

# Problem Gambling as a public health issue in AAPI communities: Root causes and interventions

Monday 3pm - 5pm

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WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS  
**FOCUS ON THE FUTURE**



**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



# Problem Gambling as a Public Health Issue in AAPI Communities: Root Causes & Interventions

Presented by: Ben Hires, Grace Su, & Heang Rubin

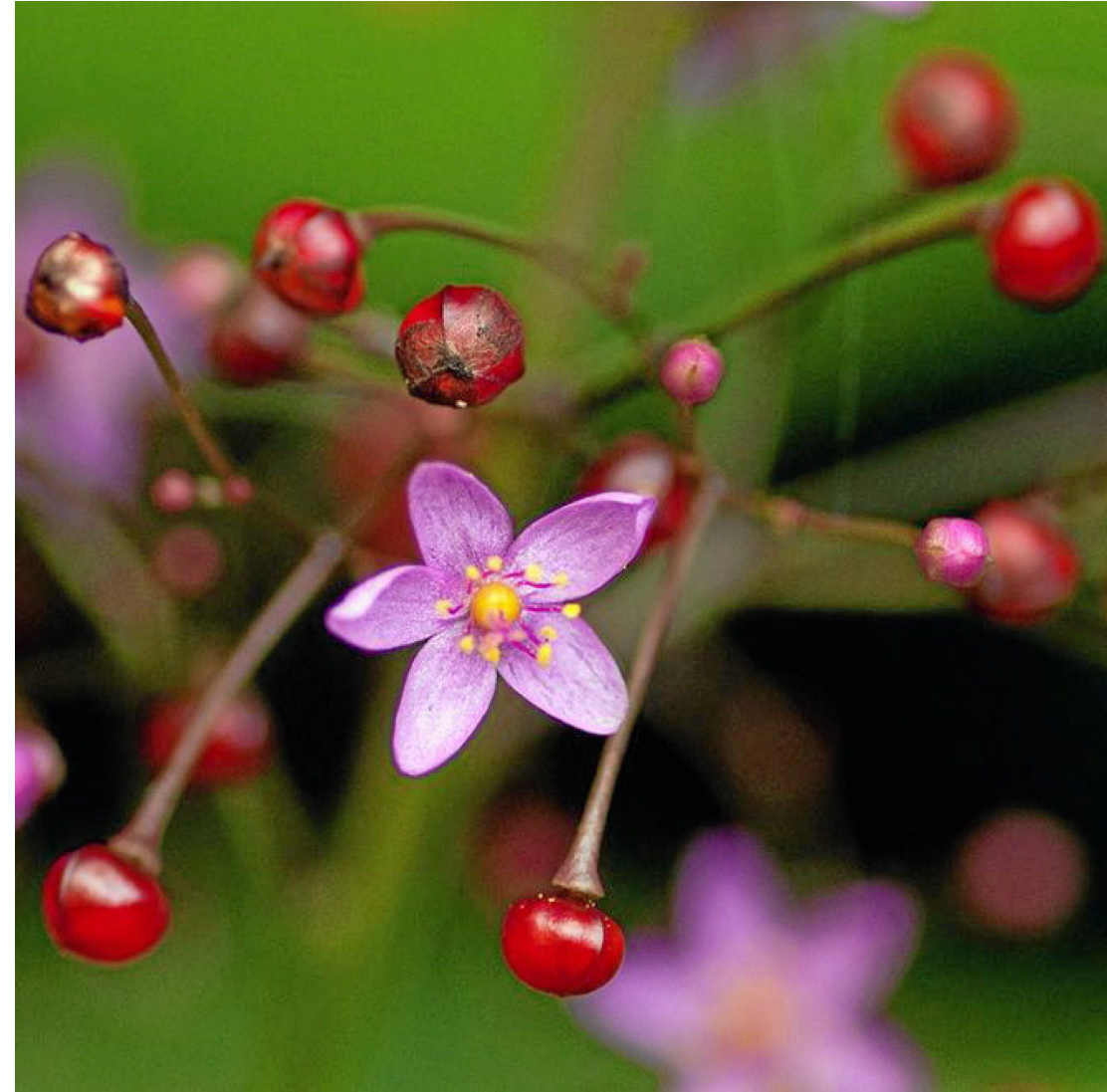
# Agenda

- Knowledge Check
- Who is in the room
- Intro to BCNC
- Problem gambling & BCNC program interventions
- Cultural considerations in service provision
- Activity time
- Post-workshop knowledge check
- Q&A



