

# NC PROBLEM GAMBLING PROGRAM

1-877-718-5543

<https://morethanagame.nc.gov>

*If gambling is more than a game, free help is available.*

## Stacked Deck Awareness and Facilitation Skills Guide:

### How to build awareness in the community of youth problem gambling and engage middle schools and high schools in the curriculum

Facilitators of the Stacked Deck program will be from various organizations and fields. It is important to understand those facilitators who are not teachers and/or do not have direct access to students will need to acquire some skills and operationalize specific strategies in order to be able to implement the curriculum in a classroom setting within a school or an after-school program setting. A facilitator will need to execute an assessment and create fact sheets, build awareness and capacity, develop a plan, foster strong relationships, create an environment for learning and evaluate the program.

#### Assess Data and Create Fact Sheets

Data collection on youth gambling and youth problem gambling prevalence rates will be key in putting together the first document, which will be a fact sheet to share during the Build Awareness and Capacity phase. Connect with organizational staff who offer problem gambling prevention, treatment or recovery services and reach out to any groups who engage in assessing social and economic issues by implementing surveys or focus groups. Start searching locally, statewide, regionally and then nationally for this data. Include the definition of problem gambling and the risk and protective factors for youth to develop problem gambling in the fact sheet. Risk and protective factors are those biological, psychological, family, community or cultural impacts that affect an individual's health, both physical and mental, throughout the lifespan. Protective factors are seen as positive countering events.

The second document will be a fact sheet on how youth prevention education increases academic performance and decreases high-risk behavior that youth engage in such as alcohol use, tobacco use and gambling, as well as a crosswalk of how the Stacked Deck curriculum meets local, state or regional academic standards.

The third document will be a fact sheet with information on the success of the Stacked Deck program in changing attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and behaviors with a brief description of the curriculum.

The final document will be a budget including suggested resources needed to implement the curriculum. Suggested items for the budget include materials for the poster design session in the curriculum and resources such as a computer, a projector, a printer, printing paper and a screen. Consider what evaluation tool and consultation services are needed for the Evaluate the Program phase or for any other consultation services related to the outreach activity. Once these documents are complete, consider the Build Awareness and Capacity phase.

#### Skills:

- Research different aspects of problem gambling and youth prevention education.
- Create documents to share during activities to build awareness and capacity.

#### Strategies:

- Discover any data that is local, state, regional or national.
- Create a fact sheet on youth gambling and problem gambling prevalence rates and risk and protective factors.

- Create a fact sheet on youth prevention education increasing academic performance, decreasing high-risk behaviors youth in engage in such as alcohol use, tobacco use and gambling, as well as a crosswalk of how Stacked Deck meets local, state or regional academic standards.
- Create a fact sheet on the evidence-based Stacked Deck program sharing basic information and the success of the program.
- Create a budget with information on costs of program including resources needed such as a computer, a projector, a printer, printing paper and a screen. Consider evaluation tools and other consultation services needed.

## Build Awareness and Capacity

The Build Awareness and Capacity phase is a time to collaborate across sectors. This is a vital step in preparing the school or after-school setting for the Stacked Deck curriculum. Make a list of “champions” in the community who can assist in getting a meeting with the school administrators or after-school program director. Champions are decision-makers and influential leaders in the community who have professional relationships with those gatekeeper or staff members of the school or program.

It is time to decide which method or methods you will use to build awareness and capacity. The different types of methods can include the following: one-on-one meetings, presentations at coalition or city council meetings, networking at events or handing out materials. Meeting one-on-one with key champions would be an excellent first step.

The key piece of information here is to ask the champion their advice on how to get in the door with the organization:

- How would you approach the organization with this information?
- What are my next steps?
- Who should be involved in the next meeting?
- How would you like to be involved?
- Should we host a focus group to discuss youth gambling and problem gambling prevalence rates?
- Who should be the focus group members?
- What other meetings or events should I attend?

When asked to give advice, champions are more apt to get involved. Consider other options such as writing an article for a bulletin or newspaper, hosting a focus group, attending a community event to talk to other champions or meet with the organization task force, board, committee or staff. If the champion does provide a platform to share information, always follow through with the plan and bring enough fact sheets to share with all attendees. Consider emailing the information ahead of time to give attendees time to read the documentation so each member can come prepared to ask questions. The ultimate goal of all of these interactions is to build relationships to get in the door of the school or after-school program setting to set up the plan to deliver the curriculum.

