

# What the Public Thinks About Problem Gambling (and Why It Matters)

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# KENNY ROGERS *the* GAMBLER







← trucker hat

Handy!  
I have seen  
a lot of places  
in my day!

Key facts:

- 52 (latterly)
- 3 kids
- Married
- Likes beer
- Likes to travel
- hard working
- family-oriented
- laid back

Billy James Williamson

Jillian O'Brien

- 24
- no kids, single
- active lifestyle
- into fashion
- social
- artistic/creative
- perfectionist



I am  
happy  
to be here

# What do we need to know?

- How does the public perceive addiction?
- Do they stigmatize addiction?
- Do they recognize gambling addiction?
- Do they understand the causes?
- Do they understand the solutions?
- Do they know where to go for help?
- Do they know preventative factors?
- What are they willing to do?
- What messages are credible and appealing?

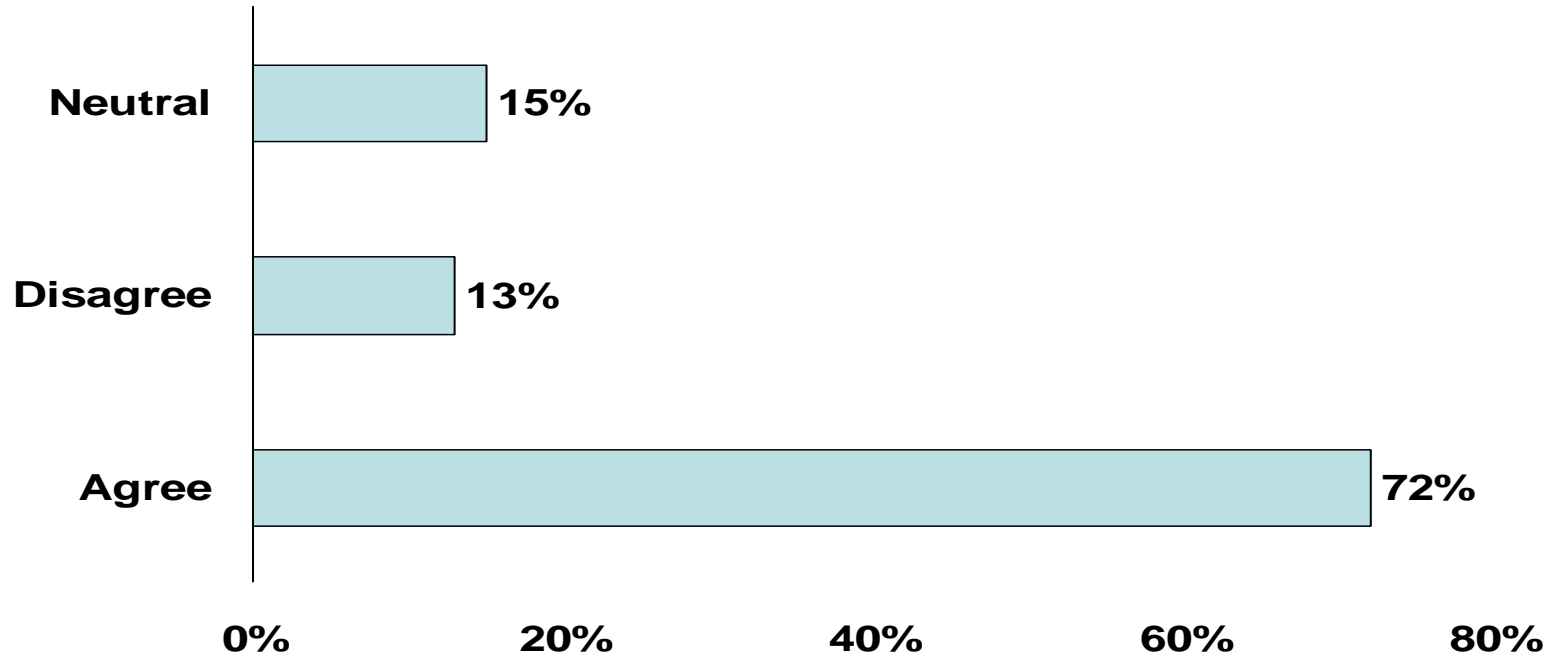
# Data Sources

- Ipsos Reid US Express Omnibus Survey
  - + U.S adults
  - Internet sample
  - June 25-30, 2009, September 2011, June 2012, May 2013
- Ipsos Reid Survey
  - Telephone sample
  - 1000 U.S. adults
  - June, 2008
- Minnesota gambling surveys
  - 2000+ Minnesota adults
  - Telephone sample
  - Taken 2003 through 2010
  - Taken by St. Cloud State University
- Minnesota interviews/focus groups
  - Fall, 2011

**DOES THE PUBLIC  
UNDERSTAND ADDICTION?**

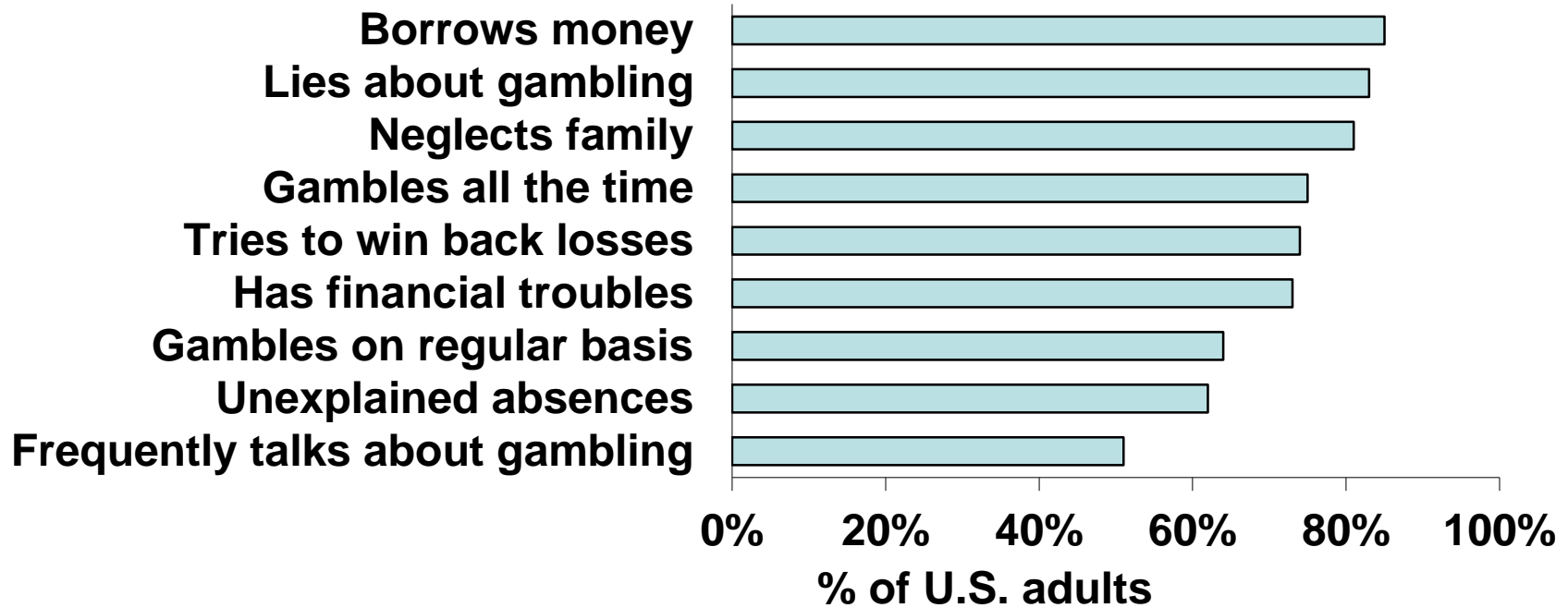


“...Compulsive gambling is an addiction just like addiction to drugs or alcohol”