# Objectives

- Identify the social determinants of health impacting gambling behaviors in the Asian American community
- Learn 2-3 creative strategies for developing community interventions
- Describe 1-2 ways to form partnerships to address gambling prevention



According to research, how do gambling disorder rates in AAPI communities compare to the general population?



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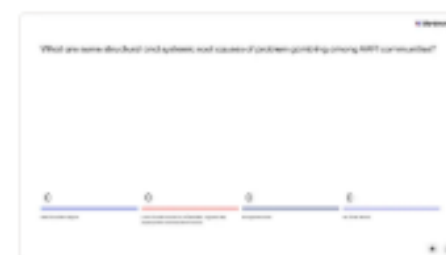
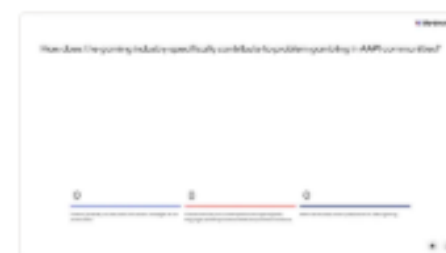


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How does the gaming industry specifically contribute to problem gambling in AAPI communities?

0

Casinos generally use the same recruitment strategies for all communities

0

Casinos actively recruit AAPI patrons through targeted, language-specific promotions and transportation incentives

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AAPI communities have a preference for online gaming

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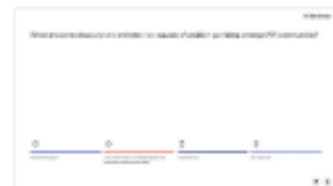
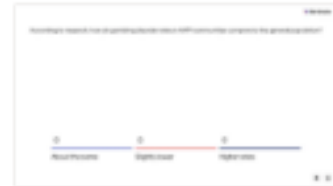


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### Select which slide to add

How do you think it will depend on the order when you present the content?

0 0 0

About the course    Single time    Higher costs

4 / 5

How does the gaming industry specifically contribute to problem gambling in NZ?

0 0 0

Government    Gaming industry    Problem gambling

4 / 5

What are some practical and systemic solutions of problem gambling among Māori?

0 0 0 0

Education    Support services    Prevention    Research

4 / 5



## Who is in the room?

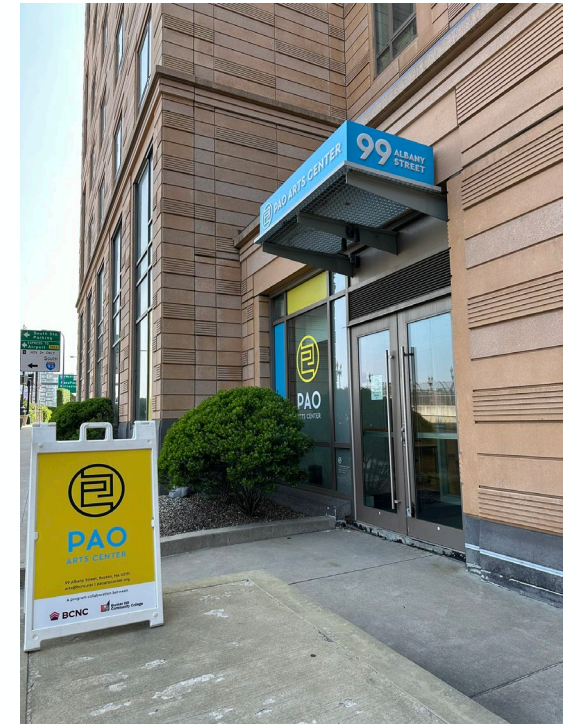
- Where are you from?
- What work do you do?
- How many work with or see AAPI populations?

