



PROBLEM GAMBLING

MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH 2020

1 Background

2 Category Exploration

3 Barriers

4 Message Testing

5 Summary

OVERLYING STUDY OBJECTIVE

There has been a decline in lowans seeking problem gambling treatment, while at the same time gambling opportunities such as sports gambling are on the rise.

This research explores public attitudes about gambling and what the prominent barriers are to seeking treatment. Insights will be used to optimize future communications promoting the availability of gambling education and treatment resources.



RESEARCH PROCESS

Phase 1

Discovery Research

- 6 Focus groups
- + Category exploration
- + Identify prominent barriers
- + Explore public recommendations



Phase 2

Creative Message Development



- + Feedback from phase 1 is translated into future messaging opportunities



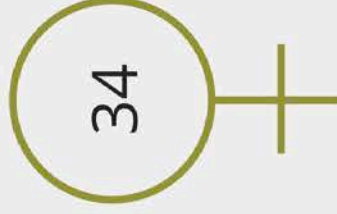
Phase 3

Validation Research

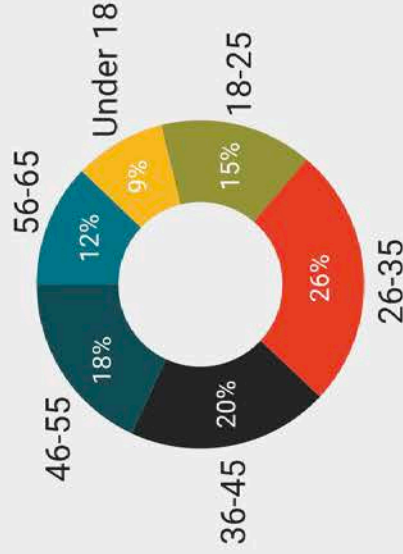
- 9 Virtual Focus Groups
- + Message testing

WHO WE SPOKE TO

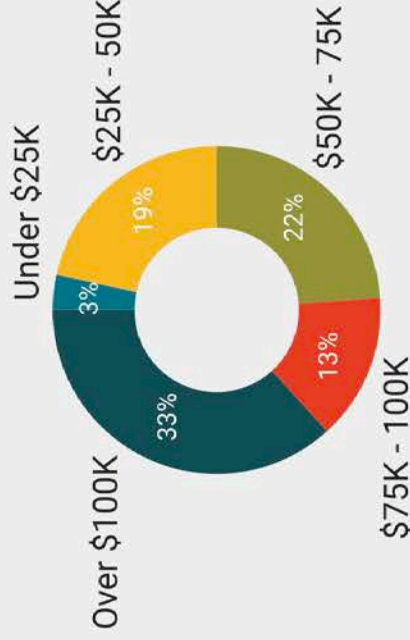
- ⊕ 80 Participants
- ⊕ Teen only group
- ⊕ Concerned others group
- ⊕ Mix of gambling frequency



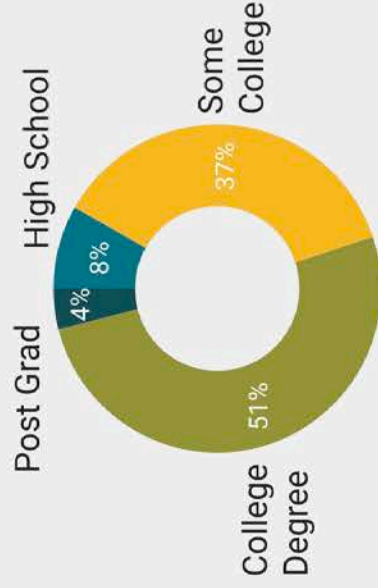
AGE



HOUSEHOLD INCOME

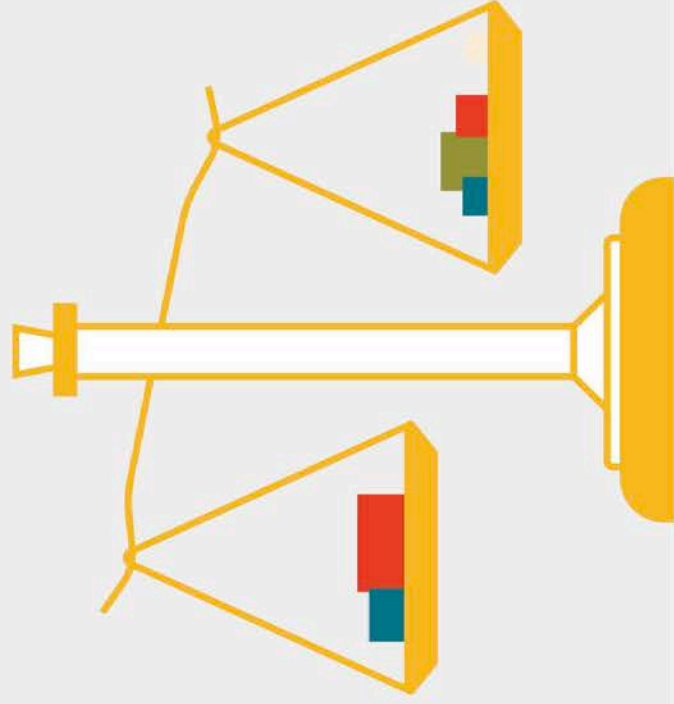


EDUCATION

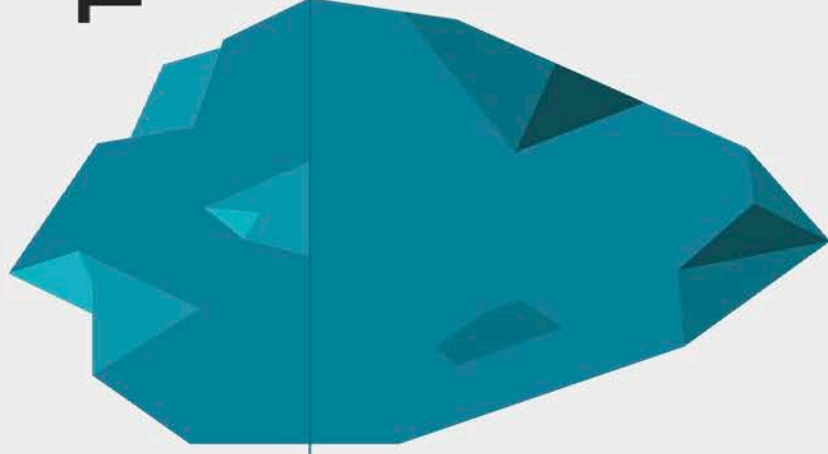


THE PROCESS – OBJECTIVITY

- ⊕ All sessions conducted by the same facilitator
- ⊕ Identical methodology / questions used within each wave of research
- ⊕ Participants committed to a point of view prior to voicing opinions out loud using written worksheets or other research stimulus
- ⊕ All conversations were recorded on audio and video to ensure accurate and authentic representation of the insights



