



Measuring responsible gambling in Massachusetts 2022

Benchmarking with the
Positive Play Scale

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Participants and procedure

- In October 2022, a sample of 1,996 Massachusetts players were surveyed to assess the extent to which they held positive play beliefs and engaged in positive play behaviors.
 - The sample consisted of players who had played at least one game in the past 12 months. The majority of the sample (50%) gambled at a Massachusetts casino in the past 12 months. The sample was representative by gender and age.
 - The survey included the positive play scale (PPS) and the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI), as well as general demographic questions and questions about gambling behavior and attitudes towards responsible gambling initiatives.
 - For exploratory purposes, the survey also included items that assessed use of substances (alcohol & cannabis) while gambling, player satisfaction and awareness of gambling-related advertisements, as well as whether respondents would be more likely to use responsible gaming tools if rewarded for doing so.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY


Results

- Most respondents scored high on the *Personal responsibility, Honesty and control*, and *Pre-commitment* sub-scales, but scored lower on the *Gambling literacy* sub-scale.
- Scores in 2022 were lower on all sub-scales compared to 2020, but caution should be exercised in comparing the two samples because they were not the same players.
- Older relative to younger players had more positive play beliefs and behaviors, particularly in relation to *Gambling literacy* and *Pre-commitment*
- Positive play beliefs and behaviors were slightly lower for males compared to females (but the differences were small and not practically meaningful).
- Approximately a quarter of respondents (n=501) played multiple game types either weekly or several time per month (i.e., *High frequency multi-game players*). Four fifths of these respondents (n=416) were classified as problem gamblers (measured using the PGSI).
- *Higher frequency multi-game players* scored much lower on the PPS, were more likely to be men, and have gambling problems compared to those who primarily played the lotto (and other games, but at a lower frequency; i.e., *Lotto + players*).



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY


Results cont.

- Respondents were most satisfied with gambling when they played within their means, understood how to play a game, and felt relaxed after playing. These results indicate that responsible play equates to more satisfying gambling experiences.
 - 31% of respondents were classified as problem gamblers according to their PGSI scores. Most respondents reported that they had gambled whilst under the influence of alcohol in the last year, whereas just under half reported gambling after consuming cannabis.
 - Most respondents expressed that they would be more likely to consume responsible gaming information and use a responsible gaming tool if they were rewarded for doing so.
 - Players low in *Gambling literacy* and problem gamblers, reported the greatest exposure to gambling-related advertisements.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY


Recommendations

- To increase *Gambling literacy*, it may be necessary to focus on educating players about the nature of gambling and addressing erroneous perceptions of winning. Players should also be encouraged to pre-commit by considering their spending before gambling.
 - To improve responsible gambling among younger players (19-34), initiatives may need to be made more attractive or appealing to them, particularly in relation to improving *Gambling literacy*.
 - Further research using longitudinal data following the same players over time would provide a more accurate understanding of any changes in PPS scores over time.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recommendations cont.

- Rewarding players for their positive play beliefs and behaviors may be an innovative and effective means to improve positive play in Massachusetts.
 - Playing multiple game types at a high frequency (i.e., weekly or more often) should be discouraged as suggested by the Lower Risk Gambling Guidelines.
 - The association between players' awareness of gambling-related advertisements and (low) *Gambling literacy* suggests that gambling-related advertising (which can obscure a player's true chance of winning) may be contributing to poor *Gambling literacy*. It is also possible that people low in *Gambling literacy* are exposed to more adverts (people low in *Gambling literacy* also tend to be multi-game players and thus may have more opportunity to see adverts).
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The Properties of the PPS

THE PPS IS A 14-ITEM SCALE THAT ASSESSES POSITIVE BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS ABOUT GAMBLING.

There are two beliefs subscales:

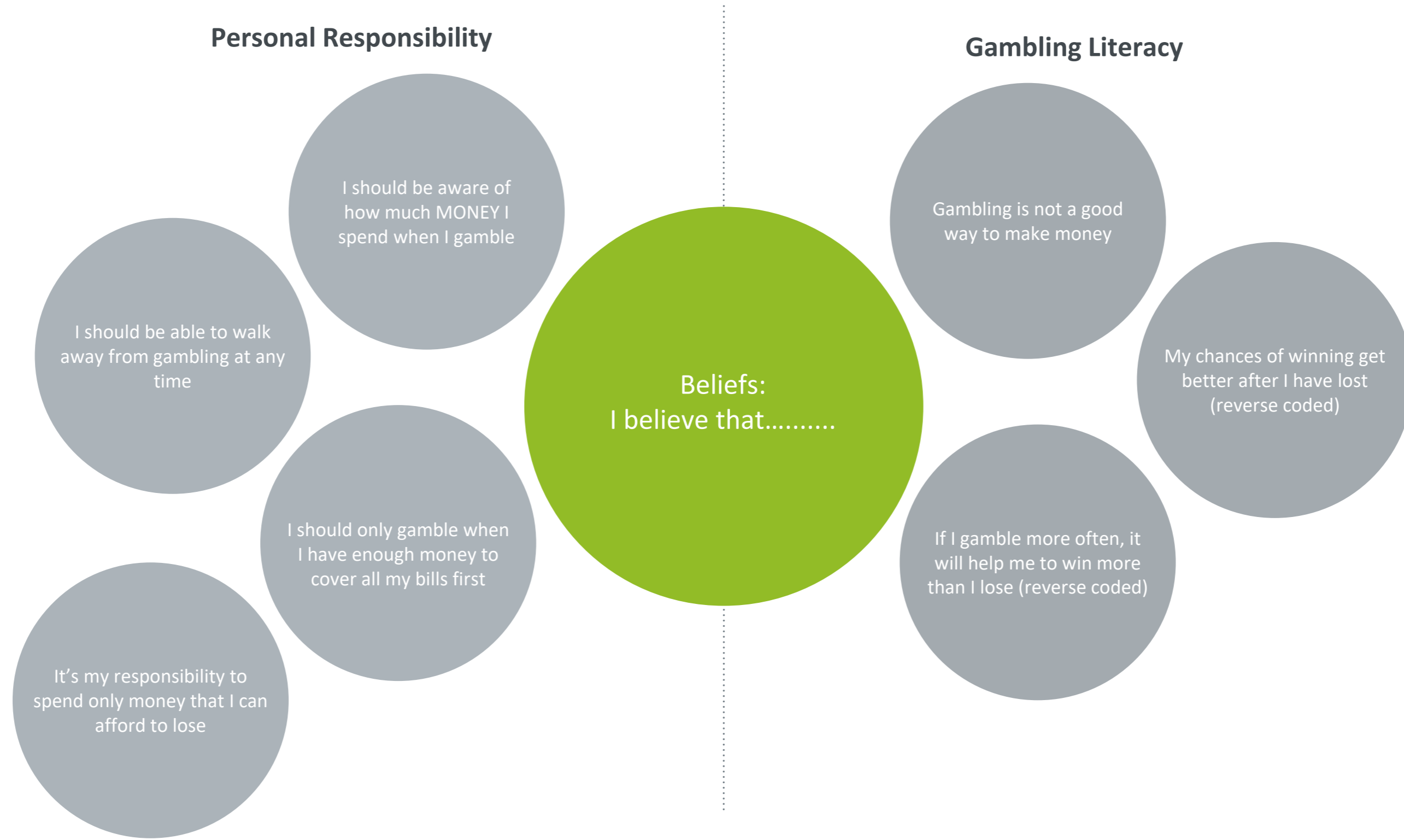


The extent to which a player believes they should take ownership of their gambling behavior



The extent to which a player has an accurate understanding about the nature of gambling

Items that compose the PPS beliefs subscales



The Properties of the PPS

THE PPS IS A 14-ITEM SCALE THAT ASSESSES POSITIVE BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS ABOUT GAMBLING.

There are two behavior subscales:

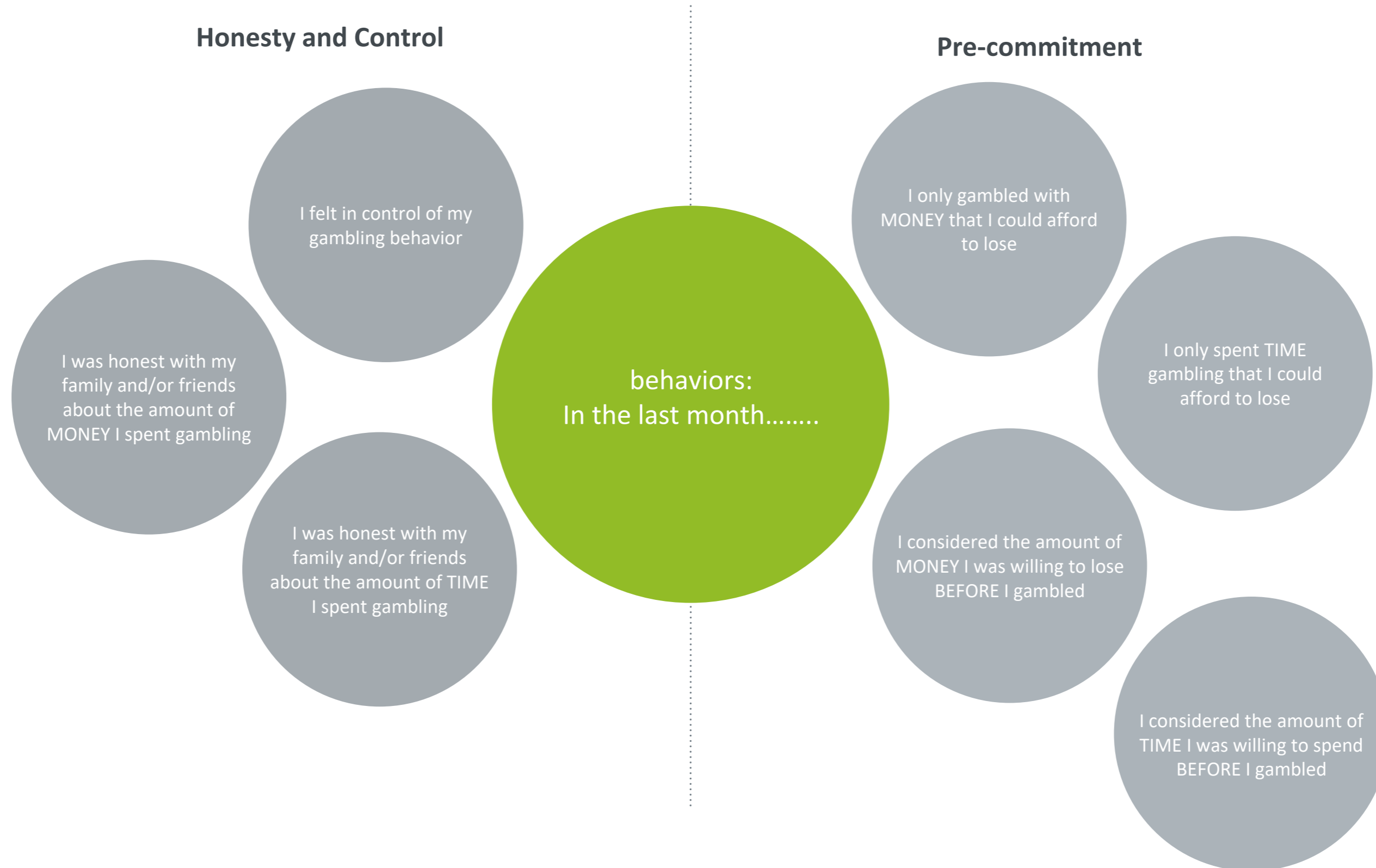


The extent to which players are honest with others about their gambling behavior and feel in control of their behavior

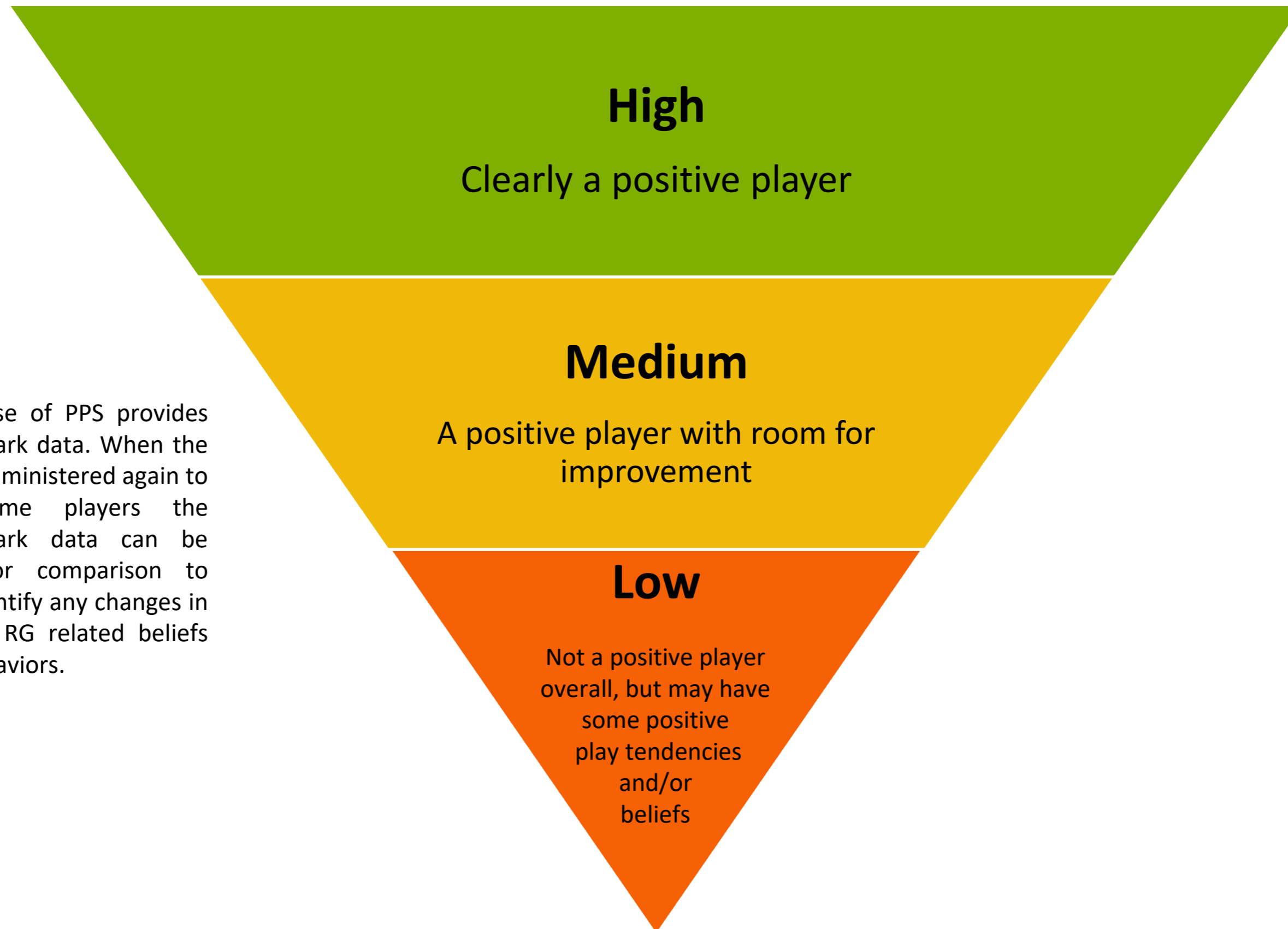


The extent to which a player considers how much money and time they should spend gambling

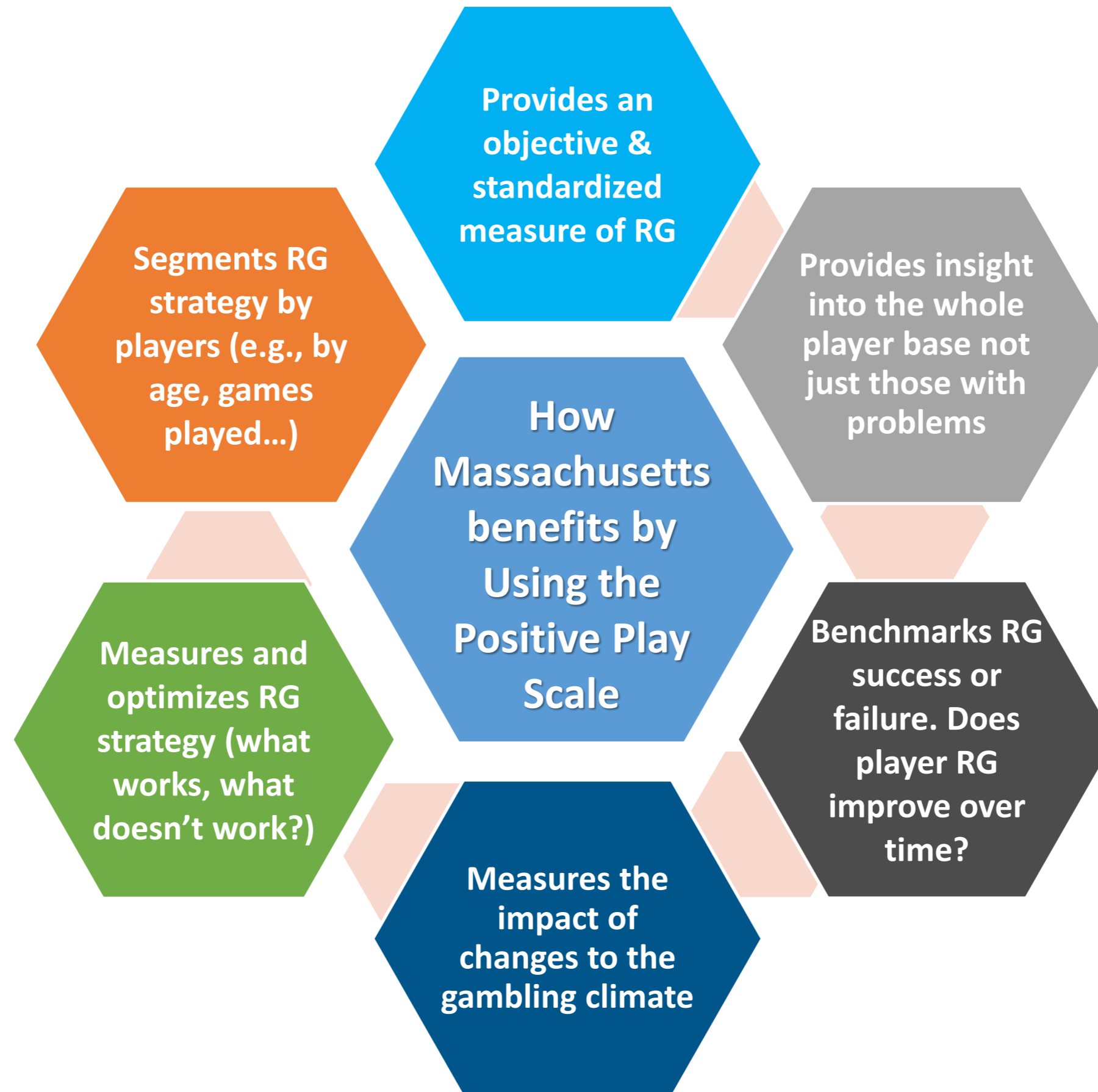
Items that compose the PPS behaviors subscales



Players can be placed into positive play categories



Initial use of PPS provides benchmark data. When the PPS is administered again to the same players the benchmark data can be used for comparison to help identify any changes in players' RG related beliefs and behaviors.