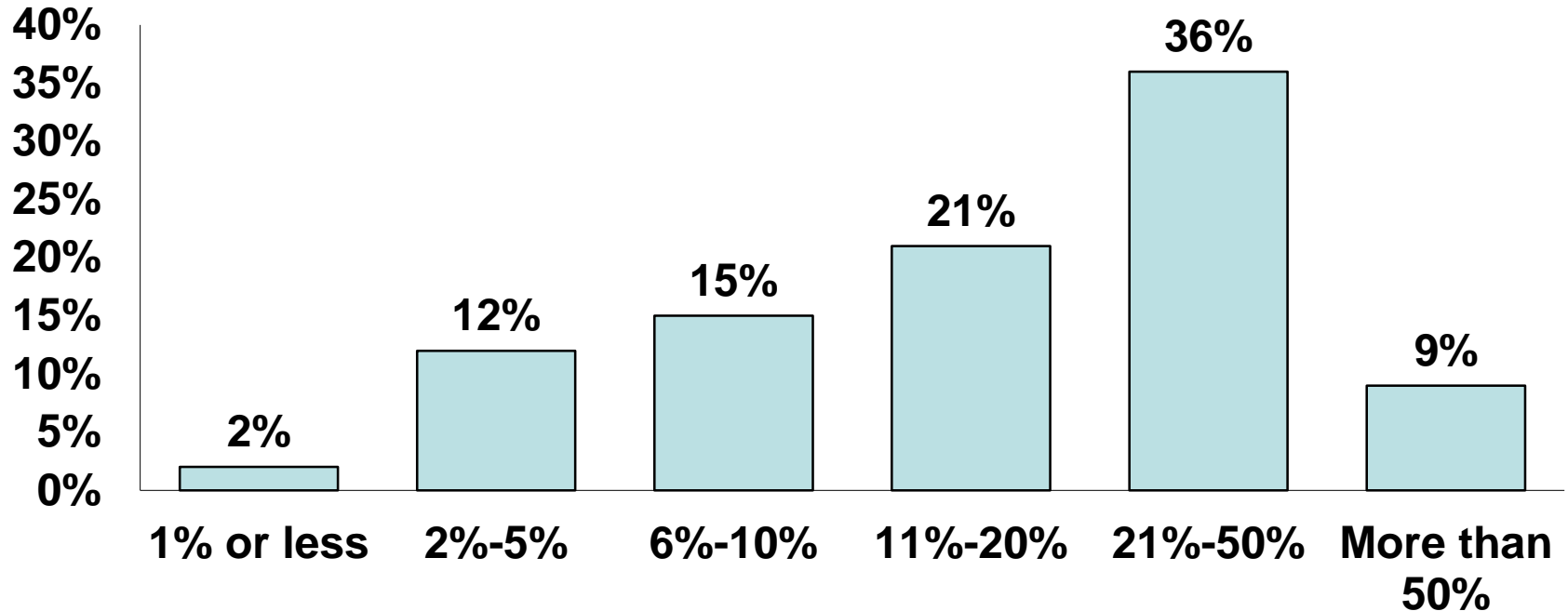
Source: Ipsos 9/11 survey of 1009 US adults

# What are the signs of a gambling problem?



Source: NCPG (2015)

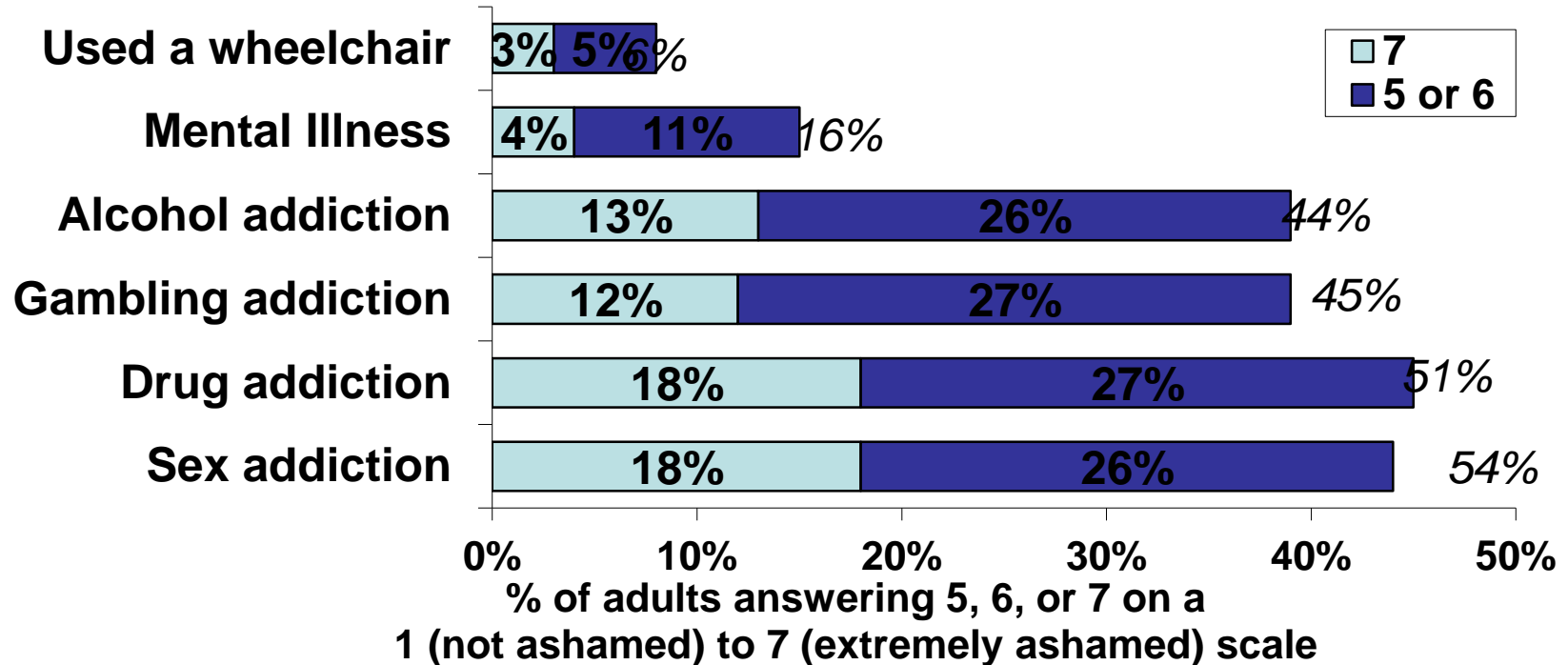
# “What percentage of U.S. adults have a gambling addiction?”