THE PROCESS – RESEARCH DEPTH



- ⊕ Use research tools and exercises that uncover deeply held expectations and values
- ⊕ Most research methodology used unaided exercises. These are questions that are open ended and rely on participants to use their own verbiage to express opinions and ideas
- ⊕ Every participant offers individual feedback to every question or exploration posed

THE PROCESS – PATTERN IDENTIFICATION



Comb through transcripts looking for common or related patterns of thought



Use charts and graphics to visually illustrate patterns



Use participant video to bring the results to life and expose subtle nuances/language that are critical to the message development process

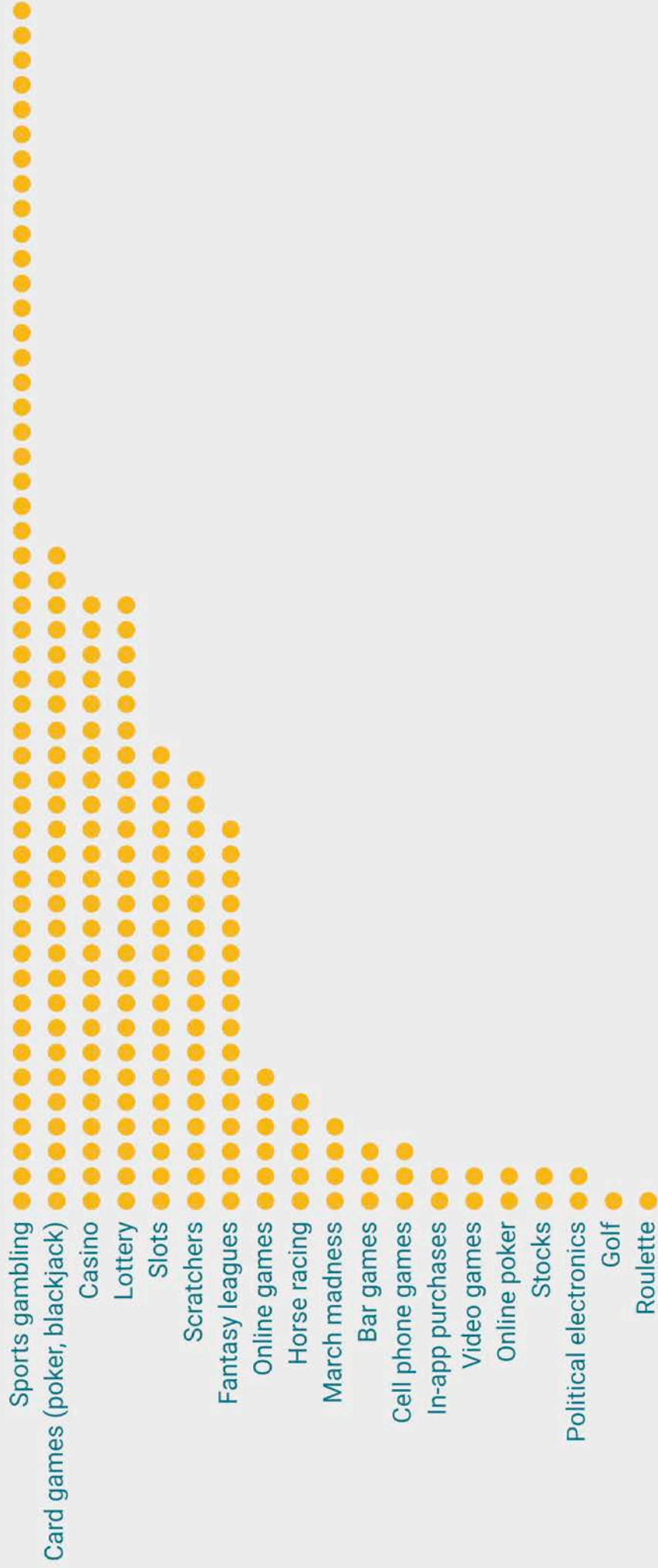
OPENING QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

How common would you say betting is among your personal peer group? This would include yourself, your family, your friends, co-workers, or people in your expanded social circle?



OPENING QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

List the types of gambling that are most common for yourself and your social circle.



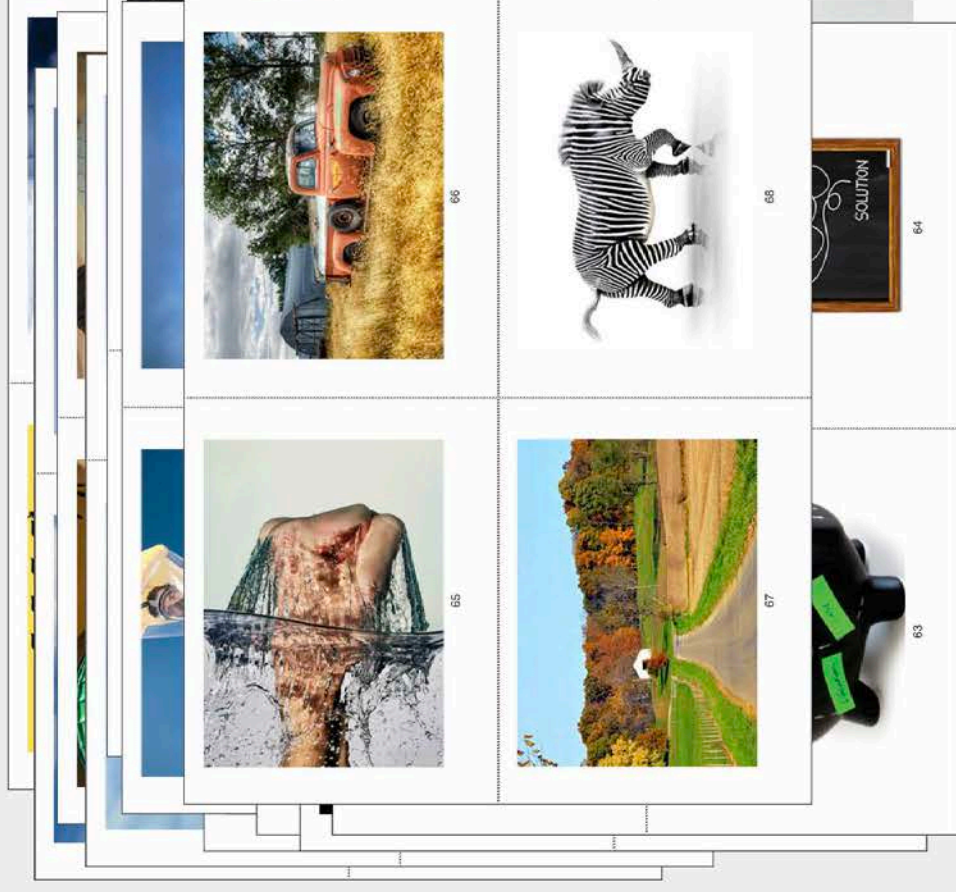
APPEAL OF BETTING VS. POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Part 1 - Appeal/Attraction

Why do you think people gamble? What satisfaction or fulfillment do people get from the activity? What do you think they find appealing or attractive and why?

