Technology-First Solutions to Help Mitigate Gambling Harms

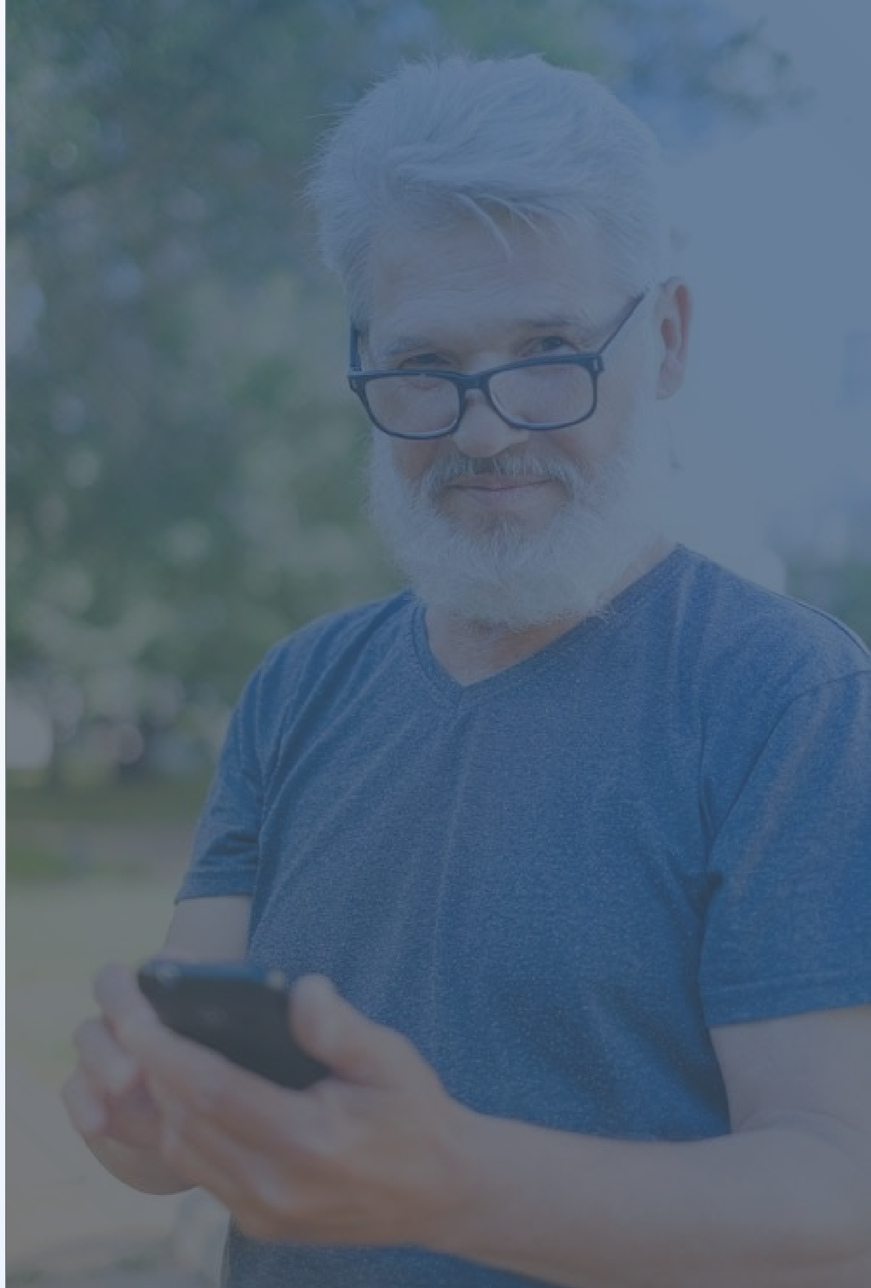
FOCUS ON THE FUTURE 2024

MAY 1, 2024

SPEAKERS

Jeff Marotta, PhD, ICGC-II

Sam DeMello



Your Presenters

Sam DeMello

Sam DeMello has extensive experience growing early stage-startups. His 15+ years of lived experience with gambling addiction helps him understand the challenges of recovering from gambling harm.

Jeff Marotta, PhD, ICGC-II

Dr. Jeff Marotta has worked in academic, public health, and clinical settings with over 25 years as a responsible gambling and problem gambling expert.

Disclosure Information

Dr. Marotta has the following current financial relationships to disclose:

Consultant for:

- *Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC)*
- *Voices of Problem Gambling Recovery (VPGR)*
- *Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (Nevada DHHS)*
- *Oregon Health Authority (OHA)*

Grant/Research support from:

- *Oregon Council on Problem Gambling (OCPG)*
- *Oregon Health Authority (OHA)*
- *National Association of Administrators of Gambling Disorder Services (NAADGS)*

Trainer for:

- *OHA, Nevada DHHS, b spot games*

Dr. Marotta and Sam DeMello and both founding officers of Evive

Presentation Overview

Weaving storylines

- *Sam's story as a person navigating a modern gambling existence, seeking change, learning lessons, and harnessing the power of recovery and technology to create new solutions*

- *Observations of a changing gambling landscape by a problem gambling and responsible gambling expert*

