

# **Problem Gambling and Suicide:**

*What this Relationship Means  
for the Fields of Substance  
Abuse and Mental Health*

2019 New York State Suicide Prevention Conference



New York Council on Problem Gambling

**Raise Awareness  
Advocate for Support**

Because the math says we should.

Because we care about people.

Because there is hope.

# Setting the Stage

## Problem Gambling

Problem gambling is the result of repeated gambling behavior that **leads to adverse affects** to the individual and loved ones.

-American Psychiatric Association

## Gambling Disorder

Gambling disorder involves **repeated problematic gambling behavior** that causes significant problems or distress. It is also called gambling addiction or compulsive gambling.

-American Psychiatric Association

# Setting the Stage

At-Risk  
Gambling

Problem  
Gambling

Pathological  
Gambling\*

# Setting the Stage

Suicidal Ideation

Thinking about, considering, or planning suicide

Suicide Attempt

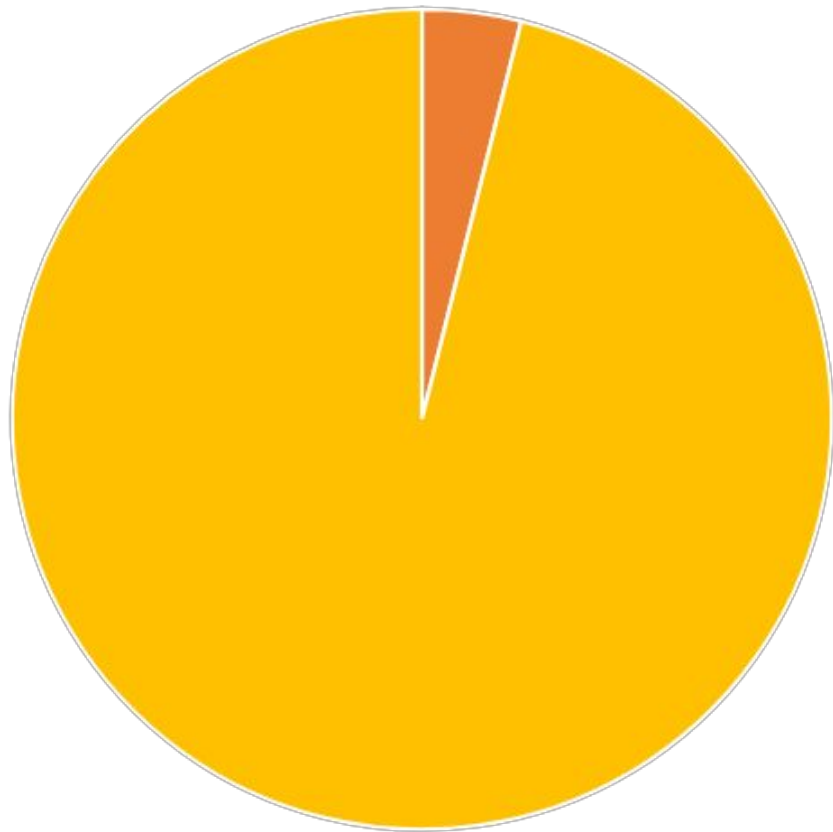
A non-fatal, self-directed, potentially injurious behavior with an intent to die