Source: NCPG 2015

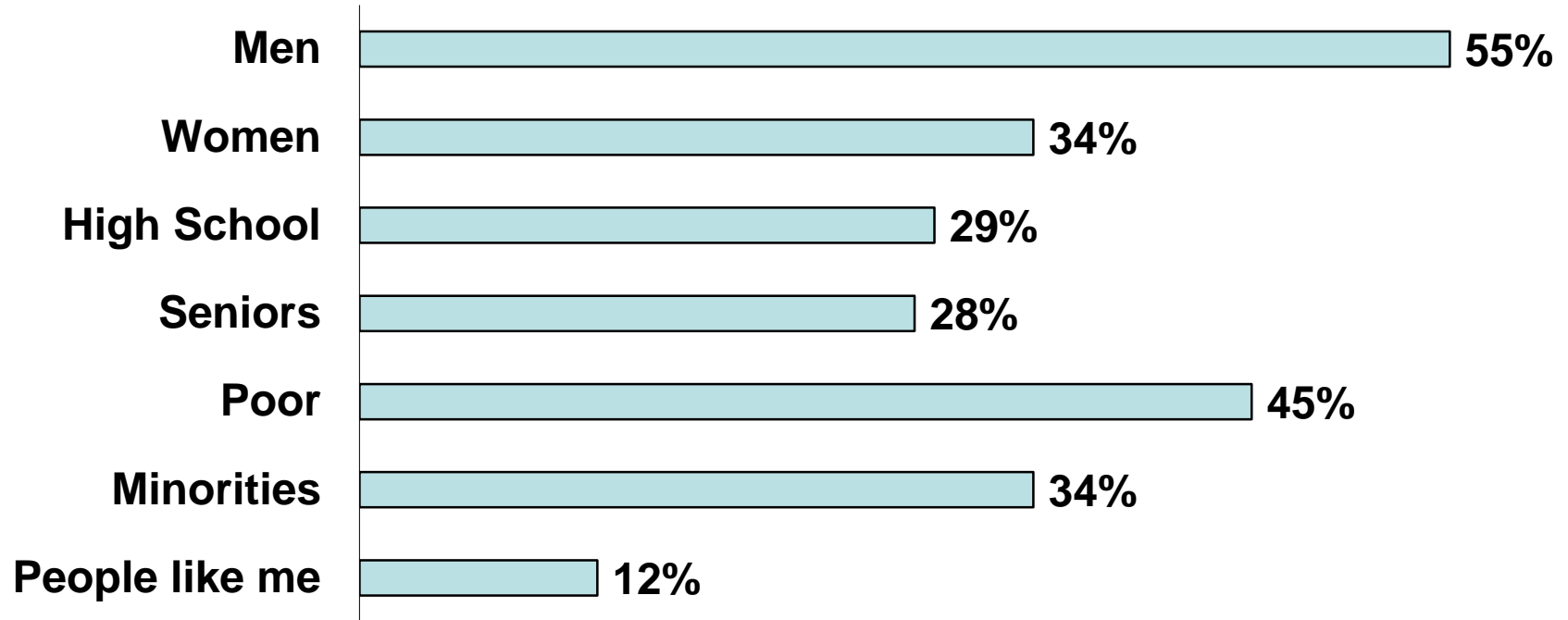
**IS ADDICTION STIGMATIZED?**

# Would you feel ashamed or embarrassed if a family member had ...



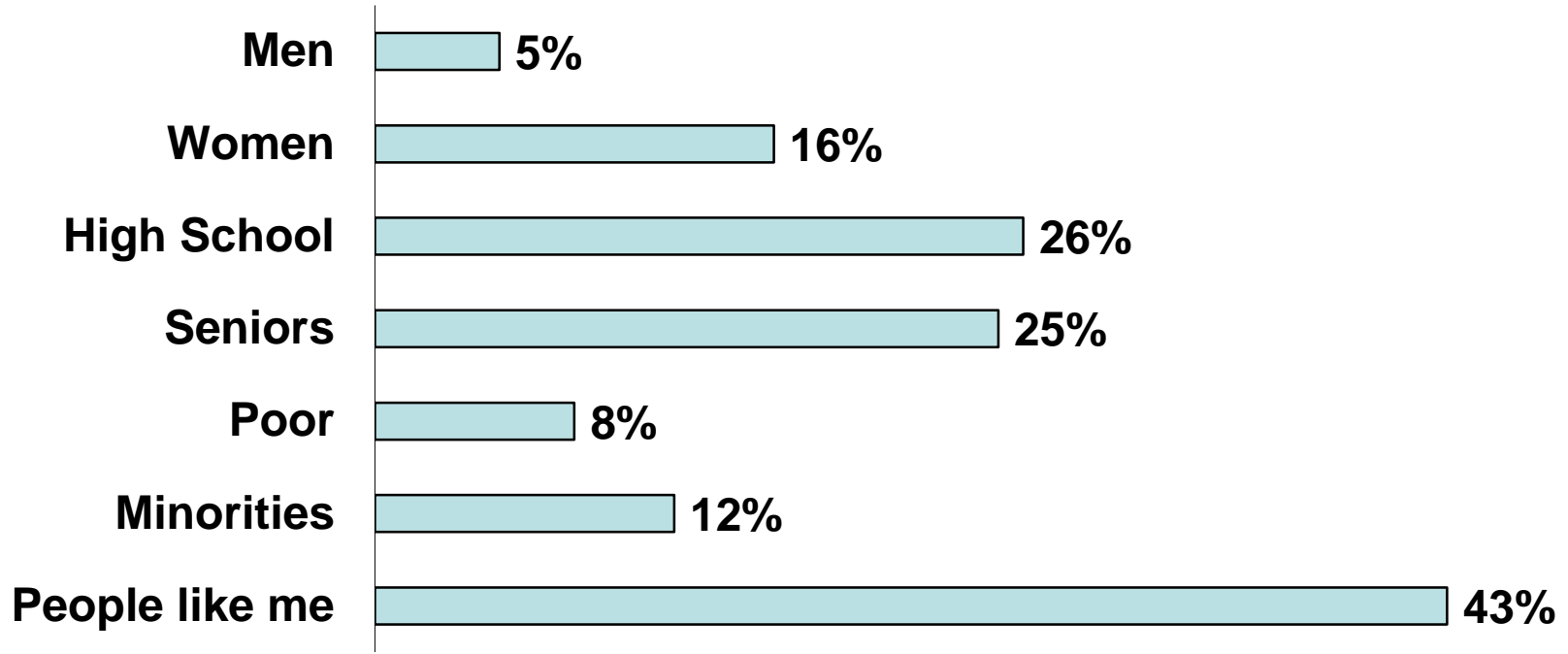
Source: NCPG 2015

# More likely to develop gambling addiction



Source: 2009 Voices of America Survey

# Less likely to develop gambling addiction

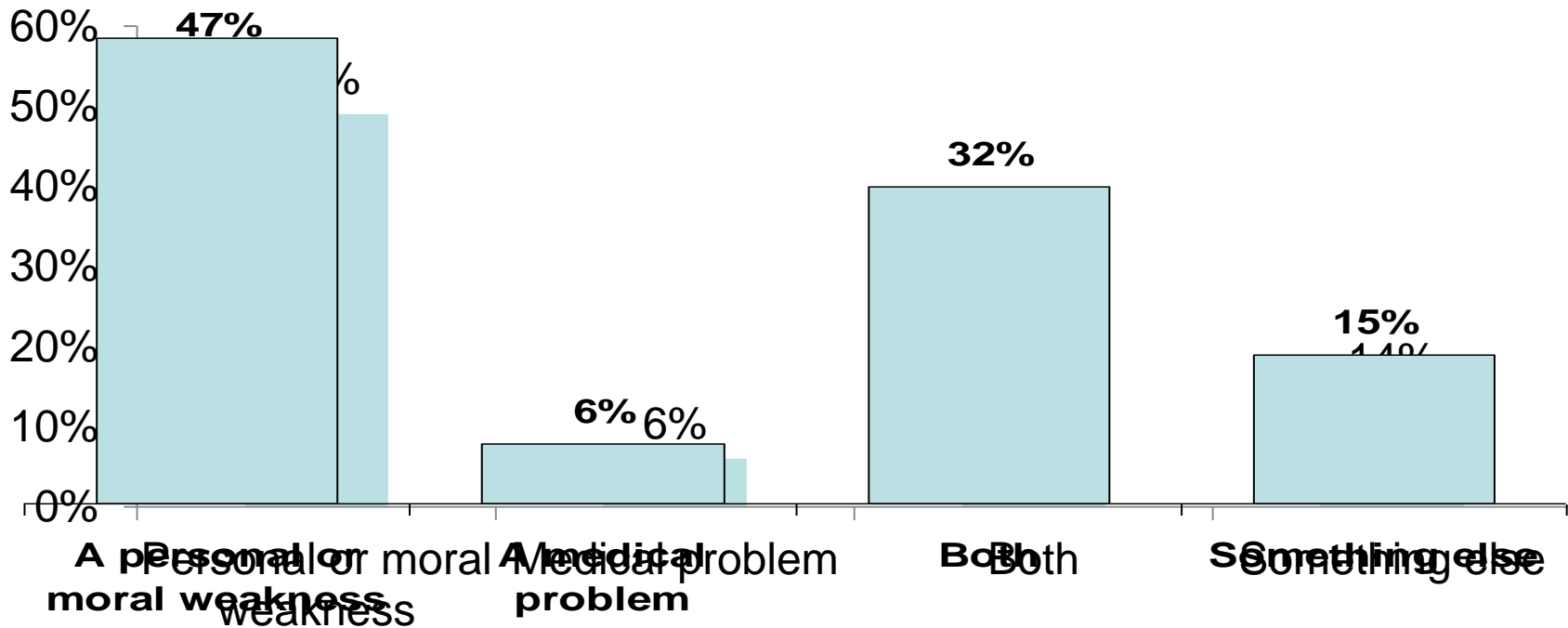


Source: 2009 Voices of America Survey

**DO THEY UNDERSTAND THE  
CAUSES?**



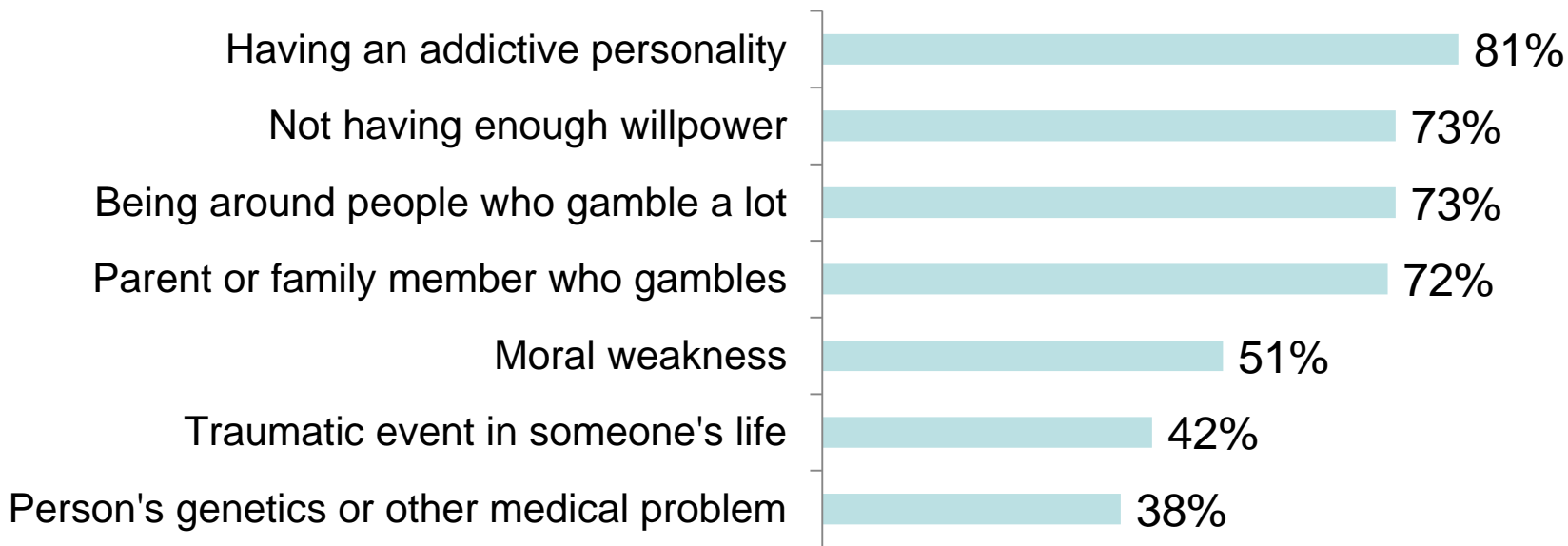
# Would you say that addiction to gambling is primarily ...?



