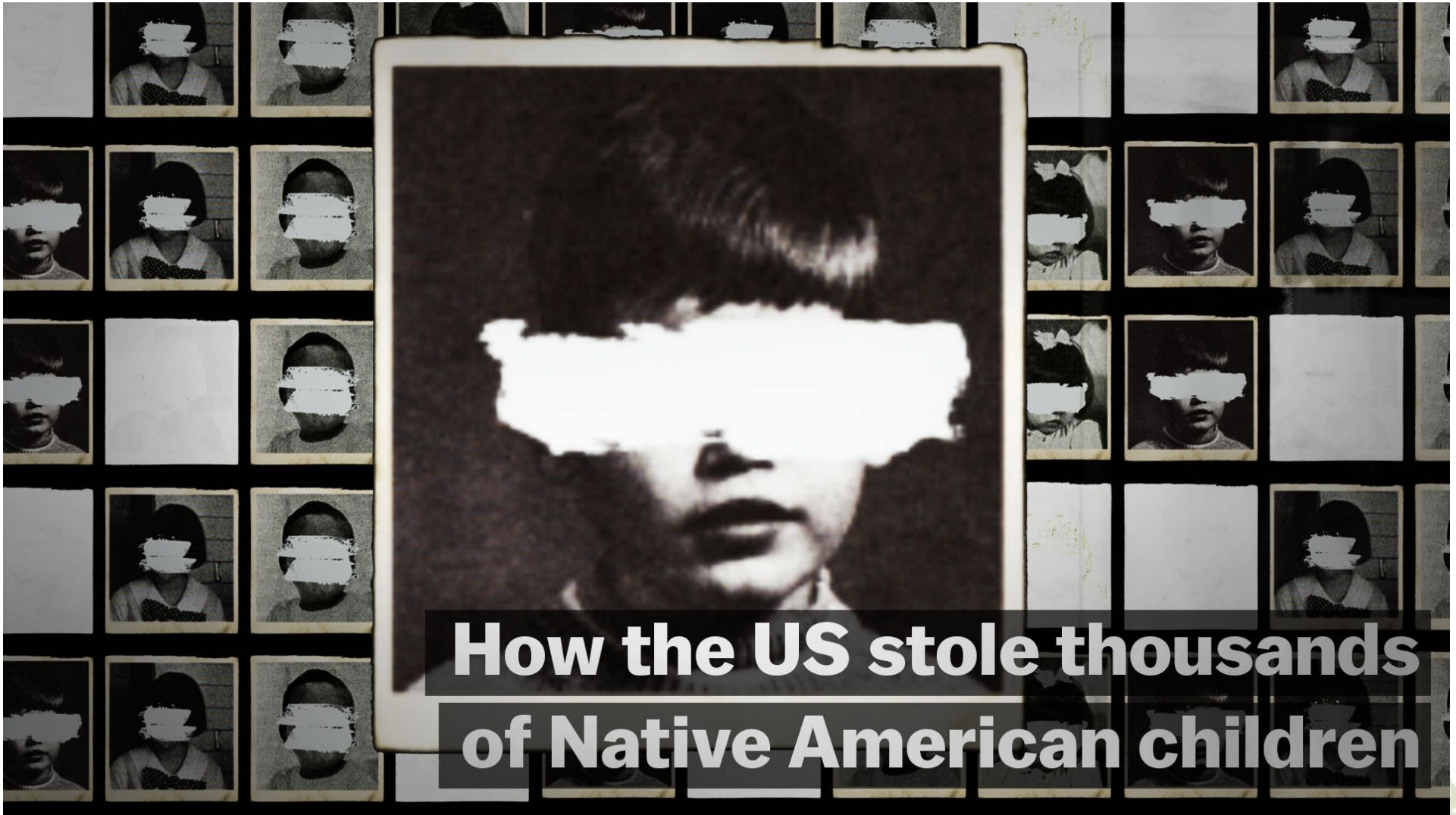




## Evolution of Race-Based Child Removal in the United States







**How the US stole thousands  
of Native American children**

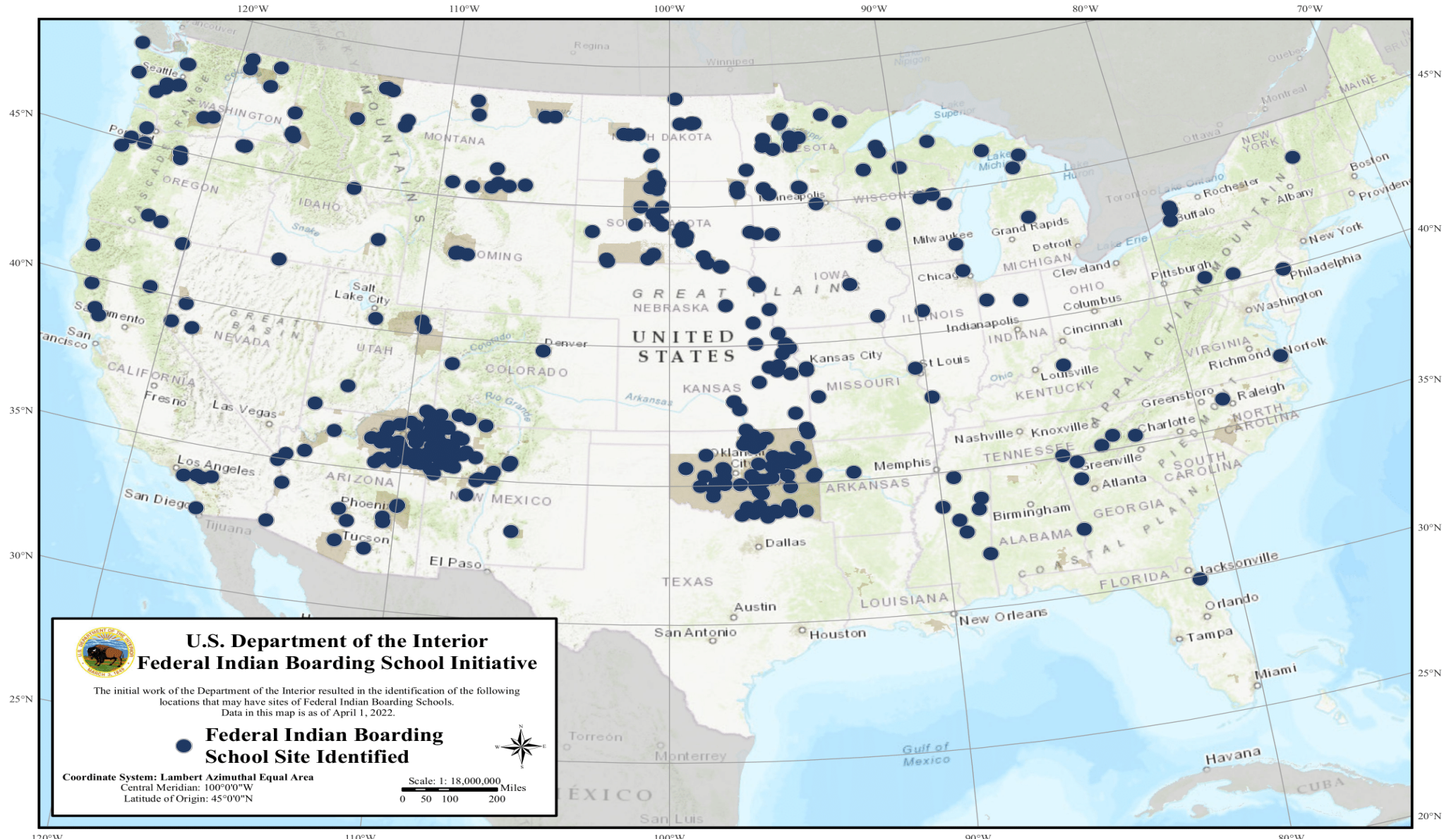








# Federal Indian Boarding School Sites

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 **U.S. Department of the Interior**  
**Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative**

The initial work of the Department of the Interior resulted in the identification of the following locations that may have sites of Federal Indian Boarding Schools. Data in this map is as of April 1, 2022.

 **Federal Indian Boarding School Site Identified**

Coordinate System: Lambert Azimuthal Equal Area  
 Central Meridian: 100°0'0"W  
 Latitude of Origin: 45°0'0"N

Scale: 1: 18,000,000 Miles  
 0 50 100 200

Service Layer Credits: The National Geospatial Data Asset by the U.S. Census Bureau is displayed with American Indian Reservations, Federally Recognized Tribal Entities, and Alaska Native Villages, and other data by Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community.