Three-Part Presentation

1. New Era
2. New Challenges
3. New Opportunities

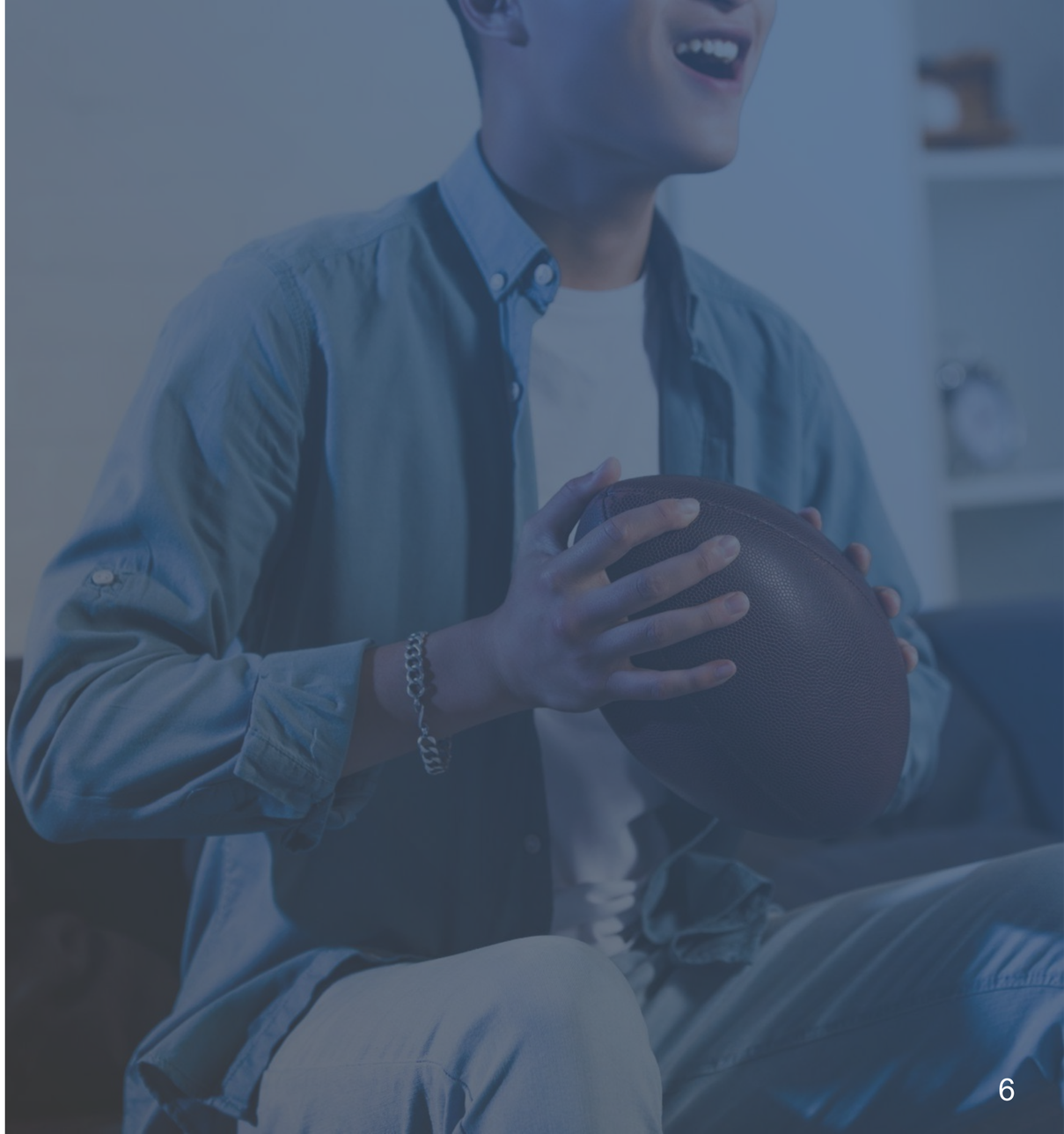
New Era

The U.S. gambling industry has changed dramatically over the past 10 years fueled by technological developments, liberalized gambling laws legalizing online and sports betting, and increased acceptance.

This is the story of that change and one person's experience living through it

Sam's Story:
My Early Relationship with Gambling

The personal experience of entering adulthood during an era of expanded gambling.



Poll Question

Which of the following has fueled the growth of gambling over the past 10 years?

A. Legalization of sports betting

B. Growth in online gambling

C. Technological developments

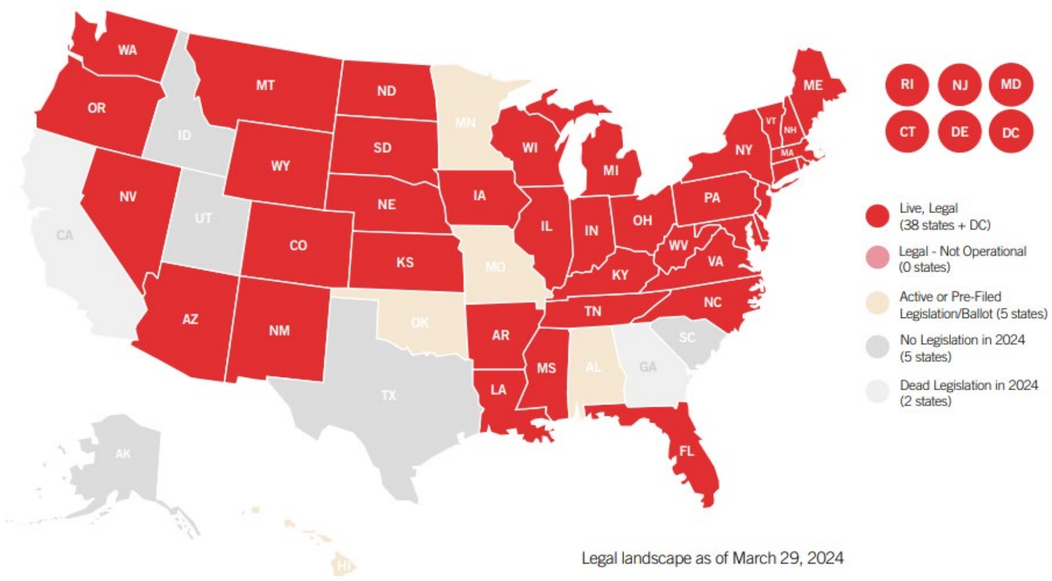
D. The COVID-19 pandemic

E. All of the above

Legalization of Sports Betting

In May 2018, the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) was stuck down in a Supreme Court's decision.