Suicide

The act of taking one's own life intentionally

## Suicidal Ideation

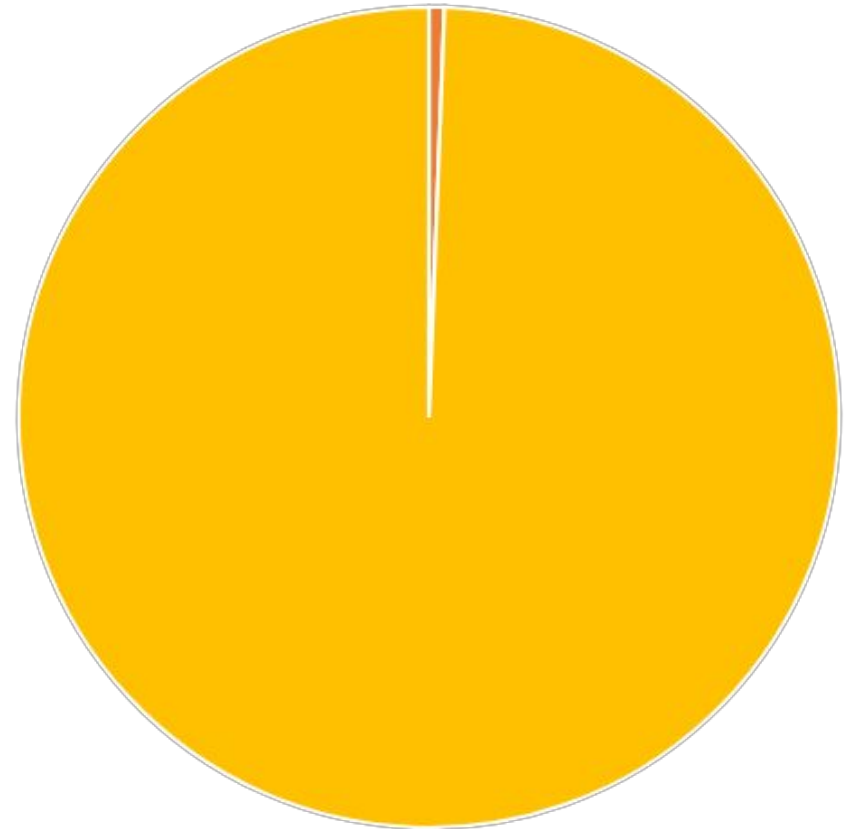
- 9.3 million adult (3.9% of adult population)



■ Suicidal Ideation ■ No Suicidal Ideation

## Suicide Attempt

- 1.3 million adult (0.6% of adult population)