- Taken from their home and family.
- Cut their hair, traditional clothing taken and given school uniform, and given white names.
- Forced to speak English and not allowed to practice their culture
- Classes on how to conduct manual labor and expected to maintain and upkeep the school.
- Given unfamiliar food and not enough.
- Unclean and overpopulated living conditions led to the spread of disease.
- Excessive physical and sexual Abuse
- Bounties were offered for student who attempted to run away.

Many Native students who survived the boarding school era went on to suffer from mental health and other related issues such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, a lack of cultural identity, and the development of negative stereotypes (i.e. lazy, alcoholics, etc.).





# Education

Native American children have the highest dropout rates of any ethnic group in the United States.

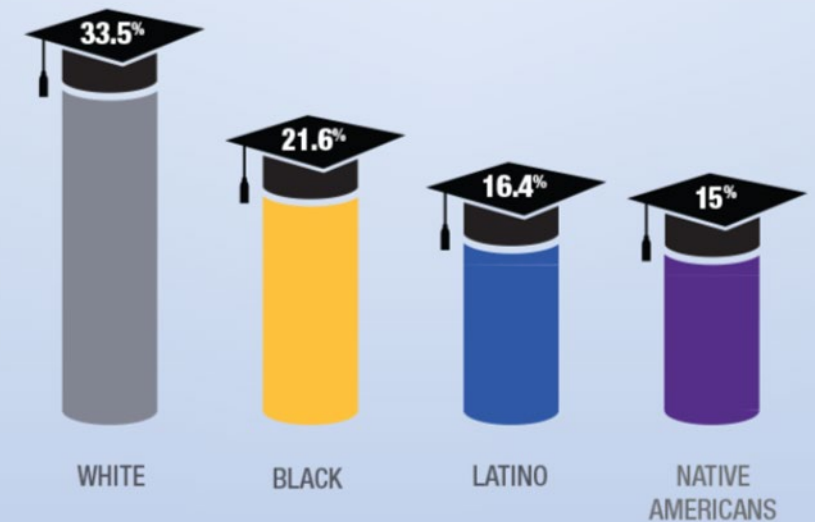
Recent statistics from the Bureau of Indian Affairs have noted that 29% to 36% of all Native American students drop out of school, mostly between the 7th and 12th grades.