"Congress can regulate sports gambling directly, but if it elects not to do so, each State is free to act on its own"



Growth in Online Gambling

- Increased revenue (annual growth rate of nearly 9%)
- Interest in Betting Apps grew 29% over the past year, compared to the year before, putting it at a current volume of 66K searches per month, as of last month

Technological Revolution

The future of gambling is a dynamic landscape driven by technological innovation

- Mobile revolution
- Advanced platforms
- Social media engagement
- Virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR)
- Cryptocurrencies and blockchain offer new opportunities
- Convergence of gaming, sports events, and gambling
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are set to transform the gambling experience

The lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the gambling industry

- Land based casinos on a decline
- Increase in online gambling
- Shifting demographics
- Increase in government sanctioned gambling to increase revenues
- More competition
- Increased advertising
- Further normalization of gambling

New Challenges

As more people are moving to online gambling, more individuals are experiencing gambling related harm. The largest growing segment are younger adult males, a segment of the population that has historically not sought help for gambling problems.

This part of the story includes one person's experience seeking change

Sam’s Story:
The challenge of change

Navigating systems of care and personal exploration.

Poll Question

Which of the following are challenges faced by the treatment, recovery, and public health communities regarding the growth of gambling?

A. Rates of problem gambling among online and app-based users is higher than persons who gamble at land-based establishments

B. The largest growing segment of persons who are developing gambling problems are young adult males

C. Treatment seeking among individuals with gambling problems is very low

D. Our current system of care for addressing gambling harm is antiquated and not meeting today's needs

E. The gambling industry's use of technological innovations is far outpacing technological innovations from the prevention, treatment, and recovery communities

F. All of the above

Landscape

Innovations within the gaming industry are not being matched with an equal level of technological solutions to promote safer gambling nor assist those desiring to change their relationship with gambling.

In short, current tools and systems of care are not meeting today's growing needs. The result is rising gambling harm in the United States, presenting a strong opportunity for new strategies and scalable tools.

85%

PERCENTAGE OF AMERICAN ADULTS WHO GAMBLED IN 2022

$220B

AMOUNT SPENT ON ONLINE SPORTS BETTING IN THE 5 YEARS SINCE LEGALIZATION

60%

PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOLERS REPORTED GAMBLING FOR MONEY LAST YEAR

New Opportunities

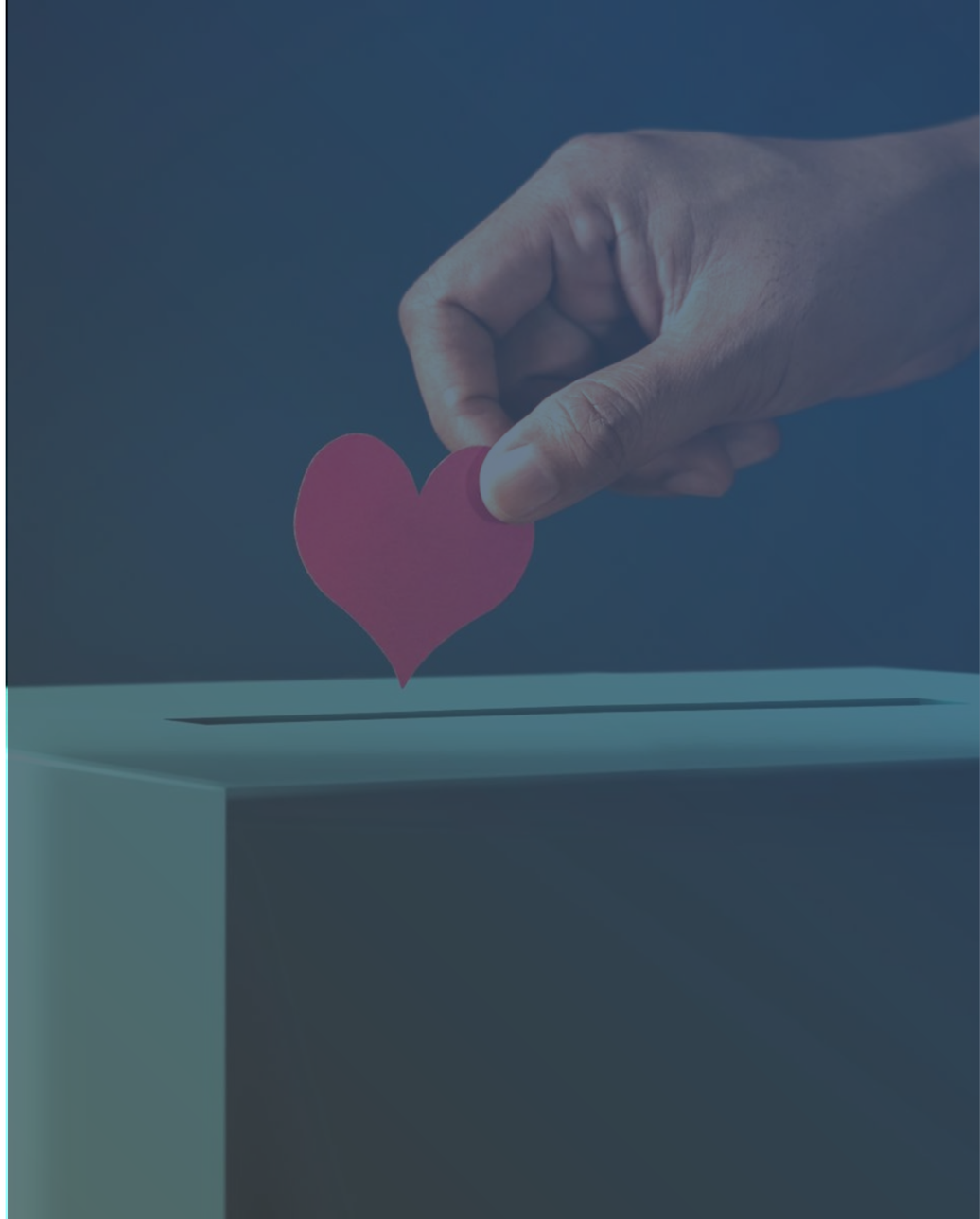
As more people move to virtual environments for entertainment and help, new opportunities open for expanding and strengthening responsible gambling measures and advancements in technology provide opportunities to reach more people to reduce gambling harm.