# Who is BCNC?

Founded in 1969 in Boston Chinatown, BCNC has been providing new immigrants, especially Asians, the support and resources they need to thrive in the United States.

## 8 Departments:

- Acorn Early Education
- Family Child Care
- Red Oak After-School Program
- Youth Program
- Adult Education
- Family Services
- Pao Arts Center
- Mental Health Clinic



# Family-Centered Approach

- View individuals as members of a family and larger systems.
- Offer support and resources that may benefit the individual AND their family to help the whole family thrive.
- Recognize that individuals have strengths that they bring with them.
- Provide holistic and culturally responsive services.

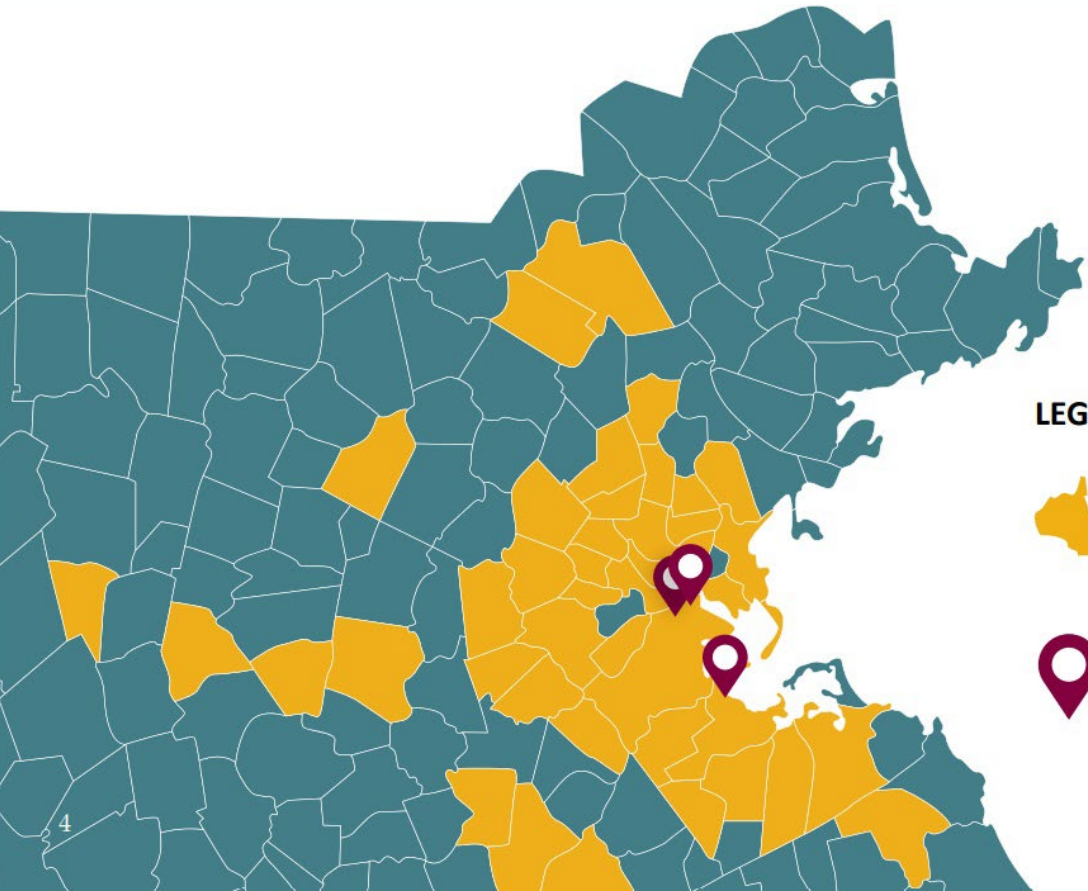


# Who We Serve

86%  
Asian

78%  
Low Income

41%  
New Immigrants



- LEGEND**
-  Towns in MA where BCNC Participants Reside
  -  BCNC Locations



# BCNC Problem Gambling Timeline

Expanded Gaming Act enacted in MA



Casinos approved and Public Health Trust Fund established



DPH OPGS Created  
MA Legalizes Fantasy Sports but no fees or taxes



BCNC advocates and applies to MGC funding for research project and Asian communities needs