Only 65 percent of Native students graduate high school—this is the lowest graduation rate among American students.

## EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Despite increases in educational attainment over the last 25 years, Native Americans have the lowest educational achievement rates in comparison to other national racial and ethnic groups, according to the 2005-2019 ACS Briefs.

### Bachelor's Degree Attainment Rate







## Violence and Abuse

National data on AI/AN children is sparse, available evidence suggests:

- Child abuse and neglect data show that AI/AN children
  - Have the second highest overall rate of child maltreatment (Child Trends Data Bank, 2016),
  - Represent 14.2 percent of child maltreatment cases (U.S. DHHS, 2018),
  - Experience neglect at a rate higher than any other population (Earle & Cross, 2001).
- Sexual abuse, AI/AN children are 50 percent more likely to be victims of sexual abuse than are white children (Cooper, 2012).
- AI/AN youth experience high rates of all ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) indicators: physical, sexual and emotional abuse, intimate partner violence, household substance abuse, household mental illness, parental separation/divorce and incarcerated household member (Sotero, 2015).

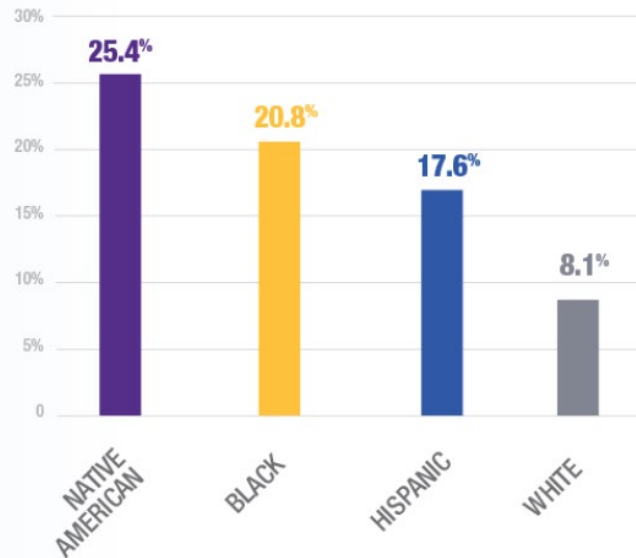




# Native American Poverty

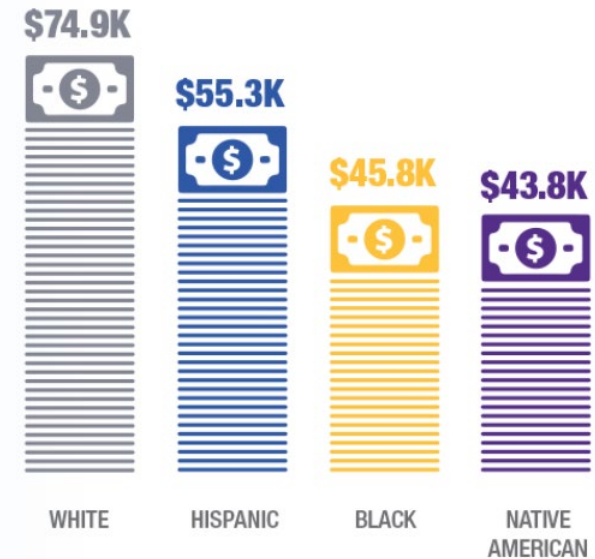
## POVERTY

Based on the data from the 2018 U.S Census cited by Poverty USA, Native Americans have the highest poverty rate among all minority groups.



## INCOME

Based on the 2015-2019 ACS for American Indian and Alaska Native population, the median income of American Indian and Alaska Native households was \$43,825 – slightly lower than the median income of African American households.

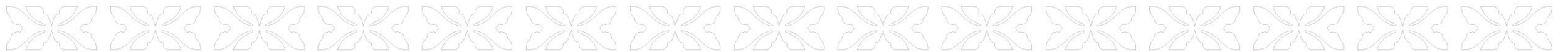






# Cultural Considerations for Native Communities

- Historical Trauma is the root cause of the dysfunction in Native American families and Communities.
- There are many factors that contribute to addiction rates , most of which can describe the socioeconomic conditions of many tribal communities
- Research shows addiction often co-occurs; meaning that an individual who is prone to one addiction is likely to simultaneously be prone to another
- Unfortunately, Native Americans suffer from addiction at a much higher rate than any other US ethnicity
- Native Americans suffer from gambling addictions at a rate that is estimated twice as high as the rest of the adult population. This is due to the higher level of addiction risk that native communities face, along with the fact that many Native Americans live in areas where gambling is easily accessible.