This next part of the story is how these opportunities are being harnessed for positive change.

Sam's Story:

The opportunity to make a difference

Leveraging experience in the tech world with the power of recovery.



Poll Question

Which of the following newer technologies are currently being used or explored to reduce gambling related harm?

A. AI powered player tracking alerting players and operators when behavior analytics detect problem gambling risk

B. AI powered RG support to players via chatbots and virtual assistants

C. Limit and self-exclusion tools and systems build into gambling platforms

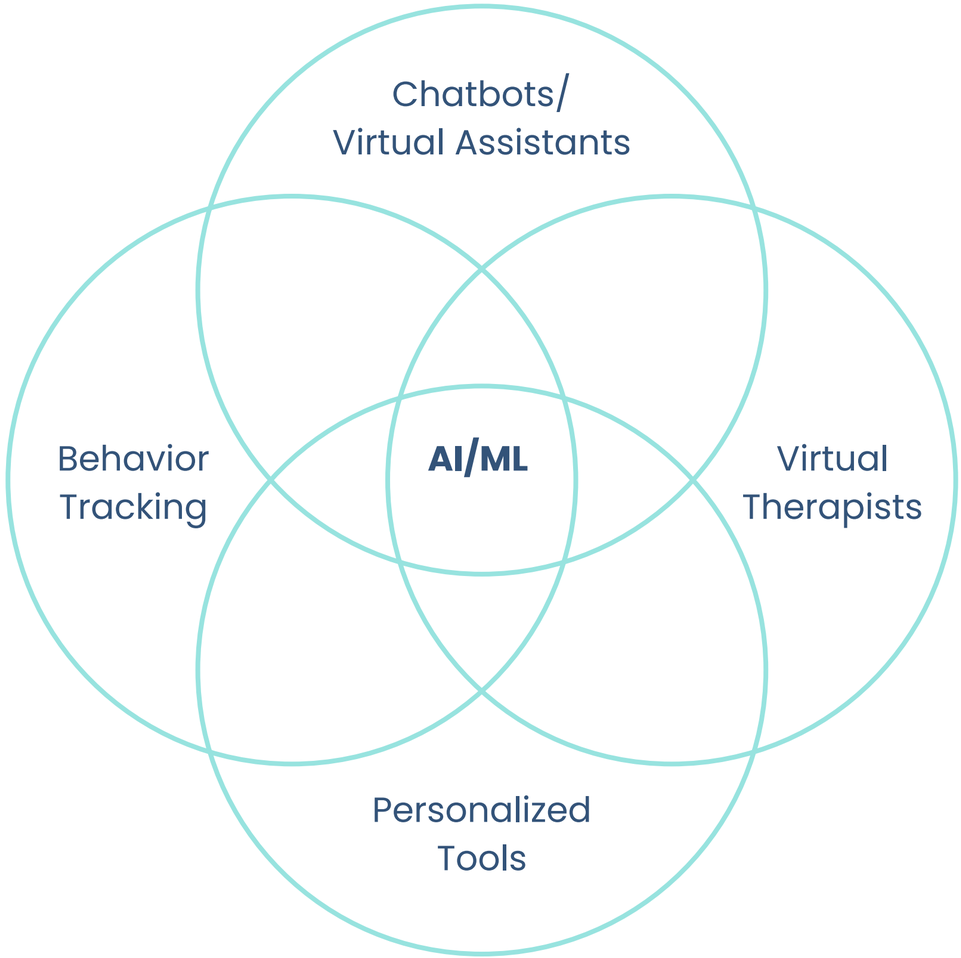
D. Video conferencing technologies used for providing telehealth and support meetings

E. New recovery and safer gambling apps

F. All of the above

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML)

As technology advances, artificial intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) will play an ever-increasing critical role in reducing gambling harm.



Examples

Providers of RG Products

IDScan enables remote ID verification.