01

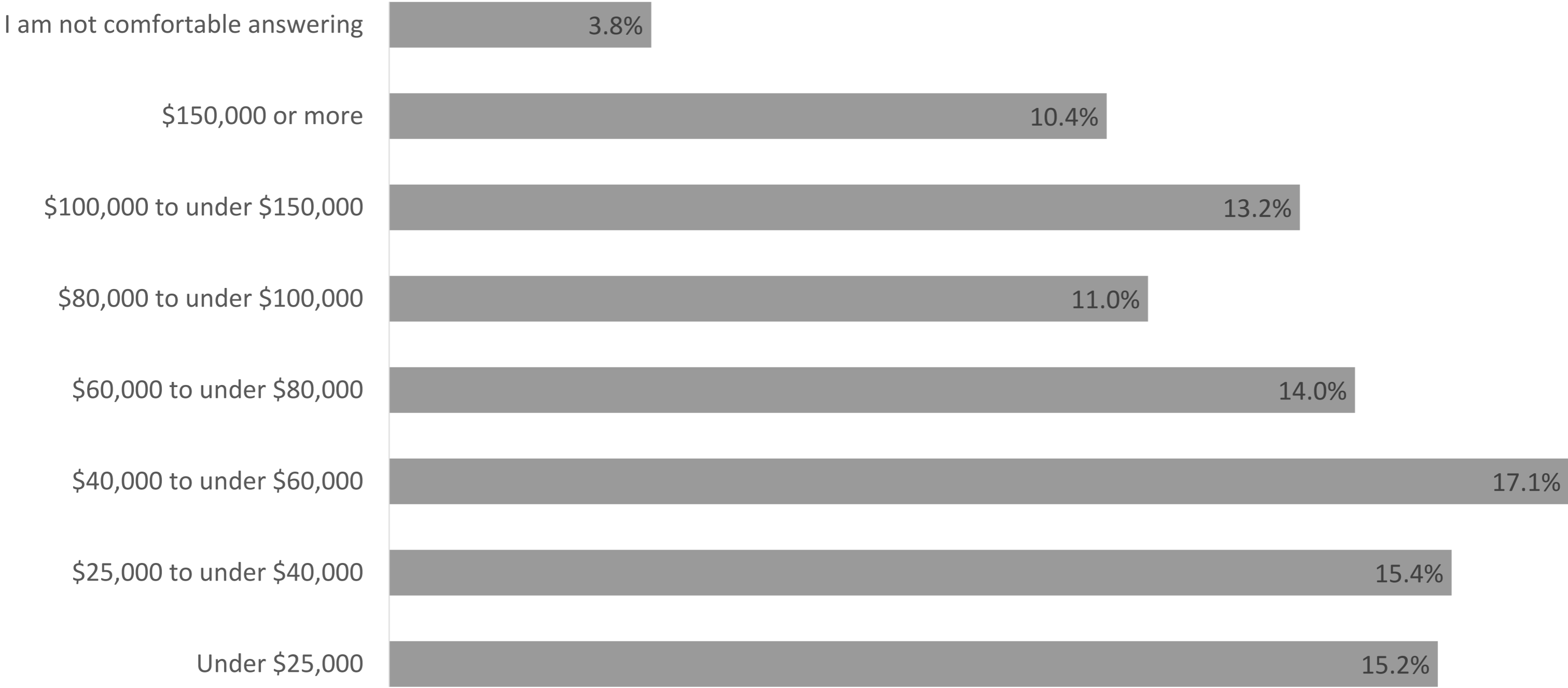
Positive Play in
Massachusetts



Measuring responsible gambling in Massachusetts

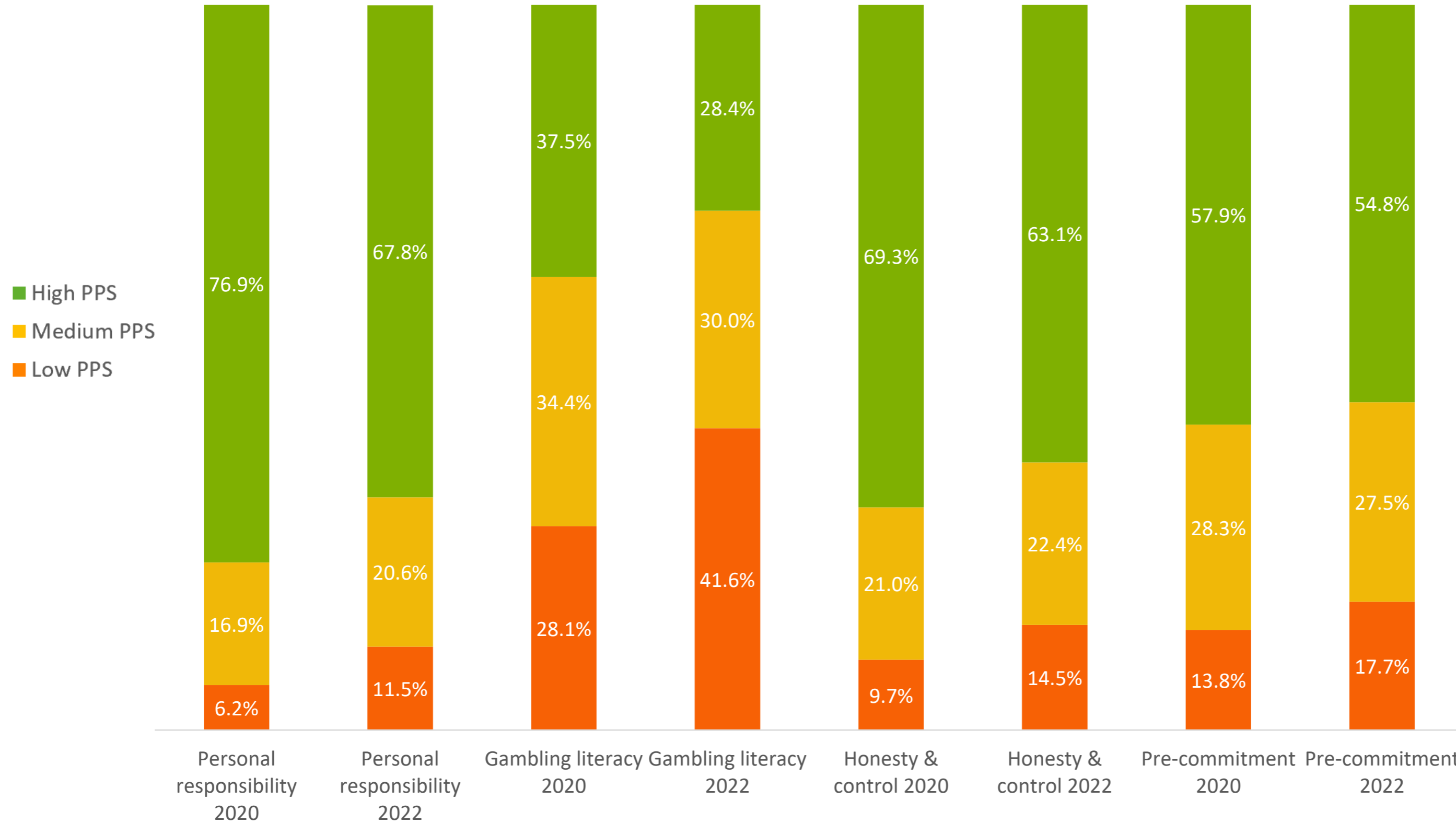
- ✓ The purpose of the study was to identify benchmark PPS scores (i.e., how responsible are Massachusetts players?), to identify specific areas in which responsible gambling could be further supported, and to assess whether there are player segments that are more (or less) responsible. Lastly, the survey was developed, in part, to provide insight into how to better promote positive play in Massachusetts.
- ✓ During October 2022, a convenience sample of 1,996 Massachusetts players were recruited by a third-party survey company.
- ✓ All respondent played on at least one game in the last 12 months. Half of all respondents gambled at a Massachusetts casino in the last 12 months. There was an equal number of males/females, and the sample was representative by age group.
- ✓ The survey was conducted online and included the PPS, the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI), general demographic questions, and general questions about gambling behavior. Items were also included that assessed respondents' attitudes towards and awareness of various responsible gambling initiatives, satisfaction with gambling, and awareness of gambling related advertisements.

Self-reported personal annual income range (before tax)



The correlation between income and PPS scores amongst players generally was small

PPS scores: all players



As in 2020, these results suggest that strategies to improve players' *Gambling literacy* and *Pre-commitment* should be considered for Massachusetts players

Note: The 2020 and 2022 samples are independent samples. As such, any differences and similarities between the two samples must be interpreted with caution.

Positive play: all players

Key findings:

Most players scored high on *Personal responsibility* (the highest scoring sub-scale) as well as *Honesty and control*. They also scored high on *Pre-commitment*, but less so than the aforementioned subscales. In contrast, most players scored medium or low on *Gambling literacy* (the lowest scoring sub-scale).

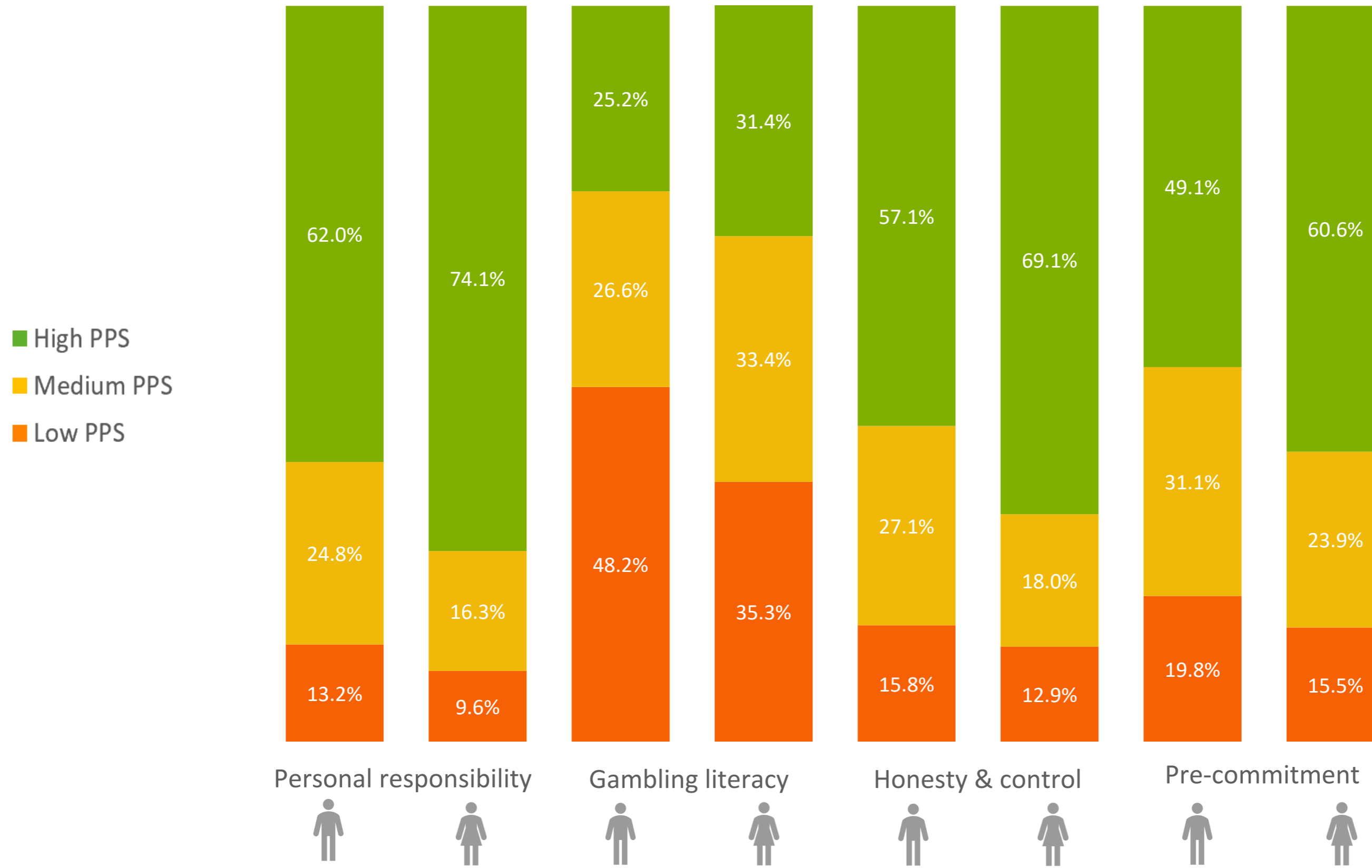
Scores in 2022 were lower on every subscale than in 2020. However, because the two samples were not comprised of the same players, caution about interpreting the difference in scores is warranted.

Implications:

To increase *Gambling literacy* it may be necessary to focus attention on educating players about the nature of gambling. In particular, it may be helpful to address erroneous perceptions players may have about their chances of winning. Also, players should be encouraged to *pre-commit* by considering what they spend (time & money) before they begin gambling.

Longitudinal data (i.e., following the same players over a period of time) would allow for a more accurate understanding of any changes in PPS scores over time.

PPS scores: by gender



(Men = 979, Women = 995, Other = 22)

Positive play by gender

Key findings:

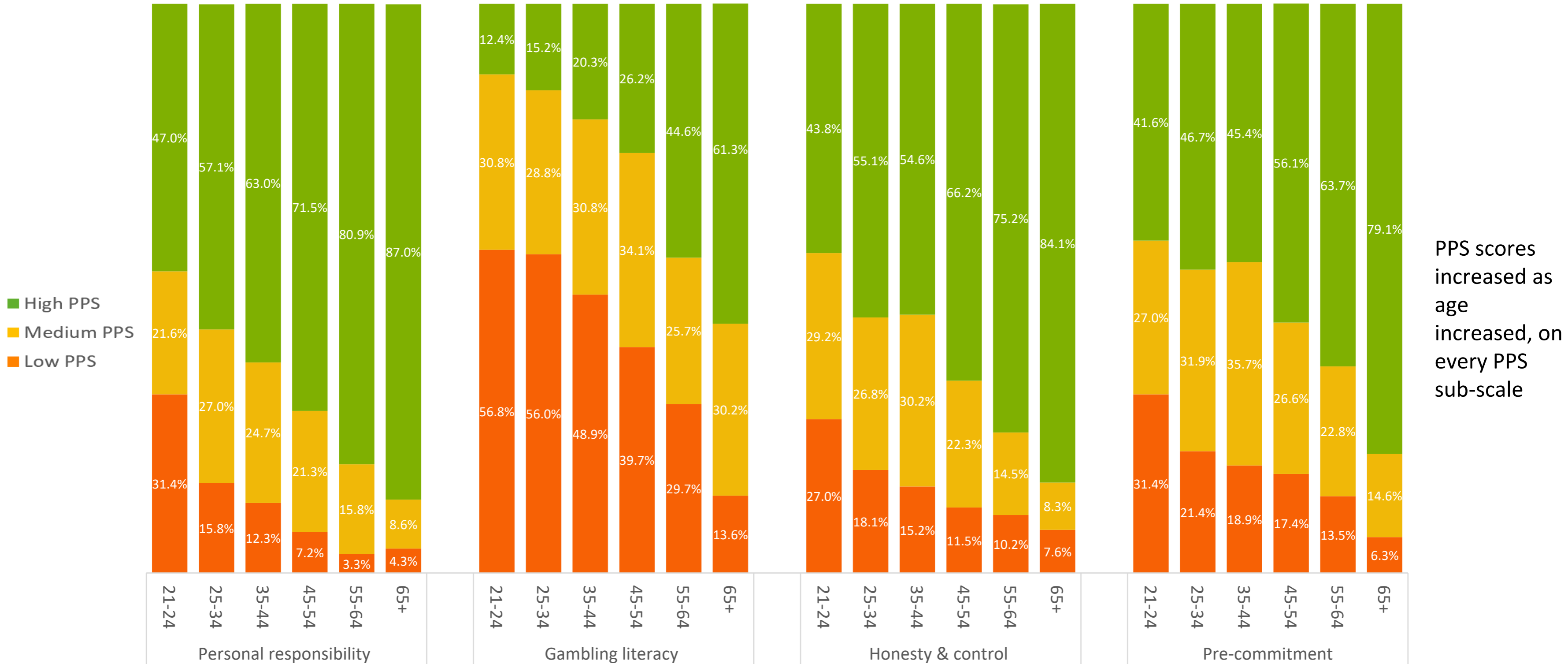
As in the 2020 PPS study, *Personal responsibility*, *Honesty & control*, and *Pre-commitment* were somewhat lower for men compared to women. Men also scored lower than women in terms of *Gambling literacy*, which differs from 2020 (where men scored higher than women on *Gambling literacy*). Importantly, however, the gender difference for *Gambling literacy* was small and not practically meaningful.

The PPS pattern of effects observed by gender were similar to those we have observed in previous PPS studies conducted across North America.

Implications:

Based on the findings of the current study, we do not recommend investing in RG strategies that segment exclusively by gender, at least in reference to specific factors assessed by the Positive Play Scale.

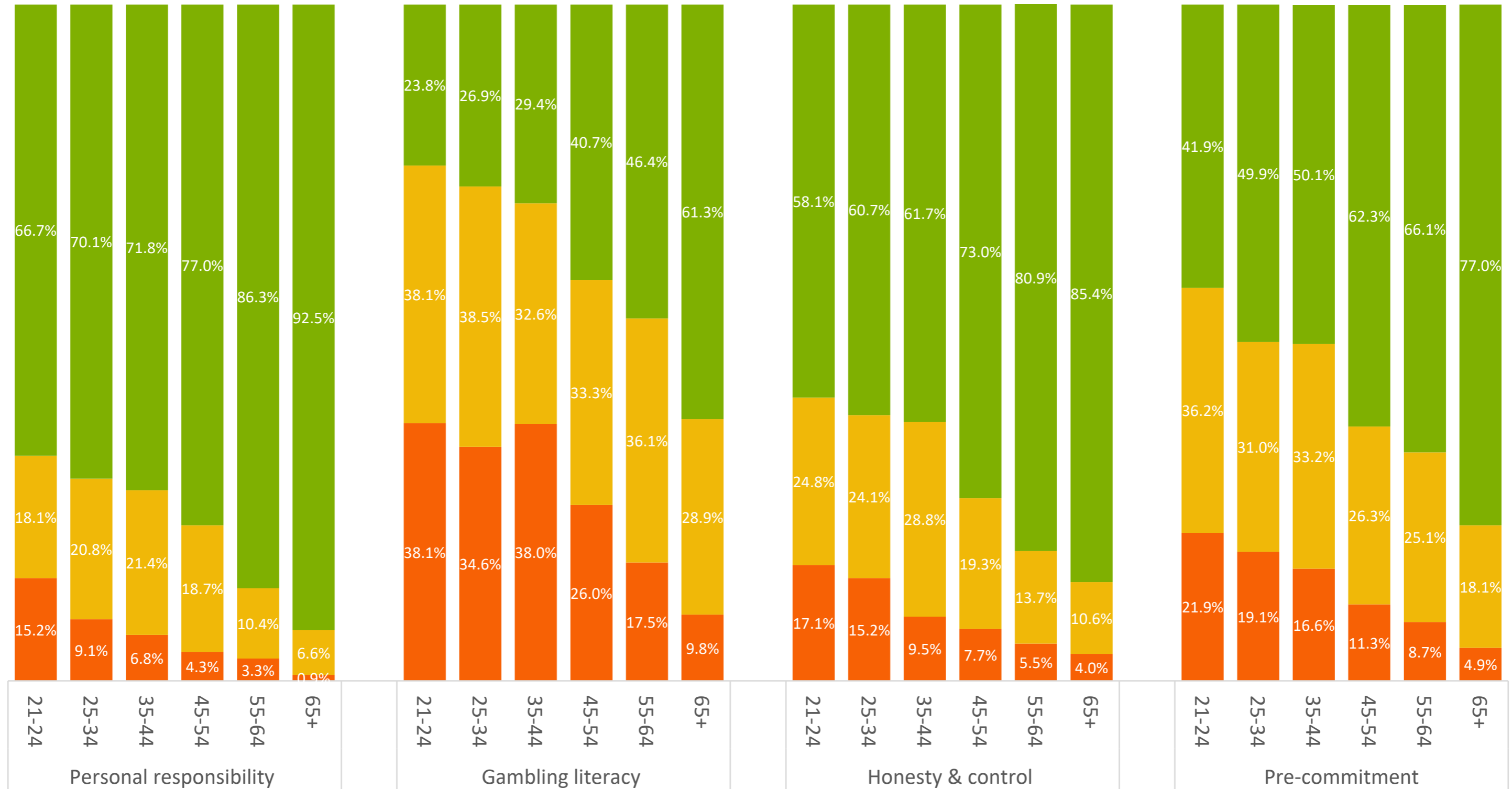
PPS scores: by age (2022)



Note: The 2020 and 2022 samples are independent samples. As such, any differences and similarities between the two samples must be interpreted with caution.