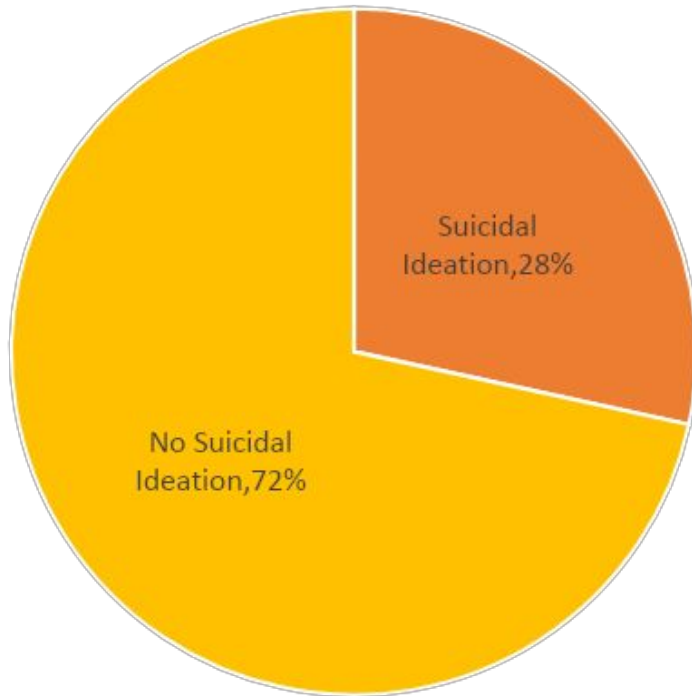


■ Suicide Attempt ■ No Suicide Attempt

*CDC (2015)*

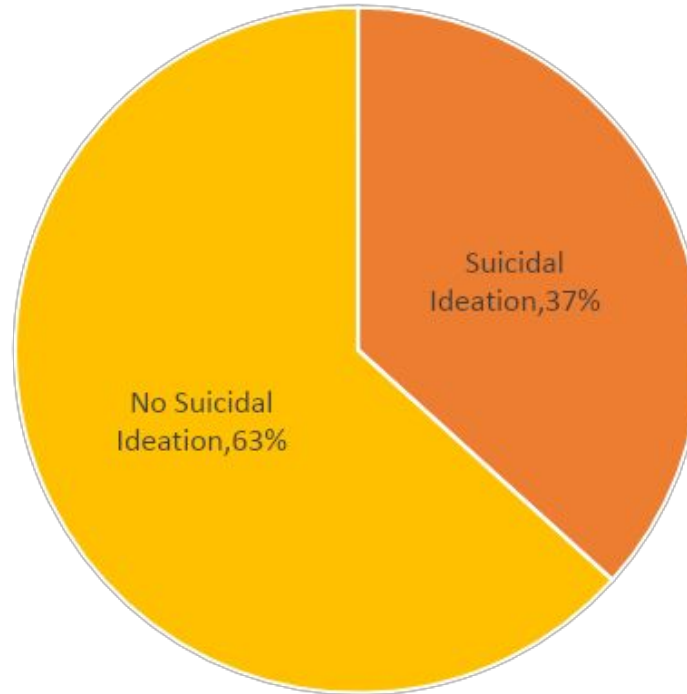
# Suicidal Ideation

At-Risk Gambling



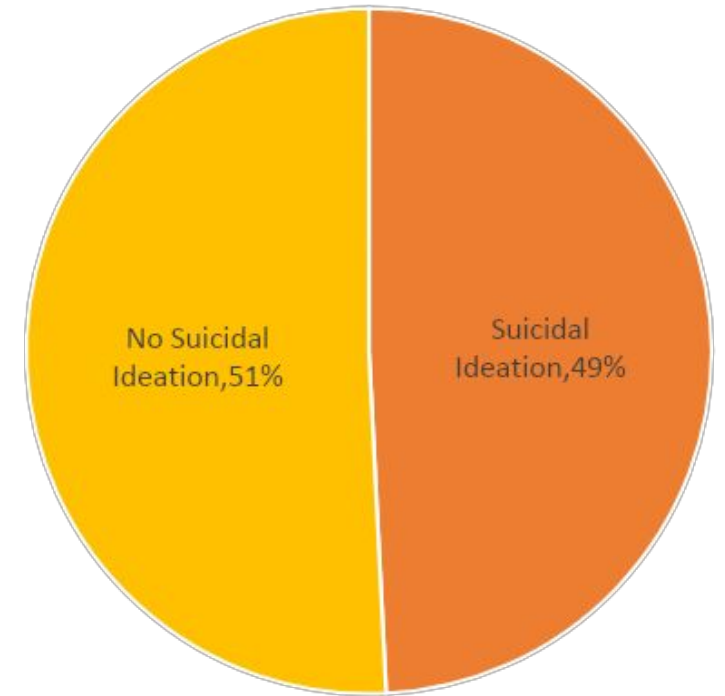
OR 1.14

Problem Gambling



OR 1.66

Pathological Gambling

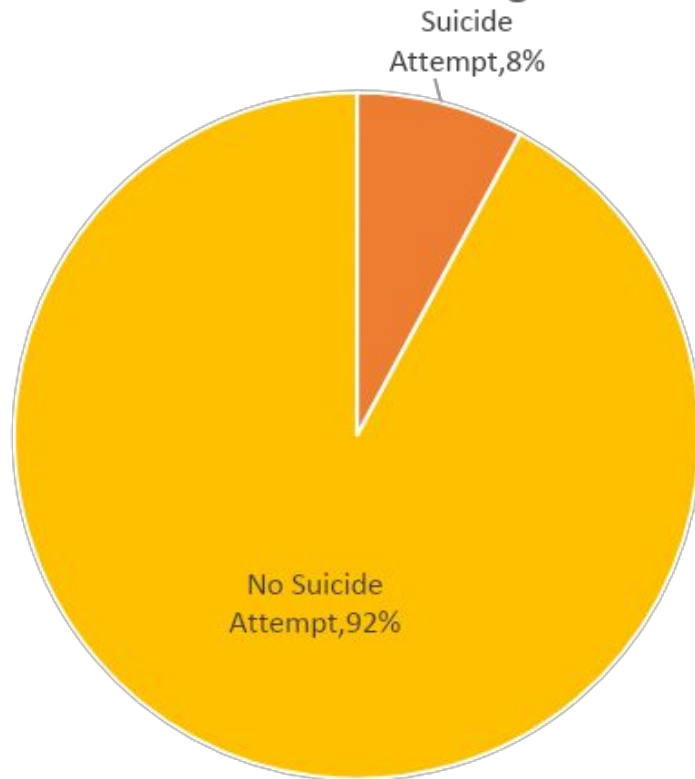


OR 2.78



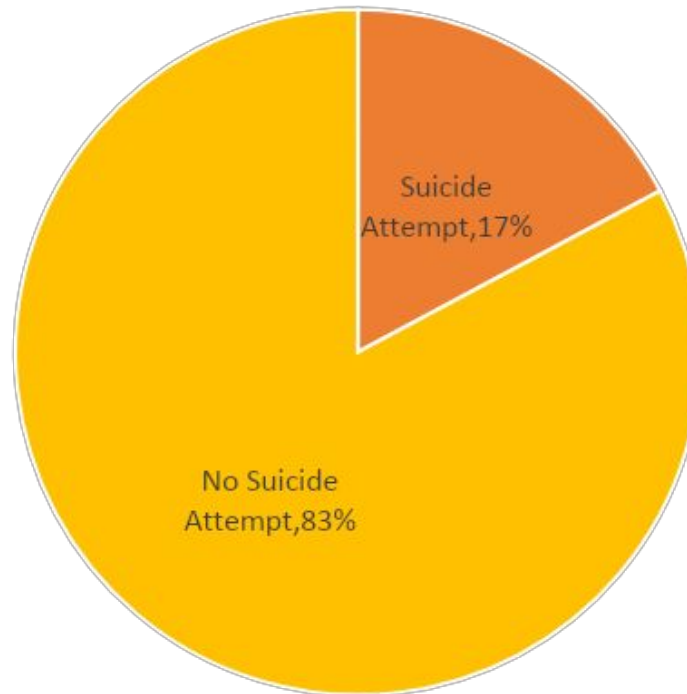