- Rapid enrollment into VSE
- Checks against VSE lists, verify age

idPair

- “Powers data for RG”
- National VSE

BetBuddy, Mindway, idPair

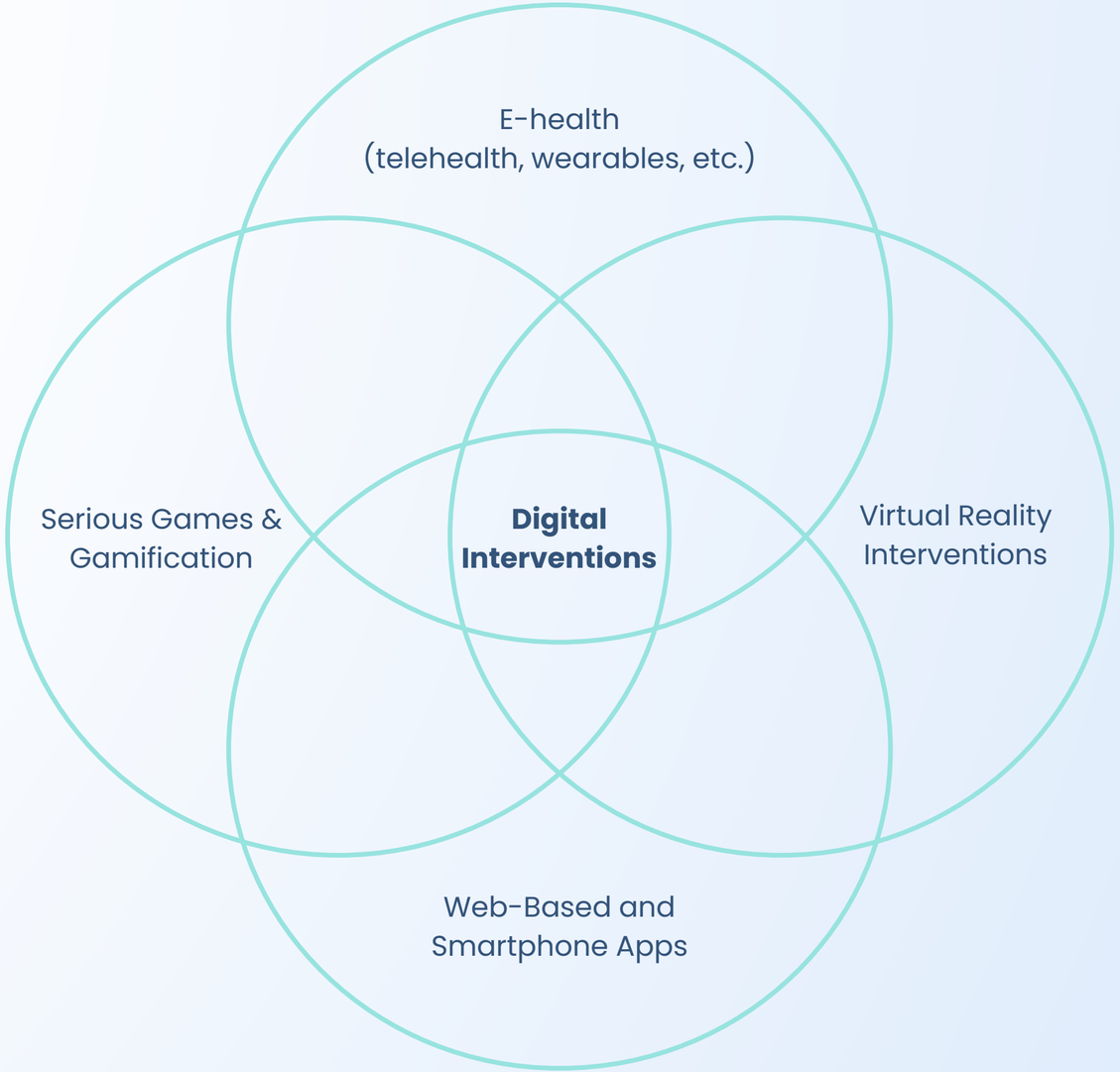
- Behavioral tracking

Behavioural Insights Team

- RG best practice audits
- Behavioral consultancy and services

Digital Interventions

Overcoming barriers to treatment is one of the primary challenges for healthcare providers. Broadening the outreach and offering low-threshold programs, tailored to the demands for privacy and self-reliance, and ensuring sensitivity to the socioeconomic conditions of problem gamblers could potentially decrease treatment-seeking stigma and stimulate behavior change on a larger scale (Snippe, Leroy, et al.)



Snippe, Leroy, et al. "Innovative treatment approaches in gambling disorder." Gambling disorder (2019): 195-233.