PPS scores: by age (2020)

■ High PPS
■ Medium PPS
■ Low PPS



PPS scores increased as age increased, on every PPS sub-scale

Positive play: by age

Key findings:

As in the 2020 PPS Study, positive play beliefs and behaviors increased systematically with age. This age effect was especially pronounced for *Gambling literacy* as well as *Pre-commitment*.

For *Pre-commitment*, across all age groups, the effect of age was similar to that observed in 2020. For *Honesty and Control*, PPS scores were lower in the current study compared to 2020 in every age group, except the 65+ age group (which was similar to 2020). For *Personal responsibility*, across all age groups, scores were lower in the current study than in 2020. For *Gambling literacy*, scores in the current study were lower than 2020 for every group except those 55 or older (which was similar to 2020).

Implications:

It is unknown why there is a tendency for positive play to be higher among older players relative to younger players. One possibility is that there is a cumulative effect of exposure to RG messaging and other related initiatives. Older players may have had greater exposure to RG initiatives over the course of their lifetime, which may have positively influenced their gambling related beliefs and behaviors. Another possibility is that current RG initiatives are more tailored for older players. Regardless of the reason, the results of the current study suggest that improving RG amongst younger players should be a strategic focus. One strategy may be to make RG initiatives more attractive or palatable to younger players, particularly in relation to improving their *Gambling literacy* and *Pre-commitment*.

Longitudinal research would be helpful for developing a more accurate understanding of any changes in PPS scores over time.

02

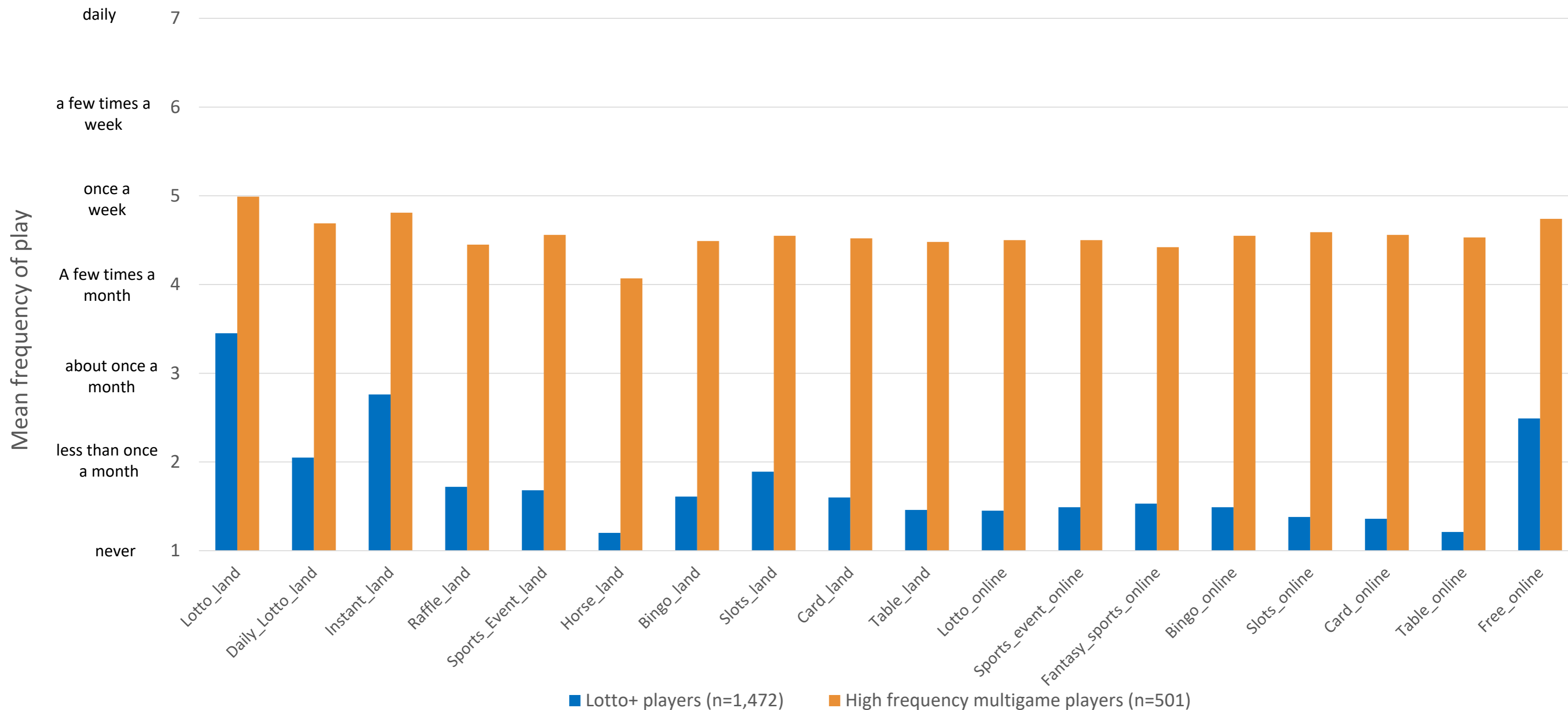
PPS scores by games played and frequency of play



Cluster analysis of players by game type and frequency of play

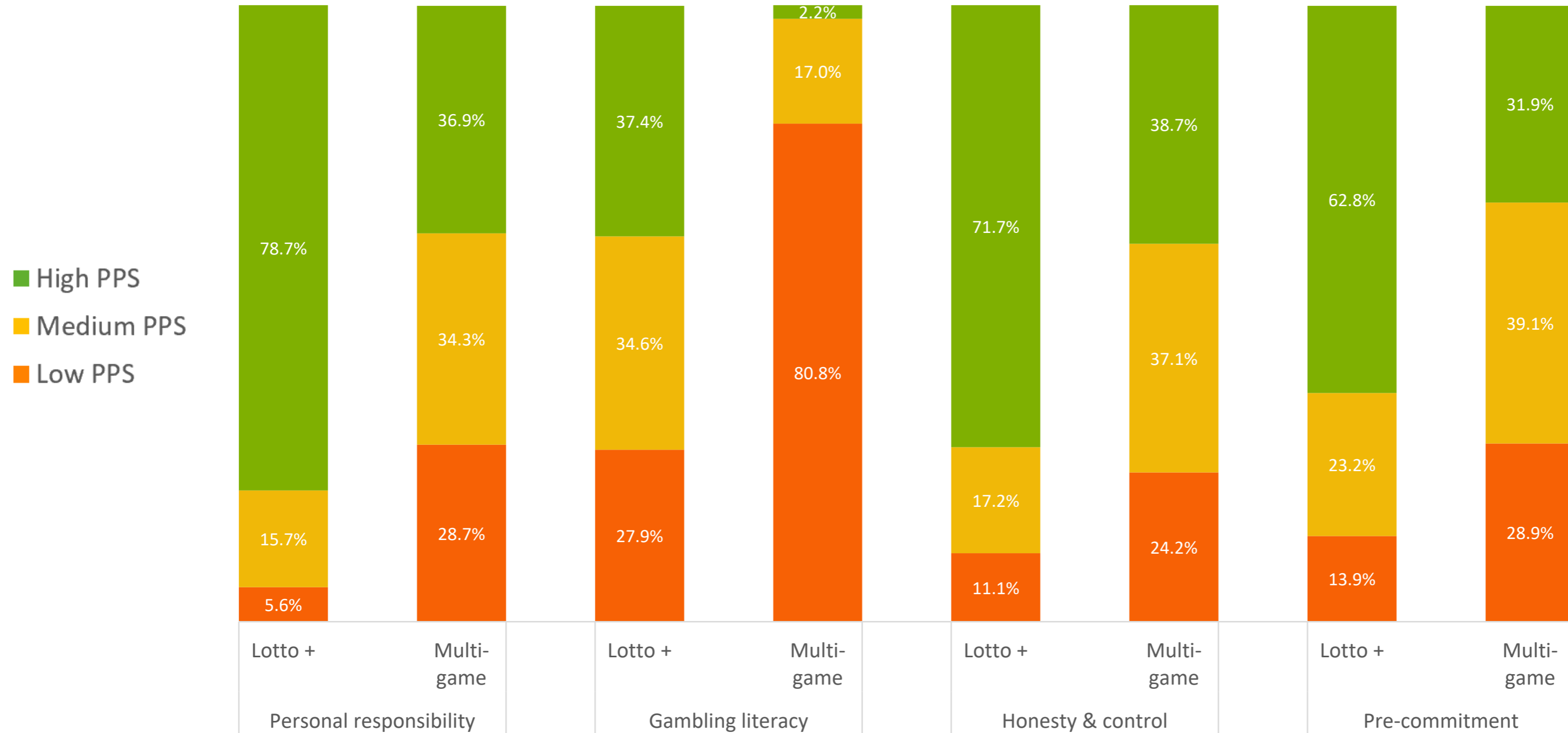
- Players will often play on more than one type of game in any given year. This means that analysing PPS scores by (a specific) game type can be problematic. Also, frequency of play on games is a critical consideration because infrequent play is unlikely to be associated with overall gambling beliefs or behaviors.
- Cluster analysis allowed us to identify groups of players who cluster together according to the types of games that they play and how frequently they play those games.
- We identified two distinct groups of players.
 - *Higher frequency Multi-game Players* played on a wide variety of games and on average a few times a month.
 - *Lotto + Players* played mostly lottery draw games and lottery instant tickets on average about once a month or less and other games less than once a month or never.
- We examined the PPS scores of both groups of players as well as their PGSI scores and the general demographics that defined each group.

Cluster analysis of players by game type and frequency of play



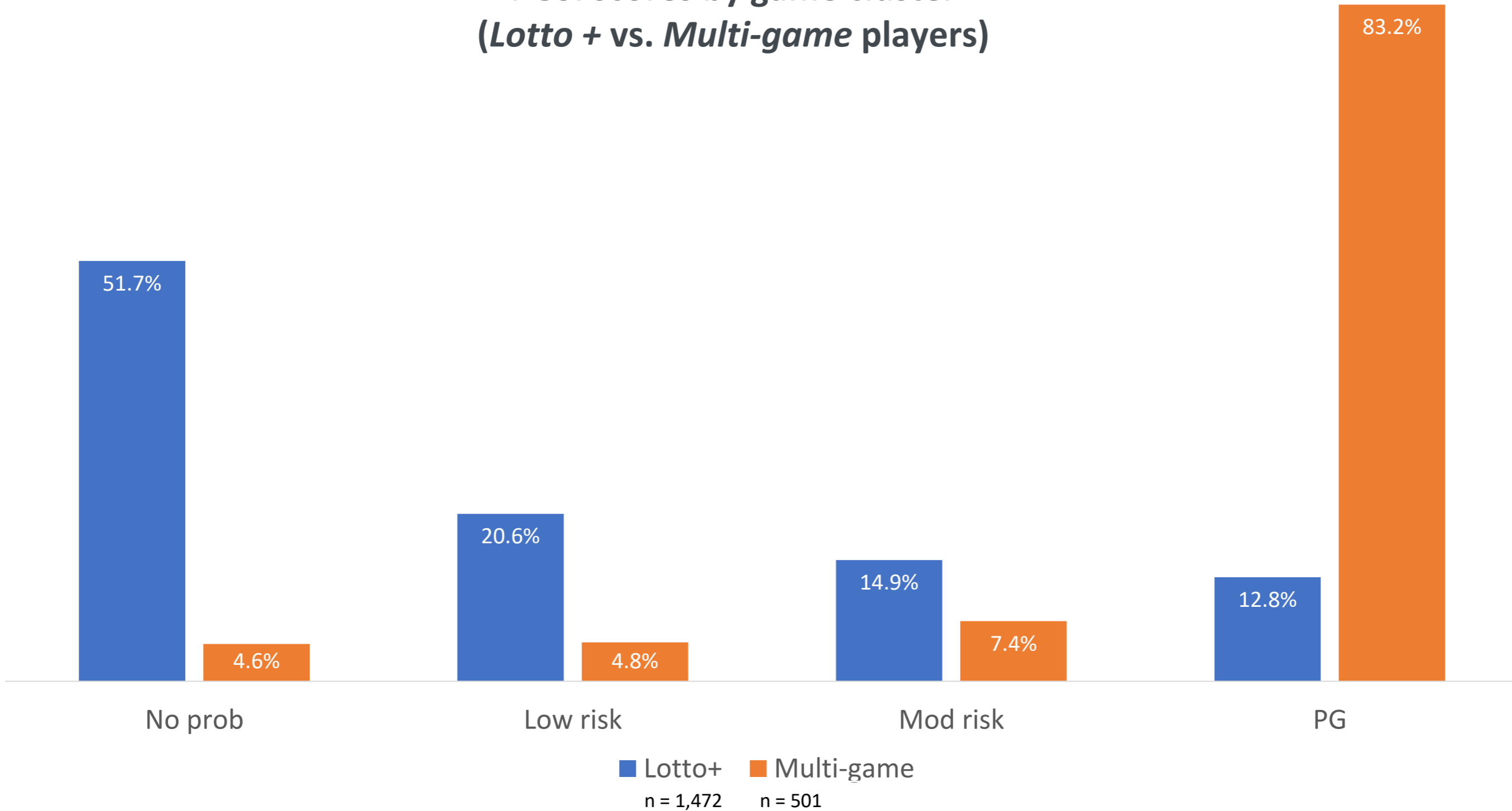
High-frequency multigame players, played (on average) most games either weekly or a few times a month. By contrast, Lotto+ players primarily played lotto draw games a few times a month, instant games and free online games around once a month and rarely played any other type of game.

PPS scores by game cluster (*Lotto+* vs. *Multi-game* players)



Those who primarily played lottery games at a lower frequency (***Lotto +*** group) had higher PPS scores (i.e., were more responsible players) on every sub-scale compared to those who played lotto games *and* a range of other games more frequently (***Multi-game*** group).

PGSI scores by game cluster
(*Lotto + vs. Multi-game* players)



Those who played lottery games *and* a range of other games at a higher frequency (***Multi-game*** players) had higher PGSI scores compared to those who primarily played lottery games at a lower frequency (***Lotto +*** players).

Observed differences between *Lotto + players* (n = 1,472) and *Multi-game players* (n = 501) on psychological and demographic characteristics

Cluster	Psychological characteristics					Demographic characteristics		
	Personal Responsibility Mean score out of 7	Gambling Literacy Mean score out of 7	Honesty & Control Mean score out of 7	Pre-commitment Mean score out of 7	Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) Mean score out of 27 3-7 moderate risk ≥8 high risk	Household mean income	Age (years) Mean	Gender M/W %
<i>Lotto + players</i>	6.52	5.50	6.22	6.14	2.53	\$60,000 to \$79,999	48.2	43.1%/ 55.6%
<i>Multi-game players</i>	5.50	3.74	5.38	5.31	14.77	\$80,000 to \$99,999	35	65.7%/ 33.7%

Psychological characteristics:

Regression analysis indicated large differences between *Lotto + players* and *Multi-game players* in terms of the PPS subscales with *Lotto + players* endorsing greater *Personal responsibility, Gambling literacy, Honesty and control,* and *Pre-commitment* compared to *Multi-game players*. As well, there were large differences between *Lotto + players* and *Multi-game players* in terms of the PGSI with more *Multi-game players* reporting gambling problems.

Demographic characteristics:

Multi-game players reported a higher income bracket than *Lotto + players*. *Lotto + players* were older than *Multi-game players*. Also, *Multi-game players* were more likely to be men, whereas *Lotto + players* were more likely to be women.

PPS and game cluster

(*Lotto+* vs. *Multi-game* players)

Key findings:

Across all the PPS dimensions, those who played only (or predominantly) lottery games at a lower frequency had higher PPS scores than those who played multiple games at high frequency.

Playing a wider range of games was linked to much lower PPS scores, particularly in relation to *Gambling literacy*.

Higher frequency *Multi-game players* were more likely to report gambling-related problems (as measured by the PGSI) than *Lotto + players*

Implications:

Exposure to a range of games and higher frequency of play was linked to lower positive play. However, it is difficult to discern whether exposure to gambling games leads to decrements in positive play or whether those with less positive play beliefs or who engage in less positive play behaviors are more apt to play multiple games at higher frequency.

Focusing RG resources on higher frequency *Multi-game players* may have RG utility, especially given that more than four out of five of these players were identified as living with significant gambling-related problems. GameSense advisors should be made aware of the increased likelihood of gambling-related problems that such players may have. These findings support the Lower Risk Gambling Guidelines that recommend playing no more than two types of gambling games per month and gambling no more than four days per month.

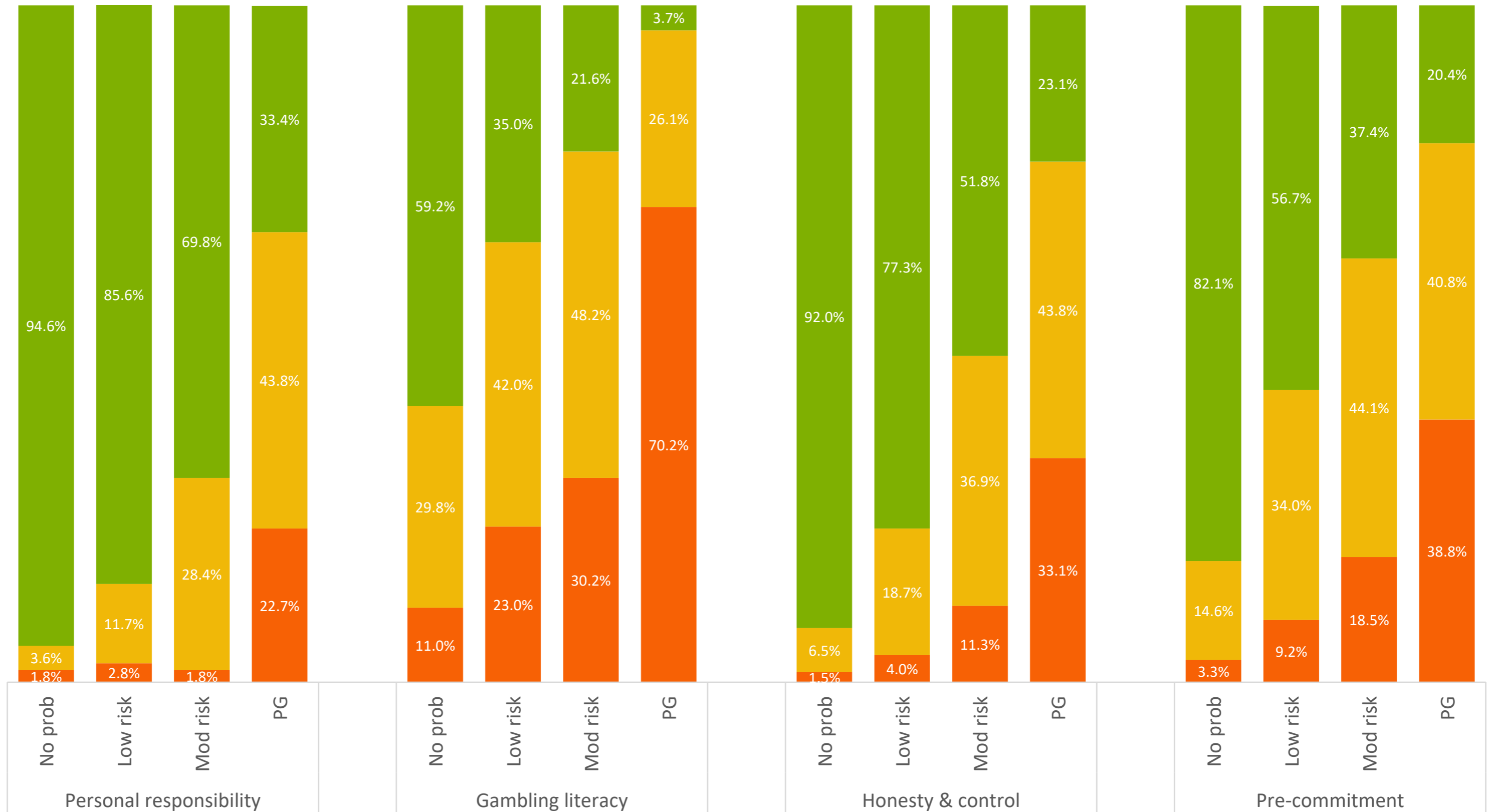
04

Positive play and
problem gambling
in Massachusetts



PGSI categories by PPS categories

- High PPS
- Medium PPS
- Low PPS



PGSI categories by gender

PGSI Category	Men	Women	Non-binary
Non-problem	38.7% (305)	60.1% (474)	0.5% (4)
Low-risk	44.9% (149)	53.9% (179)	0.3% (1)
Moderate-risk	51.9% (135)	47.3% (123)	0.4% (1)
Problem gamblers	63.2% (392)	35.8% (222)	0.8% (5)

Respondents who scored 8 or more on the PGSI (i.e., problem gamblers) were more likely to be men than women. Overall, 31% of the sample could be classified as problem gamblers. However, it is important to note that the sample was derived entirely from people who had gambled in the last 12 months and therefore the problem gambling figures are not directly comparable to prevalence surveys that also include non-gamblers.