Source: NCPG 2015

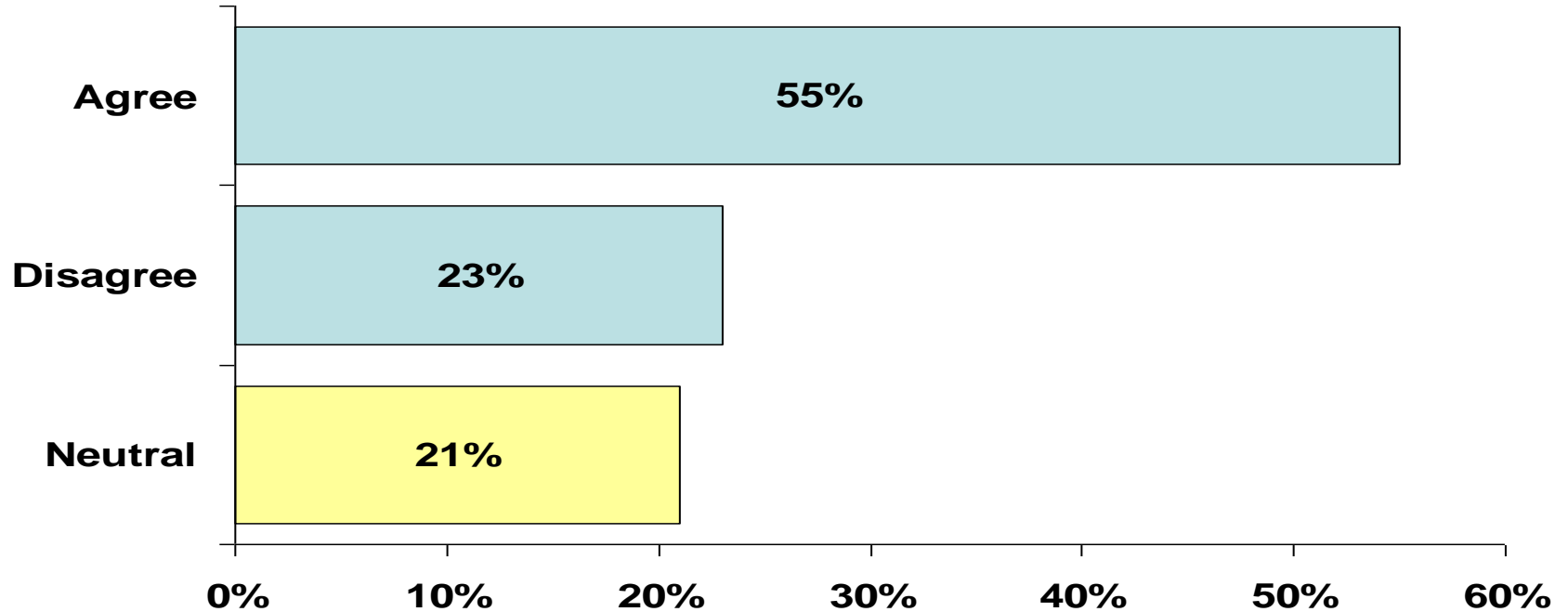
# How likely is this to cause a gambling addiction?

Percent saying “very likely” or “somewhat likely”