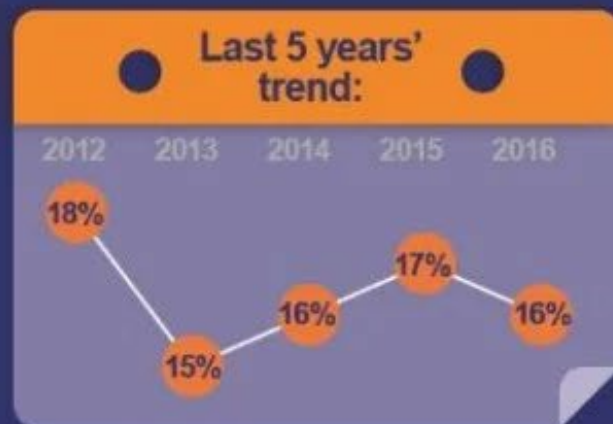


## Popularity of Gambling for Youth

- **Illegal gaming websites**
- **Games of chance among cohorts**
- **Illegal lotteries**
- **Betting on Fantasy/Virtual Games**
- **Sports Betting**
- **Internet Cafes**
- **Poker/Card Games**



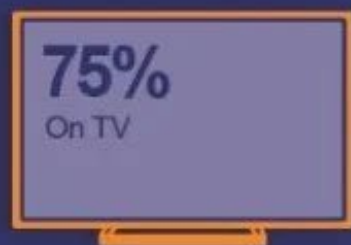
## Gambling prevalence



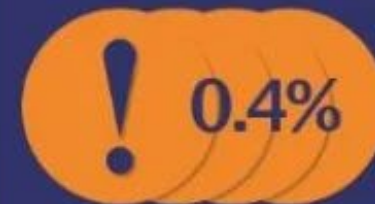
## Most common activities



## Seen gambling advertising



## Problem gambling



Children defined as problem gamblers

## Online gambling





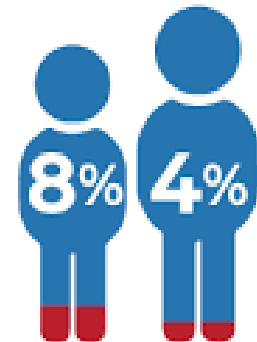
# Characteristics of Youth Gamblers

- Greater risk-takers
- Lower self-esteem
- Higher rates of depression
- Dissociate more frequently when gambling

GIFT RESPONSIBLY  
Lottery Tickets  
Aren't Child's Play.



8% of adolescents (12-17 years old)  
have **gambling problems** vs. 4% of adults





# Characteristics of Youth Gamblers

- Potential financial rewards may be secondary to:
  - Challenge
  - Entertainment
  - Social Contacts



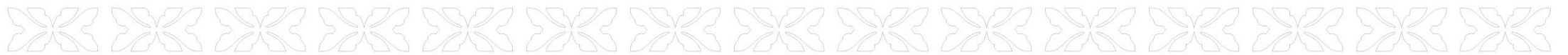




# Characteristics of Youth Gamblers


- Impulsivity
- Developmental nature
- Susceptibility to peer influence
- Emerging egos
- The attraction of winning
- Their belief that nothing negative can happen to them
- Their lack of understanding that there can be a downside to gambling







# Characteristics of Youth Gamblers

- **Adolescence is a period of profound brain maturation**
- 
- **It was once believed that brain development was complete during childhood**
  - **The maturation process is not complete until about age 25**
  - **Greater risk taking (particularly in groups)**
  - **Greater propensity toward low effort-high excitement activities**
  - **Lower capacity for good judgment and weighing consequences**
- 
- **Greater sensitivity to novel stimuli**





# Characteristics of Youth Gamblers

- Youth who suffer from deficits in judgment and self-regulation, believed to be neurologically based seem to be at heightened risk including kids with ADHD
- In the general population, adolescent problem gambling rates are 10%, in kids with ADHD the rates jumps to 15-36%
- College Age Youth:
  - Similar statistics and risk involved as for adolescents
  - Less supervision and more access to gambling activities (i.e. poker tournaments, online gambling)
  - School and Greek sponsorship of Texas Hold'em/Casino Nights, excursions to casinos, etc.





# Youth Brain Development & Informed Decision-Making

- Brain Function

- Imbalances within the neurotransmitter system – serotonin, dopamine, endogenous opioids and hormones – influence both behavioral and substance addictions

- Feel, think, and do

- Neuroimaging studies suggest similarities between behavioral and substance addiction

- Studies of families with pathological gamblers reveal a possible shared genetic vulnerability between pathological gambling and other addictions

- Use of opioid antagonist drugs (naltrexone and nalmefene) and several therapist-driven techniques have proven effective in the treatment of pathological gambling





