

2008 ICE Awards Student Creative Competition Sponsored by the Atlantic Lottery Corporation

Creative Brief

Subject: Preventing youth gambling - "Friends Helping Friends"

BACKGROUND

The rolling of the dice, the shuffling of a deck of cards, the seemingly innocent online poker game for play money – sound risky? Perhaps you don't think so but what if I were to tell you that today, gambling is the most popular high-risk activity among teenagers compared to alcohol, drugs and cigarette use. In fact, there is lots of research demonstrating that 80% of teenagers gamble; between 4% and 6% of teenagers may be considered probable pathological gamblers with an additional 10% to 15% that may be considered at-risk of developing a gambling problem.

Dr. Jeffrey Derevensky, a researcher at McGill University focused on youth gambling, states that adolescent prevalence rates of pathological gamblers are two to four times that of adults. Developmentally young men and women are entering a time in life when they are at risk. Before the age of 25, our impulse is developed but not our 'stop and think' part of the brain. According to Dr. Jon E. Grant, Assistant professor of psychiatry at Brown Medical School in the US, gambling and other addictions begin in this 'impulse' driven time, often between the ages of 16-25.

A team of researchers from McGill University, in cooperation with other universities and teams across Canada and internationally, have set-up a youth gambling research team and a Youth Gambling Website www.youthgambling.com. The website outlines and highlights major findings in youth gambling research. National and international research consistently shows that youth are at a greater risk for gambling problems than adults.

According to research

Youth gamble to:

- escape from their problems
- relieve boredom
- relieve feelings of depression
- gain excitement

The negative impacts associated with youth gambling include:

- damaged family and peer relationships
- increase incidence of delinquent or criminal behaviour
- poor academic performance
- thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts

Adolescent problem gamblers:

- are more likely to be boys but the number of girls is increasing
- are greater risk takers in general
- often show signs of lower self esteem
- report higher rates of depression
- are more likely to develop an addiction(s)
- are more anxious and less self-disciplined
- often replace their regular friends with gambling acquaintances
- have poor general coping skills
- often recall an early big win
- report more daily hassles and major traumatic life events
- often have parents, relatives, or friends who gamble
- move quickly from just gambling with friends and family to problem gambling

Much of the issue with youth gambling is the low level of awareness around the risks associated with the activity. Plenty is known about the risks of alcohol and drug use; they are commonly discussed topics and a great deal of work is done to prevent youth from both engaging in the activity and from abusing these substances. Youth know what the signs of alcoholism or drug abuse are. The same is not true for gambling.

The challenge is to raise awareness and help youth understand that gambling is an activity that, like alcohol and drug use, can lead to serious problems. It is therefore important that parents, adults and peers understand the risks associated with youth gambling and do their part to ensure that these products, products intended for adult entertainment only, do not fall into the hands of youth.

THE CHALLENGE

Your task is to develop a creative execution that will raise awareness about the risks of gambling in a way that is relevant and engaging to youth. You need to cut through the clutter and find a way to make this message resonate. In addition, your creative must focus on how friends can help friends.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

There are several important strategic considerations that you should keep in mind when tackling this challenge:

1. Prevention vs. Treatment – this task is about raising awareness about the risks of gambling. This means you are focusing on education and prevention; getting the message to the audience *before* they have developed a problem. Once someone has a gambling problem, the message changes significantly. At that point, it is focused on treatment. Your goal is to shape their beliefs early on so the problem never occurs.
2. Harness the Power of Peer Pressure – we mean this in a good way. Peer pressure can encourage youth to act positively or negatively. We want your submission to use peer pressure in a way that discourages youth from engaging in gambling activities. In other words, it's "cool" *not* to gamble, "not cool" *to* gamble.
3. Abstinence vs. Minimization – the message we want to share is not "if you're going to gamble, gamble responsibly." There is no such thing as responsible gambling for underage youth, as they should not be gambling at all. The message is therefore: don't do it. The challenge with this is that if you tell youth not to do something, they will usually do the opposite. It's up to you to find a way around that.

TONE AND MANNER

We want you to be as creative as possible, so the tone and manner of your creative is open to your interpretation. The only parameter is that the creative should avoid concepts that are dark and employ fear tactics.

Ultimately, we are looking for a campaign that will speak to youth in a way that is different from the norm – in a youth's own voice, in their own way, not in a way an adult would want to talk to them.

DESIRED RESPONSE

Some sample comments that we might hear after someone sees your creative:

- "I didn't even know gambling was risky. Guess I should stick with my Nintendo Wii."
- "Some of my buddies have started a poker club. It's just for fun, but maybe we should do something else with our time."
- "I know more about the risks of gambling and how to prevent a problem. That's cool."

USAGE

The primary objective is to shape the perceptions and beliefs of young people in a way that not only discourages them from gambling, but gives them the confidence to influence their friends. The creative developed as part of this program may be represented in high schools and universities across Atlantic Canada.

The secondary objective is to create awareness amongst all youth about the risks of underage gambling.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Primary Target: Young adults – ages 14 to 21
Secondary Target: The general public

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In order to help you better-understand the issue of problem gambling, specifically problem gambling related to youth, we are providing you with some key pieces of information and website links related to the topic. You are not obligated to use all or any of this information, but it may be valuable as you develop your submission.

<http://www.alc.ca/English/AboutALC/>

<http://www.youthgambling.com/>

<http://www.friends4friends.ca/>

<http://www.yellowflag.ca>

THOUGHT STARTERS

The following links are provided as thought starters. They are not necessarily representative of the topic or audiences related to this challenge, nor are they provided as a reference point for the judge's expectations. They are simply examples of great creative that may help to get the juices flowing.

http://www.marketingmag.ca/magazine/current/marketing_awards/article.jsp?content=20070329_69281_69281

<http://www.canadianadvertisingclub.com>

<http://adsoftheworld.com>

<http://creativity-online.com>