PGSI categories by PPS categories

Key findings:

As in 2020, across all the PPS dimensions, those who scored lowest on the PGSI had the highest overall PPS scores.

PPS scores on the following sub-scales were moderately negatively correlated to PGSI scores:

Honesty and Control $r = -.390$

Pre-commitment $r = -.387$

Personal responsibility $r = -.428$

PPS scores on *Gambling literacy* were strongly negatively correlated to PGSI scores:

Gambling Literacy $r = -.553$

Males were more likely to have a gambling related issue than females.

Implications:

As PPS scores increase, PGSI scores decrease. The negative association suggests that positive play is incompatible with problem gambling.

However, whilst a high PGSI score reliably indicates a low PPS score, the opposite is not always true. That is, a low PPS score does not necessarily indicate problem gambling. This is likely because some PPS low scoring players do not play frequently enough to show symptoms or the consequences of PG.

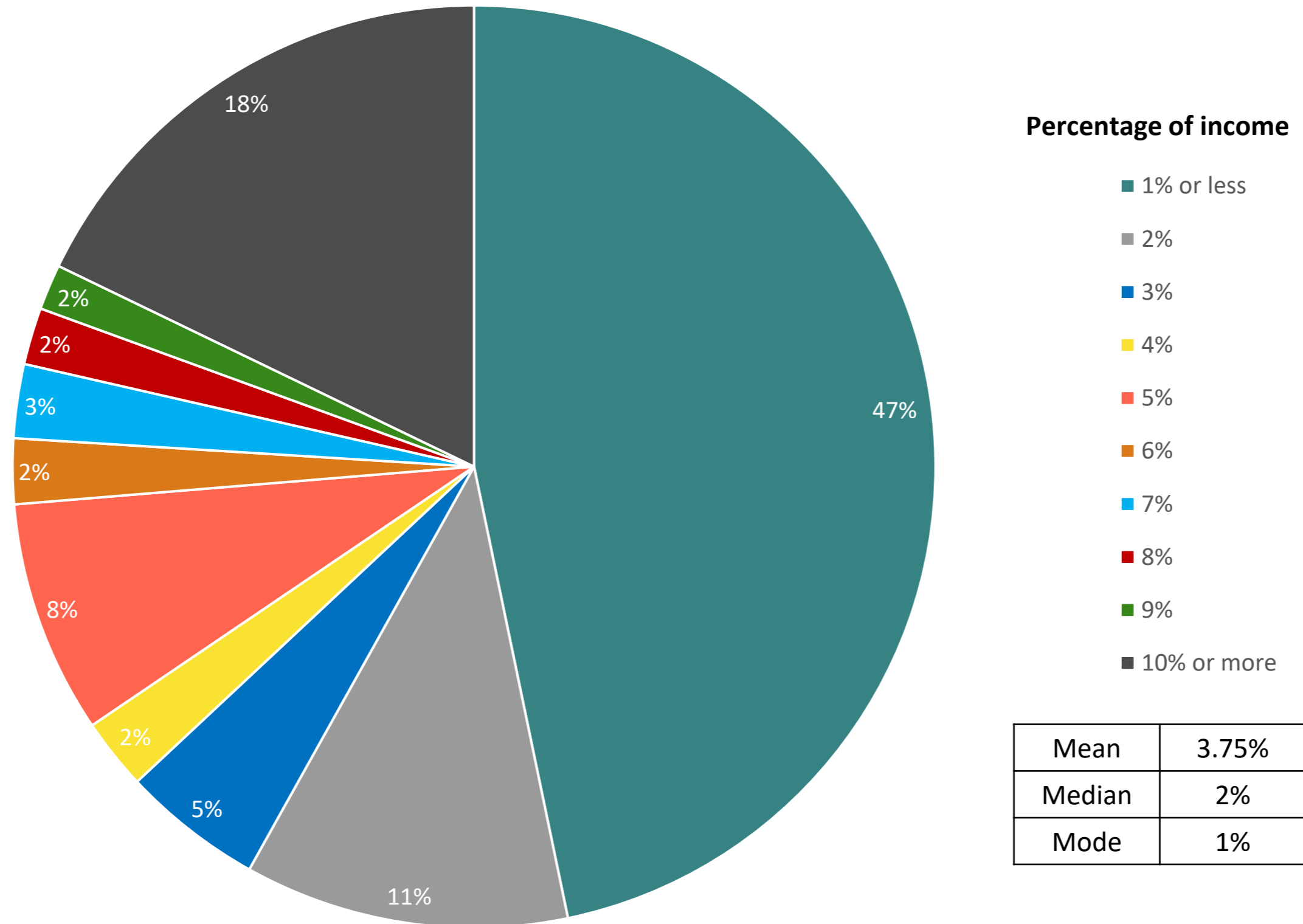
Consequently, we speculate that for low PPS scoring players, as frequency of play increases, so does the likelihood that those players could develop a gambling problem.

05

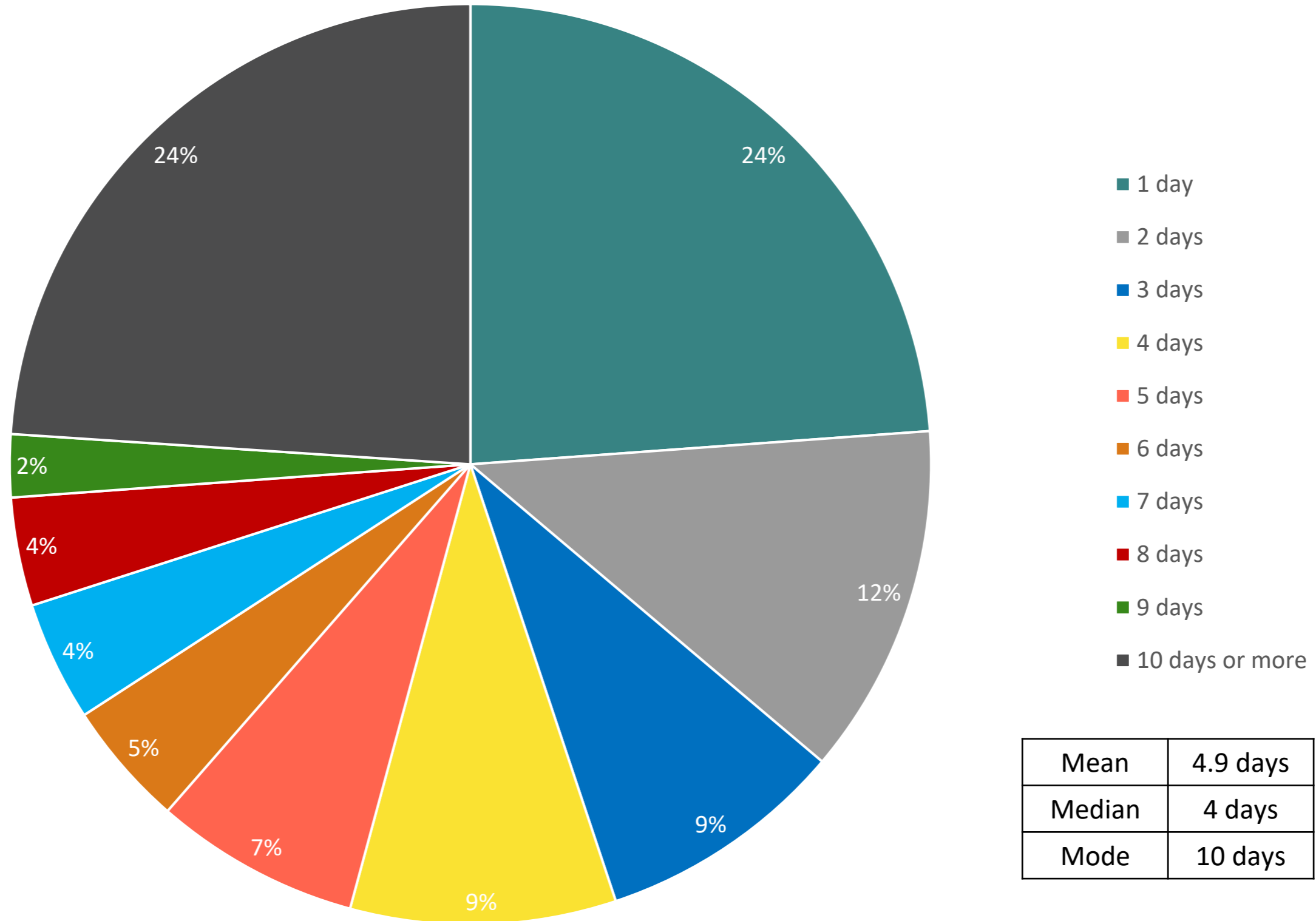
Gambling behaviors and
views about gambling



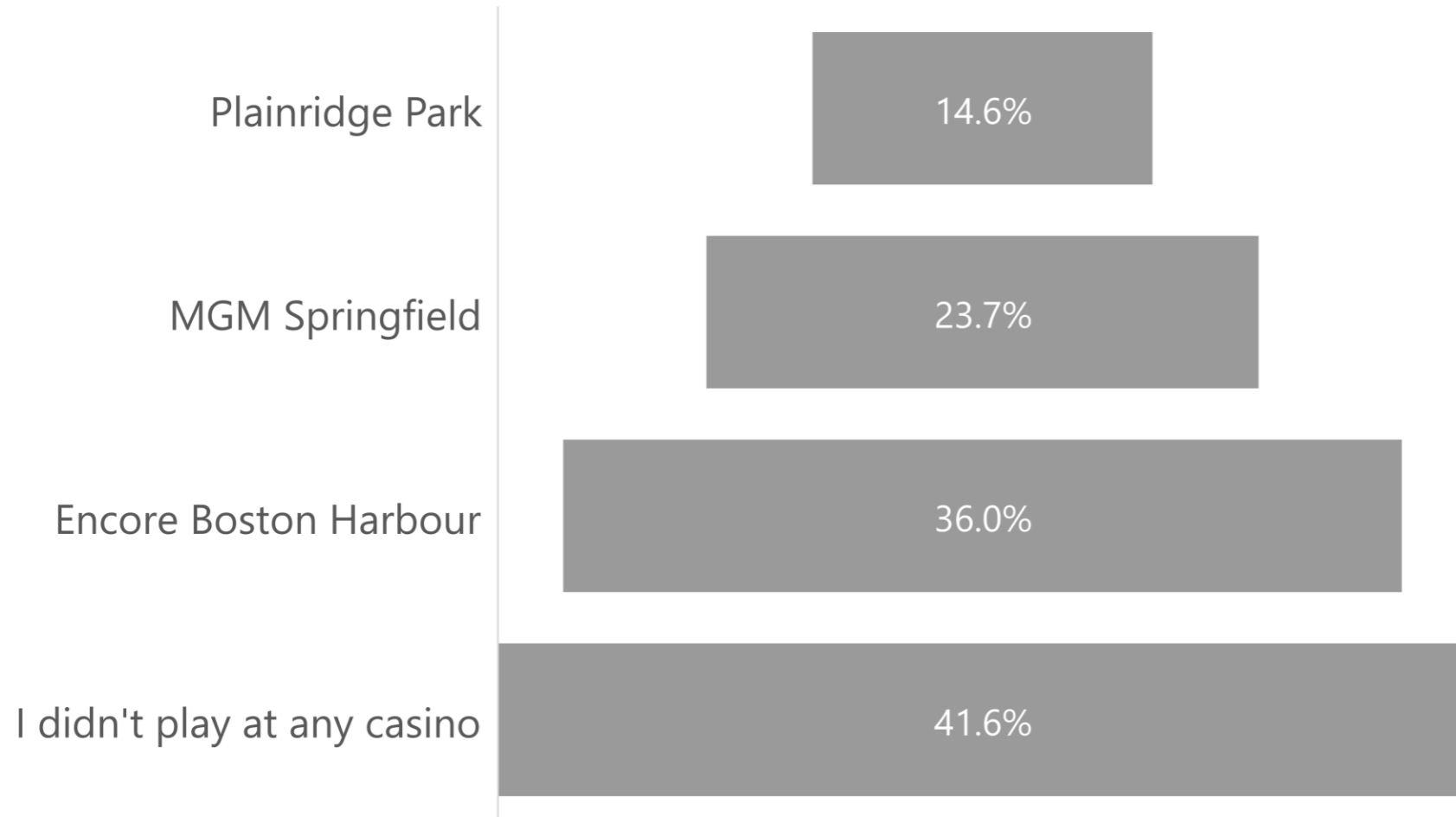
Over the last 12 months, roughly what percent of your personal annual income have you spent on average on gambling?



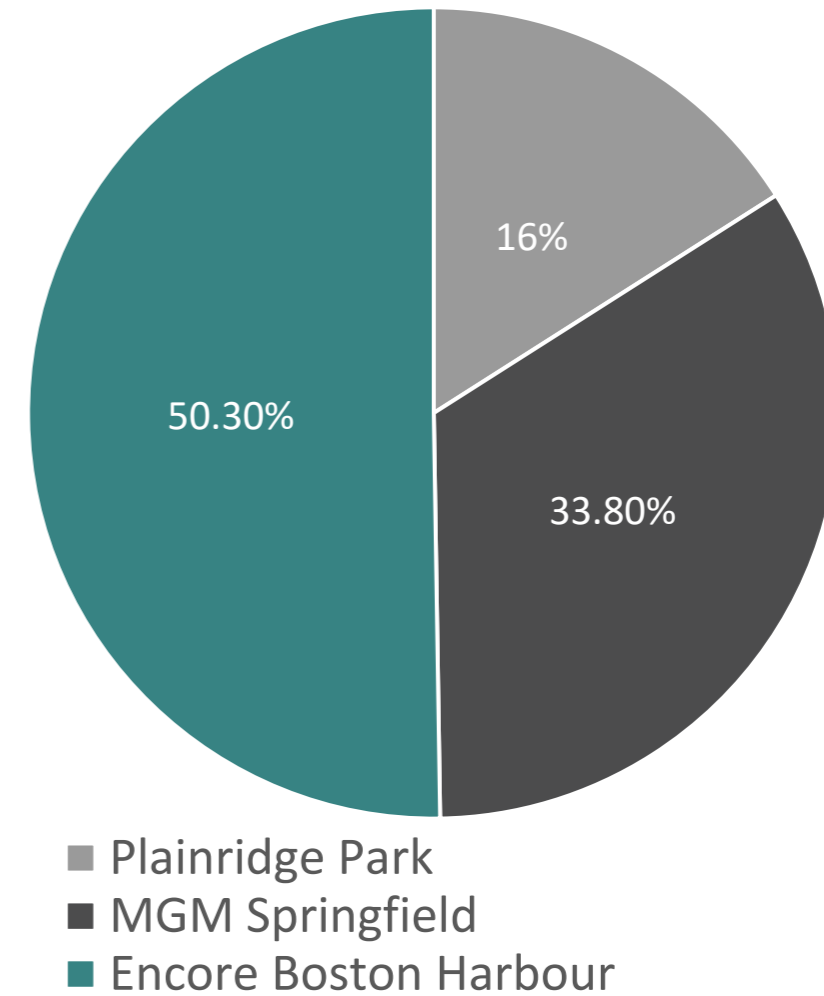
Over the last 12 months, on average, how many days a month did you typically gamble?



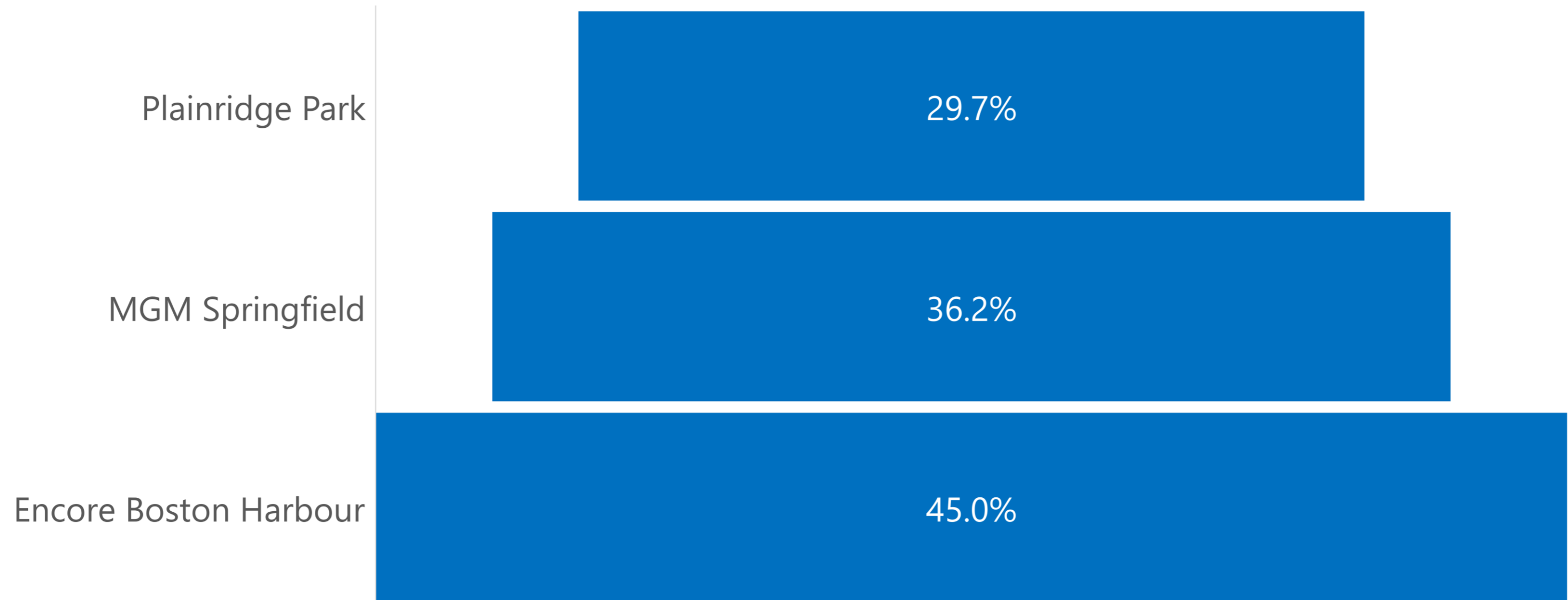
In the last 12 months, which of the three casinos in Massachusetts have you played at?