# Youth Brain Development & Informed Decision-Making

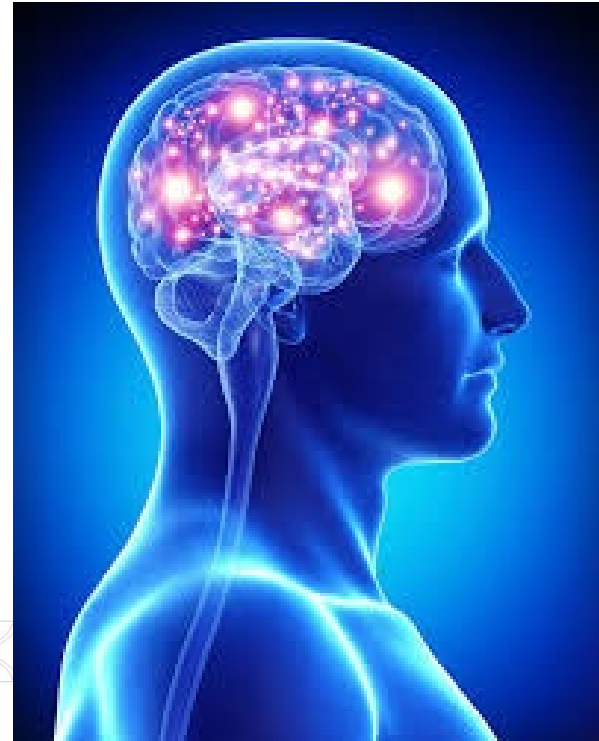
- Similarities Between Behavioral and Substance Addictions
  - Repetitive/compulsive behavior despite adverse consequences
  - Diminished control over problem behavior
  - A state of anticipated pleasure prior to engaging in the problem behavior
  - A positive, satisfying feeling while engaging in the problem behavior
  - Tolerance towards the activity increases over time
  - Withdrawal symptoms
  - Attempts to cut back or stop are often repetitive and unsuccessful
  - Rapid rate of progression to problem behavior in women compared to men





# Youth Brain Development & Informed Decision-Making

- Problem Gamblers
  - More impulsive and sensation-seeking
  - More neurotic, exhibiting higher scores in areas of:
    - Anxiety
    - Hostility
    - Depression
    - Self-consciousness
    - Vulnerability
    - Impulsiveness





## Dopamine Pathways

Frontal Cortex

## Serotonin Pathways

Striatum

Substantia nigra

Nucleus accumbens

VTA

Hippocampus

Raphe nuclei

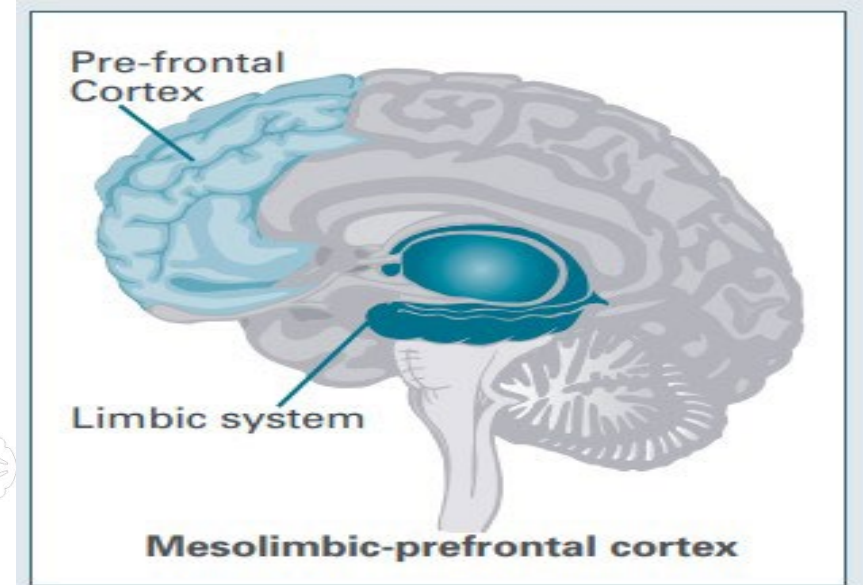
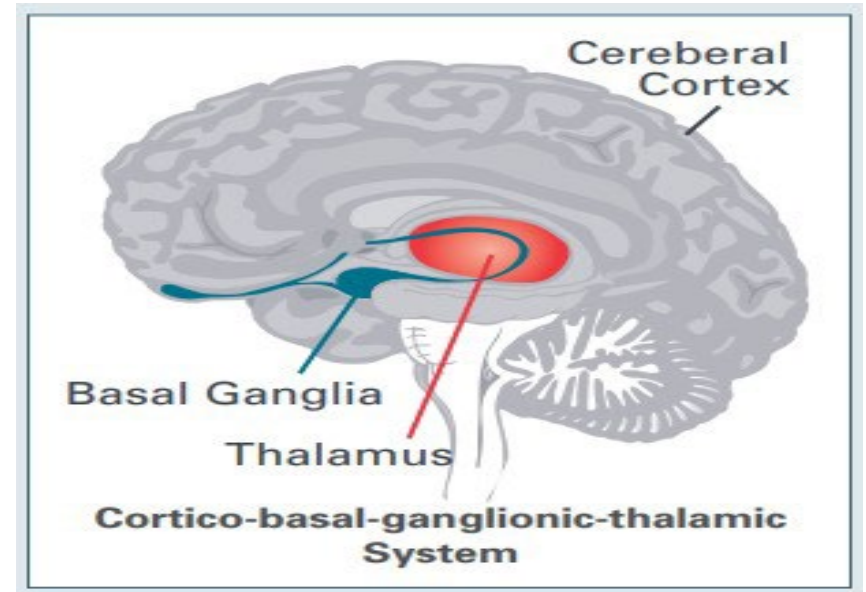
The **mesolimbic-prefrontal circuit** in the brain is influenced by neurotransmitters such as dopamine and serotonin, and mediates mood and social behavior, pleasure processing, influences motivated behavior related to rewards and risk taking, and thus affects judgment and decision making processes.