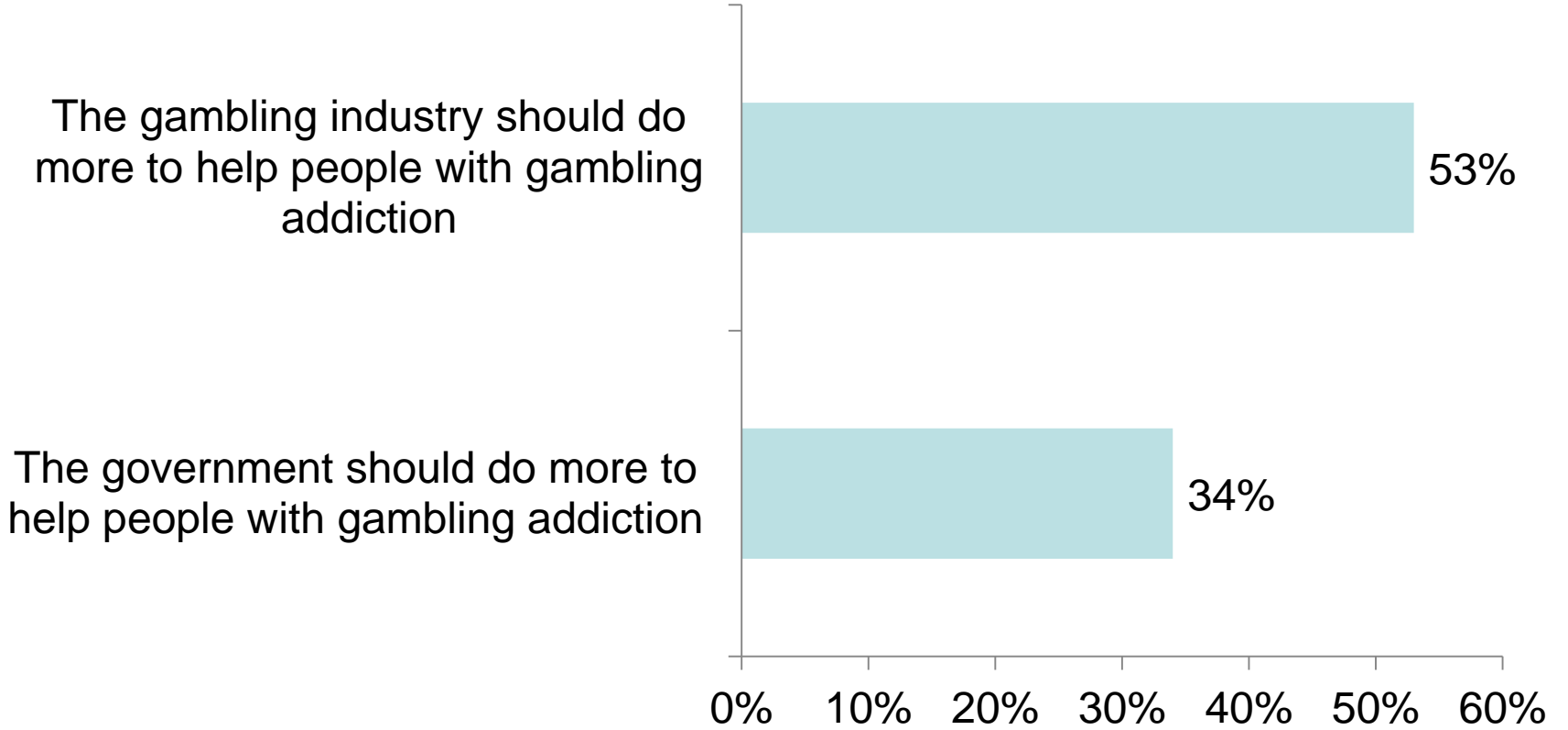


Source: NCPG, 2013

# “Controlling compulsive gambling is mostly a matter of willpower”



Source: NCPG, 2012

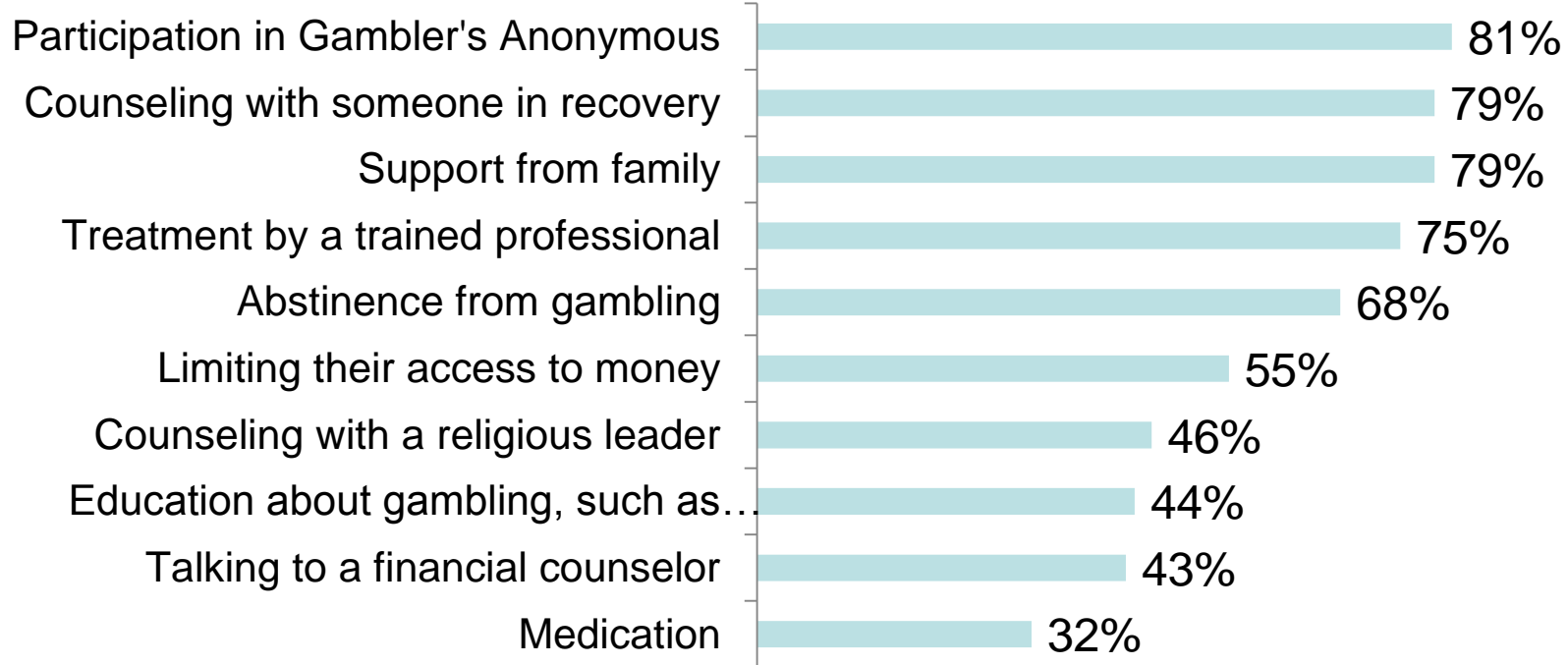


Source: NCPG 2015

**DO THEY UNDERSTAND THE  
SOLUTIONS?**

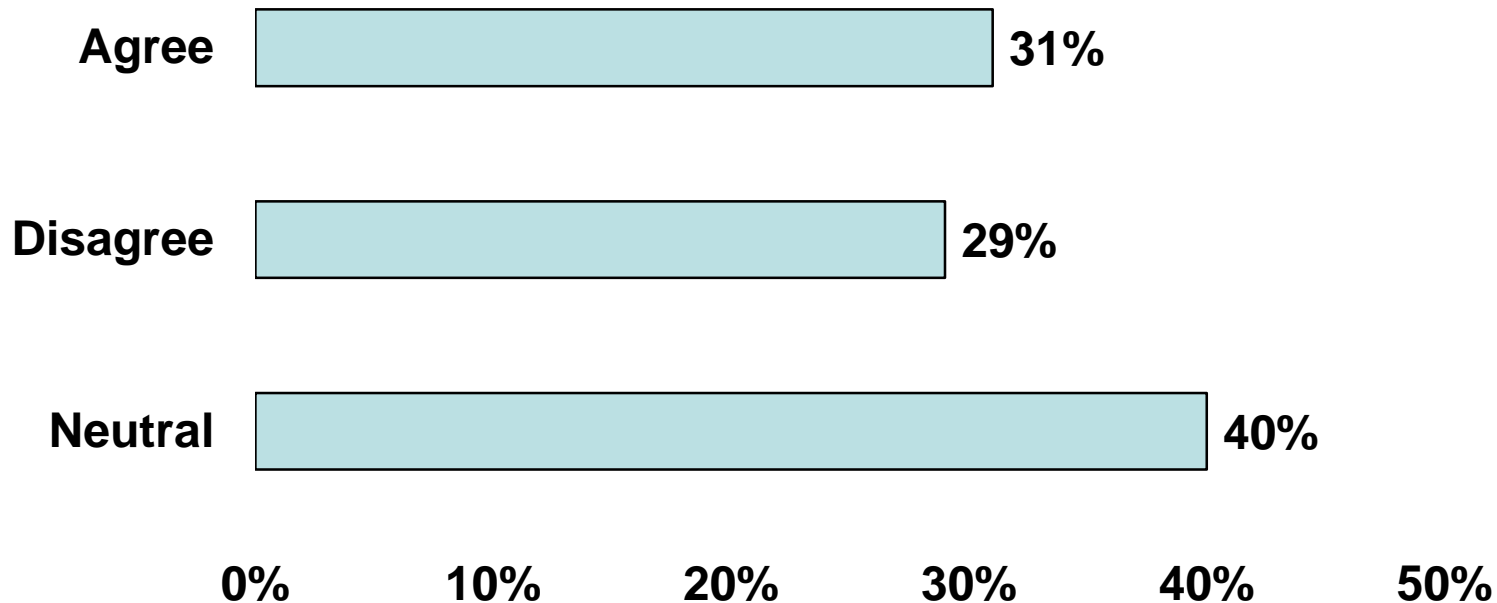
# How successful is this as a solution to a gambling addiction?

Percent saying “very successful” or “somewhat



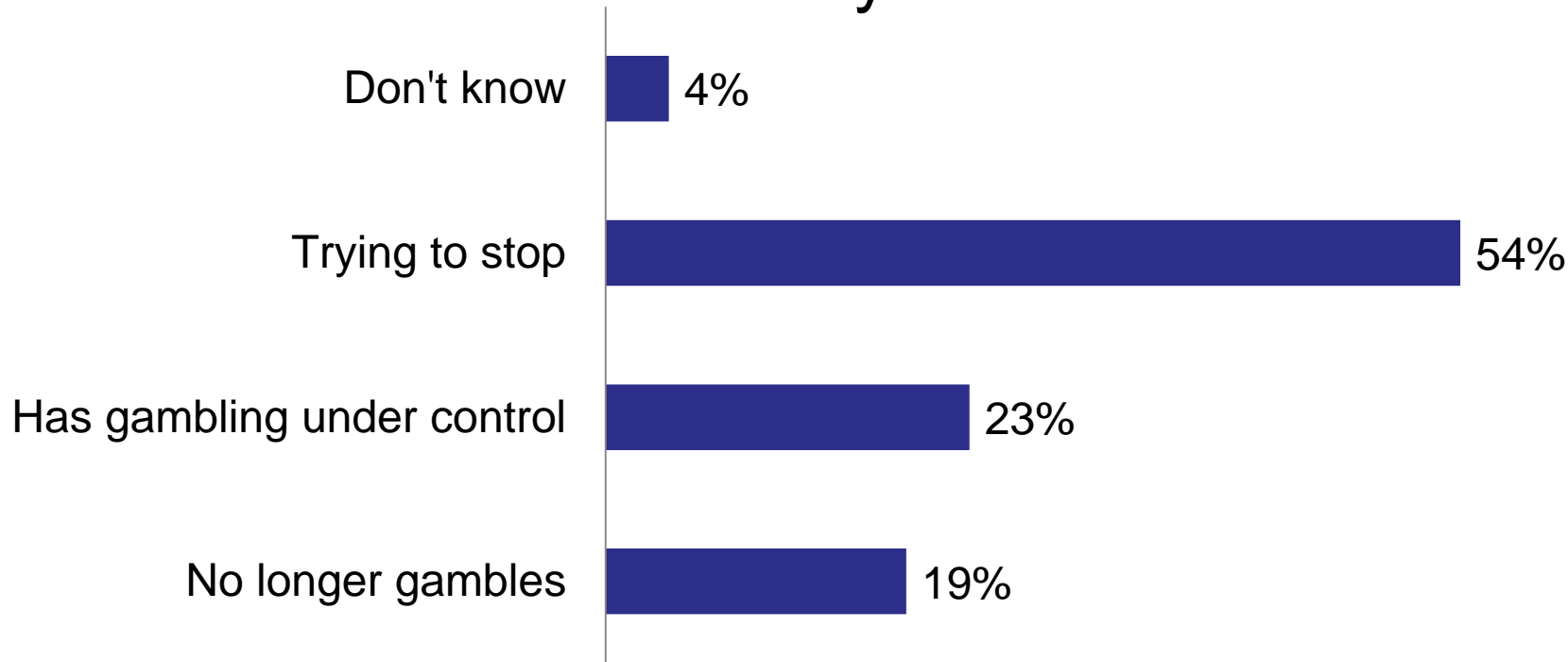
Source: Ipsos US Express Omnibus, May 2013

# “...The majority of people who receive treatment for compulsive gambling achieve life-long recovery”



Source: NCPG 2012

“When you hear the word ‘recovery,’ as in ‘this person is in recovery from a gambling addiction,’ what does it mean to you?”