Examples

Providers of Digital Therapeutics

AI Therapist. Generalist AI therapist

Elomia: AI Therapy Chat

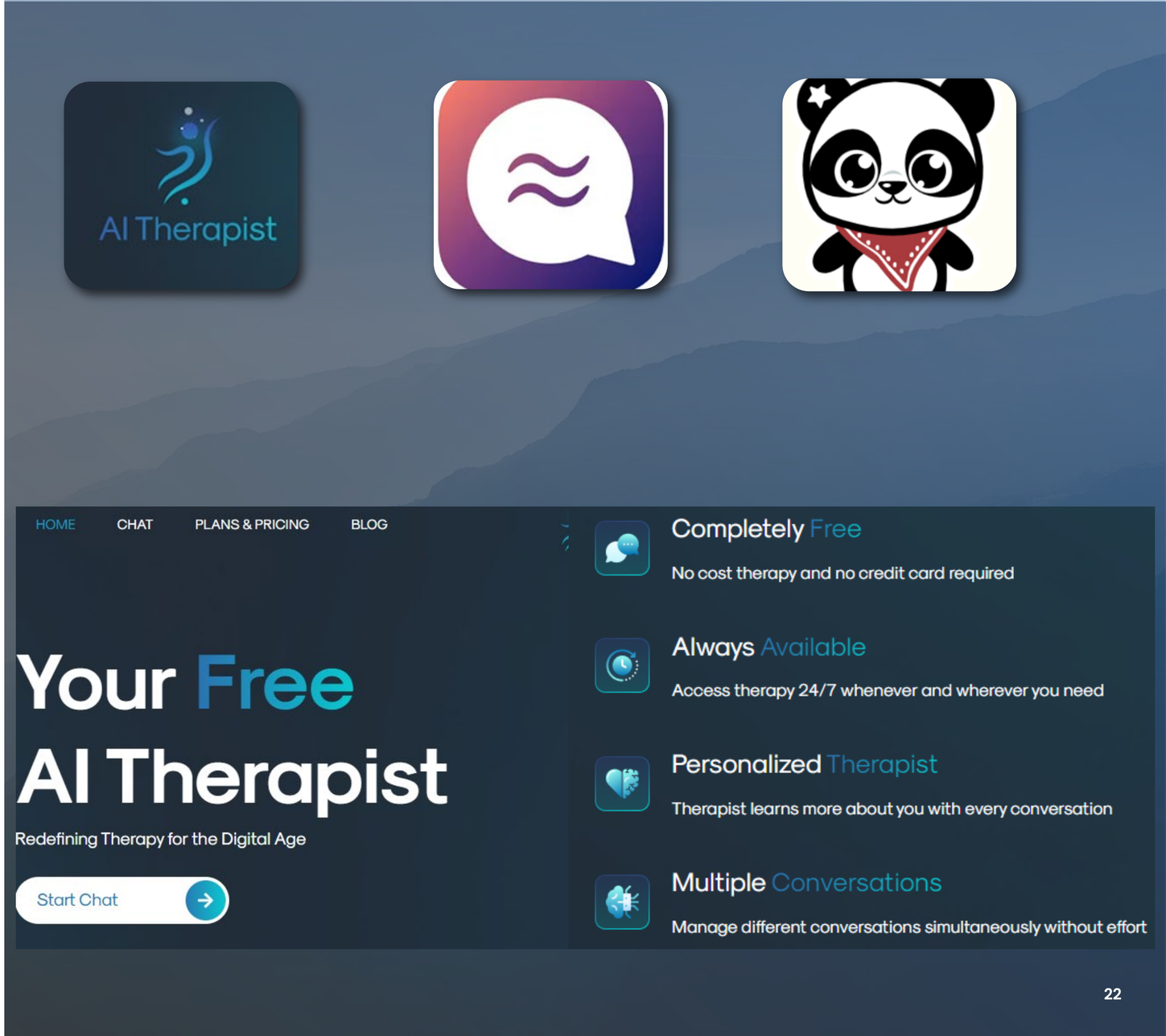
Anxiety & Depression CBT Ap

Earkick: AI Chatbot

Teen and young adult crisis chatbot.

GAMBOT: AI Chatbot (not available to public)

GAMBOT was developed to help people with problem gambling and used cognitive behavioral therapy principles



Smartphone Interventions

- Wide variability in quality
- Highest rated QuitGamble and RecoverMe
- Maintaining engagement with apps is one of the biggest issues app developers face.
- Providing social interaction via in-app communities improves engagement and outcomes.

Smartphone Apps for Problem Gambling: a Review of Content and Quality

Li Yan McCurdy[1,2] · Jennifer M. Loya[2] · Victoria R. Hart-Derrick[3] · Griffin C. Young[4] · Brian D. Kiluk[2] · Marc N. Potenza[2,3,5,6,7]

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Abstract

Purpose of Review Problem gambling can have profound consequences for affected individuals, yet only a small proportion of people with problem gambling seek treatment. Mobile phone applications (apps) may provide an effective and scalable therapeutic option. The purpose of this study was to evaluate publicly available mobile apps aimed at improving problematic gambling behavior.

Recent Findings To date, there are no published studies that have evaluated the quality of publicly available smartphone apps for problem gambling in the USA. There is thus a significant gap in knowledge of existing apps for addressing problem gambling.

Summary This study included a review of 14 problem-gambling-specific apps. Apps that incorporated cognitive-behavioral therapy concepts and in-app communities were associated with better aesthetics and information quality scores. Additionally, in-app communities were associated with better engagement scores. Our results highlight the importance of evidence-based and engaging features in apps designed to help people with problem gambling.

12-step Gamblers Anonymous
888-ADMIT-IT
Bettor Time Gambling Control
Gambless
Gambling Addiction
Gambling Addiction Calendar
Gambling Addiction Test
Gambling Therapy
playRIGHT
Quit Gambling
QuitGamble
RecoverMe
Stay on Track SA
Stop Addiction: Gambling

Today's U.S. smartphone apps are designed for specific user groups, most those wanting to quit gambling. There is much room for improvement

Sam’s Story:
From vision to reality

How can we empower all individuals to prevent, reduce or recover from gambling-related harm?