Source: National Institutes of Health



# Youth Brain Development & Informed Decision-Making

- Cortico-Basal-Ganglionic-Thalamic System
  - Motivation and behaviors related to motivation
  
- Mesolimbic-Prefrontal Cortex
  - Judgement, decision-making, mood, social behavior







# Youth Brain Development & Informed Decision-Making

- Prevention Education
  - Informed Decision-Making versus Scare Tactics
- Creating Decision-Making Neuropathways in Children
  - Parents should start young – 6-7 years
- Neo-Cortex Development/Independence
  - 15 years for boys, younger for girls



# Youth Gambling Indicators



- Possession of gambling materials; dice, playing cards, casino chips, lottery tickets, betting sheets
- Mood swings corresponding to gambling wins and losses
- Paying more attention to sports scores
- Neglects relationships and responsibilities
- Believes gambling is an easy way to make money

# Youth Gambling Indicators

- Money and valuables from your home turn-up missing
- Weekly or daily card games in your child's room
- More time than usual spent watching sports on television
- An unusual or sudden interest in newspapers, magazines, and other publications having to do with sports or horse racing
- An intense interest in conversations about gambling
- Unexplained new items in your child's possession (jewelry, clothes, etc.)
- Several calls to sports phone lines on telephone bill
- Unaccountable time away from home

# Youth Gambling Indicators

Uses money intended for other purposes to gamble

Lies to family and friends

Unexplained absences from school

Sudden drop in grades

Changes in personality

Eating less

Forgoing prescribed medication



# Youth Gambling Indicators

Possession of large amounts of money

Intense interest in gambling conversations

Uses gambling language

Commits illegal acts to finance gambling activity

# Impact on Youth

Adolescents are 2-4x more likely to develop a problem with gambling than adults (Gupta and Derevensky, 2000)

For compulsive gamblers, gambling becomes an addiction much like drugs or alcohol, with many of the same symptoms and effects

Left untreated compulsive gambling can lead to family problems, financial trouble, and sometimes even suicide

The availability of unrestricted Internet access poses a special threat to children who become tempted by gambling sites



# Impact on Youth

- Gambling, in any form, is illegal in for anyone under the age of 18 and in some states gambling is not legal until the age of 21.
- Teenagers who gamble are three to four times more likely than adults to become problem gamblers
- The National Council on Problem Gambling estimates that 5% of youth ages 12 to 17 have a gambling problem, and an additional 10% to 14% of youth are also at risk for developing a gambling problem
- A 2020 Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth Survey showed 15% of high school students in West Michigan had placed bets or gambled in the last 30 days. Gambling is illegal for minors and research shows it can lead to serious consequences like betting disorders, financial problems and delinquency.
- Research also shows that playing video games for an excessive amount of time increases the risk of developing a gambling disorder



# Impact on Youth



The 49% of 8th graders that reported gambling were:

- Over 50% more likely to drink alcohol
- More than twice as likely to binge drink
- More than three times as likely to use marijuana
- Three times as likely to use other illegal drugs



# Impact on Youth



- Almost three times as likely to get in trouble with the police
- Three times as likely to be involved in a gang fight
- Almost three times as likely to steal or shoplift

Delaware surveys

# Impact on Youth



- The 44% of eleventh graders who reported gambling were:
  - Over 25% more likely to drink alcohol
  - Twice as likely to binge drink
  - One-third more likely to use marijuana
  - Almost twice as likely to use illegal drugs

# Impact on Youth

Almost four times more likely to get in trouble with the police

More than three times as likely to be involved in a gang fight

Almost three times as likely to steal or shoplift

29% of those who gambled in the past month also were DUI

Delaware surveys

## Impact on Youth

- Gambling, unlike any other addiction, is associated with cognitive distortions. People say, “If I keep gambling then eventually, I’ll win. You don’t say that about alcohol, tobacco, or cocaine.
- Rick Benson, the founder of the Algamus Gambling Recovery Center in Arizona, states that the number of young adults receiving treatment for gambling problems has more than doubled from 2019 to 2021.

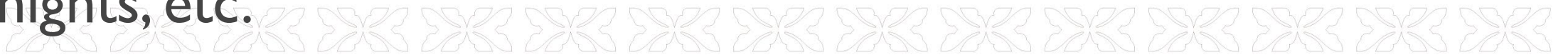






# Activity Promoting Youth Gambling

- Societal influences have normalized gambling
- Parents, family members, schools, and the community are not aware of the risks of youth gambling
- The media bombards youth with pro-gambling messages
- Inadvertent promotion of gambling involvement by schools who host casino nights, 50/50 raffles and by parents who put scratch-offs in as stocking stuffers or encourage family poker nights, etc.



