

Rutgers Gambling Screening Protocol (2024 version)

Note to Clinician:

This is a gambling screening protocol, used to identify gambling behavior and problems and to individualize treatment. Only Parts 1 and 2 are used for all clients. The word “gambling” is intentionally omitted because it tends to lower response rates among those who find it stigmatizing. The term is not introduced until activities are identified. Therefore, you should not indicate to a client that these questions are related to problem gambling.

The protocol consists of:

Part 1 (All clients): Activities Frequency Chart (Nower, 2020);

Part 2 (All clients): Modified version of the Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBGS, Gebauer et al, 2010);

Part 3 (Only those who meet criteria below): Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI, Ferris & Wynne, 2001), called “Gambling Perceptions” in this protocol;

Part 4 (Separate handout; Only clients receiving gambling treatment) Gambling Pathways Questionnaire (GPQ, Nower & Blaszczynski, 2017)

Administration:

1. Screen all clients with “Part 1,” **the Activities Frequency Chart**.
2. If “no” to all activities, end of screen; if “yes” to any activities, give “Part 2,” the **modified, three-question BBGS**.
3. If client endorses a) any activity 2 to 3 times a month or more OR b) “yes” to any BBGS item, give “Part 3: Gambling Perceptions,” which is the **PGSI**.

PGSI scoring is as follows:

For each question: Never (0), Sometimes (1), Most of the time (2), Always (3), with total scores ranging from 0 to 27.

Total Score of 0 = Non-problem gambling.

Total Score of 1 or 2 = Low-risk gambling (Low level of problems with few or no identified negative consequences.)

Total Score of 3 to 7 = Moderate-risk gambling (Moderate level of problems leading to some negative consequences.)

Total Score of 8 or more = High-risk gambling (Problem gambling with negative consequences and a possible loss of control.)

4. Clients who agree to treatment should be given **GPQ** at first visit (see additional handout). GPQ results will help individualize treatment planning.

Citations:

Ferris, J. A., & Wynne, H. J. (2001). *The Canadian problem gambling index* (pp. 1-59). Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.

Gebauer, L., LaBrie, R., & Shaffer, H. J. (2010). Optimizing DSM-IV-TR classification accuracy: A brief biosocial screen for detecting current gambling disorders among gamblers in the general household population. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 55(2), 82-90. [Modified]

Nower, L (2020). Gambling activities and frequency chart. New Brunswick, NJ: Author.

Nower, L., & Blaszczynski, A. (2017). Development and validation of the Gambling Pathways Questionnaire (GPQ). *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 31(1), 95.

Part 1: Activities Frequency Chart

The following is a list of leisure activities. Please indicate how often in the *past year* you have done each of the activities **for money...**

	Not at all	Less than once a month	Once a month	2-3 times a month	Once a week	2-3 times a week	4+ times a week
Purchased a lottery, Powerball or Mega Millions ticket							
Purchased an instant scratch-off ticket							
Bought a ticket for a raffle or drawing							
Played Bingo							
Wagered on sports							
Bet on horse racing at a track/off-track betting parlor							
Played live or tournament poker (excluding video poker)							
Played live casino table games, excluding poker (e.g., blackjack, roulette, craps, baccarat)							
Played daily fantasy sports							
Played games of skill for money (e.g., backgammon, mahjong, puzzles, word games, trivia, board games, strategy games, bridge)							
Traded cryptocurrencies (e.g., digital currency such as Bitcoin, Ethereum, Ripple)							
Played dice, spades, or other "street games"							
Played a slot machine							
Traded high-risk stocks (e.g. options, margins, futures)							
Played a video poker or other card game machine							
Bet on esports							
Purchased skins or loot boxes in video games							
Spent real money while playing social casino games							
Spent real money on social sports betting apps							



Part 2

Please respond **yes** or **no** to the following questions:

1. Have you ever become restless, irritable or anxious when trying to stop/cut down on any of those activities?
2. Have you tried to keep your family or friends from knowing how much you spent on any of those activities?
3. Had you had such financial trouble as a result of any of the those activities that you had to get help with living expenses from family, friends, or welfare?

Part 3: Gambling Perceptions

We would now like to learn a little bit more about your perceptions of your wagering and betting behavior, which is also referred to as “gambling.”

Thinking about the past 12 months, how often...

	Never	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
Have you bet more than you could really afford to lose?				
Have you needed to gamble with larger amounts of money to get the same excitement?				
Have you gone back another day to try to win back the money you lost?				
Have you borrowed money or sold anything to get money to gamble?				
Have you felt that you might have a problem with gambling?				
Have people criticized your betting, or told you that you have a gambling problem, whether or not you thought it was true?				
Have you felt guilty about the way you gamble or what happens when you gamble?				
Have you felt that gambling has caused you any health problems, including stress or anxiety?				
Have you felt your gambling has caused financial problems for you or your household?				