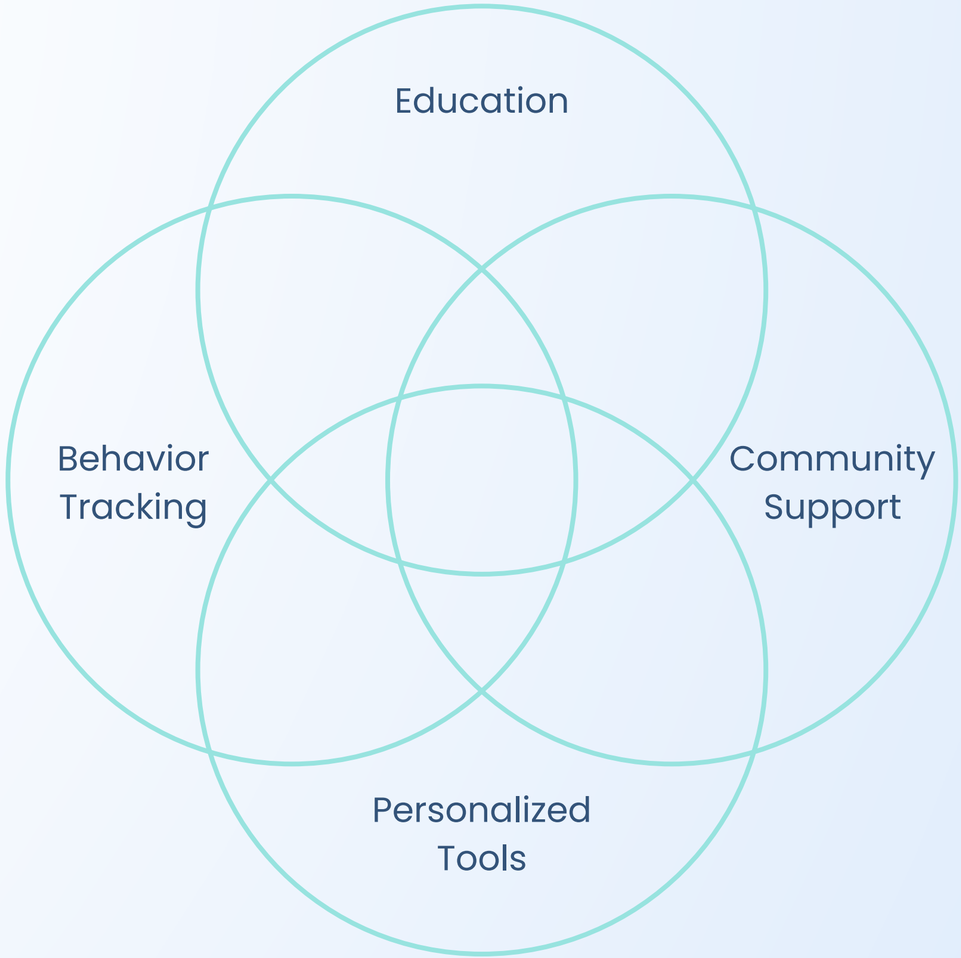
How Can We Use Technology?

How can we better meet gamblers where they are?

How can we to create personalized, effective experiences?

How can we connect those with lived experience, treatment providers, and researchers to generate new solutions?

How can we engage more people into the existing system of care?



Primary prevention

Interventions that take place before gambling harm has occurred. These are designed to prevent gambling harm.

Secondary prevention

Interventions that target early identification of a gambling problem and reduce harm by intervening before further harm is created.

Tertiary prevention

Interventions that seek to mitigate the negative consequences and worsening of symptoms among those with gambling disorder.

For anyone to stop gambling, or maintain abstinence.

For anyone to change how gambling shows up in their lives.

For anyone to proactively safeguard their play.

The Pillars of Integrated Help

BEHAVIORAL TRACKING

Uncover triggers, monitor mood, and analyze play

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Give and receive support from others with shared experience

EDUCATION & RESOURCES

Learn how to combat and prevent gambling harm

CUSTOM TOOLS

Use tools to manage access and maintain emotional balance

Preliminary

Pilot Program Evaluation

- Early Observations
- Direct Feedback

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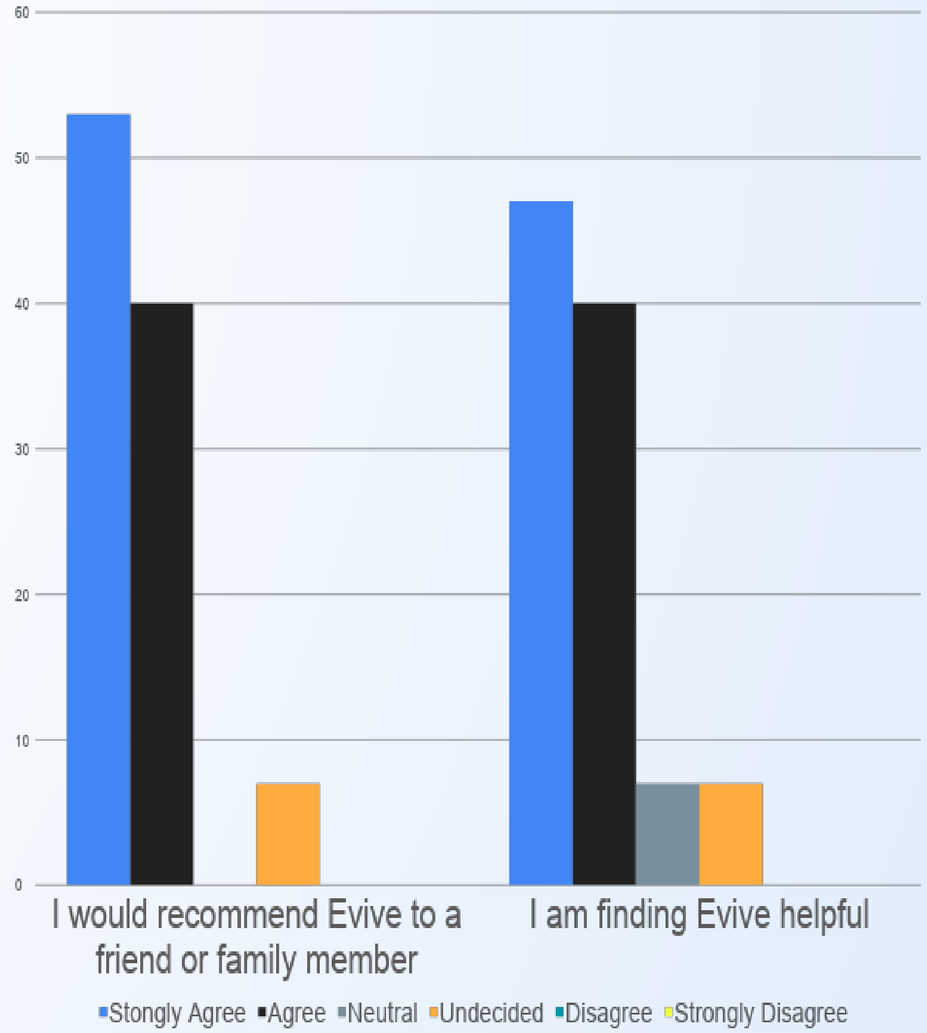
Initial Data