# Activity Promoting Youth Gambling

Casino Night  
Fundraisers

Parental gambling

Allowing children  
to scratch-off  
lottery tickets

Televised poker  
games/glorification  
of poker  
champions

University poker  
tournaments

Computer gaming



# Activity Promoting Youth Gambling

- Apathy toward dangers of youth gambling
- Home poker games involving youth
- Under-reporting of youth gambling crimes
- Worldwide marketing moving gambling from a negative reputation to the entertainment value of gaming



# Prevention Strategies



Raise the awareness of the problem in the community



Conduct community activities that increase knowledge about youth gambling problems



Implement programs to help modify and change the attitude that gambling is a harmless behavior





# Healing the Community with Language, Culture, History, Family Strengthening, and Community Building

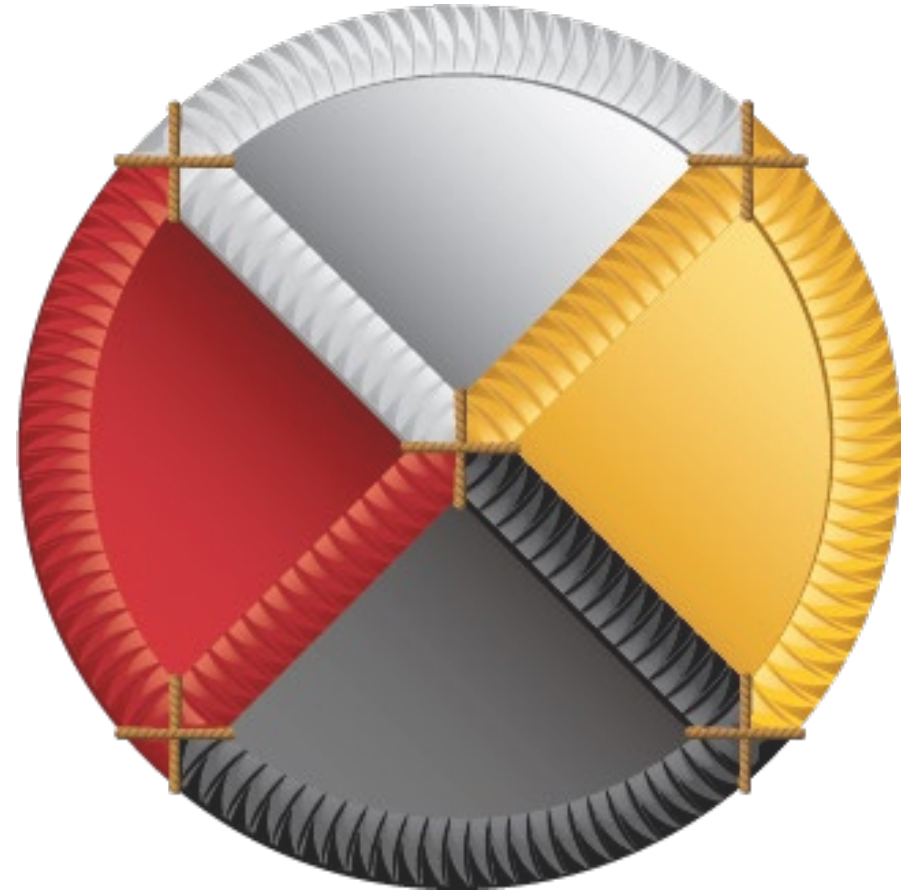






## Traditional Parenting Practices

- Storytelling
- Cradleboards
- Traditional Games
- Coming of Age Ceremonies





# **Pokagon Band Programming**

- **Culture Camp, Youth Council, and Fasting Camp**
- **Zagbëgon: An Early Learning & Development Academy**
- **Traditional Art Classes: Basket Making, Beading, Quilling, Sewing, and Finger weaving**
- **Traditional Skills Classes: Cleaning Feathers, Building Long House, Sugar Bush, and Traditional Garden**
- **Language Classes, Shishibe, and Pidro Nights**
- **Potawatomi Gathering, Food Sovereignty Events, Pow Wows, and Round Dance**
- **Honoring, Healing & Remembering (Mt. Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School)**



## **Community Organizers or Tribal Services Employees**

### **Language and Cultural Programming Helps Heal Tribal Communities**

- **Promotes Healthy Self Identity**
- **Strengthen Community Ties**
- **Helps them Walk in Two Worlds (General Society and Tribal Community)**
- **Grieve Our History**
- **Take Ownership of the Future**





## Prevention Strategies

- **Check your debt:** Look at credit and debit card statements for in-app purchases on video games. Note that the purchases may be listed under iTunes store.
- **Codes for safety:** Establish and use verification for in-app purchases.
- **Cut back on screen time:** Limit video games to one hour per day but cut back slowly so there's an adjustment period.
- **Get active:** Have children select an extra-curricular or family activity they enjoy.
- **Set limits:** See what parental controls are available on gaming systems.
- **Follow through:** Talk through the changes and ensure the guidelines are being followed.
- **Warning signs:** Look for changing behaviors and items going missing or purchases that can't be explained.
- **Know when to get help:** If behavioral issues persist, talk to a doctor or seek professional advice.