BCNC's "Talking about Casino Gambling: Community Voices from Boston Chinatown" Report



BCNC partners with DPH on Everett Community Level Health Project



AAPI Empowerment Project launched with support from DPH OPGS

BCNC Asian CARES report: Unpacking the Root Causes



BCNC advises DPH vendor on Asian problem gambling marketing campaign

Sports betting passed by MA Legislature



BCNC presents Asian CARES report at National Problem Gambling Conference & Tufts University Public Health Symposium



DPH OPGS Equity in Action Conference: Empowering Communities

DPH Youth Leaders in Problem Gambling

Boston Globe tour of Chinatown Buses and Encore Casino



BCNC raising awareness around projected impact on Asian community

2011

2014

2016

2017

2019

2020

2021

2022

2023

2024

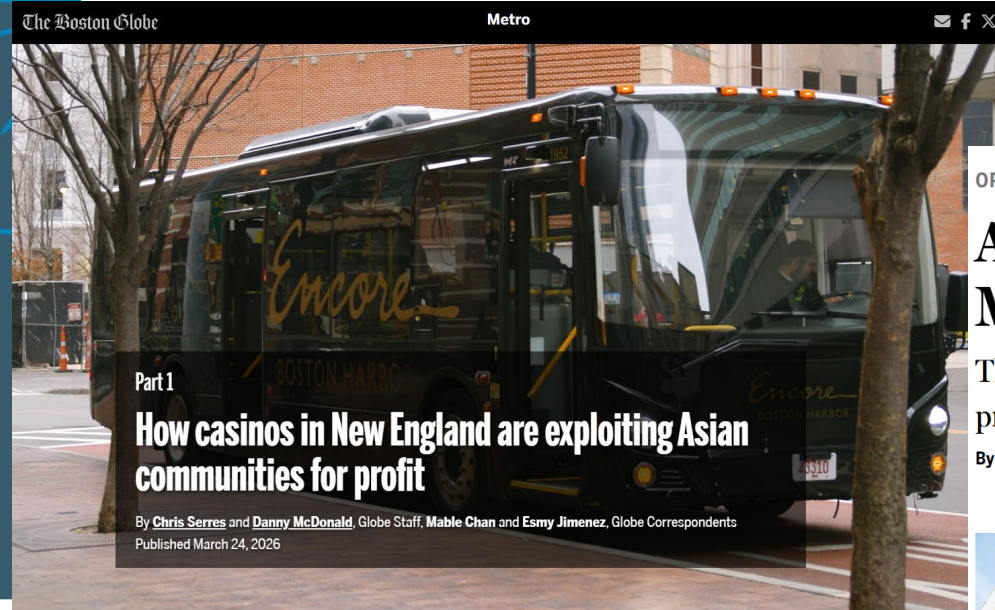
"Living here, feeling so isolated and far from home"

## Unpacking the Root Causes of Problem Gambling in the Asian Community

### Asian CARES Research Report September 2021

A REPORT PREPARED FOR:

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission



An Encore casino shuttle bus picked up passengers at 209 Essex St. in Boston. (Raphael Chinca/Globe Staff)

Read in simplified Chinese 阅读  
简体中文版

**Part 1:** How casinos in New England are exploiting Asian communities for profit

**Part 2:** Within the confines of Boston's Chinatown, there are dozens of illegal gambling parlors. What is the city doing about it?