By harnessing the power of technology, lived experience, and clinical expertise, we have the opportunity to transform the landscape of gambling support.

- **93%** of users would recommend Evive to a friend of family member
- **87%** of users are finding Evive helpful in maintaining their goal to stop
- **45%** decrease in gambling urges among Evive's initial cohort
- **64%** reduction in actual gambling behavior
- **42%** increase in positive moods and 15% decrease in negative moods

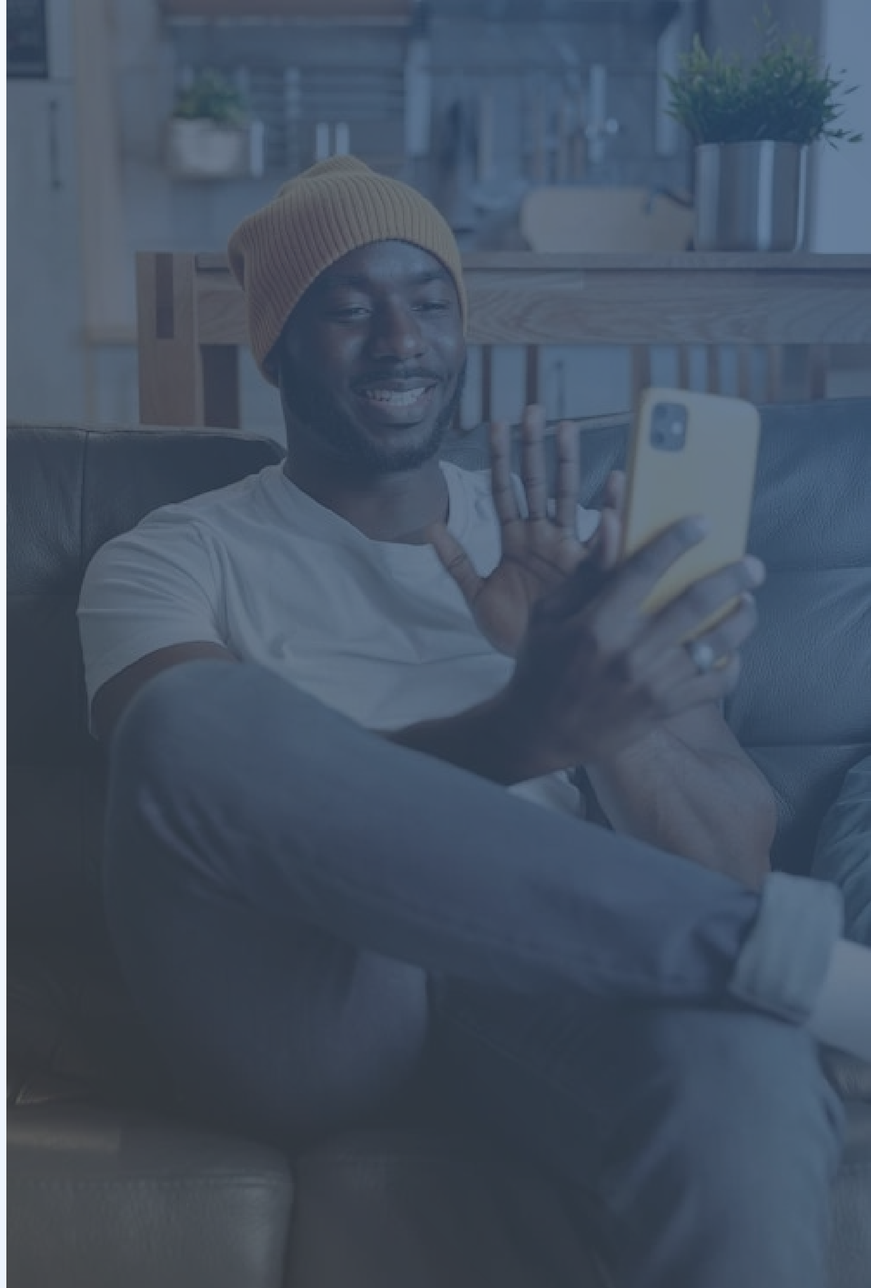


What early participants are saying

- "The Evive app has been crucial to my recovery from gambling addiction. One of my favorite pieces of the app is the educational modules. Knowledge is power and educating others about gambling addiction helps empower them to take control of their recovery journey."

- "I'm finding so much help and information as I'm looking more into all that Evive has to offer. This 'multitool' is becoming my favorite on my toolbelt."

- "With Evive I have found an accountability partner that I can do daily check-ins with, to measure the progress that I'm making as well as a list of educational resources that can benefit in addiction recovery to gambling."



Questions?

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