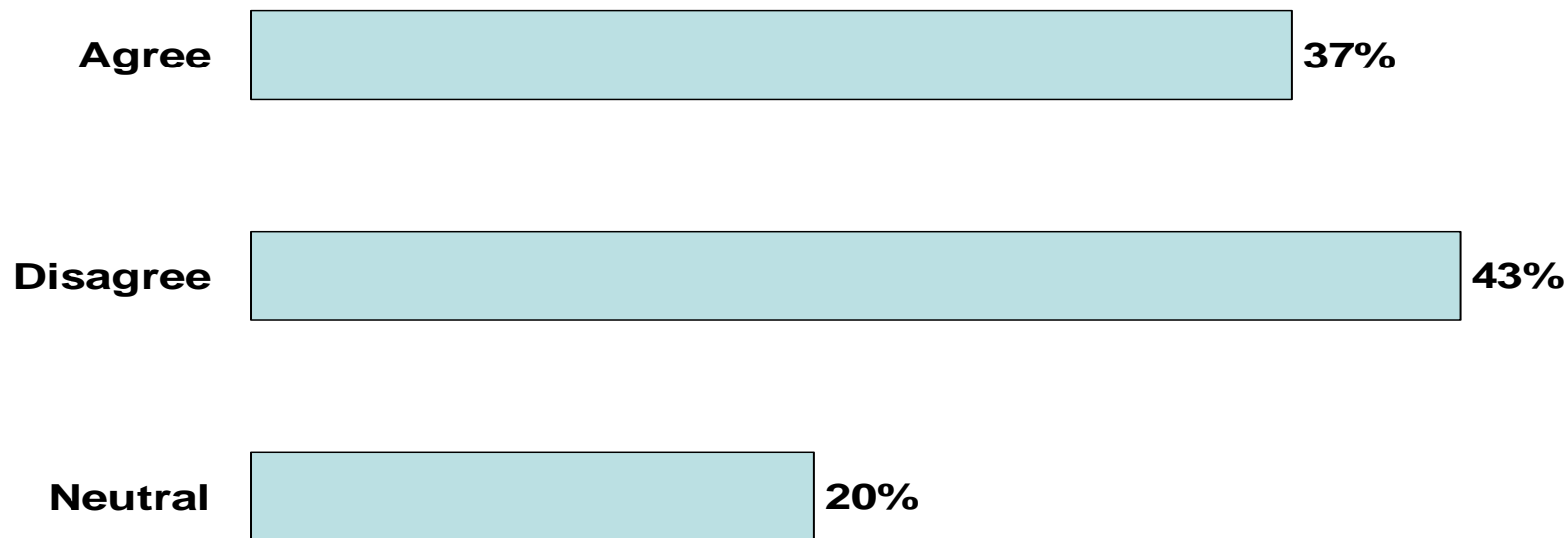


Source: NCPG 2012



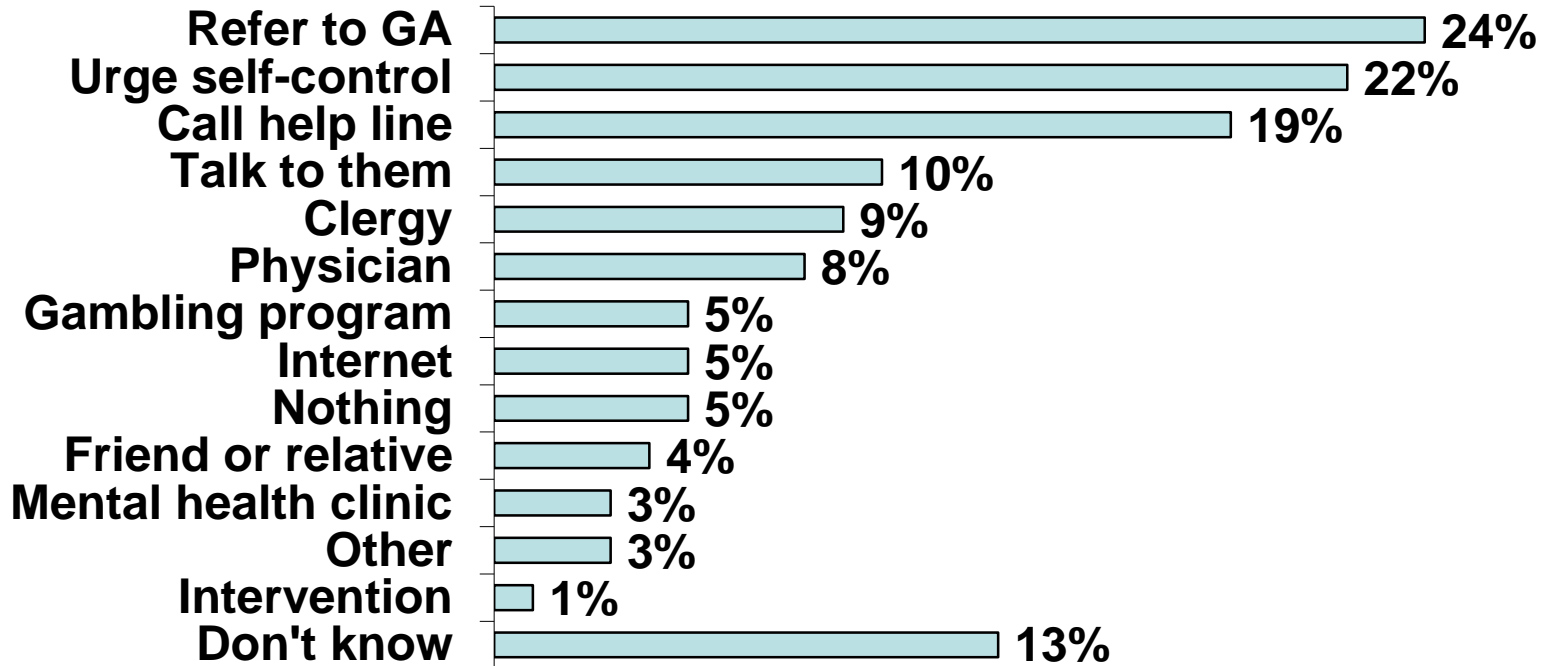
**DO THEY KNOW WHAT TO  
DO?**

“If a friend or family member approached me with a gambling problem, I am confident I would know where to get them help”