### Skills:

- Discussion techniques to engage the champion in dialogue.
- Email and phone etiquette to engage the champion(s) in a one-on-one meeting.

### Strategies:

- Create a list of champions in the community or organization.
- Set up one-on-one meeting with champions.
- Take the list of questions to meetings with champions and ask their advice.
- Decide on other strategies to connect with the target organization utilizing the champion’s advice and support.
- Email information ahead of time to give attendees time to look over the fact sheets.
- Take enough fact sheets for all of those attending meetings.
- Utilize all meetings as relationship-building opportunities with the ultimate goal of getting in the door of the organization.

## Develop a Plan

Developing a plan to implement the curriculum in the school or after-school setting is the next step in the process. It will be important to meet with all staff who will be directly involved in the success of the Stacked Deck curriculum. This could include teachers, principals, staff members and directors. During these initial meetings, keep in mind relationship-building best practices. Consider the initial role as a marketer and keep things positive and progressing. Make sure to ask who will need to be involved in the planning meeting ahead of time. Build awareness and capacity with these individuals and share the same documents utilized during the initial meetings with champion(s). Discussion of shared resources and the budget with school or after-school setting will be a key conversation at this point as well. Develop a Memorandum of Understanding that includes who, what, where, when and how, and come prepared to discuss this information during the first meeting. This might be the only time to get down these important details that need to go in the MOU, which everyone should sign and receive a copy of:

- Who will handle classroom behavior management? Will this be the teacher in the classroom or staff member from the after-school program setting?
- Who would like to receive communication on the success of areas of improvement during the implementation of the curriculum? What grade levels are the target?
- What are the common goals and roles of each partner? What do you expect of the school or after-school program setting?
- What is the start and the end time for the curriculum?
- What are the dates of make-up lessons?
- What resources are available at the school or after-school program setting?
- What are the organizational rules on data collection methods for the evaluation?
- How many lessons and length of those lessons?
- When will the pre-program and post-program evaluations occur?
- Where is the setting for the curriculum facilitation? Is it in the classroom or gym?
- Where will the student problem gambling posters developed during the curriculum go on display in the school, classroom, or after-school program setting?
- How would those involved like to receive information about the curriculum?
- How much additional time do students need for poster design?
- How will the pre-program and post-program evaluation data be shared?

### *Skills:*

- Put together a template for the MOU.
- Discussion techniques to engage the organization.

### *Strategies:*

- Meet with all organizational staff who will be directly involved in the Stacked Deck program.
- Continue to build awareness and capacity in all meetings.
- Discuss budget and shared resources.
- Use who, what, where, when and how questions to formulate the MOU.
- Encourage all key players to sign the MOU.
- Email copies of the MOU to all stakeholders.
- Review the MOU and attribute dates and times to those parts of the agreement that require action by the facilitator.
- Pay close attention to any dates that involve communicating information on the program to keep all stakeholders informed.

## Develop and Foster a Strong Relationship

Developing and fostering a strong relationship is a very important function of the facilitator. This is important because the facilitator should become a part of the school or after-school program setting and be seen as a key player in assisting to meet organizational goals. This means being on time and following the organizational rules and regulations. Get to know the

key partners such as the teachers, principal, staff members or director and learn about their interests at appropriate and professional levels. Attend functions at the organization and greet people by name and looking them in the eye. Above all, the facilitator must follow through with the MOU while finding ways to challenge issues that arise in a respectful manner. Schedule a separate meeting to discuss any issue, listen carefully and present information in a clear and concise manner. Make sure not to push too hard if the teacher(s), principal, staff member(s) or director does not want to budge on a particular topic. Later on in the relationship building process, address the subject again when the time is right. These steps will build a relationship of trust with the school or after-school program setting to facilitate the Stacked Deck curriculum or engage in another opportunity to build awareness and capacity.