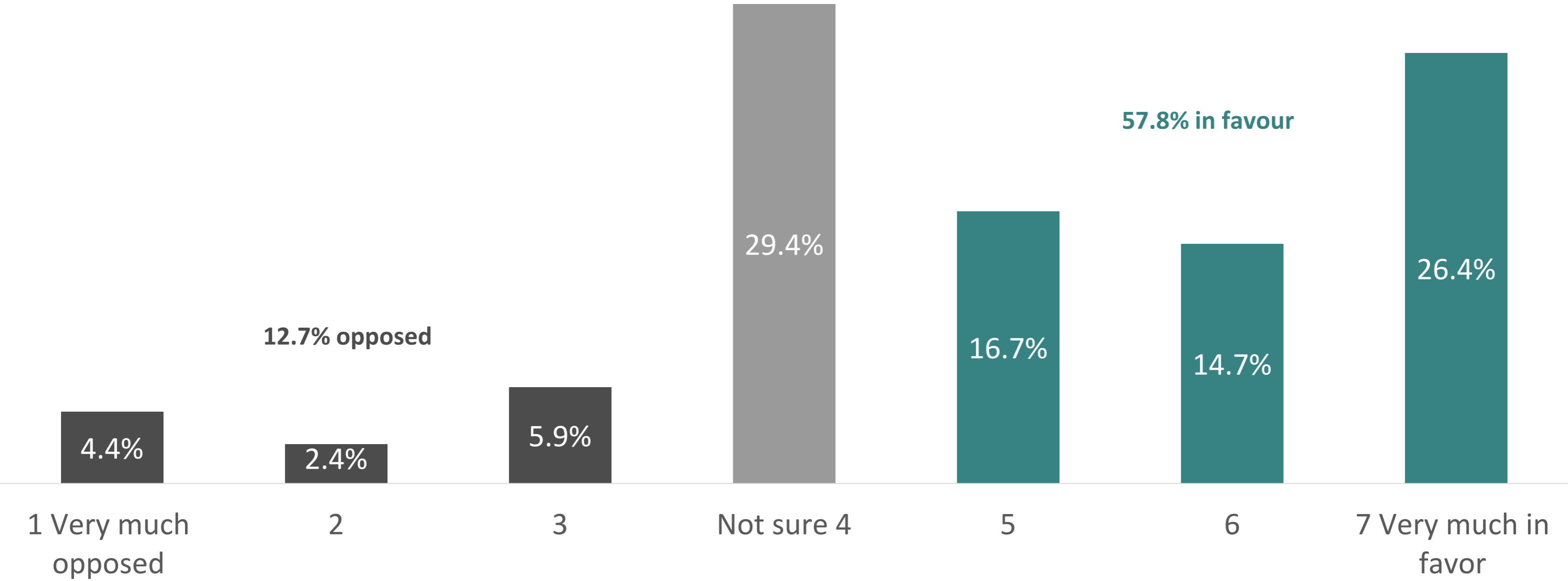
Which of the three casinos in Massachusetts is your primary casino destination?



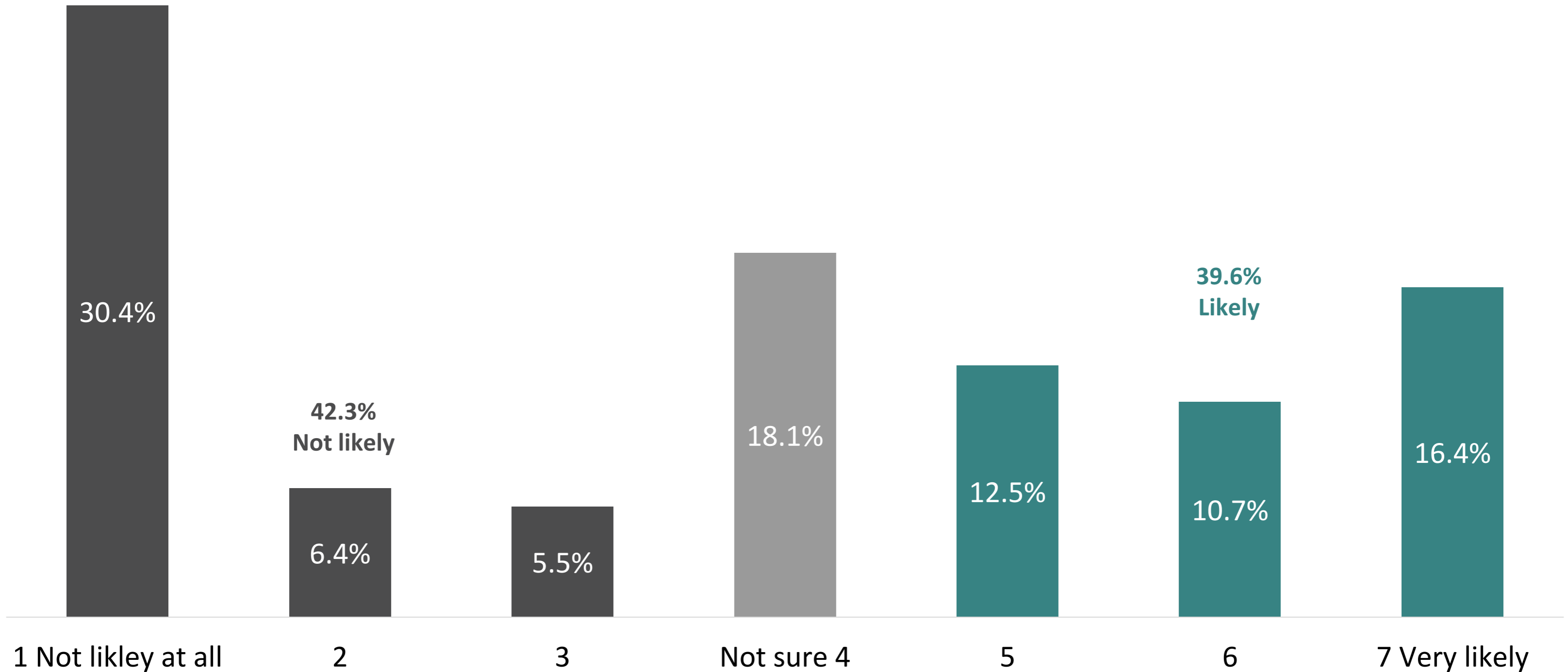
Percentage of last year casino players (by venue) who are rewards program members



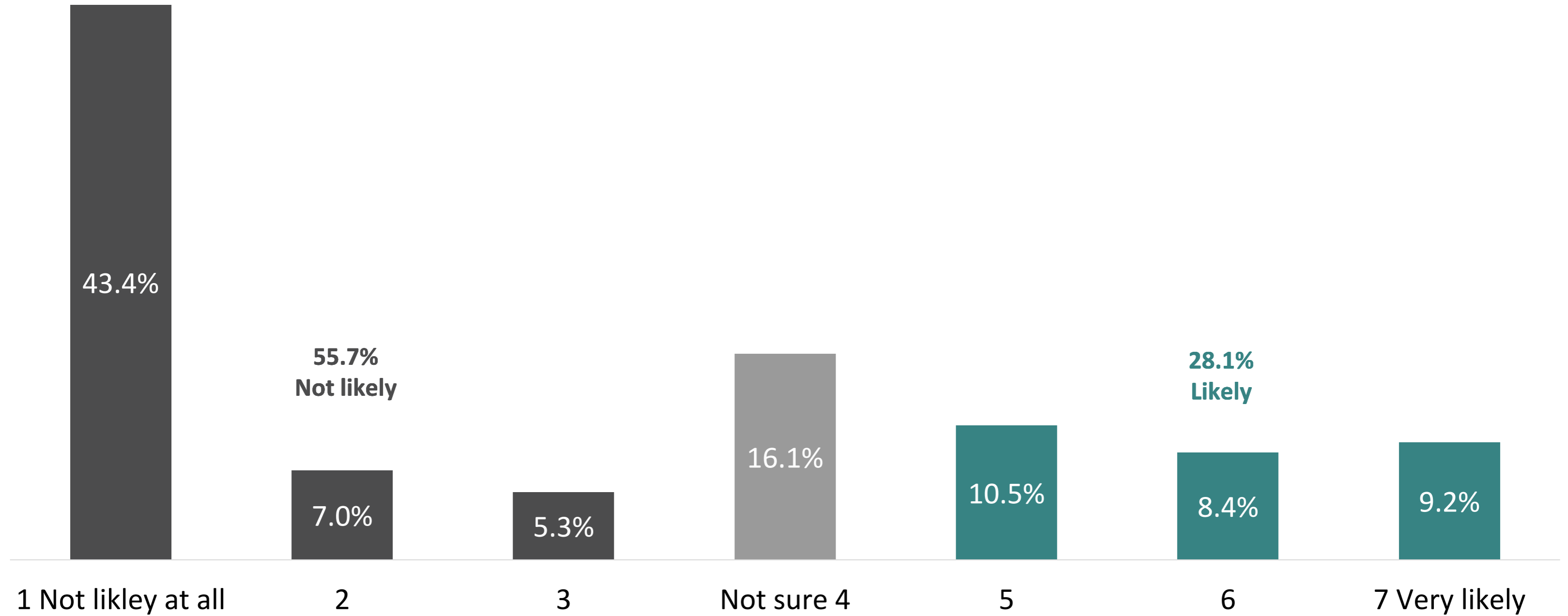
Sports wagering will soon be legal in Massachusetts. How do you feel about this?



Once sports wagering is legal in Massachusetts. How likely are you to bet on sports at a Massachusetts casino?

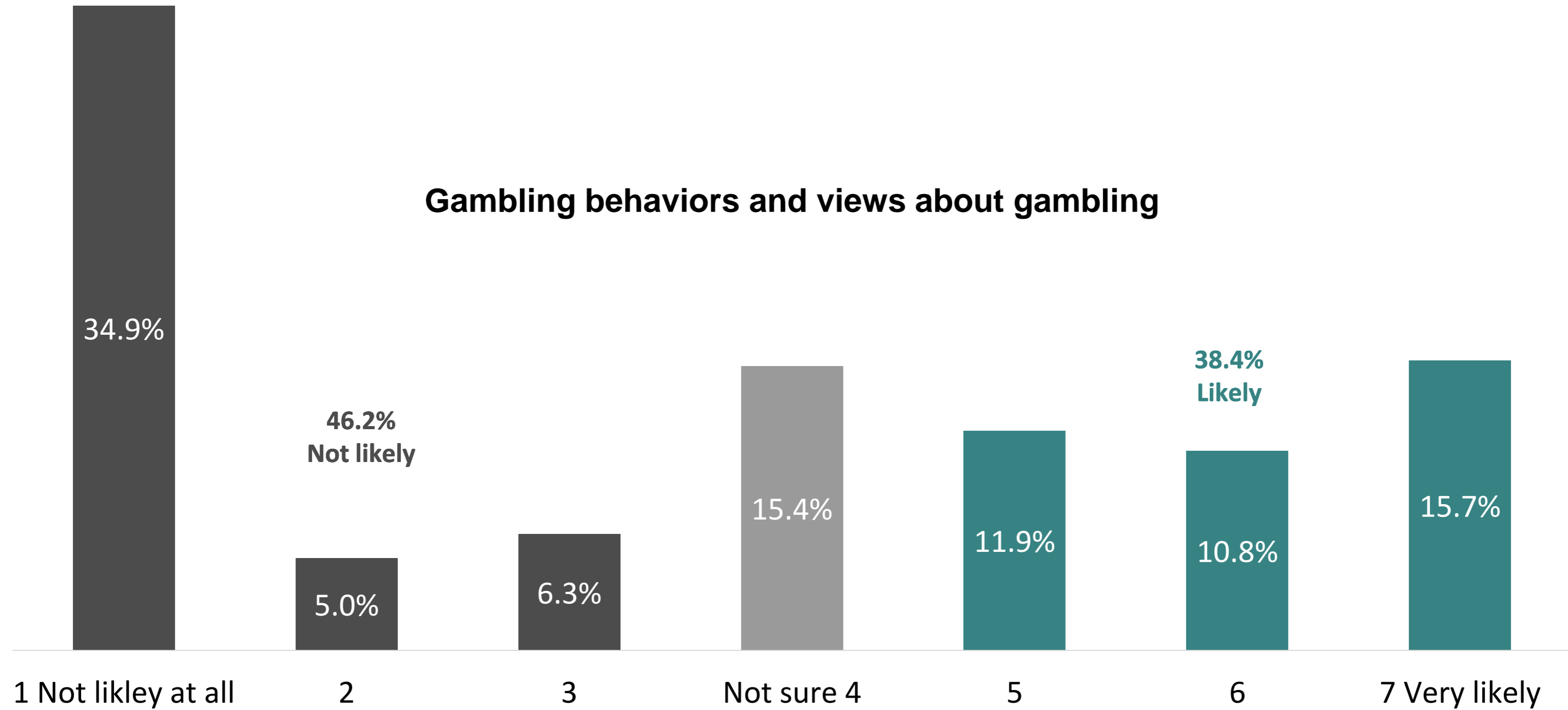


Once sports wagering is legal in Massachusetts. How likely are you to bet on sports at a horse racing or dog track?



Once sports wagering is legal in Massachusetts. How likely are you to bet on sports using a mobile sports betting app?

Gambling behaviors and views about gambling



Gambling behaviors and views about gambling

Key findings:

Just over half of respondents (53%) reported spending more than 1% of their annual personal income on gambling over the last 12 months, which exceeds the Lower Risk Gambling Guidelines (LRGG) recommendation of no more than 1% of household income. Furthermore, whilst 54% of respondents gambled four times or less per month (as recommended by the LRGG) it is worth noting that almost a quarter of respondents (24%) reported gambling 10 or more times per month.

Although most participants (57.8%) reported that they were in favor of legalized sports wagering in Massachusetts, most also suggested that they either did not intend to engage in sports wagering or were undecided.

Implications:

Approximately half of all respondents gambled more frequently and spent more on gambling than is recommended by the LRGG. This may put the respondents at increased risk for excessive gambling. Consequently, communicating these risks to Massachusetts players could be a worthwhile endeavor.

A significant number of respondents were undecided about whether they would gamble on sports wagers in Massachusetts, which may suggest that they lack information about this development or currently feel they lack sufficient knowledge about sports to engage in such form of betting. However, it is possible that, over time, advertising may persuade many of those who are undecided that they should try wagering on sporting events in Massachusetts. Public health information about sports wagering may be needed to help individuals make well informed choices about if, when, where and how often they should gamble on sporting events.

06

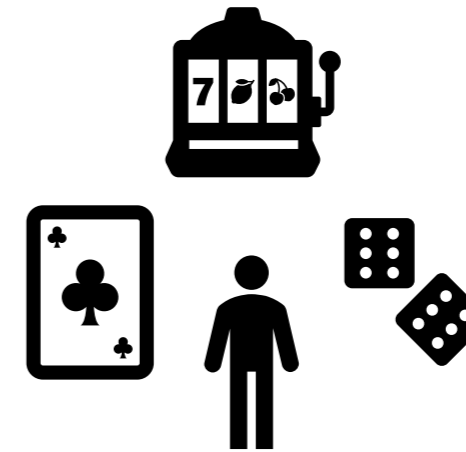
Focusing on lower PPS
scoring players in
Massachusetts



Player segments who might be targeted for an increased RG focus



Younger players



Higher frequency multi-game players

Younger players scored progressively lower than older players on every PPS sub-scale. In particular, *Gambling literacy* and *Pre-commitment* scored lower than the other sub-scales. This was most prominent in players aged between 21 and 44 years-of-age. Future RG efforts may want to engage younger players using media and content that resonate with these age groups (see pages 68-75 for ideas on how to increase positive play).

Those who played several game types, other than lottery draw games or scratch tickets, and who played at least once a month, scored lower on the PPS. Although there were no meaningful gender differences in PPS scores amongst all players generally, men were more likely to be high-frequency multi-game players and to have a gambling problem.

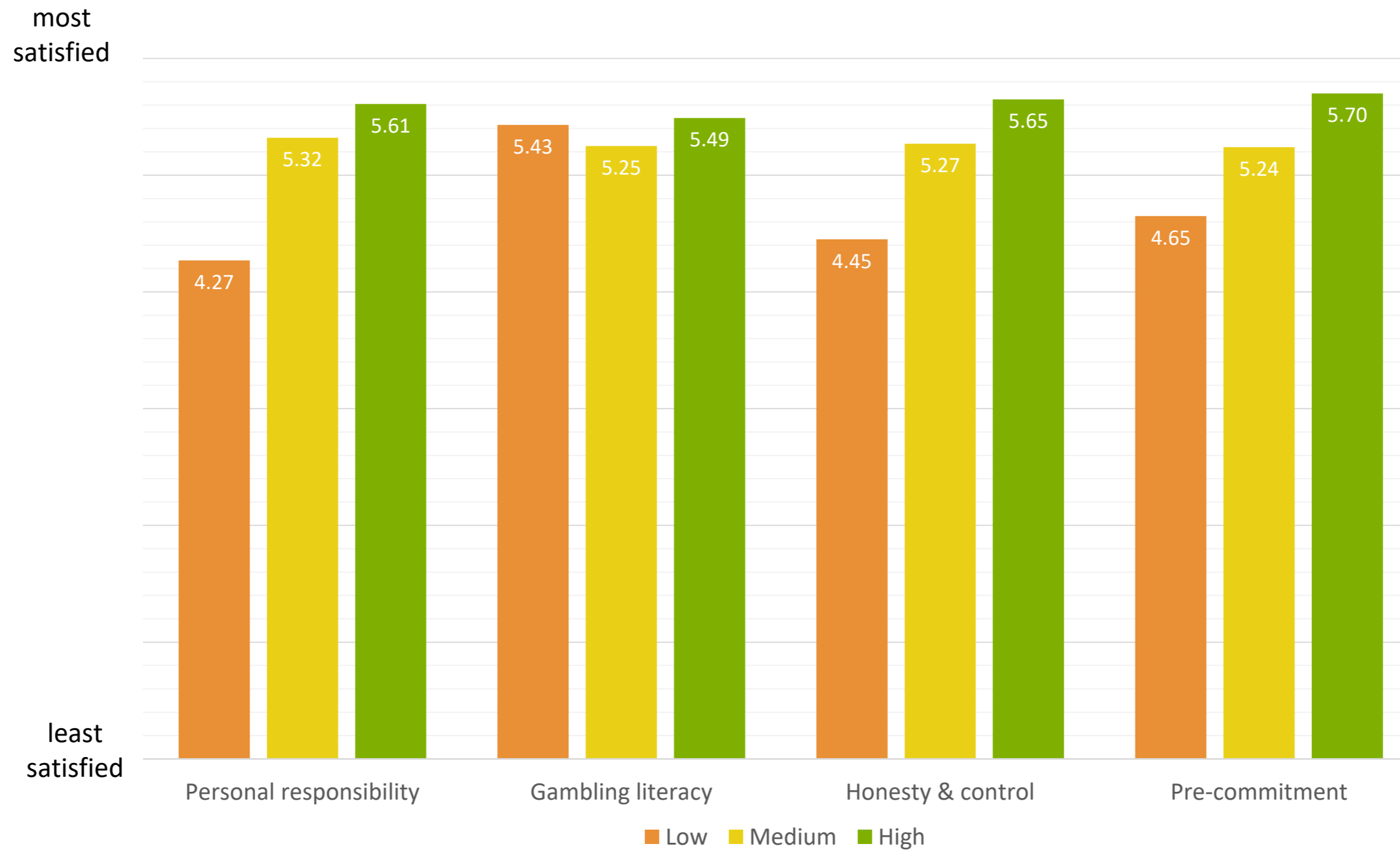
Future RG efforts may wish to focus on higher frequency multi-game players to try to increase their *Gambling literacy* and to encourage *Pre-commitment* (see pages 68-75 for ideas on how to increase positive play).