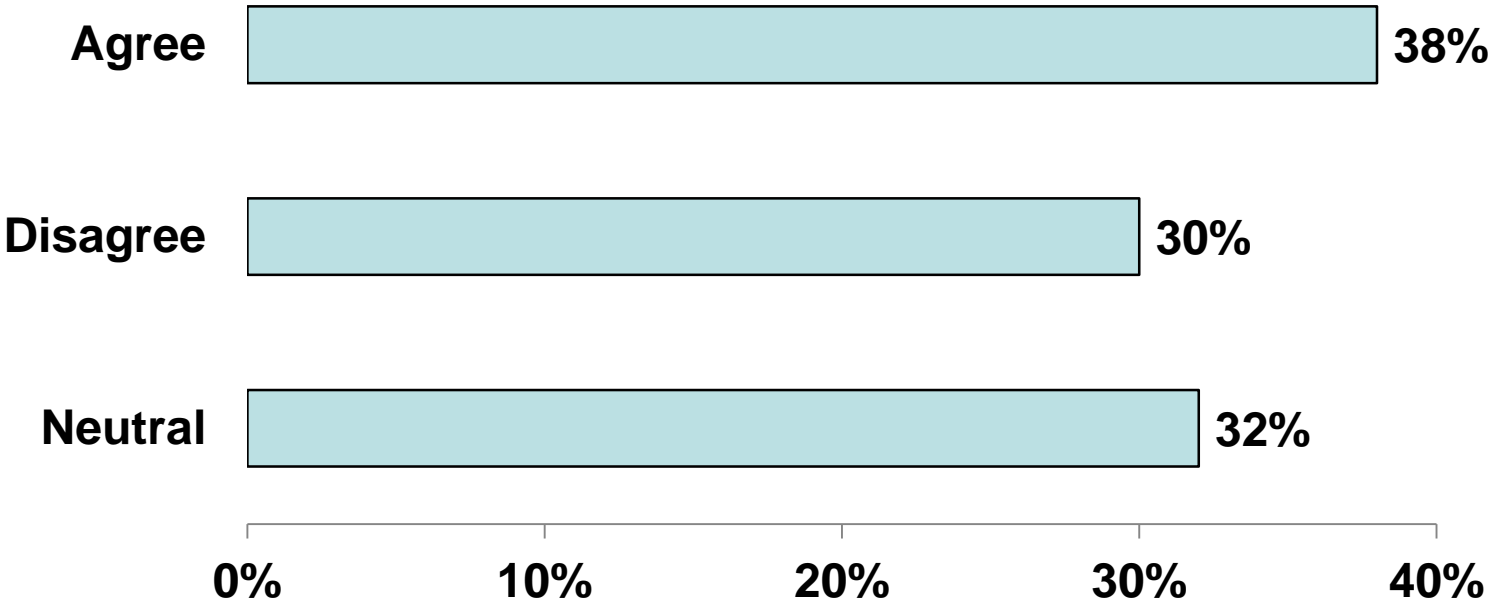
Source: NCPG 2011

# What would you do?



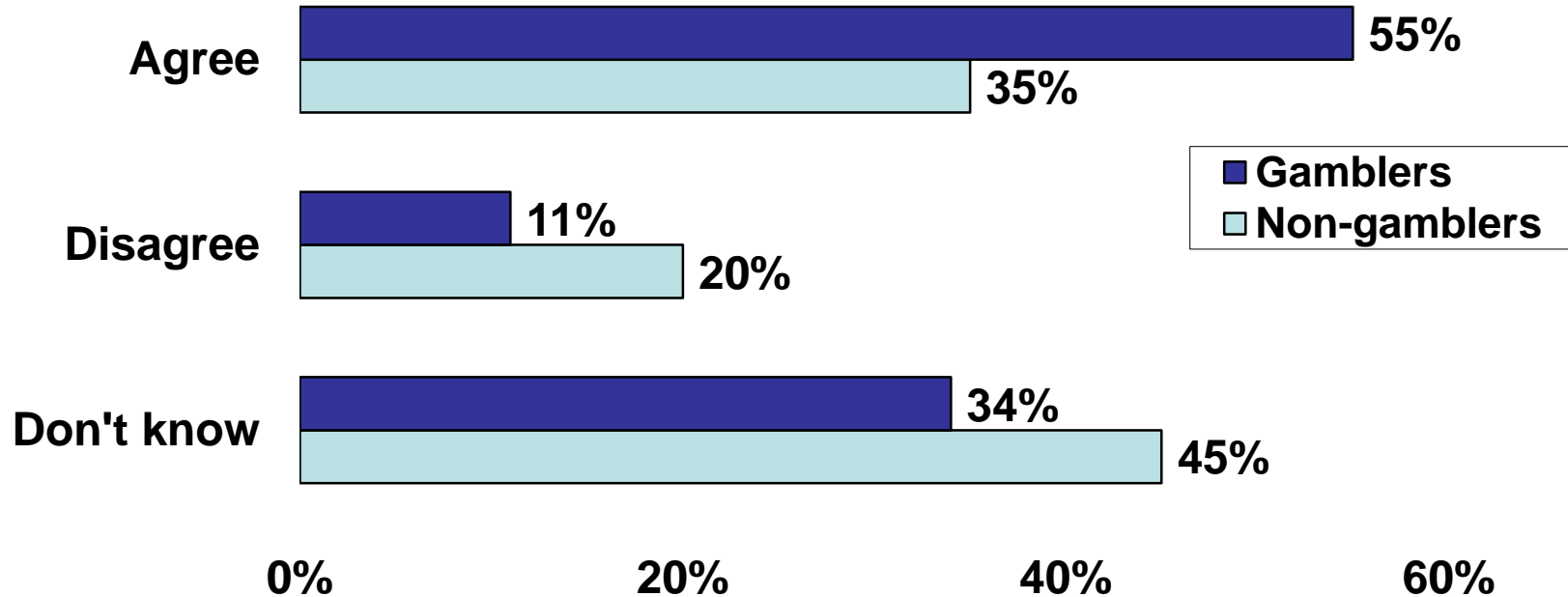
Source: SCSU 2/06

# “...Services to treat compulsive gambling are available in my community”



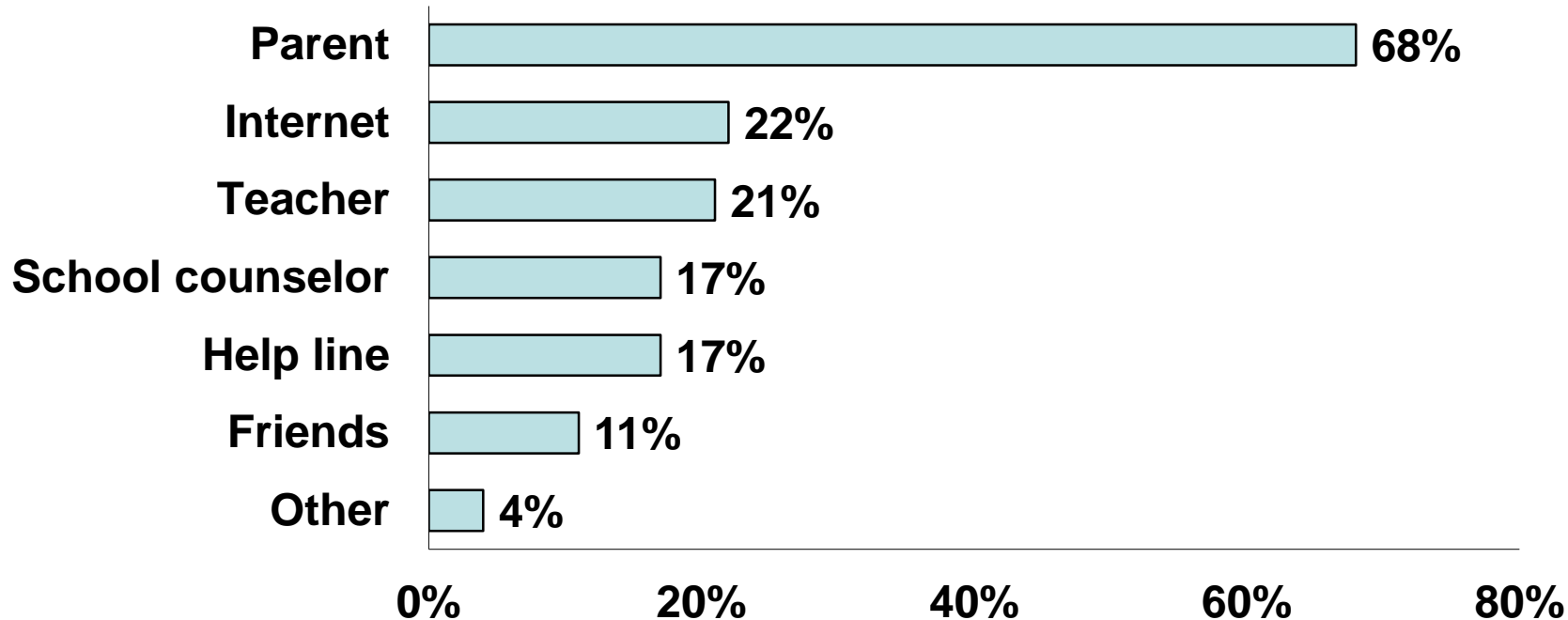
Source: NCPG 2015

# “...Services to treat compulsive gambling are available in my community”



Source: SCSU 2/09

# Who would you turn to if you or a friend had a gambling problem?



Source: 4/08 MN DHS survey of 121 10<sup>th</sup> graders

# Qualitative Research Findings

Interviews

Focus Groups

# What should we call it?

- Compulsive gambling
- Gambling addiction
- Weak willed gambling
- Treatable addiction
- Problem gambling
- Moral weakness
- Lifestyle choice



# What terms describe the condition?

- Compulsive gambling
- Gambling addiction
- Weak willed gambling
- Treatable addiction
- Problem gambling
- Moral weakness
- Lifestyle choice

# What is the best term?

- Compulsive gambling
- **Gambling addiction**
- Weak willed gambling
- Treatable addiction
- Problem gambling
- Moral weakness
- Lifestyle choice

*“Compulsive gambling is not serious, and it’s a lifestyle choice. It’s like going to the bar and enjoying pulltabs and beers several times a week. It becomes a problem when the player has to hit the ATM too often.”*

IT'S ONLY  
A GAMBLING  
PROBLEM

WHEN  
I'M LOSING

TM

# Consensus opinion

- Starts as a lifestyle choice
- Becomes uncontrollable due to financial losses or pleasure of win
- Ultimately becomes an addiction
- This addiction is treatable

# Key Findings

- Opinions are poorly formed and weakly held (mostly)
- Problem gambling is accepted as a serious issue
- But it is often seen as a moral weakness
- It is commonly stigmatized
- It happens to “other” people
- The public is skeptical about treatment effectiveness

