

# CIF FEATURE STORY:

## Gambling Awareness Program



May 2019

### FEATURE STORY: *Gambling Awareness Program (GAP); Canadian Mental Health Association Saskatchewan Division*

The Gambling Awareness Program is a free provincial program that provides services in many towns and communities across Saskatchewan. GAP helps to educate communities and groups about the facts and risks associated with gambling, and offers a closer look at how technology has begun to blur the lines between gambling and video gaming. **“Loot boxes, In-App purchases and the desire to ‘level up’ are part of the monetization in today’s video gaming experience. For some youth, gaming can be a fun and harmless activity, but for others it can be challenging to navigate responsibly as gaming and gambling converge and the lines become blurred,”** shared Shauna Altrogge, Director of the Gambling Awareness Program. GAP has designed unique presentations that have been tailored to be meet the needs of youth, post-secondary students, older adults, and the general public. Youth sessions are usually delivered in school classrooms and are most appropriate for Grade 6-12, and align with Saskatchewan curriculum, making them a hit with educators as well.

**“Overall, recipients of our programming report having been positively impacted by it. Often, they feel they learned something new and also suggest they plan to make positive changes in their life as it relates to their personal gambling activities, and their desire to impart what they learned with their friends and family,”** shared Shauna.

**“GAP got its start way back in 1994, and as the program embarks on its 25th year of providing services, there remains much work to do,”** Shauna expressed. As gambling opportunities continue to increase and youth are especially more exposed to gambling opportunities than ever before, GAP is committed to helping educate kids, parents, teachers and school administrators on gambling and gaming trends, how to keep it safe, and building resiliency among youth.

A member of the GAP Team can provide a unique and engaging presentation or set up an interactive GAP Display at a local event in your community. To complete the visit, an array of helpful resource material can be distributed to anyone interested in learning more about gambling, responsible gambling and how to access the Helping Services. For more information about GAP, visit their [website](#).

“After hearing the GAP session, I learned some things. I just wanna say, I think it’s time to look at my gambling issues. I love to gamble too much and do too much of it. So, I need more people in my life that can help me set limits.”

- Metis Addictions Council of Sask presentation participant

“The link to healthy life / work balance was really appropriate. Part of work, having disposable money, ties very well with values, stress management, and decision making. Discussion of this silent affliction, mental health disorder, is essential at all ages. Much needed information.”

- Employment and Training presentation



Katelyn, Southern Coordinator, working with students from a rural school

Jenna, Central Coordinator, attending Blades Game as part of the Mental Health Stick it To Stigma Event

Kathy, Northern Coordinator, playing Plinko with some engaged university students