



Young Women's Engagement with gambling

Understanding motivations and perceptions of risk

Young women's engagement with gambling is shaped by a range of socio-cultural, environmental and commercial factors. Their reasons for gambling are diverse, and risk perceptions play a key role.

Why young women gamble

Five key themes emerged from interviews with 41 Australian women aged 18–40 years.



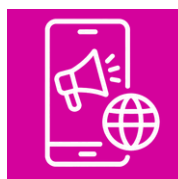
Escape from everyday life

Gambling helps women escape stress, worry and difficult feelings. Some gamble at home, online or on their phone, providing a break from responsibilities.



Financial motivations

Seen as a way to change life circumstances, young women hope to win money for themselves or their family. Gambling is viewed as an opportunity for financial security.



Social connection

Gambling is a way to connect with friends, partners and family. It becomes a shared activity that builds and maintains relationships. Creating a sense of community or part of a group.



Extension of leisure activities

Gambling is incidental to other activities (e.g. social outings, sporting events, dining). Seen as a normal part of leisure and entertainment that adds excitement and fun.



Lower risk perceptions

Many women do not see themselves as at risk, they believe they can control their gambling. Risks are downplayed, especially when gambling socially or in small amounts.



“I think most likely a Friday or a Saturday night when we want to have dinner in the casino. And then it's kind of like an add on after the dinner”

– 33 year old woman



Why this matters

Young women's gambling is diverse and not limited to high-risk activity

- Women may gamble to address emotional, financial and social needs
- Lower risk perceptions can increase vulnerability to harm
- Harm prevention must address the broader influences, not just individual behaviour

Implications for public health

- ✓ Move beyond individualised messages
- ✓ Address social, environmental and commercial determinants
- ✓ Reduce exposure to gambling promotion and availability
- ✓ Develop gender-responsive harm prevention strategies

What action is needed

- ✓ Strong regulation of marketing, especially online
- ✓ Limit the availability and accessibility of gambling products
- ✓ Support young women with accessible, non-stigmatising help options.
- ✓ Create safer environments and reduce normalisation



BASED ON: McCarthy, S., Thomas, S., Pitt, H., Marko, S., Randle, M., Cowlshaw, S., Kairouz, S. and Daube, M., 2023. Young women's engagement with gambling: A critical qualitative inquiry of risk conceptualisations and motivations to gamble. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, 34(1), pp.129-137.