07



Positive play and player satisfaction

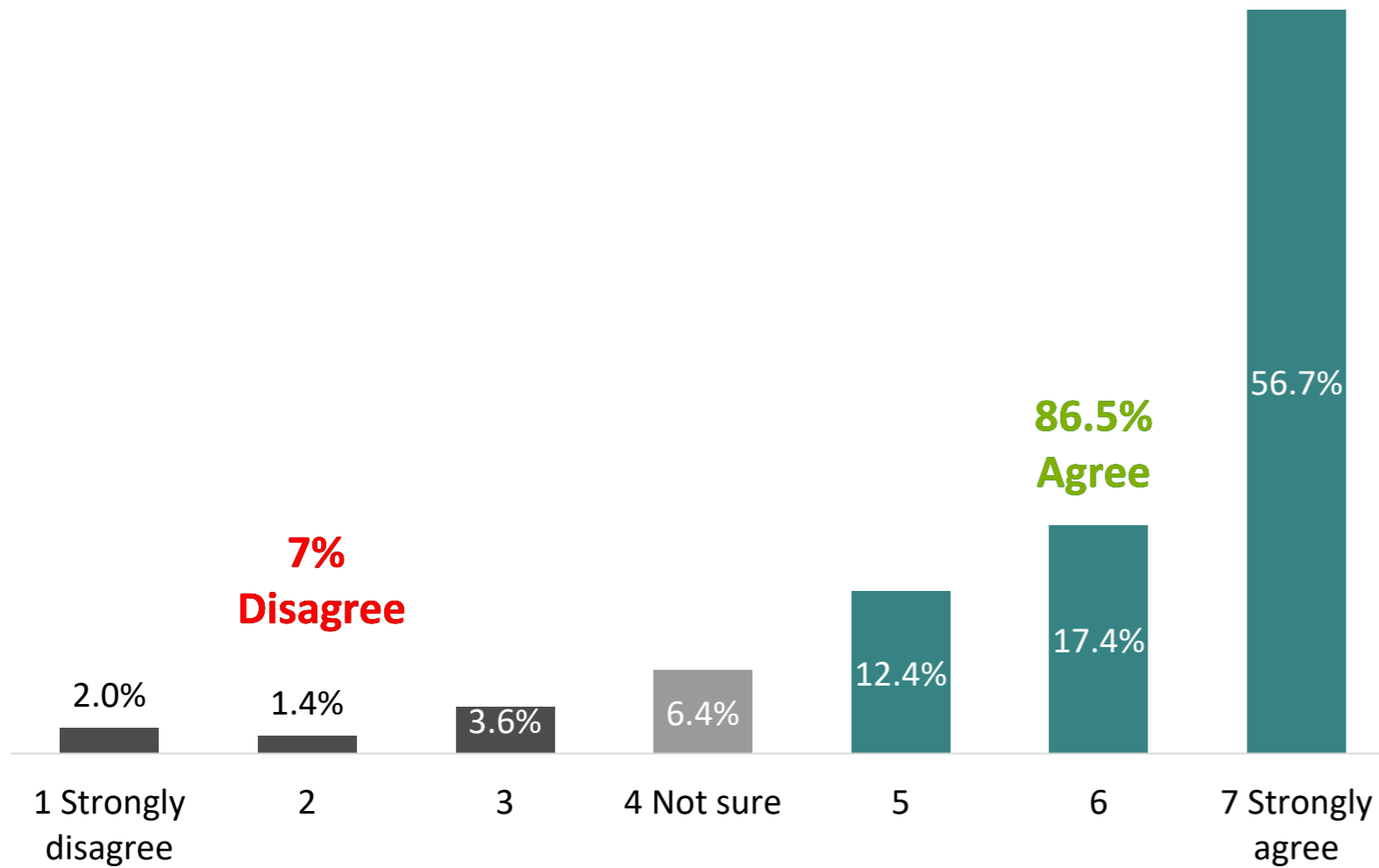
Gambling satisfaction mean scores (out of 7) by PPS category scores



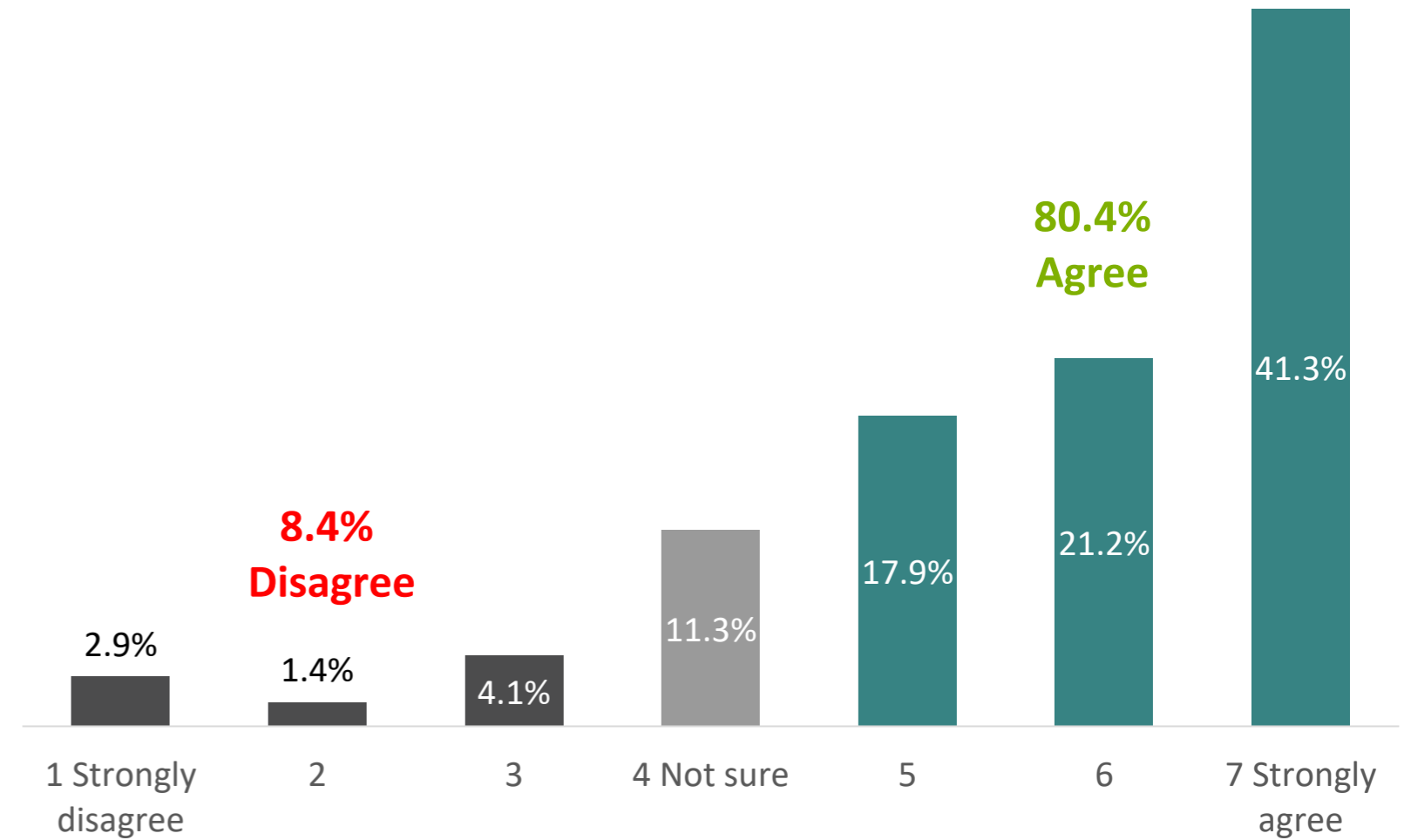
Player satisfaction (past year) increased alongside positive play beliefs and behaviors

I feel satisfied with my gambling experience when....

I only spend what I can afford to lose



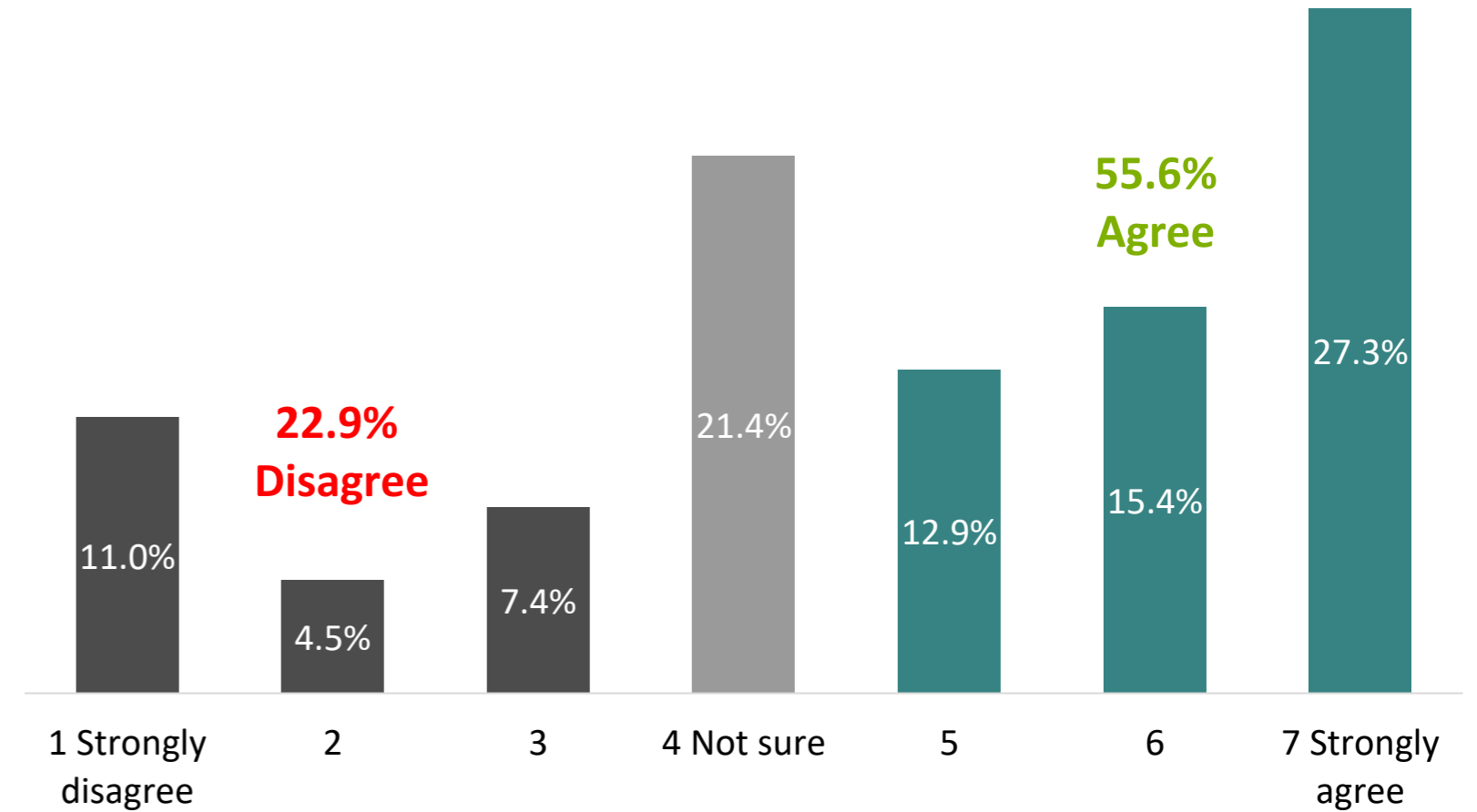
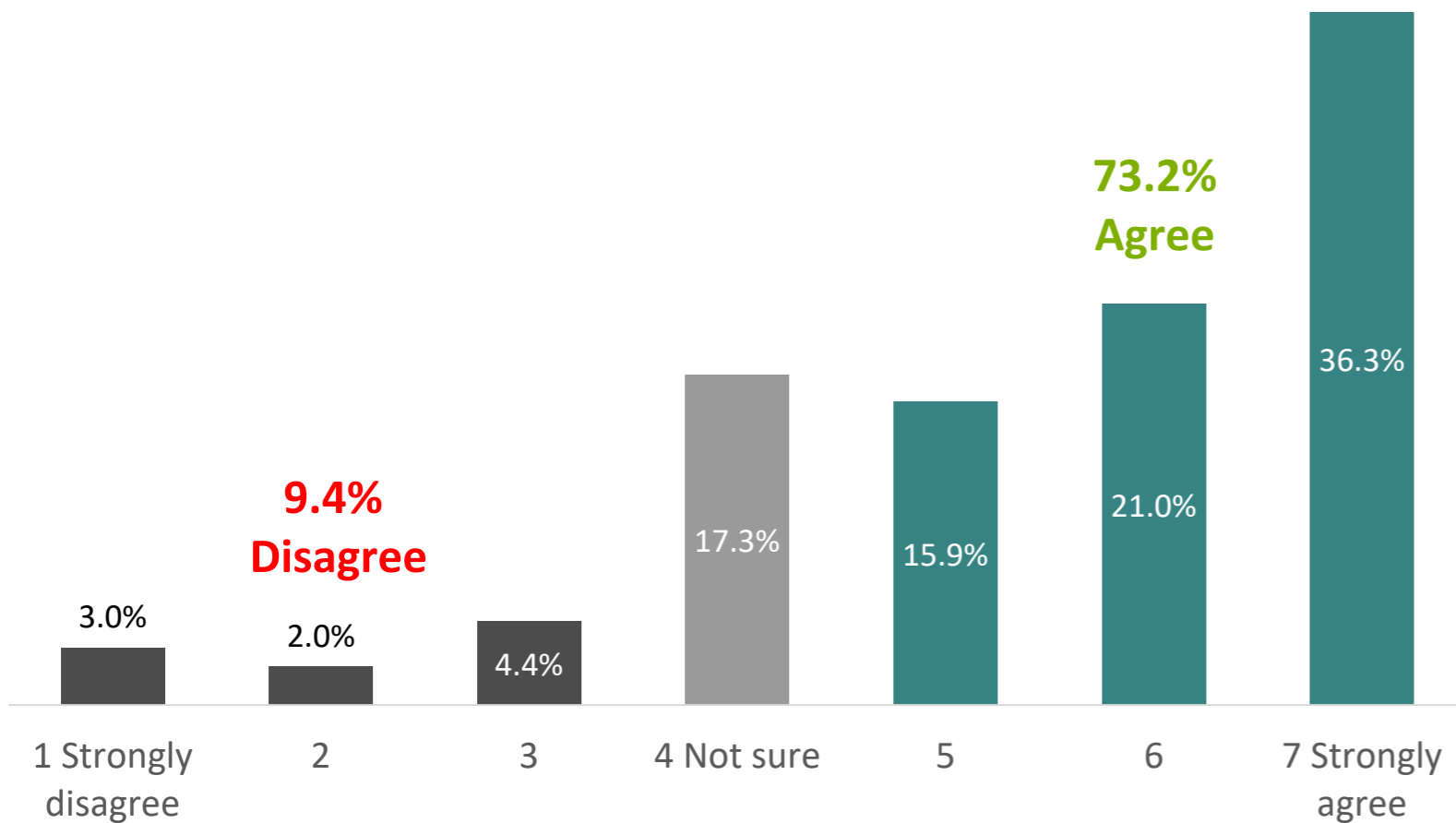
I feel I have been entertained



I feel satisfied with my gambling experience when....

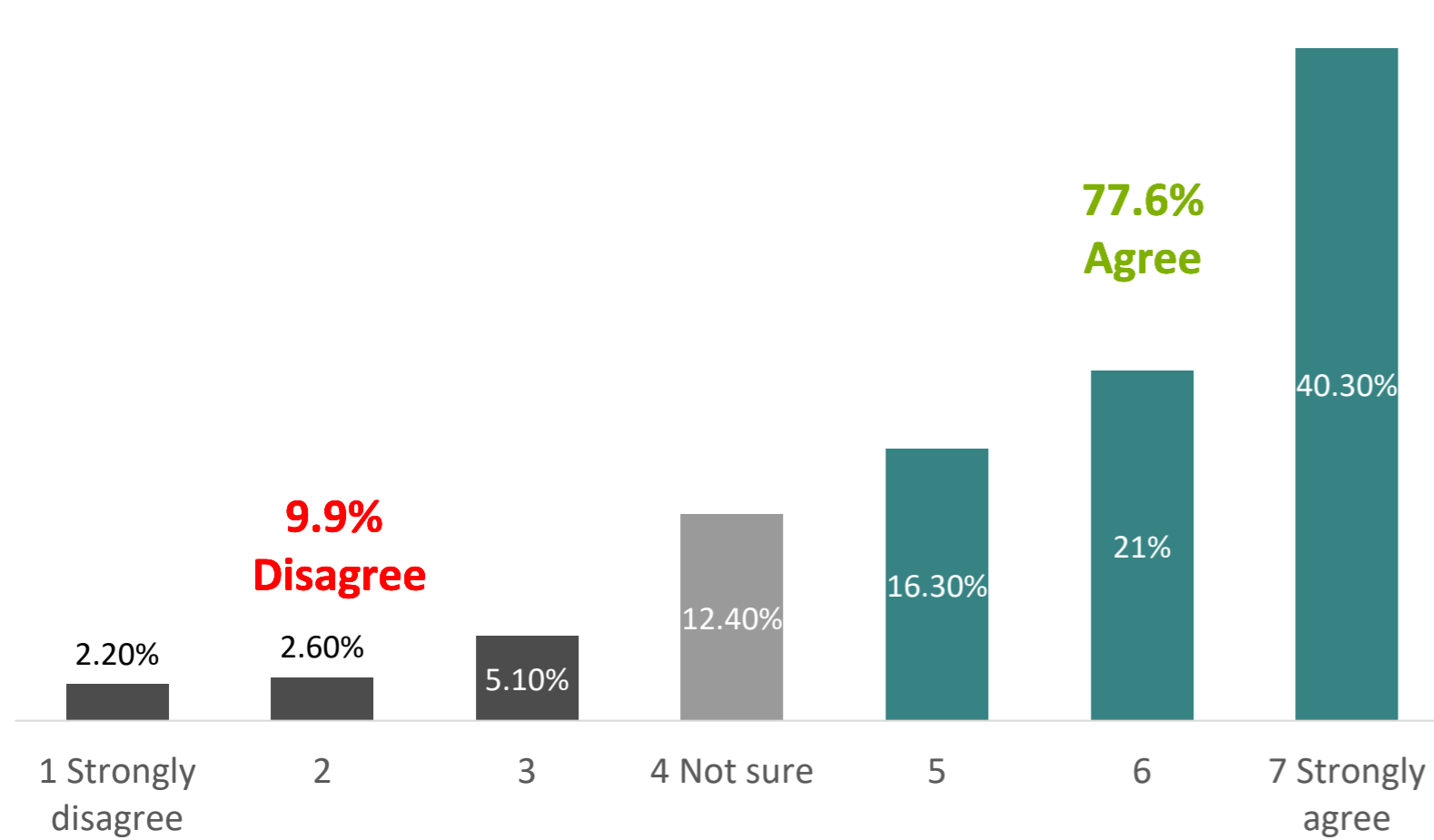
I feel I can trust the company I am playing with

I feel the company I am gaming with wants me to only spend what I can afford to lose