**Part 3:** In Greater Boston's Asian communities, gambling can build social ties – and fuel addiction. Here's how residents are fighting back.

The late-morning sun was already high and hot over the brownstones in Boston's [Chinatown neighborhood](#) when a sleek bus pulled to a stop at a mostly deserted street corner.

Five dozen people emerged from under store awnings and from shaded alleyways to clamor for one of 60 seats on the air-conditioned bus, set for a day of money-risking and, for most, money-losing at the Bally's [Twin River Lincoln Casino Resort](#) near Providence. The goal was a bit of excitement and out-of-town fun, and the passengers on board seemed ready for both. As the bus snaked its way through Chinatown, a female tour guide handed out vouchers for free gambling and food.

A little over an hour later, the passengers bounded off the bus into the smoky entrance of Bally's. Many headed straight to the Asian card games of [baccarat](#) and [pai-gow poker](#), where they laid down stacks of crisp, hundred-dollar bills on the green felt tables. Others made their

OPINION

## Asian Americans pay the price for Massachusetts casino profits

The state has a responsibility to curb predatory casino practices.

By Ben Hires Updated April 11, 2026, 3:00 a.m.

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Chinatown has long been treated as expendable. JOHN TLUMACKI/GLOBE STAFF

Ben Hires is CEO of the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center.

What responsibility does the state have when its revenue depends on the exploitation of vulnerable communities? A [recent investigation](#) by The Boston Globe shed long-overdue light on predatory casino practices in Massachusetts, confirming what many in Boston's Asian American communities have long known: The casino regulatory system isn't working

# Some Definitions: Gambling Disorder vs. Problem Gambling

**Gambling Disorder (DSM-5):** Persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behavior leading to clinically significant impairment or distress. An individual must meet at least 4 of these criteria within a 12-month period:

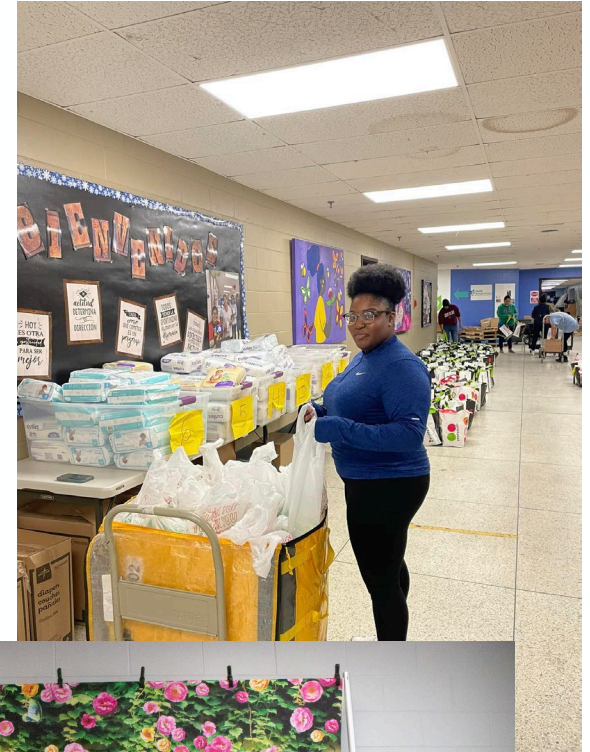
1. Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money to achieve the desired excitement
2. Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling
3. Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling
4. Is often preoccupied with gambling
5. Often gambles when feeling distressed (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed)
6. After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even (“chasing” one’s losses)
7. Lying to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling
8. Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity
9. Relies on others to provide money to relieve desperate financial situations caused by gambling

# Some Definitions: Gambling Disorder vs. Problem Gambling

**Problem Gambling (MA OPGS):** When gambling behavior begins to cause harm in the individual who may be experiencing any or some of the following:

1. Getting defensive when asked about gambling
2. Gambling every day
3. Gambling with higher amounts of money to keep the same excitement
4. Feeling annoyed when attempting to cut down on gambling
5. Trying and failing many times to cut back or stop gambling
6. Spending a lot of time thinking about gambling
7. Gambling when feeling stressed, anxious, or depressed
8. Gambling to try to win back money previously lost by gambling
9. Lying to hide how much or often they gamble
10. Losing an important relationship, job, or opportunity because of gambling
11. Needing to borrow money as a result of gambling losses

# Problem Gambling Prevention Initiatives: Project RISE



# Problem Gambling Prevention Initiatives: AAPI Empowerment Project



Coalition of 10 Asian immigrant-serving organizations across MA



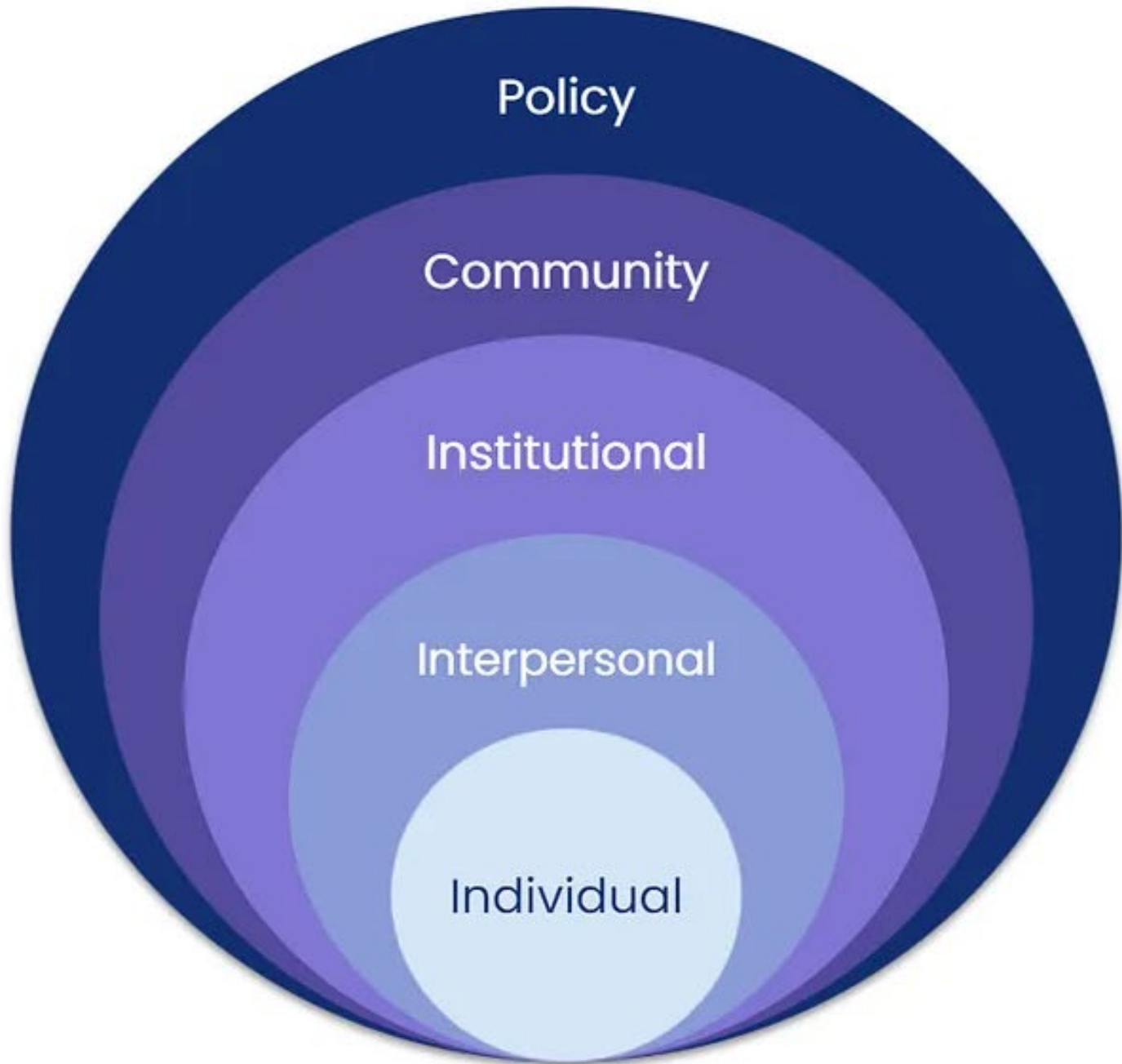
# Problem Gambling Prevention Initiatives: Youth Leaders Project