# Suicide Attempt

At-Risk Gambling



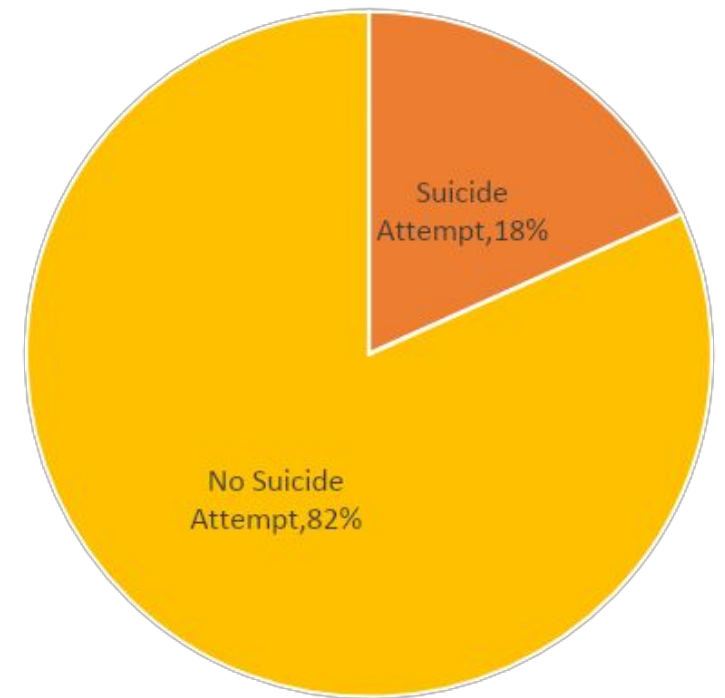
OR 1.0

Problem Gambling



OR 2.42

Pathological Gambling



OR 2.62

# Apples and Apples with General Population

At-Risk  
Gambling

- 1.14x more likely to have thoughts of suicide

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# Apples and Apples with General Population