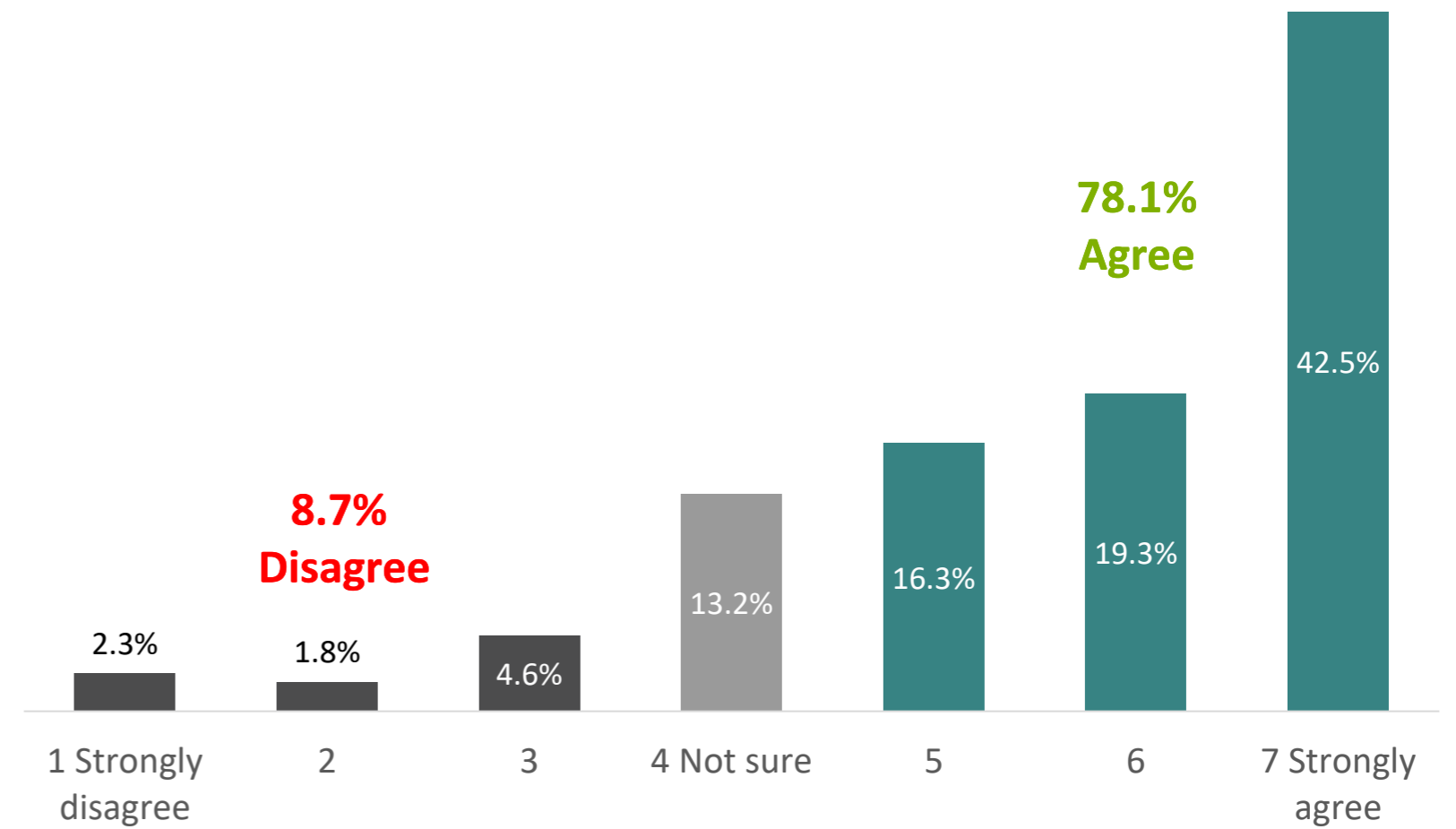


I feel satisfied with my gambling experience when....

I fully understand my odds of winning at the game I am playing



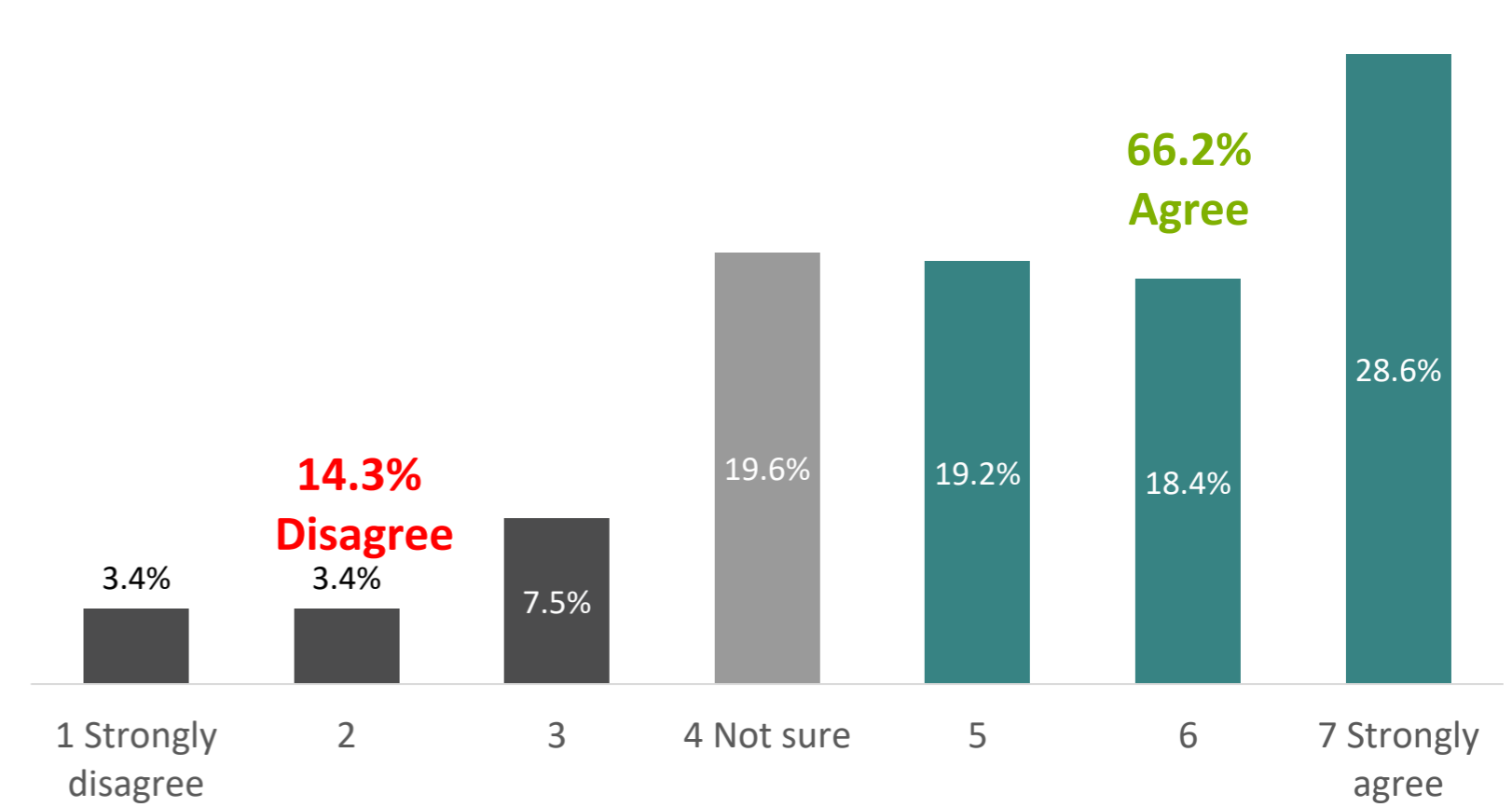
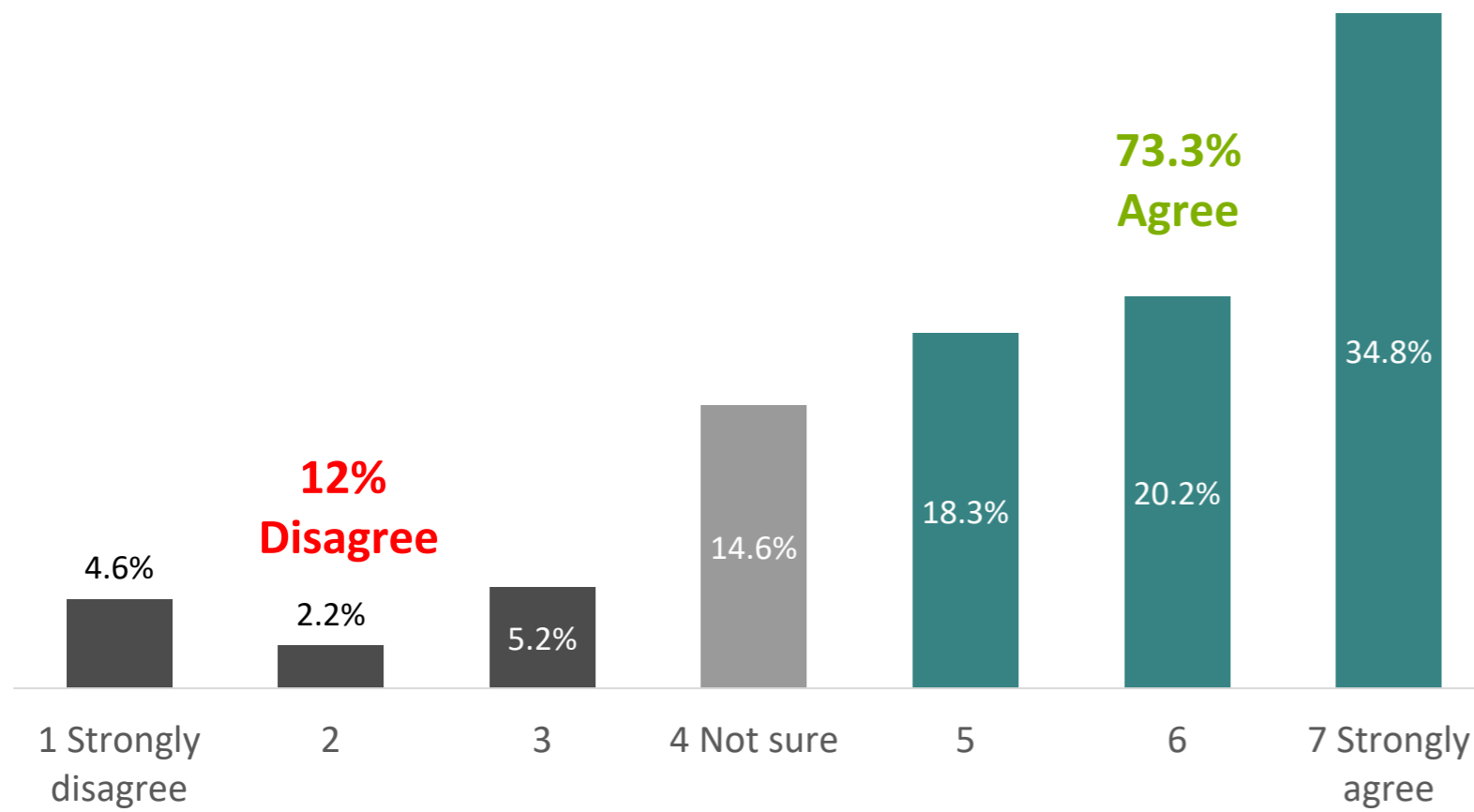
I feel I have stopped gaming "at the right time"



I feel satisfied with my gambling experience when....

I have access to a wide variety of games to play (e.g., poker, slots, lottery) each time I play

I feel relaxed at the end of my gaming session



Positive play and satisfaction with gambling

Key findings:

Players were more satisfied with their gambling experiences when they accepted personal responsibility for their gambling, were honest and in control about their gambling and when they considered limits for the amount of money and time they should spend gambling (i.e., *Pre-commitment*). There was little association between player satisfaction and *Gambling literacy* scores.

Players also reported more satisfaction when they played within their means, understood how to play a game and felt relaxed after playing. Furthermore, having trust in the gaming company and believing that the gaming company is concerned that players only spend what they can afford was also associated with higher levels of satisfaction with play.

Implications:

Playing responsibly and holding responsible beliefs about gambling does not appear to decrease satisfaction with gambling, suggesting that RG promotion to date is not a deterrent to responsible play, and may provide added value. That *Pre-commitment* and satisfaction are linked makes intuitive sense. Players who pre-determine how much they can afford to lose and then adhere to that limit are unlikely to experience high levels of anxiety due to their gambling losses. Higher scores on *Personal responsibility & Honesty and control* may be indicative of an overall high level of psychological well being, which may translate into less worry and concern about losing control over gambling than those players who have lower PPS scores.

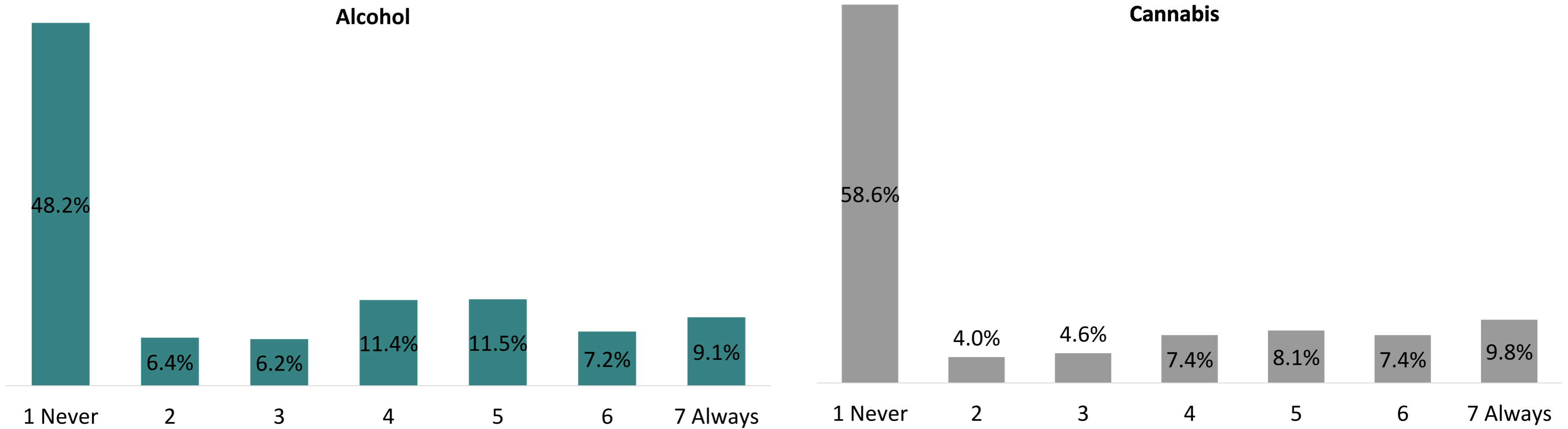
These findings also suggest that both trust in a gaming company and believing that the company is concerned for the welfare of its players are linked to satisfaction. Consequently, genuine corporate responsible gambling strategies may offer more than just an ethical approach to gambling, they may also increase levels of customer satisfaction.

08

Positive play alcohol
and cannabis use in
Massachusetts



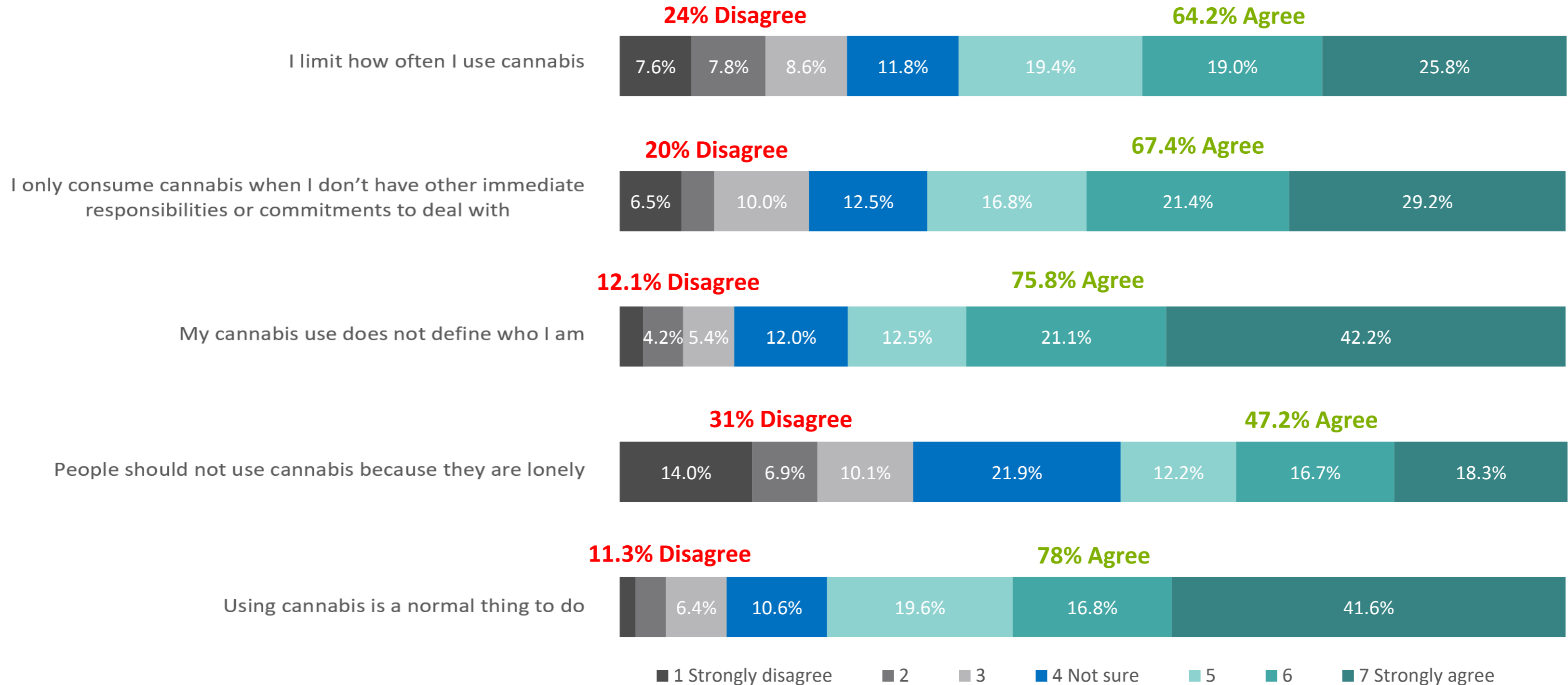
Over the last 12 months, when you gambled, did you ever gamble while under the influence of.....



Most players had gambled whilst under the influence of alcohol at some point in the last year. However, less than half had gambled after consuming cannabis.

Agreement with key items from the Cannabis Lower Risk Scale (CaLRS)

(only those who reported using cannabis whilst gambling in the last 12 months n = 830)



Most respondents who reported cannabis use whilst gambling in the last year agreed with items that related to lower-risk cannabis use. However, there was less certainty regarding the use of cannabis when lonely.

Agreement with key items from the Cannabis Lower Risk Scale (CaLRS) and PPS scores

- **Using cannabis is a normal thing to do:** There was a moderate correlation between those who scored high on *Honesty & control, Pre-commitment and Personal responsibility* and agreement with this statement. *Gambling literacy* scores were not meaningfully correlated with this statement.
- **My cannabis use does not define who I am:** There was a moderate correlation between those who scored high on *Honesty & control, Pre-commitment and Personal responsibility* and agreement with this statement. *Gambling literacy* scores were not meaningfully correlated with this statement.
- **People should not use cannabis because they are lonely:** There was no meaningful correlation between those who scored high on *Honesty & control* and *Personal responsibility, Pre-commitment or Gambling literacy*.
- **I only consume cannabis when I don't have other immediate responsibilities or commitments to deal with:** There was a moderate correlation between those who scored high on *Honesty & control, Pre-commitment and Personal responsibility* and agreement with this statement. *Gambling literacy* scores were not meaningfully correlated with this statement.
- **I limit how often I use cannabis:** There was a moderate correlation between those who scored high on *Honesty & control, Pre-commitment and Personal responsibility* and agreement with this statement. *Gambling literacy* scores were not meaningfully correlated with this statement.

Alcohol and Cannabis use in relation to positive play

Key findings:

Most respondents reported that they had gambled whilst under the influence of alcohol in the last year, whereas just under half reported gambling after consuming cannabis.

Agreement with low-risk cannabis items were somewhat correlated to PPS scores except in relation *Gambling literacy*. However, there was no correlation between PPS scores and using Cannabis when feeling lonely.