Part 2 - Pitfalls/Drawbacks

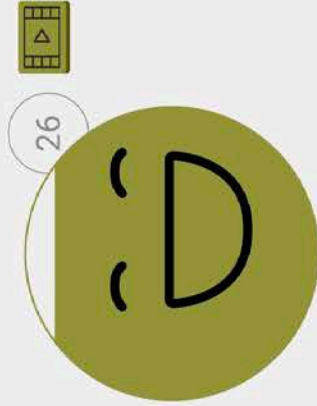
What are the concerns that some people might have about gambling? How would you describe the risks? (That is if you believe there are any)



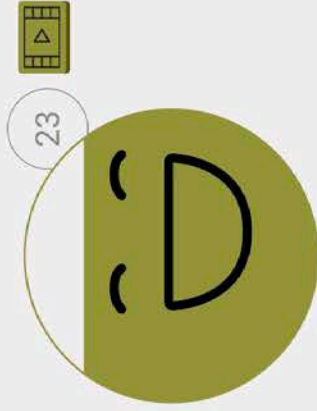
GAMBLING APPEAL



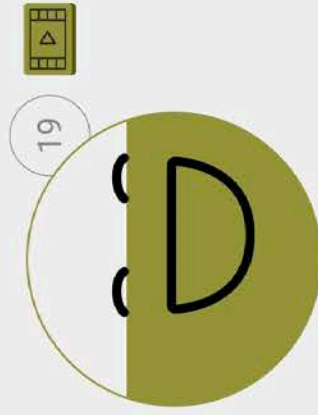
Financial Rewards



Exciting, exhilarating, escape from boredom



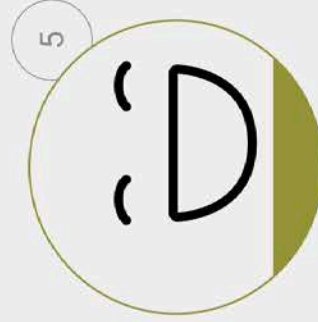
Social entertainment; fun, camaraderie, friendship



Sense of success or accomplishment, beat the system, feel smart



Fast money/ can't be earned elsewhere

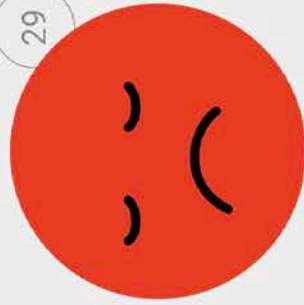


Way out of a financial problem

GAMBLING PITFALLS



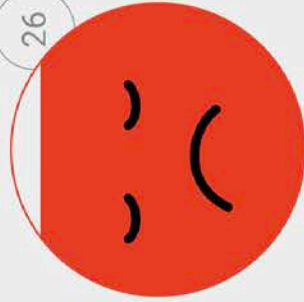
29



Guilt and shame of losing or 'wasting' money



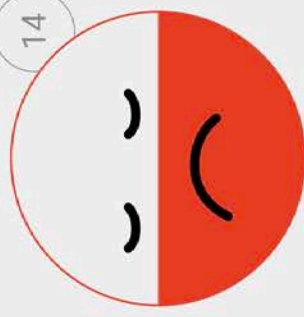
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Stress/ feeling trapped in the cycle

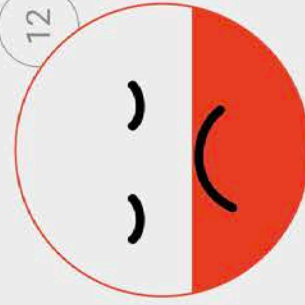


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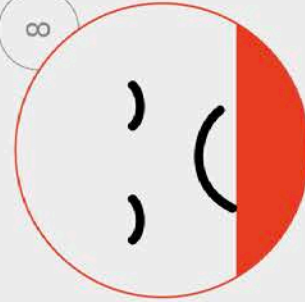
Breakdown of family relationships, loss of trust/ feeling isolated

12



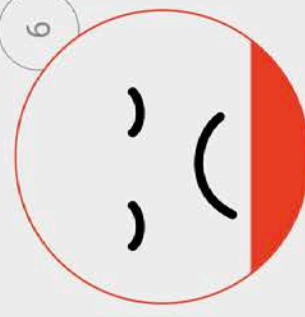
Loss of assets; savings, retirement, house, etc.

8



Potential legal trouble; bankruptcy, stealing

6



Wasting time; lose focus on kids, jobs, etc.

CERTAINTY REGARDING WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

As you were answering the previous question, did you find yourself more, or less confident about knowing what to do, or where to go, to access help in this situation?

Use the scale to indicate how confident you are about what to do in this situation