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# General Risk Factors for Problem Gambling and Suicide among *Adults*

Male vs. Female

Age

Mental Health  
Conditions  
Including Addiction

Access and  
Exposure

Family Culture and  
Genetics

Changing Life  
Events

*\*APA and AFSP*

# RISK FACTORS

## Among Adults Who Gamble

### Suicidal Ideation

- Substance Use Disorder
- Mood Disorder
- Age of onset of *first symptom* of gambling disorder

# Gambling Disorder - Symptoms

- Tolerance
- Withdrawal
- Lack of Control
- Preoccupation
- Escape
- Chasing
- Lying
- Risking
- Bailout

# RISK FACTORS

## Among Adults Who Gamble

### Suicidal Ideation

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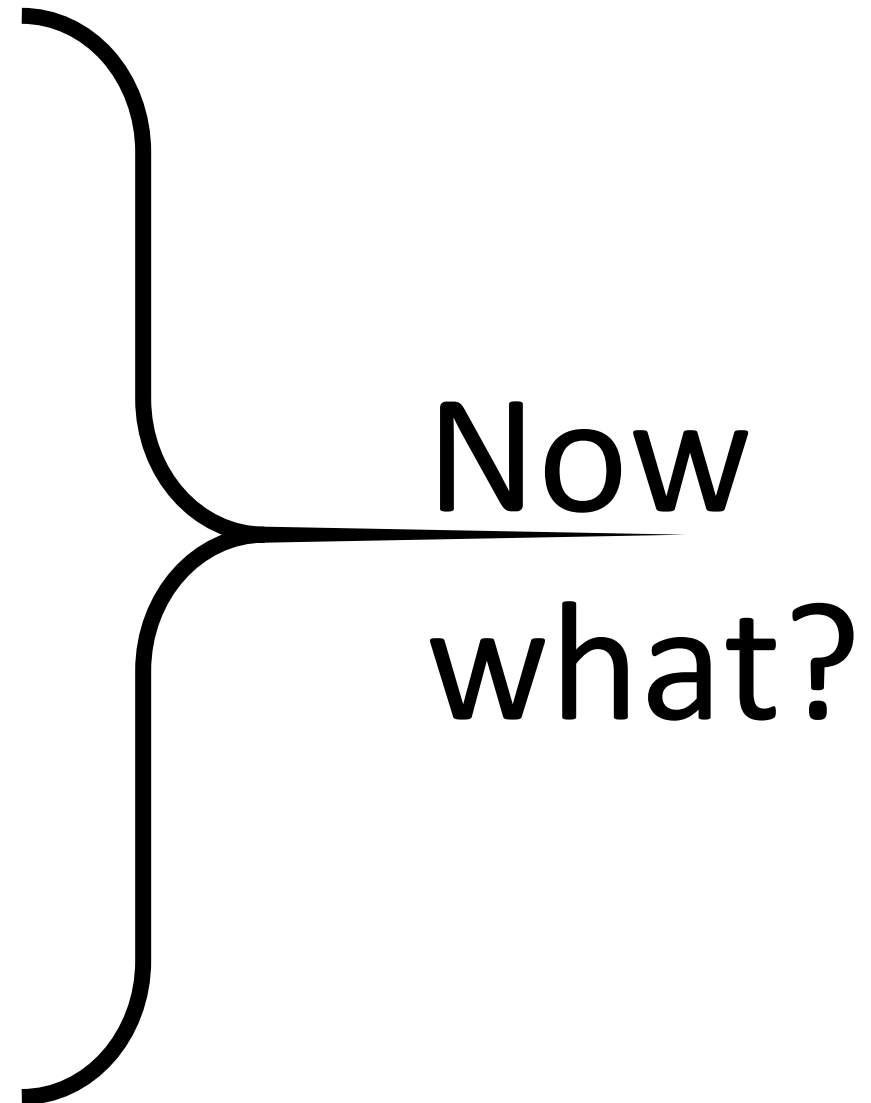
### Suicide Attempt