# Key messages

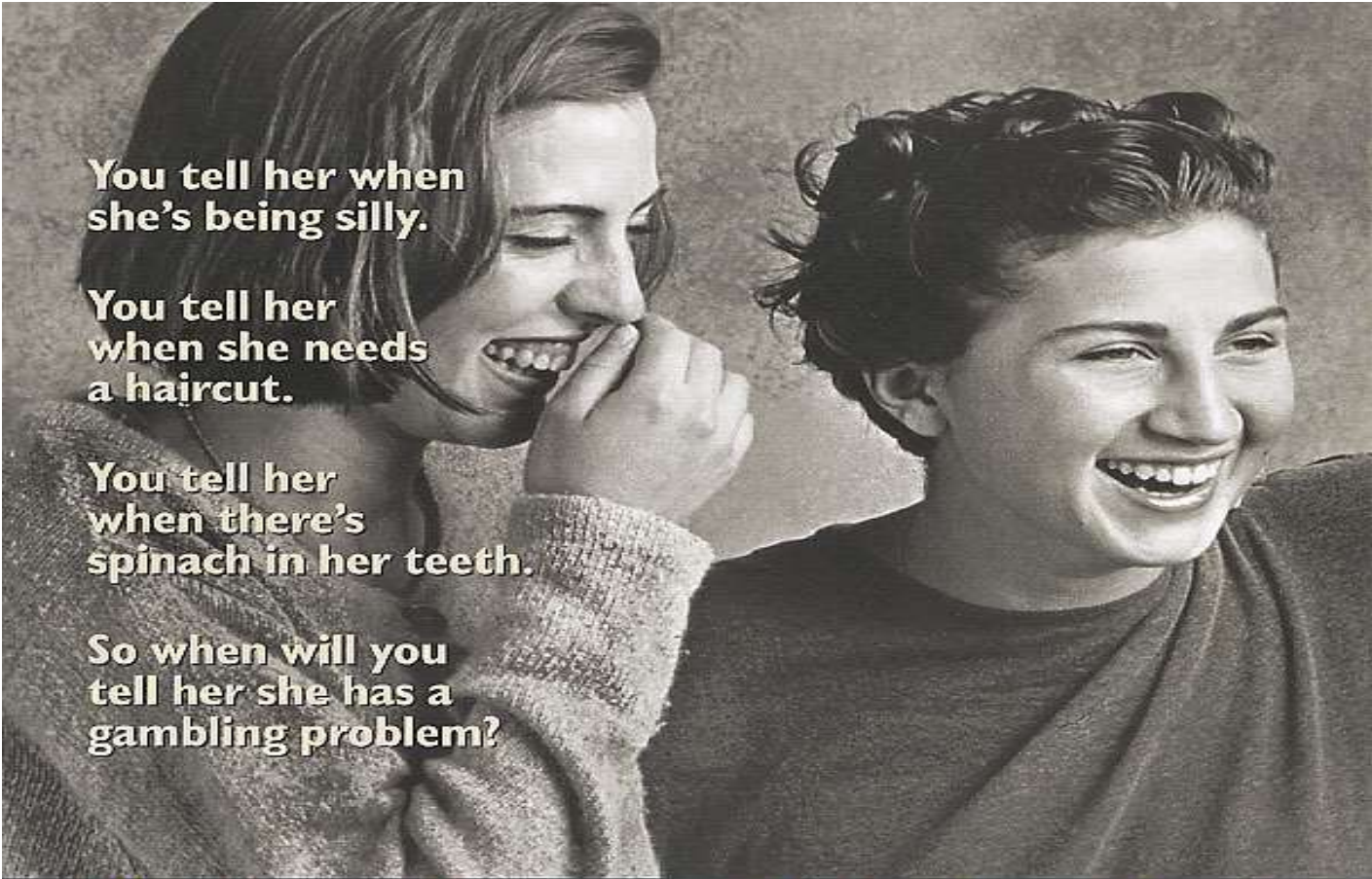
- Problem gambling can affect anyone, regardless of age or social/ethnic class
- Problem gambling is not a moral weakness. It is a medical condition.
- Problem gambling is preventable
- Treatment is available
- Treatment works











**You tell her when  
she's being silly.**

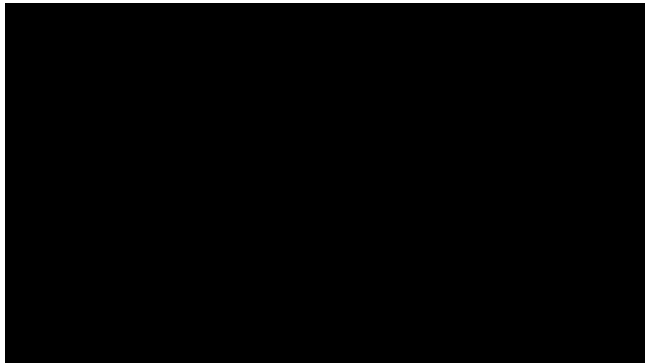
**You tell her  
when she needs  
a haircut.**

**You tell her  
when there's  
spinach in her teeth.**

**So when will you  
tell her she has a  
gambling problem?**

***When it stops being a game...it's time for straight talk.***

The Vermont Lottery Commission • Vermont Council on Problem Gambling, Inc. **1-800-522-4700**







*How will your family remember you?*

*You can try to hide a gambling problem, but eventually the truth will come out. Call for free, confidential help.*

**MINNESOTA  
COMPULSIVE  
GAMBLING  
HOTLINE  
1-800-437-3641**

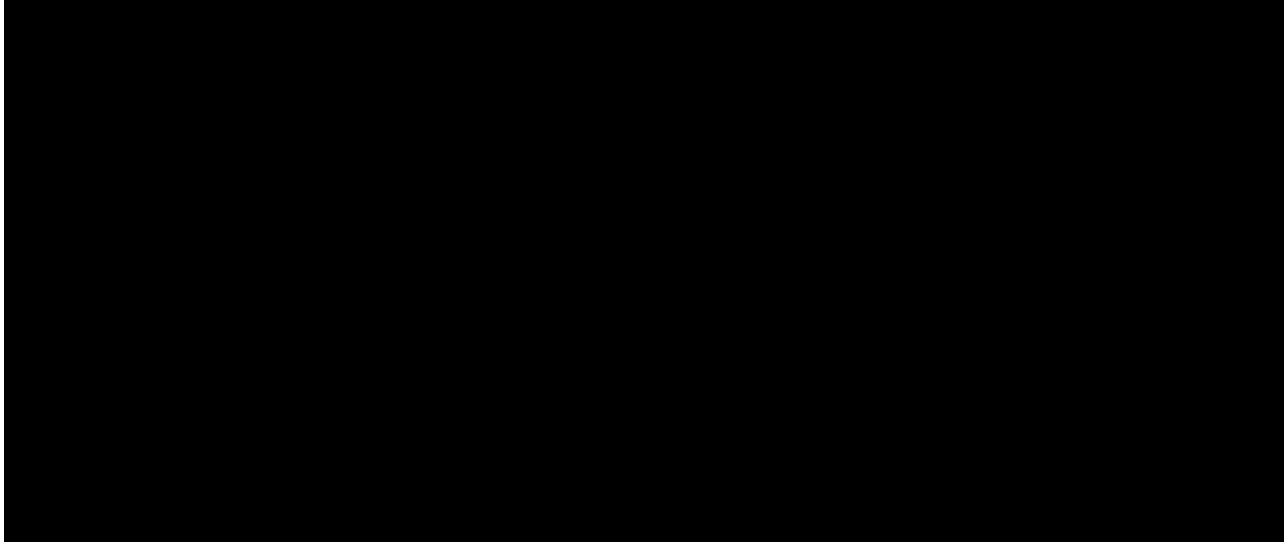




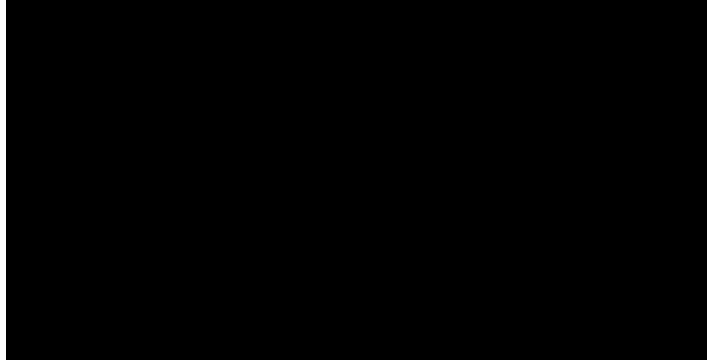














# Key messages

1. Gambling addiction is a serious problem with serious consequences. Thousands of people suffer from this addiction, which can lead to devastating financial problems, neglect of family and work, criminal activity, and even suicide. Many more suffer as the result of the gambling of a loved one.
2. Problem gambling is a treatable condition, and services are available in your community. While recovery takes time, patience, and support, people suffering from this condition are able to reclaim their lives.
3. Problem gamblers are young, old, male, female, rich, poor and come from every ethnic background. They are not simply morally weak, and are not bad people. They are good people with a bad problem.
4. Breaking the cycle of gambling addiction is critical to a healthy society. It is far less costly for society to treat gambling addictions than to deal with the consequences of leaving the addiction untreated.

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Thank you!

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