# Cultural Considerations in Service Provision



- Recognizing problem gambling as a result of factors including but not exclusive to:
  - ❖ Immigration stress
  - ❖ Mental health needs
  - ❖ Lack of culturally and linguistically accessible recreational activities
  - ❖ Social determinants of health
- Culturally responsive care more than just language accessibility
  - ❖ Person-in-environment
  - ❖ Socio-ecological model



- ← Federal, state, and local legislation
- ← Cities, neighborhoods, resources, and norms
- ← Organizations, schools, and workplaces
- ← Friends, family, and social networks
- ← Knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors

# Activity Time!

According to research, how do gambling disorder rates in AAPI communities compare to the general population?



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Select which slide to add

According to research, how do gambling disorder rates in AAPI communities compare to the general population?

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—————|—————|—————|—————

About the same      Slightly lower      Higher rates

How does the gaming industry specifically contribute to problem gambling in AAPI communities?

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—————|—————|—————|—————

What are some structural and systemic root causes of problem gambling among AAPI communities?

According to research, how do gambling disorder rates in AAPI communities compare to the general population?

The correct answer is: Higher rates. AAPI individuals experience disproportionate rates (e.g., studies showing ~2.3% vs. 1.2% in White Americans)

How does the gaming industry specifically contribute to problem gambling in AAPI communities?

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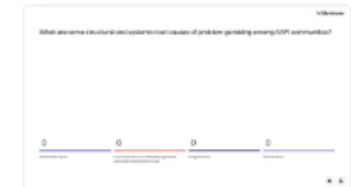
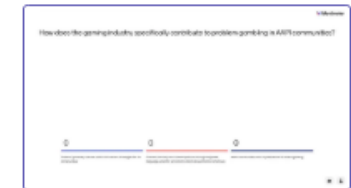
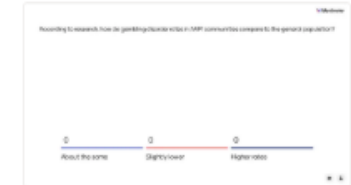


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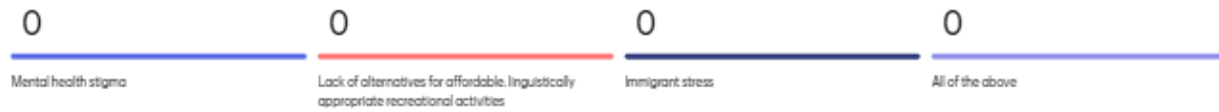
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How does the gaming industry specifically contribute to problem gambling in AAPI communities?

The correct answer is: Casinos actively recruit AAPI patrons through targeted, language-specific promotions and transportation incentives

What are some structural and systemic root causes of problem gambling among AAPI communities?



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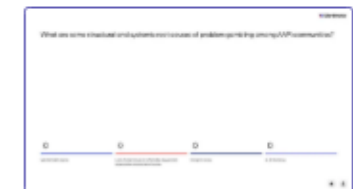
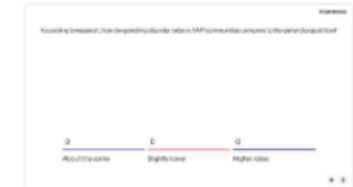


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What are some structural and systemic root causes of problem gambling among AAPI communities?

The correct answer is: All of the above

Thank you!



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