



# ENGAG'ING' *THE* COLLEGE COMMUNITY:

**working within existing programs  
to address problem gambling prevention**

missouri partners in prevention  
molly lindner | june 2026

midwest conference on problem gambling + substance abuse



# OBJECTIVES FOR TODAY

Articulate the **need to address** problem gambling + sports betting with the college student population

Discuss the benefits of **embedding sports betting + problem gambling prevention** into substance use prevention + mental health programming

**Communicate an understanding** of how Missouri Partners in Prevention sports betting + problem gambling prevention efforts are embedded within current prevention programs



# WHY COLLEGE STUDENTS?

college students are  
3 TIMES more likely  
to experience gambling  
related harms than the  
general population.

# WHY HAS COLLEGE GAMBLING GONE UNDER THE RADAR ON CAMPUSES?

- campuses aren't collecting data on the issue
  - we aren't asking the right questions
  - gambling harms are harder to spot
  - access has dramatically increased in recent years
  - policy has lagged (*federal, state, local, campus*)
-

# GAMBLING + COLLEGE STUDENTS

it is estimated that **75%** of college students have engaged in at least one gambling activity within the past year

## RISK FACTORS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

- male students
  - living in a group household
  - fraternity members
  - student athletes (*including club and/or intramural athletes*)
  - students who perceive themselves as less academically successful
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# CO-OCCURRING CONCERNS: ALCOHOL

students who engage in high-risk alcohol use are also **more likely** to engage in high-risk gambling behaviors

HIGH-RISK ALCOHOL USE + HIGH-RISK GAMBLING BEHAVIORS **SHARE MANY OF THE SAME RISK FACTORS:**

- being male
  - having high levels of impulsivity
  - experiencing psychological distress
  - participating in fraternity/sorority life
  - participating in athletics
  - living away from home
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# CO-OCCURRING CONCERNS: CANNABIS

higher cannabis use also corresponds to heavier betting

BUT OFTEN, **CANNABIS USE LEADS TO**  
ENGAGEMENT IN BETTING ACTIVITIES

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# CO-OCCURRING CONCERNS: MENTAL HEALTH

it is estimated that **96%** of people experiencing gambling harm have at least one mental health disorder

A 2023 meta-analysis found **amongst gamblers experiencing harms:**

- **31.6%** had a lifetime history of suicidal ideation
- **13.2%** had a lifetime history of suicide attempts

those with gambling disorders are **more likely** to experience suicidal ideation or attempt suicide than non-gamblers with other mental health or substance use disorders

# BUT... WHAT IS MISSING?

**what is missing** in current tactics related to gambling/betting and college students?

**MOTIVATIONAL + BEHAVIORAL PROFILES**  
OF THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO BET



# CUE... THE PROGRAM

Care. Make an impact. Commit to community.

(2021) missouri department of health + senior services contracted with MOPIP to create a **multi-level prevention strategy** focused on:

- + encouraging a **culture of care**
- + a **desire to engage** in preventing potentially harmful situations\*

01

a “better”  
outcome

02

adaptable,  
inclusive  
program

03

equitable for  
all campuses

04

community  
change

05

civic  
responsibility



# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

“bystander” behavior framed within the context of:

within this context we  
reference “**engaged  
community members**”  
vs “bystanders”

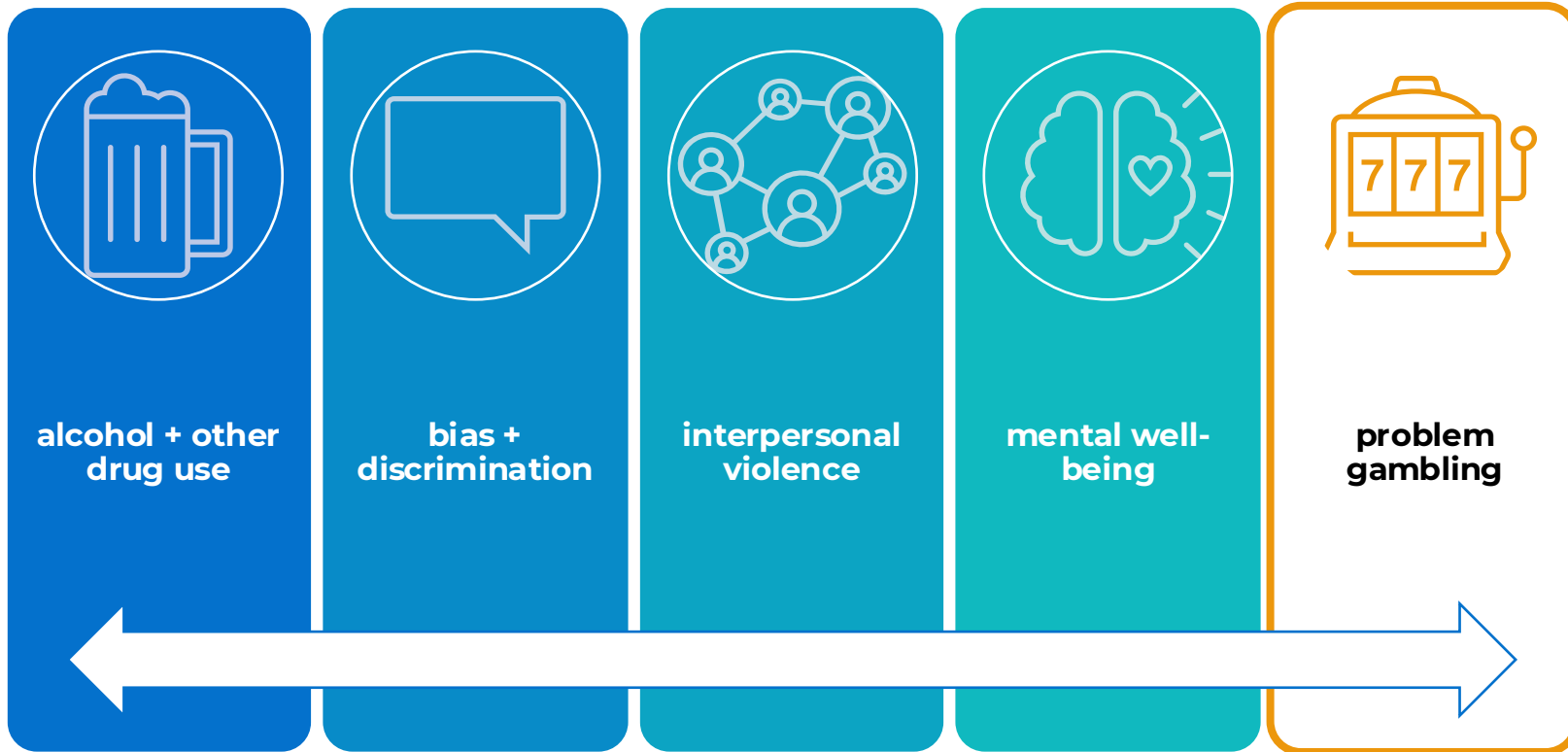
COMMUNITY CONNECTION



SENSE OF BELONGING



# EXPANDING THE REACH



complex problems  
**require**  
complex solutions