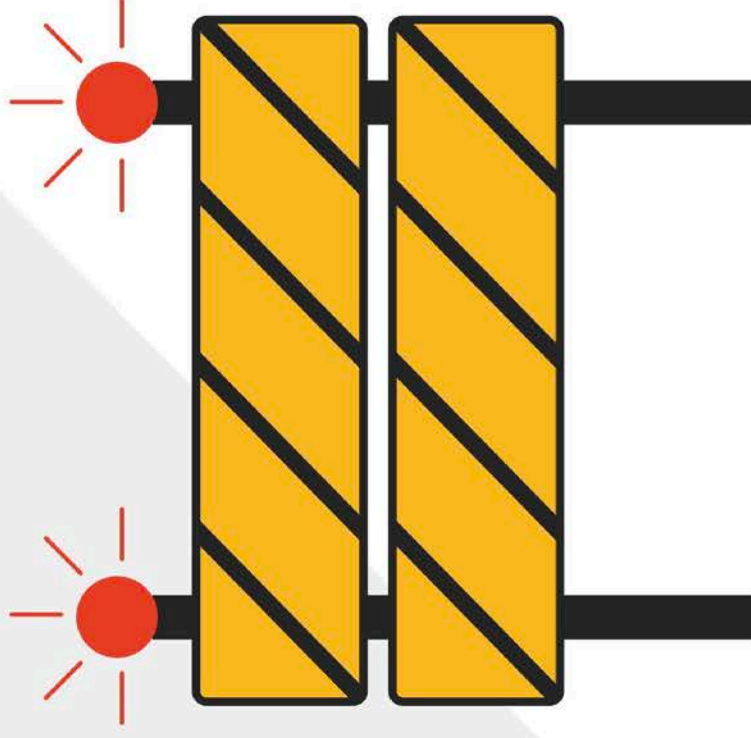


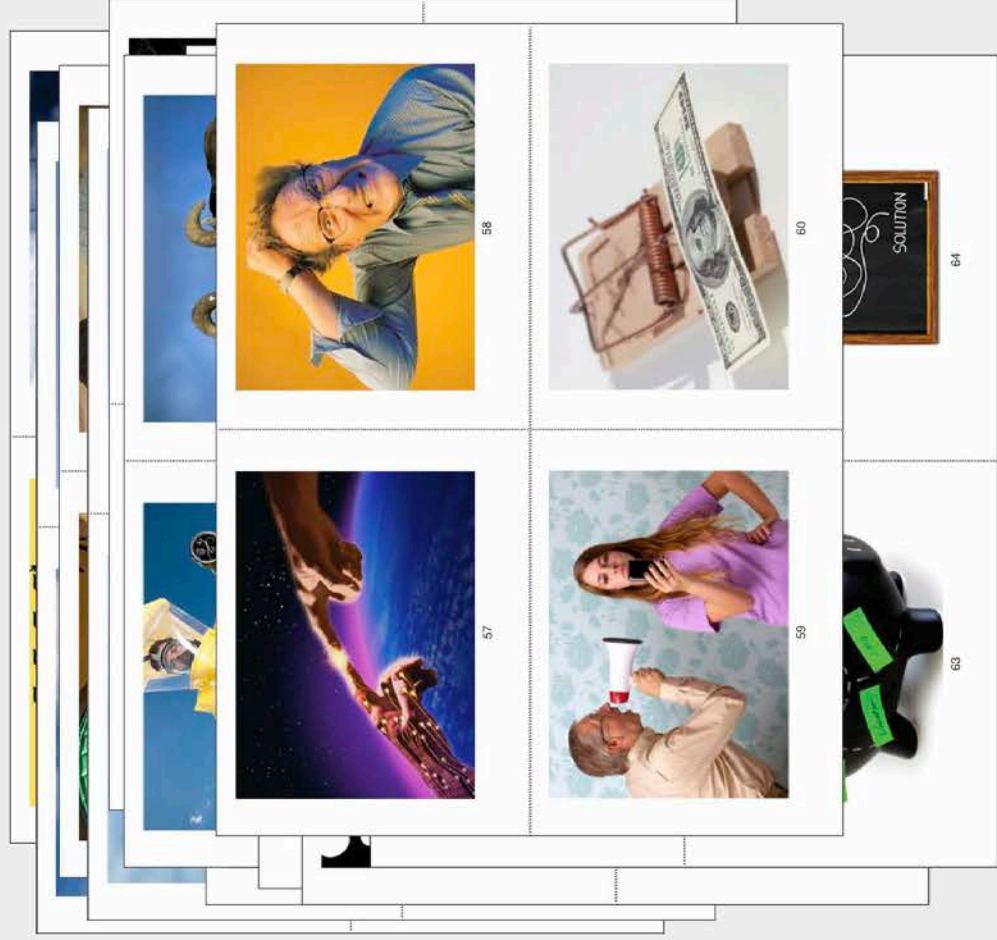
BARRIERS TO SEEKING HELP

The reality today is that the opportunities to bet or gamble in Iowa are growing over time. Whether that is sports betting, casinos, lotteries, or betting on smart phones etc. – we are seeing greater accessibility to gambling for Iowans.

And yet as these opportunities grow, the number of people that reach out to access support services for problem gambling (information, education, programs, counseling etc.) is actually going down. The question we want to explore is why?

We want to understand what some of the barriers might be. Why do you think people may not reach out and access help or support for problem gambling?





To help explore this question, we have an exercise for you to complete that uses a deck of several hundred brainstorming images.

Start going through the deck and look for any images that remind you of some sort of a barrier – or something that gets in the way of people successfully reaching out and accessing help and support. What are the things that prevent or somehow deter this from happening?

Set aside any images that strike a chord. Feel free to choose as many as you want. Afterwards, I'll get you to narrow your images down to 5 or 6 that represent the most significant barriers that come to mind for you.

CATEGORIES OF RESPONSES

Wounded Pride; Shame of admitting personal failure/ Letting people down/ Loss of respect



Denial; It's not a problem / Unaware of how much you are gambling / Not portrayed as dangerous



Scared of losing current social circle; friends, entertainment, fun, hobbies etc.



Feeling isolated & alone; Not having a support system, burning bridges, trying to do it themselves



Quickest / Easiest solution is more gambling / Trapped in the cycle (solution is more gambling)



Too hard / Too daunting



Not knowing where to go, what to do, where to start



CATEGORIES OF RESPONSES

The thrill / excitement is hard to replace



Intimidated by the potentials cost of help



Too busy / No time / have other commitments



Not addressing underlying issues (mental health, abuse etc.)

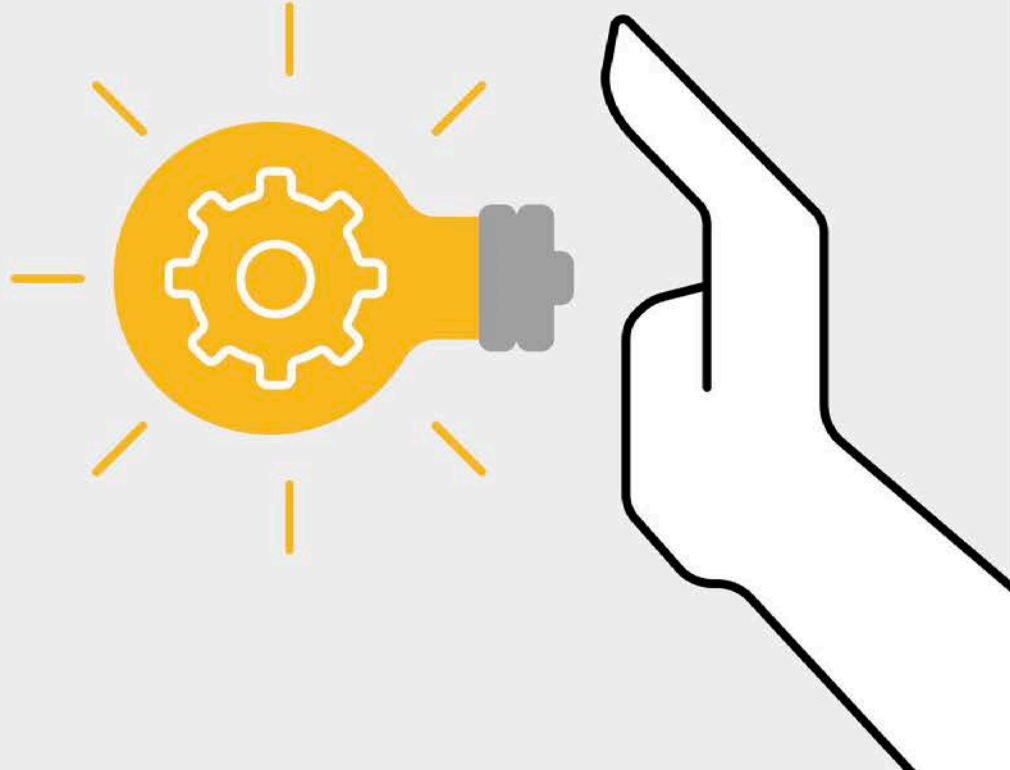


Social services seen a runaround / Treat people like numbers



Only option to change financial circumstances





RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING BARRIERS

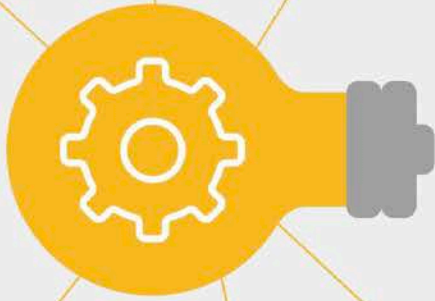
What can, or should, be done to try to address some of the barriers we just discussed? How can we better connect the public with problem gambling information, help and support?