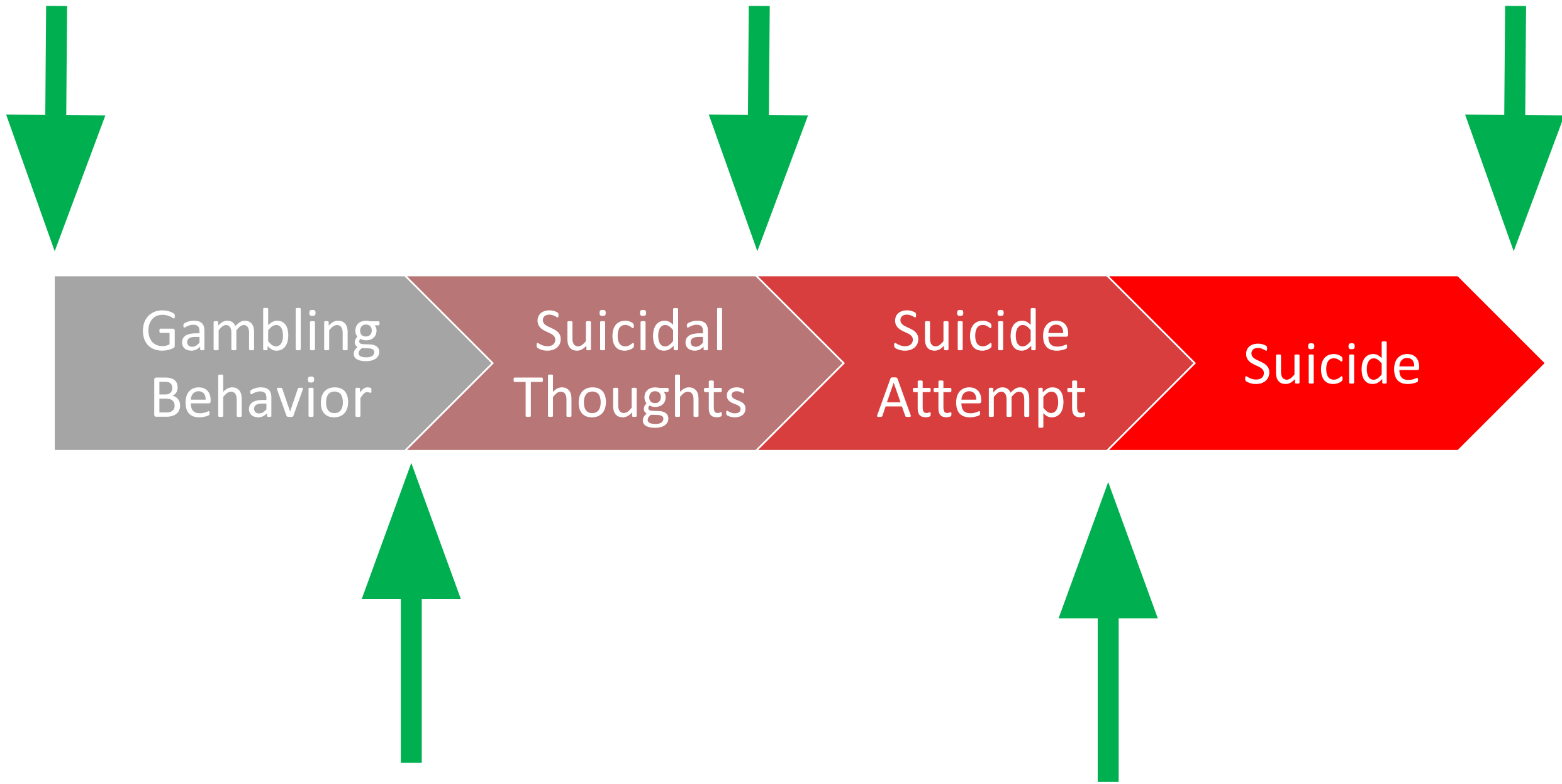
- Intensive Treatment Utilization
- Female
- Mood Disorder
- Cluster B Personality Disorder