## Initiate and Engage in Conversation

- Timing is everything. Pick a moment when you can talk naturally and effortlessly.
- Teach successful coping and adaptive skills that will prevent the development of problematic behavior.
- Give them options, and instead of telling them what to do, help them figure out healthy alternatives.
- Asking questions and listen. Show interest in what your child is doing on their phone, tablet or gaming system.
- Monitor your child's spending habits and social activities.
- Keep an eye out for noticeable attitude or behavioral changes.



# Guidelines for Parents

- Explain to them that underage gambling is risky, which is why kids cannot buy their own lottery tickets or place bets at the racetrack.
- When you're talking with your child, let them know their gaming can become a problem especially since many games now offer activities and options that mimic gambling.
- Explain to your child that gambling results in losses far more often than wins. Saving their money for purchases they desire to make is better than risking it all for a slim chance at winning more. Small amounts of gambling can lead to larger gambling problems.
- Let them know the facts about gambling and risk-taking in terms they can understand.



# Guidelines for Parents

It can be overwhelming keeping track of all the dangers out there that your child may encounter and think that gambling is not a big deal. Please keep in mind:

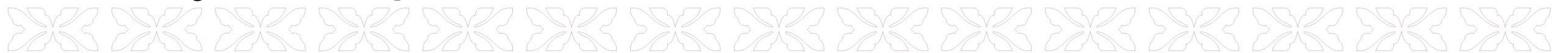
- 20% of addicted gamblers have filed for bankruptcy
- 20% of the homeless are gambling addicts
- 60% of those addicted to gambling will commit crimes
- Up to 50% of spouses of addicted gamblers are abused
- 20% of gambling addicts commit or attempt suicide





## Native Americans, Gambling, and Casinos

- Enjoy being at the Casino
- Events take place at the Casino
- Per Cap
- Gaming Revenue helps fund Government Services and Programming (promotes sovereignty)
- Socially Acceptable





# Sowing the Seeds of Recovery

Anishnaabek Healing Circle



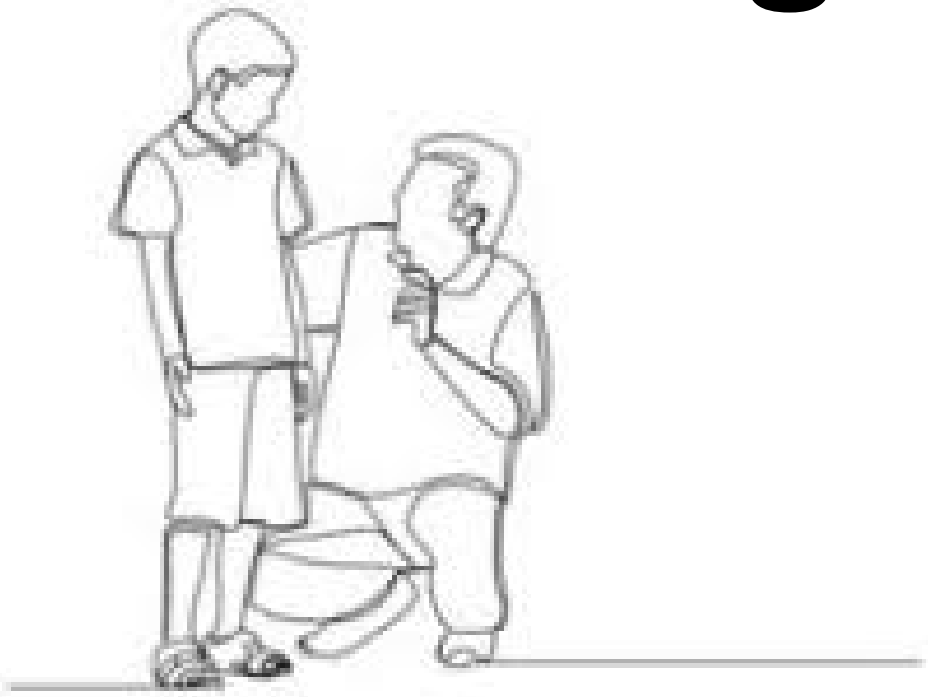


# Resources

- Problem Gambling ([michigan.gov](http://michigan.gov))
- Home - National Council on Problem Gambling National Council on Problem Gambling | NCPG ([ncpgambling.org](http://ncpgambling.org))
- Addictive behaviors: Gaming Disorder ([who.int](http://who.int))
- National Problem Gambling Hotline 1-800-552-4700. Chat: [ncpgambling.org/chat](http://ncpgambling.org/chat) Text 1-800-522-4700
- To learn more about problem gambling in Michigan, visit the problem gambling webpage on the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services [website](#)
- Parent video on gambling: [https://youtu.be/E0Dj\\_OuqYtI](https://youtu.be/E0Dj_OuqYtI)
- Parenting video on gaming: <https://youtu.be/2pPpSuFFJ3Y>



# Migwétth



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GAMING COMMISSION