SUGGESTIONS



Reduce the stigma/ promote empathy and understanding/ normalize gambling addiction

Better balance between gambling promotion vs. promotion of support



Anonymous options to get help/ protect privacy

More online promotions/ greater awareness during sporting events



Improve support messaging/ make it more emotional, greater attempt at addressing barriers

Fund treatment/ access to grants/ clarity regarding financial costs

WAVE 1: Discovery Research

KEY INSIGHTS

Defining the Communications Challenge

The issue is **not** awareness. 1-800-BETS OFF has very high unaided awareness.

Dominant Barriers:

- Wounded pride. Shame of admitting personal failure or weakness.
- Denial; It's not a problem. Not portrayed as dangerous. Don't believe they fit into their stereotypical definition of 'problem gambling'.
- Feeling isolated and alone. Fear of negative reactions from others (perceived lack of external empathy and understanding).

The marketing challenge is overcoming these highly emotional barriers.

Getting Past Emotional Barriers

Understanding /Appreciating Attitudes & Feelings About Gambling

People enjoy winning not just for the financial rewards, but also because of boosts to self-esteem. They 'beat' the odds. They outsmarted the system. They feel personal gratification, they feel shrewd, they feel validation personally and within their peer group.

BUT when they lose, the opposite is true. They feel terrible about themselves. They feel ashamed and embarrassed. And since people **without** a problem gambling disease typically consider gambling losses irrational, senseless, and reckless, (*you might as well be flushing money down the toilet*), **they hide it, or they deny they have a problem.**

They don't want to lose the respect and admiration of important people in their lives. They don't want to hear the anger and frustration from loved ones if they were to find out. They don't want to feel the shame.

Getting Past Emotional Barriers

Messaging Opportunities:

1. It Takes Strength & Courage To Own It.

It takes strength and courage to admit a gambling problem and to do something about it. Make the act of acknowledgement and outreach heroic and brave. 'Reward' the act of admitting it with positive affirmation and support.

Getting Past Emotional Barriers

Messaging Opportunities:

2. Redefining The Face of Problem Gambling

'MYTHBUST' people's assumptions about what problem gambling looks like and who it impacts.

What is the face of problem gambling? Maybe not always what you think. Anyone can be impacted. Community leaders can be impacted. Business professionals can be impacted. PHDs, fathers, grandmothers, etc. Smart, successful, highly respected people are not immune to these urges.

Getting Past Emotional Barriers

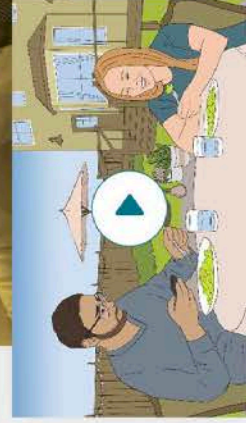
Messaging Opportunities:

3. Encourage Empathy & Understanding From Others

Redirect the messaging to those that the gambler has to 'confess' to. Husband or wife, co-worker, friends, parents, kids etc. Encourage them to be understanding, to be caring and empathetic. These urges can be very difficult to control. *Problem gamblers are not idiots, or fools or suckers – they have an illness. And they need you to help and support them, not attack them for admitting their illness.*

ZLR X IGNITION MESSAGE TESTING

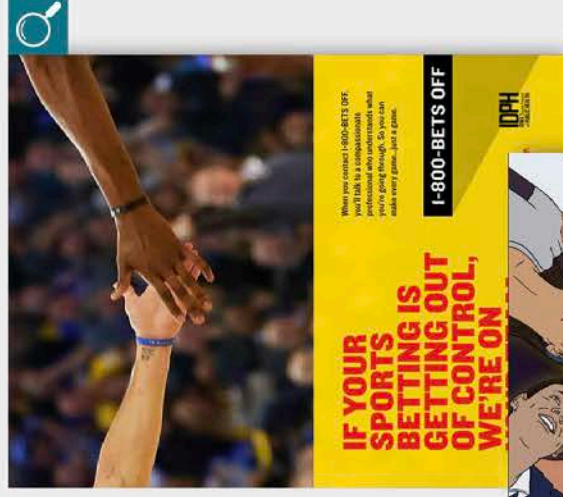
Heavy Burden



#1 At Getting Help



Starting Lineup



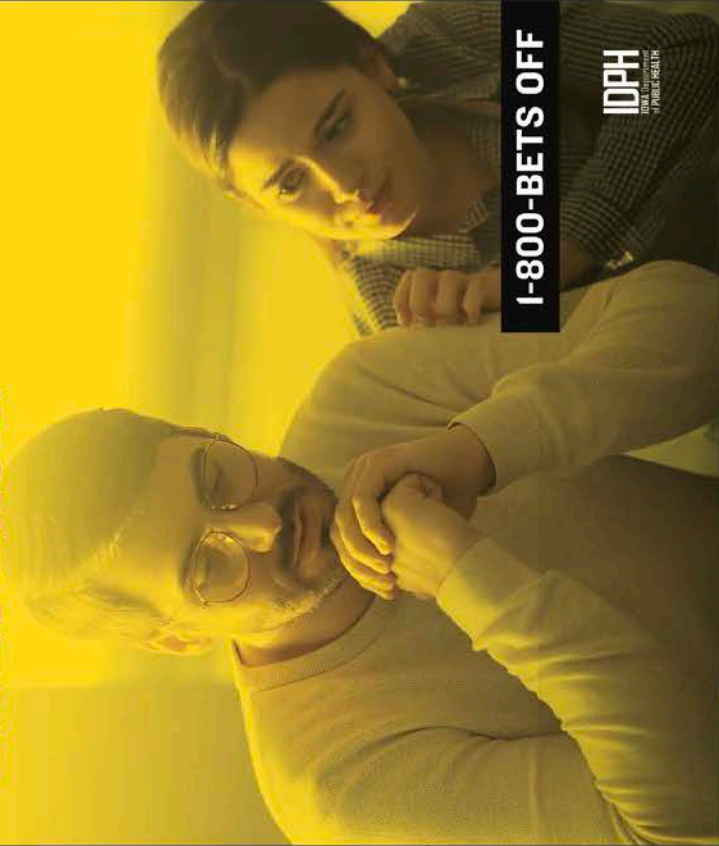


**STOP. LISTEN.
UNDERSTAND.
GET YOUR
LIVES BACK.**

Imagine someone you love is pretending all is well with their sports betting. Imagine the burden as the losses pile up. Imagine feeling powerless, unable to stop. Learn how to start the conversation and how to get both of you help. Make the call. Get your lives back.