#### **Skills:**

- Relationship building skills with boundaries.
- Be able to discuss challenges in a respectful manner.
- Understand when it is time to let go of a challenge and when to revisit the challenge later in the relationship building process.
- Active listening skills.

#### **Strategies:**

- Be on time and follow all of the organizational rules and regulations.
- Get to know key players in the organization.
- Follow through with the MOU.
- Schedule separate meetings to discuss any challenges in a professional manner.
- Take an interest in the organization and attend any public events.
- Look people in the eye, greet staff in passing by name and smile.

### **Create an Environment Conducive to Learning**

It is time to prepare for the first lesson and create an environment that is conducive to learning for the students at the school or the after-school program setting. This starts with prepared lessons and having all of the materials needed to engage students. Inclusion is key. The facilitator must use communication techniques to engage the students. Use open-ended questions, paraphrase discussions and comments and be nonjudgmental. Do not speed ahead because the students need time to formulate answers. Make sure to wait and give the students some time to answer questions. Stack their names on a chalkboard or whiteboard if there are several hands raised and call on each of them, or write all of their names down and make sure everyone answers a question or engages during the lesson. Pair students or create small group discussions to create more engagement. Make sure to walk and listen to hear what each pair or small group discusses. Pay attention to non-verbal cues such as body language, facial expression, placement in the room and tone of voice.

Behavior management is also an important part of participation. Address this early on in the MOU and in any meetings with staff members. Set the stage and come up with three class norms with the students to create the right environment from the start. Decide on the preferred method to bring the class back to attention, show the class the method first, and utilize the method throughout the curriculum. This might include a clap, raised hand, flicker of the lights, or call-and-response method. Talk to the teacher or staff member before and after the lesson to discuss any challenges that occurred.

If all else fails, when the students become un-focused, take a break. Consider bringing along brainteasers or having students stand up and stretch before engaging them in the lesson again.

Finally, if the facilitator is not a teacher in their profession, consider a practice session with colleagues and get feedback on facilitation skills. It is important to get both positive and constructive feedback in order to build skills in facilitation. Do not let this feedback create a negativity about facilitating. Take the information, work to develop the skills needed and grow into an excellent facilitator.

### **Skills:**

- Communication techniques to engage students in dialogue.
- Being able to recognize non-verbal cues.
- Understanding the purpose and appropriate use of inclusion techniques.
- Behavior management techniques.

### **Strategies:**

- Review each lesson before facilitating with students.
- Have all materials needed to execute each lesson.
- Use questioning techniques to engage students.
- Get feedback on facilitation skills.
- Use inclusion techniques to get everyone engaged.
- Come and meet the class before the curriculum begins and get to know all student names.
- Talk to the teacher or staff member before and after class as a check in to see how things are going.
- Decide on behavior management techniques to use during the lessons.
- Bring along brainteasers to give the students a break or take stretch breaks.

## **Evaluate the Program**

While this is an evidence-based program, it is important to show the effectiveness of the program through evaluation of how the facilitator engages with the school or after-school program setting, as well as facilitation of the curriculum in the classroom. Ask those adults who were in the room when you taught the curriculum, as well as the students, what areas of strength were and what areas could use improvement. Do not allow the constructive feedback to create a negativity. Learn, grow and make the next lesson better.

Establish in the MOU how the pre- and post-post program evaluation process will go. Decide how and with whom to share the evaluation results. You may also consider online evaluation software tools as an option. Some software can compile results, or consider contracting with a statistician, to put together a professional two-page fact sheet to share. Make sure to follow all policies in regard to data collection and parental and student consent. Remember, the champions and other key stakeholders may like to receive information on the success of the program.

### **Skills:**

- Online evaluation tool execution.
- Be able to take constructive feedback and make improvements.

### **Strategies:**

- Choose an evaluation tool.
- Execute pre- and post-program survey evaluations.
- Hire a statistician to produce a professional document with compiled results.
- Decide on when and how to share the evaluation with organization staff and other key stakeholders.
- Follow all organization policies regarding data collection and parental and student consent.
- Review the MOU and meet all deliverables.

**REFERENCE:** North Carolina Training and Technical Assistance Center, Winston- Salem, NC. • Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: A Guide to SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework. Rockville, MD: Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2019.