# Key Notes

- Correlation between suicidal thoughts/ attempt and gambling behavior
- Overlapping risk factors
- Mental health comorbidity





Gambling Behavior

Suicidal Thoughts

Suicide Attempt

Suicide

# Your Next Steps

- **Learn about problem gambling and suicide**
  - NYCPG
  - MHANYS, Inc.
  - Suicide Prevention Center of NYS
- **Plan for and be prepared for screening**
  - Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS)
  - Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBGS)
- **Get Connected**
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
  - MHANYS, Inc. Mental Health Information Center
  - Problem Gambling Resource Centers
- **Follow-up** with ALL clients.
- **Teach** everyone.

PROBLEM GAMBLING  
**NEW YORK STATE**  
RESOURCE CENTERS  
*— Here to Help —*



Thank  
you!

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# Resources

- **Learn More**

- The **New York Council on Problem Gambling (NYCPG)** hosts free clinical supervision and webinars for NYS providers, as well as low-cost on-demand problem gambling related training.
  - <http://NYProblemGambling.org>
- **MHANYs, Inc.**, provides training, technical assistance, and consulting services for privately held and community-based organizations such as state and county agencies, mental health professionals, and a variety of organizations and professions serving the general public.
  - <http://MHANYs.org>
- **Suicide Prevention Center of New York (SPCNY)** is an education and resource organization. SPCNY staff are certified to provide SafeTALK suicide alertness training and ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training). They are also connected to a network of skilled, certified trainers covering the full range of issues related to suicide in New York State.
  - <http://www.preventsuicideny.org/>

# Resources

- **Plan and be prepared for screening**

- The **Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS)** supports suicide risk assessment through a series of simple, plain-language questions that anyone can ask. The answers help users identify whether someone is at risk for suicide, assess the severity and immediacy of that risk, and gauge the level of support that the person needs. An unprecedented amount of research has validated the relevance and effectiveness of the questions used in the C-SSRS to assess suicide risk, making it the most evidence-based tool of its kind.
  - <http://cssrs.columbia.edu/>
- The **Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBGS)** can help individuals decide whether to seek a formal evaluation of their gambling behavior through a set of three simple "yes" or "no" questions. These questions can be administered by another party or self-administered. Scoring a “yes” to any one of the screening questions indicates potential gambling-related problems and the individual should receive further evaluation. The Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen is an evidence-based tool developed by the Cambridge Health Alliance.
  - <https://www.divisiononaddiction.org/resources1/bbgs-e-screener-2/>

# Resources

## • Get Connected

- The **Problem Gambling Resource Centers (PGRCs)** address problem gambling in all regions across New York State by increasing public awareness about the issue, and directly connecting those adversely affected by gambling with treatment and support services. Can offer trainings and resources to professionals, and linkages to support for those struggling.
  - <https://nyproblemgamblinghelp.org>
- The **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.
  - 1-800-273-8255
  - Send texts to 741741
- The **MHANYS, Inc. MHIC Information and Referral Line** operates during regular business hours (M-F; 9am-5pm). They can link you to a broad range of local, statewide, and national mental health organizations and programs, and answer questions on mental health topics. The database is searchable by subject area.
  - 1-800-766-6177 ask for the Mental Health Information Center
  - Email [infocenter@mhanys.org](mailto:infocenter@mhanys.org)
  - <https://mhanys.org/explore/links-resources/>

# Resources

- **Follow-Up**

- Even when clients leave your office, they are still at-risk! Research has shown that a “soft-touch” follow-up can increase the likelihood that clients will follow-through with their plans for staying safe. Make a follow-up plan for everyone you serve that is at-risk.

- **Teach Everyone**

- Share what you’ve learned with everyone. You never know whose life might be changed by just one conversation

Thank You for  
Caring!



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