1-800-BETS OFF.

**NO JUDGMENT.
JUST HELP.**



1-800-BETS OFF

IDPH
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH



BE AT GETTING HELP.

Dads. Moms. Lawyers. Teachers. Sports betting can affect anyone. But there's something we want you to know. It doesn't matter who you are—it just matters that you get help by contacting 1-800-BETS OFF. We're on your team.

1-800-BETS OFF

IDPH
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

NO JUDGMENT. JUST HELP.





**IF YOUR
SPORTS
BETTING IS
GETTING OUT
OF CONTROL,
WE'RE ON
YOUR TEAM.**

When you contact I-800-BETS OFF, you'll talk to a compassionate professional who understands what you're going through. So you can make every game...just a game.

I-800-BETS OFF

IDPH
IOWA DEPARTMENT
OF PUBLIC HEALTH

NO JUDGMENT. JUST HELP.



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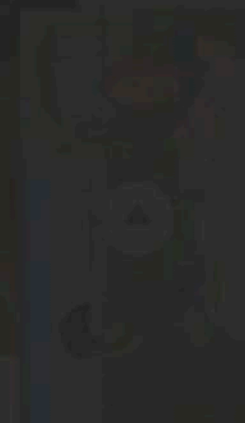
Starting Lineup

Heavy Burden

STOP. LISTEN.
UNDERSTAND.
GET YOUR
LIVES BACK.

