

COMMUNITY PARTNER DESCRIPTION:

Gambling Risk Informed Nova Scotia (GRINS) is a provincial community-based organization. We operate through a volunteer board of directors and no paid staff. The mission of GRINS is “Working together in community to build informed and caring gambling practices.” We do this by raising awareness of the harms gambling causes to the entire community and hope to influence the future of gambling in our province. We are not an anti-gambling organization. We want to reduce the harms of gambling in our community. The work that we do is diverse, including advocating changes to gambling policies, pursuing community engagement opportunities to raise awareness of gambling issues, and identifying and pursuing pieces of needed research to heighten understanding of the issues. GRINS previously operated as Kings Community Action Group on Gambling (KCAGoG) and began its work in 2011. GRINS has worked on several funded projects and has the capacity to take the information and insight gleaned from this project into future activities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Research suggests that sports wagering participation has increased over the past decade, particularly among young men. Currently, Canadian adults can participate in regulated “sports lotteries” (e.g., Proline) which allow parlay betting (i.e., must bet on the outcome of 2 or more sporting events). However, new legislation is poised to allow single-game sports betting (C-218, Safe and Regulated Sports Betting Act) which will significantly change the landscape of Canada’s gambling industry. Meanwhile, e-sports (competitive video game playing) and associated gambling activities (e.g., betting on e-sports) have also increased. A related form of gambling that has become increasingly popular is “loot boxes” which allow video game players to purchase randomized virtual items that can be used in the game or sold to others. Research exploring these forms of gambling is relatively new, especially in Canada and among young people. The proposed project will examine sports and video game-related gambling through focus groups and surveys administered to adolescents and young adults (15-25-year-olds). The aim is to better understand how young people become involved in these gambling activities, how these forms of gambling are understood, and whether they are associated with gambling problems and other risky behaviours. The findings will increase our understanding of these forms of gambling and how they impact our communities as well as help guide gambling policies and prevention measures.

PROJECTED BENEFITS:

The findings from this project will be used to help GRINS influence public policy and prevention measures specifically related to these forms of gambling. For example, findings that demonstrate a link between participation in these particular forms of gambling and consequent problems among young people would suggest that more public outreach initiatives could be helpful (e.g., developing programs for helping parents understand these issues and how they can recognize problems and help their children). As another example, if findings suggest that adolescents (under the age of majority of 19) have no trouble purchasing regulated sports gambling products, it would be prudent to encourage better enforcement of laws against selling gambling products to underage patrons. This project will allow GRINS to engage with young people to understand the scope of this issue and provide recommendations for reducing the potential harm these products may cause within the community.

NB: These are excerpts from the Community Partner’s original proposal from 2021.