I-800-BETS OFF

IDPH



METHODOLOGY



Initial Reactions - Video Concepts

NEGATIVE



Dislike



Boring



Confusing

POSITIVE



Like



Good Message



Hard Hitting



Word Association - Video Concepts

CREATIVE

BORING

RELEVANT

REALISTIC

CLEAR

DIRECT

CONFUSING

EYE-CATCHING

UNREALISTIC

EXCITING

THOUGHT PROVOKING

OVERWHELMING

DULL

UNCLEAR

BELIEVABLE

IRRELEVANT

POINTLESS

LACKS CREDIBILITY

VAGUE

IMPACTFUL

UNIQUE

UNORIGINAL

UNDERSTANDABLE

MEANINGFUL

INSPIRING

CREDIBLE

MEANINGLESS

ORIGINAL

UNINSPIRING

STRAIGHT FORWARD

BLAND

MOTIVATING

METHODOLOGY

Initial Reactions - Print

NEGATIVE



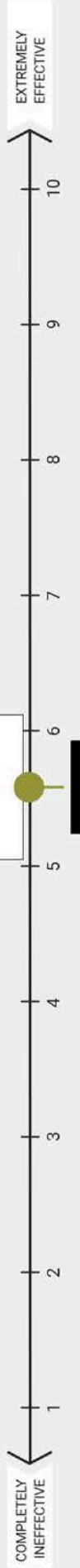
Dislike

POSITIVE



Like

Effectiveness Rating - Print



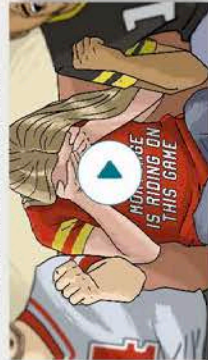
METHODOLOGY

  Overall Campaign Preference



OVERALL CAMPAIGN PREFERENCE

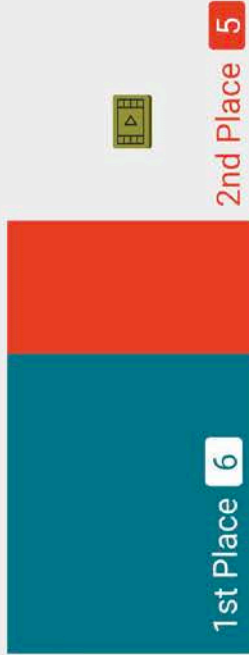
#1 AT GETTING HELP



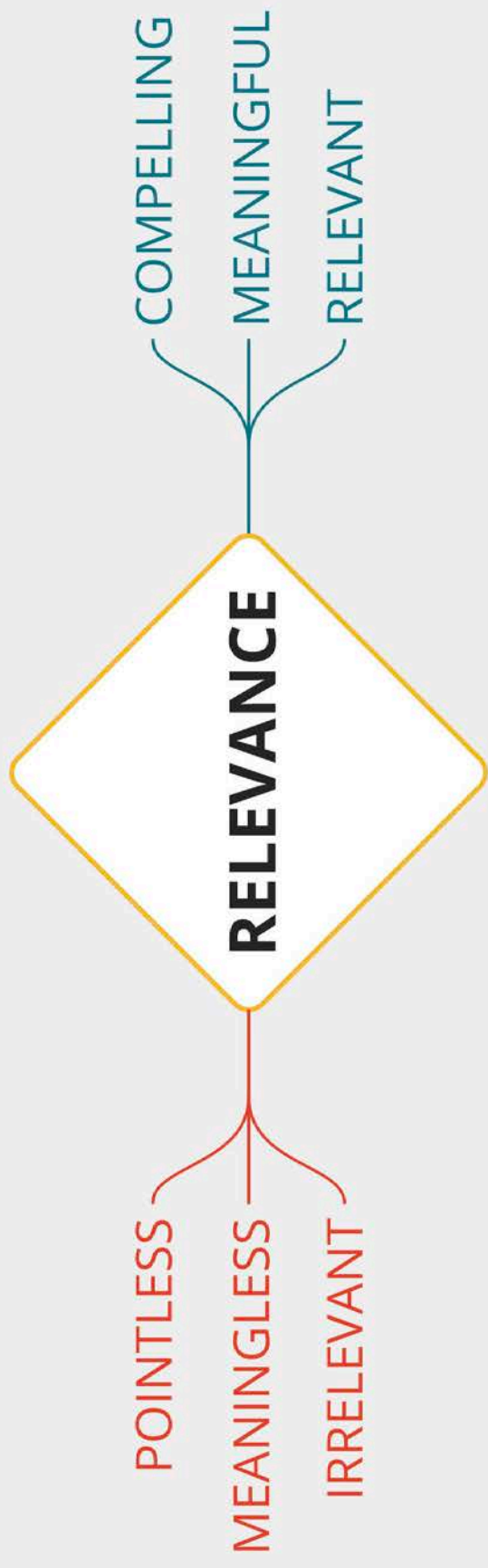
HEAVY BURDEN



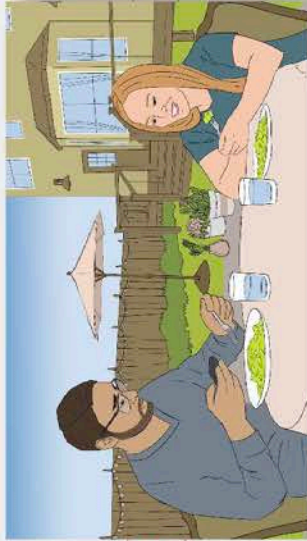
STARTING LINEUP



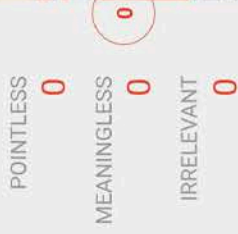
Word Association Category Analysis



RELEVANCE



37



31



23



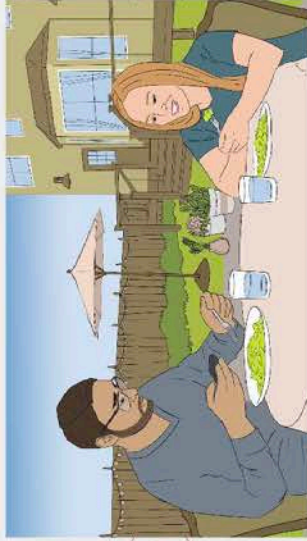
Word Association Category Analysis



CREDIBILITY

UNREALISTIC: 2
 UNBELIEVABLE: 4
 LACKS CREDIBILITY: 0
 MISLEADING: 2

8



65

REALISTIC: 18
 BELIEVABLE: 18
 CREDIBLE: 9
 HONEST: 20

UNREALISTIC: 1
 UNBELIEVABLE: 0
 LACKS CREDIBILITY: 1
 MISLEADING: 0

2



69

REALISTIC: 15
 BELIEVABLE: 15
 CREDIBLE: 15
 HONEST: 24

UNREALISTIC: 5
 UNBELIEVABLE: 7
 LACKS CREDIBILITY: 8
 MISLEADING: 6

26



27

REALISTIC: 8
 BELIEVABLE: 5
 CREDIBLE: 5
 HONEST: 9

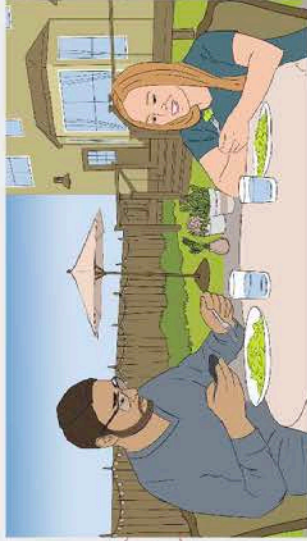
Word Association Category Analysis



COMPREHENSION

UNCLEAR 1
 CONFUSING 1
 OVERWHELMING 3
 VAGUE 1

6



53

CLEAR 14
 DIRECT 13
 STRAIGHT FORWARD 14
 UNDERSTANDABLE 12

UNCLEAR 1
 CONFUSING 0
 OVERWHELMING 1
 VAGUE 2

4



77

CLEAR 20
 DIRECT 14
 STRAIGHT FORWARD 21
 UNDERSTANDABLE 22

UNCLEAR 9
 CONFUSING 9
 OVERWHELMING 1
 VAGUE 4

23



42

CLEAR 9
 DIRECT 14
 STRAIGHT FORWARD 11
 UNDERSTANDABLE 8

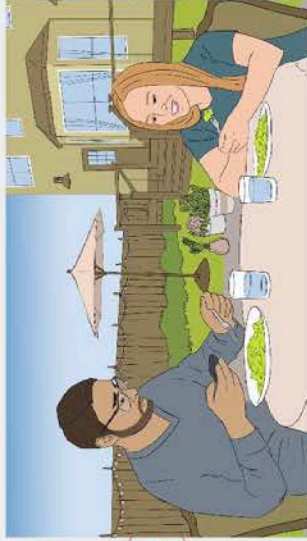
Word Association Category Analysis



CREATIVITY

UNORIGINAL 3
 CLICHÉ 5
 COPIED 0
 UNIMAGINATIVE 2
 FORGETTABLE 4

14



19

CREATIVE 6
 EYE-CATCHING 3
 ORIGINAL 3
 UNIQUE 5
 VIBRANT 2

UNORIGINAL 2
 CLICHÉ 3
 COPIED 1
 UNIMAGINATIVE 1
 FORGETTABLE 3

10



26

CREATIVE 10
 EYE-CATCHING 5
 ORIGINAL 7
 UNIQUE 2
 VIBRANT 2

UNORIGINAL 2
 CLICHÉ 5
 COPIED 0
 UNIMAGINATIVE 1
 FORGETTABLE 2

10



42

CREATIVE 14
 EYE-CATCHING 10
 ORIGINAL 9
 UNIQUE 6
 VIBRANT 3

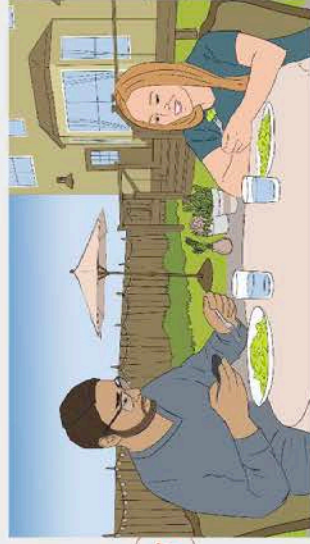
Word Association Category Analysis



EMOTIONAL IMPACT



17



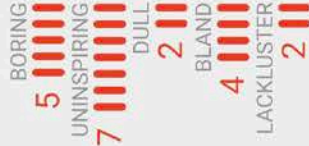
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13



54



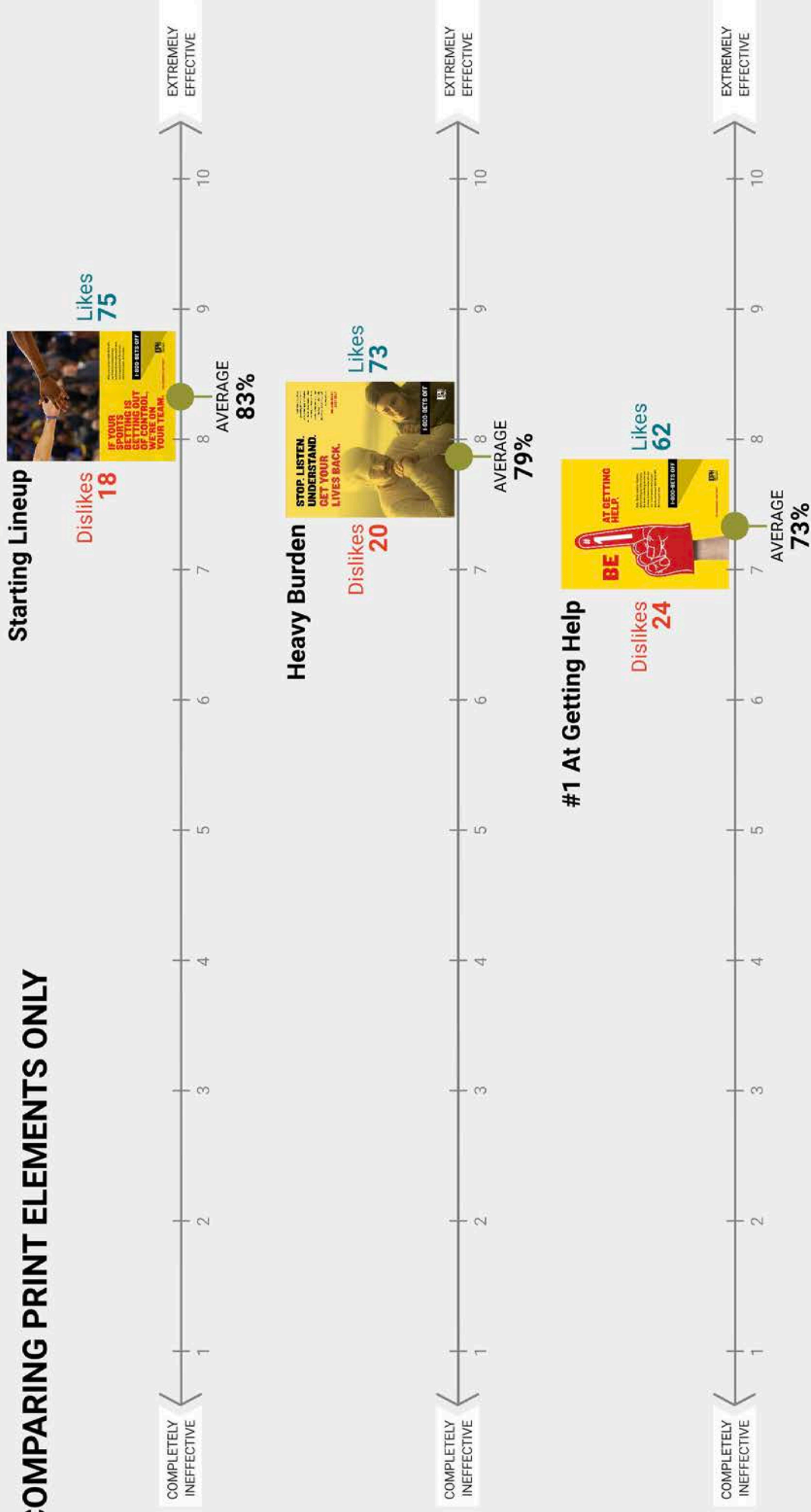
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32



COMPARING PRINT ELEMENTS ONLY



SUMMARY & MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

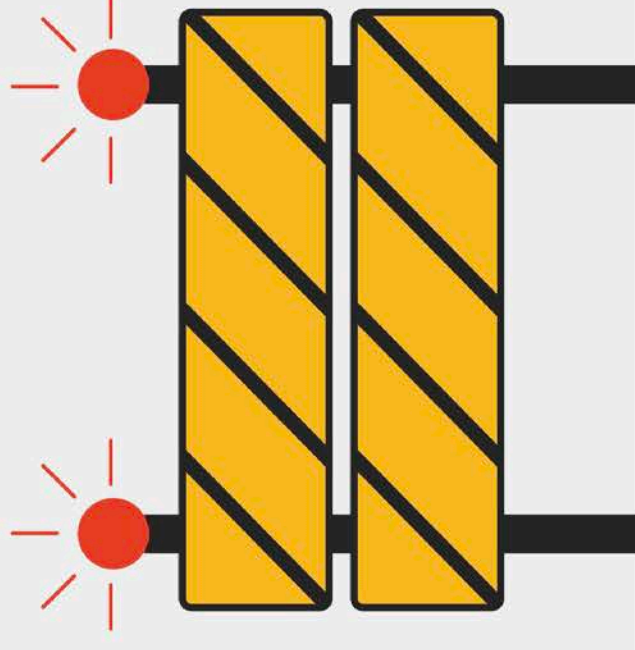
DEFINING THE MARKETING CHALLENGE

- ⊕ The number is well known in general terms, but there is an acknowledgement that marketing has dropped off and that younger people may not be as familiar. The general population mentioned 1-800-BETS OFF **56%** of the time unaidedly. Within the teen focus group it was **0%**.
- ⊕ In addition, messaging inspiring viewers to take action is a key to success, not just knowing about the existence of a 1-800 #.
- ⊕ Creating communications that are more meaningful, impactful and have a deeper connection with audiences.

THE SEARCH FOR MORE MEANINGFUL MESSAGES

We learned that the dominant barriers for not reaching out, or not calling are not the lack of knowledge of the number, but rather emotional and psychological barriers that make reaching out difficult:

- ⊕ Denial (I don't see myself as problem gambler)
- ⊕ Shame (personal failure / weakness)
- ⊕ Fear of Judgement (fear of negative reactions of others)



COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGE:

Develop more impactful messages that help people overcome these barriers and deliver them via channels that allow emotion into the narrative.

Dominant message themes:

- ⊕ Problem gambling can impact anyone. (Mythbust problem gambling stereotypes)
- ⊕ Empathize with the emotional burden of hiding problem gambling because of shame and fear
- ⊕ Recognize and commend the courage and strength it takes to speak out
- ⊕ Speaking out will be met with compassion and support, rather than judgment



#1 At Getting Help



MESSAGING VALIDATION:

2 of 3 campaign concepts tested **extremely** well and would be considered high impact communications options.

It is worth noting that the public supports more marketing for problem gambling support. There is a perception that the communications perpetuating and glamorizing gambling is growing rapidly, and far outweighs problem gambling support messaging.

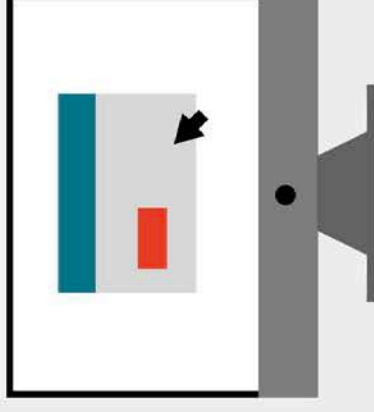
The public believes more can be done to better balance communications so that the public is exposed to more problem gambling support messages.

Heavy Burden



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

1. More impactful messaging in richer channels
2. Privacy is important and therefore consideration should be given to promoting passive engagement options (Website, chat, text, etc.)





THANK YOU

VERACAUUSA

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