Implications:

That gambling after drinking alcohol was associated is unsurprising given the long-standing practise of serving alcohol in some gambling establishments (e.g., casinos) and the legality and history of both activities in Massachusetts. Reported cannabis use whilst gambling was less prolific and may be because consumption of cannabis is prohibited in gaming establishments. Furthermore, cannabis consumption has only recently been legalized in Massachusetts.

That lower-risk cannabis use was positively associated with positive play may reflect a tendency for some people to monitor their behavior when engaging in potentially addictive activities. However, we also found that *Gambling literacy* scores were generally not associated with agreement of lower-risk cannabis items. This suggests that some people may lack understanding about the potential risks associated with potentially addictive behaviors.

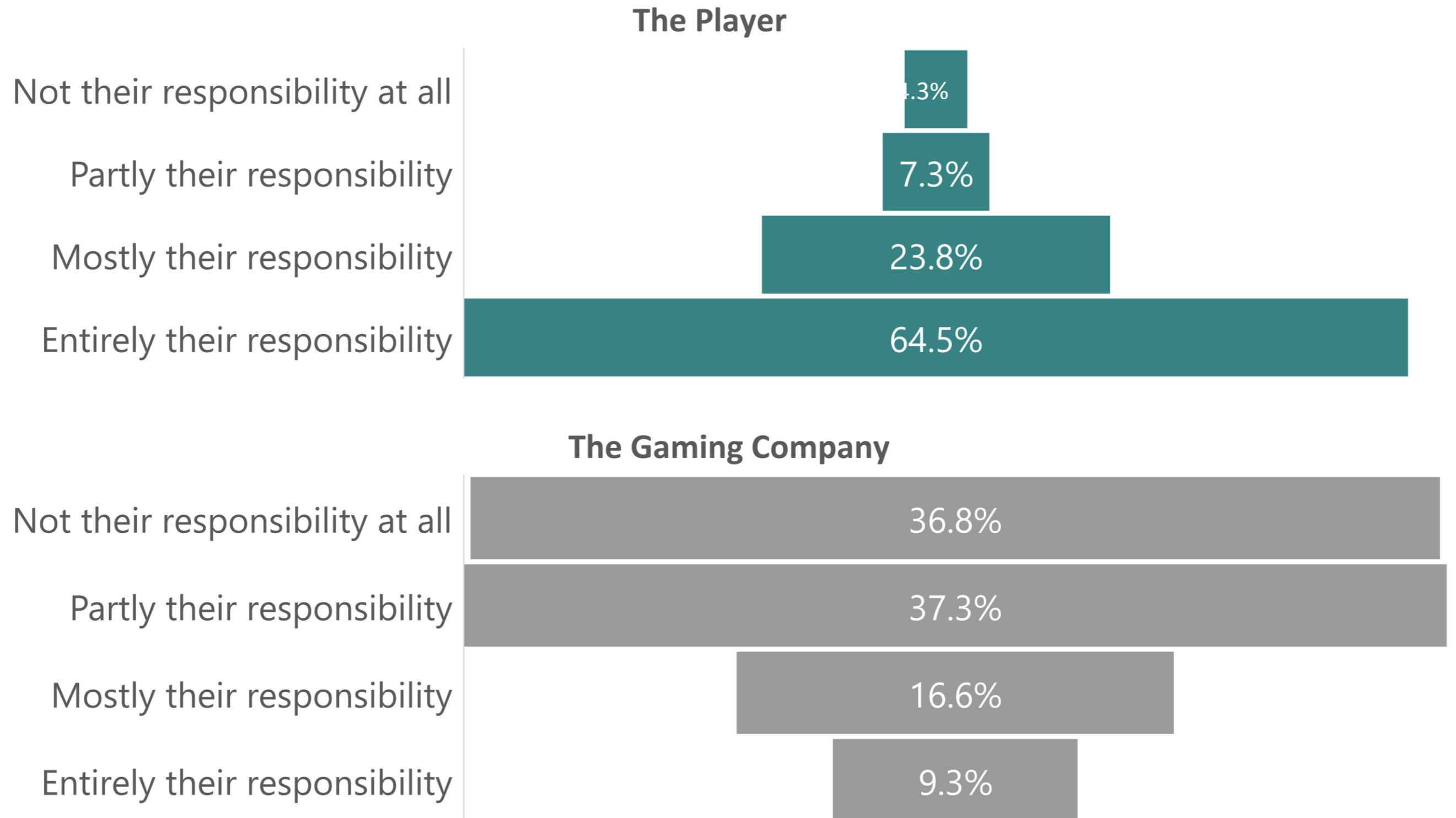
The observation that most respondents did not agree that cannabis should avoided when lonely suggests that public education in that regard is somewhat lacking in comparison with other potential cannabis related risks.

09

Views about responsible
gambling



To what extent would you say the following have a responsibility to ensure that players only gamble what they can afford to spend?



To what extent would you say the following have a responsibility to ensure that players only gamble what they can afford to spend?

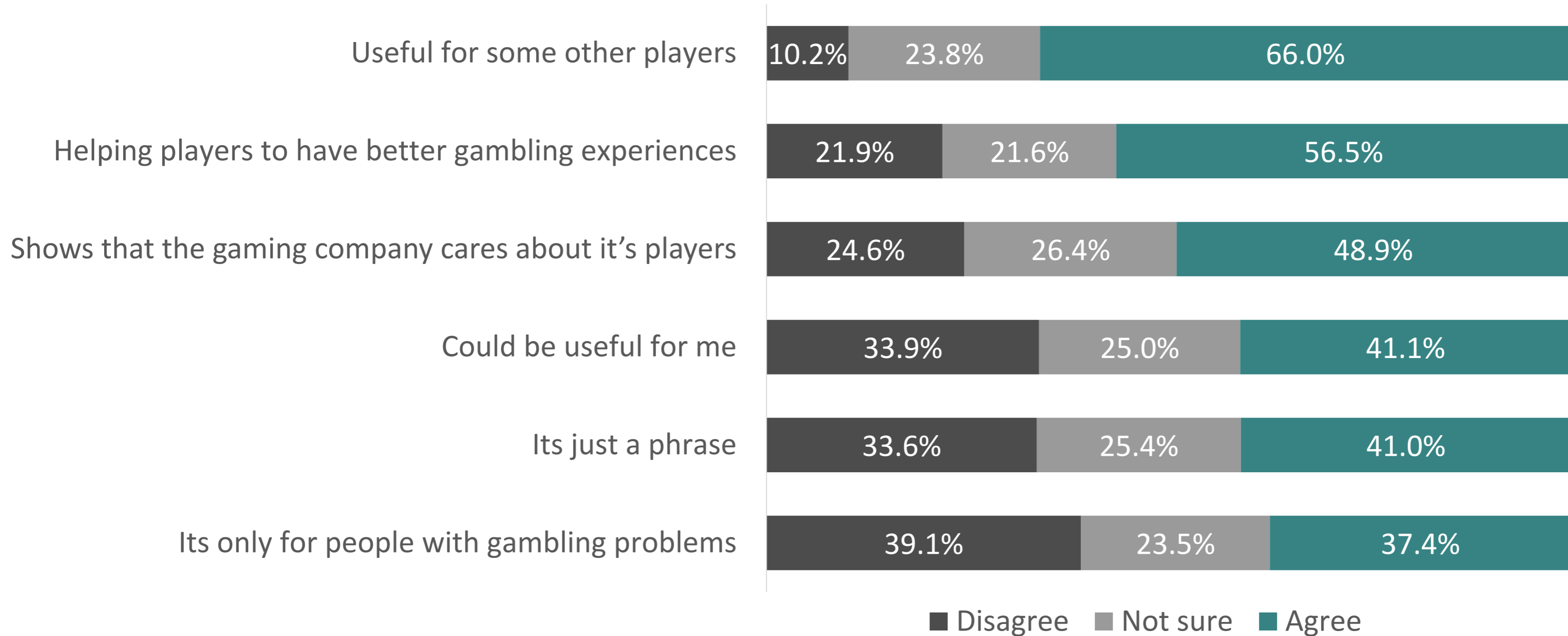
The Government/Gaming Regulators



The Retailer

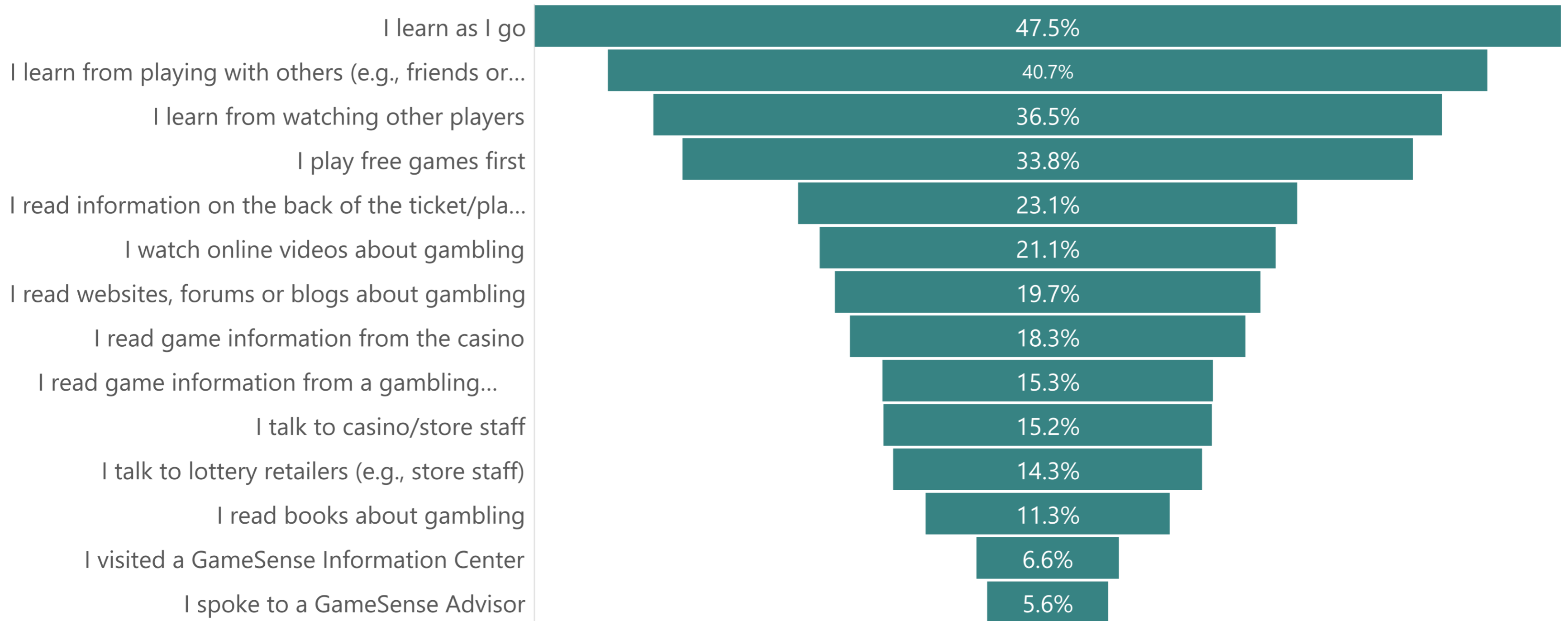


Which of the following do you think of when you hear or see the phrase “Responsible Gaming”?



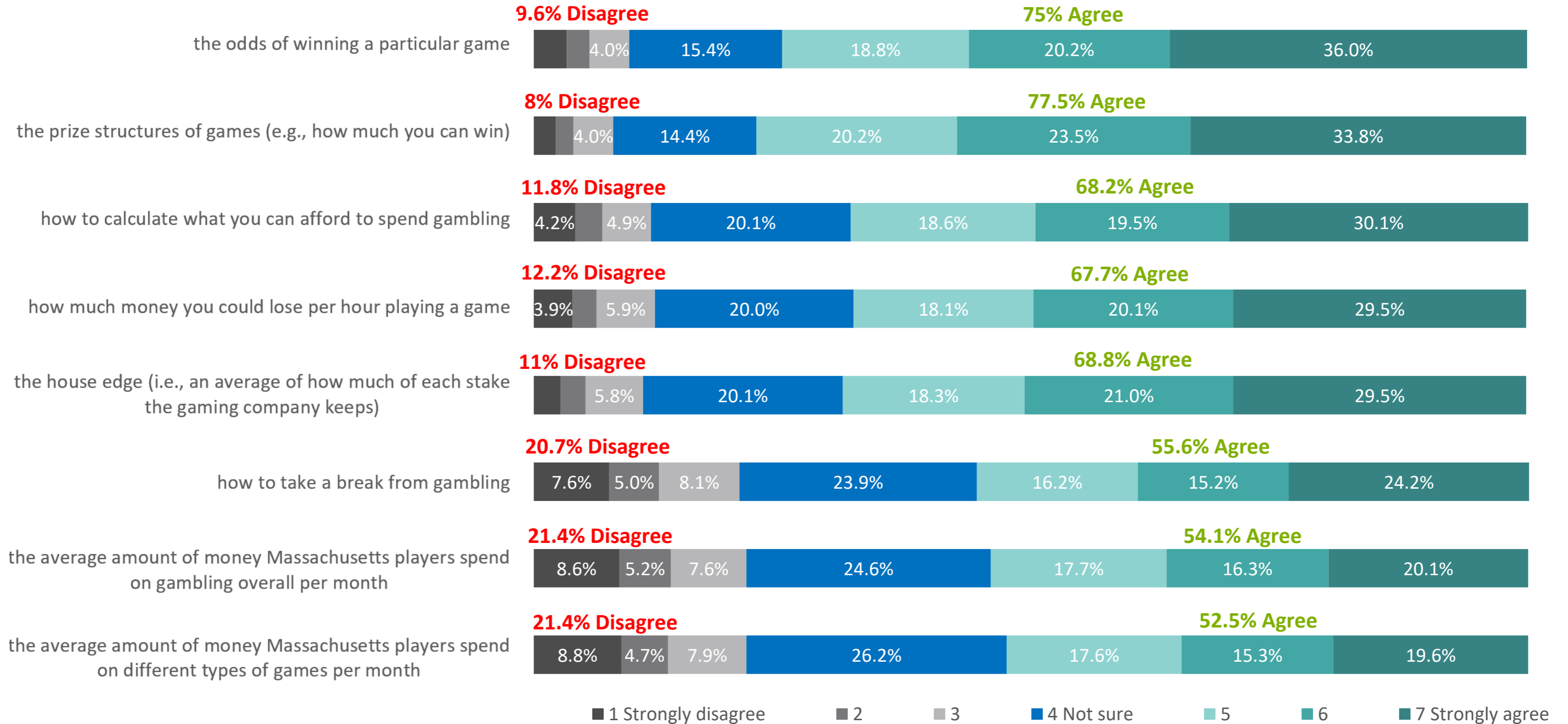
There were no meaningful correlations with PPS scores for any of these items

How do you learn about how gambling games work? (check all that apply)



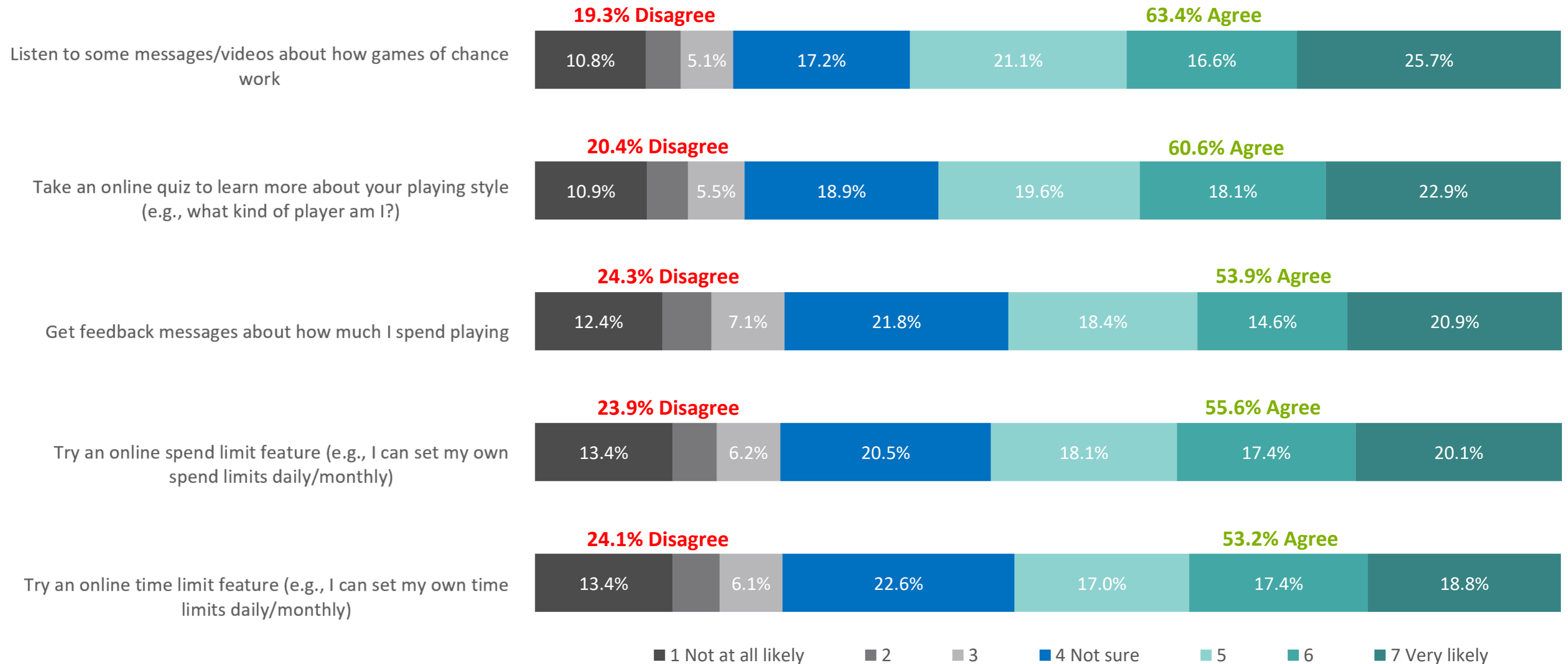
Respondents preferred to learn experientially by playing games and watching others play, followed by reading information or watching videos on how to play and last by talking to GameSense staff, although this does not indicate that GameSense staff interactions were not valued, rather they were simply undertaken less.

I would find the following helpful? Information about.....



Most players reported that they would find all of the suggested information helpful and this finding was not meaningfully correlated to PPS scores.

How likely would you be to do the following, if you were to get rewarded (e.g., get loyalty program points or a food/drink voucher) for doing so?



Most players reported that they would be willing to try a variety of RG features in return for rewards

Views about responsible gambling

Key findings:

Most respondents reported that they believed that the individual was primarily responsible for gambling within their means. However, most also agreed that gaming companies and government and/or regulators of gambling had a role to play in supporting individuals to play responsibly.

Although most respondents reported that RG was about helping players to have better gambling experiences, they also reported that RG was aimed at “other players” (not them personally). Furthermore, most respondents either agreed or were not sure whether RG was “just a phrase” and just “for people with gambling problems.”

Respondents preferred to learn experientially by playing games and watching others play, followed by reading information or watching videos on how to play and talking to GameSense staff.

Most respondents indicated that they would find a range of information about how to gamble responsibly useful. Similarly, most respondents suggested they would be motivated to engage with a variety of RG related features if they were rewarded for doing so.

Implications:

RG initiatives are only effective if players actively engage with them, and engagement rates are typically very low (1-10%; see Wohl, 2018). It is clear that misperceptions about RG still exist and these should be challenged with more inclusive and positively framed communications. In addition, providing rewards for RG engagement may be an effective way to encourage player participation.

Another way to encourage RG use would be to reduce the friction of engagement by incorporating RG features into the gaming experience wherever possible. Learning by doing was the most popular reported method for learning about games and this could be an effective way to also learn about and participate with RG information and features.

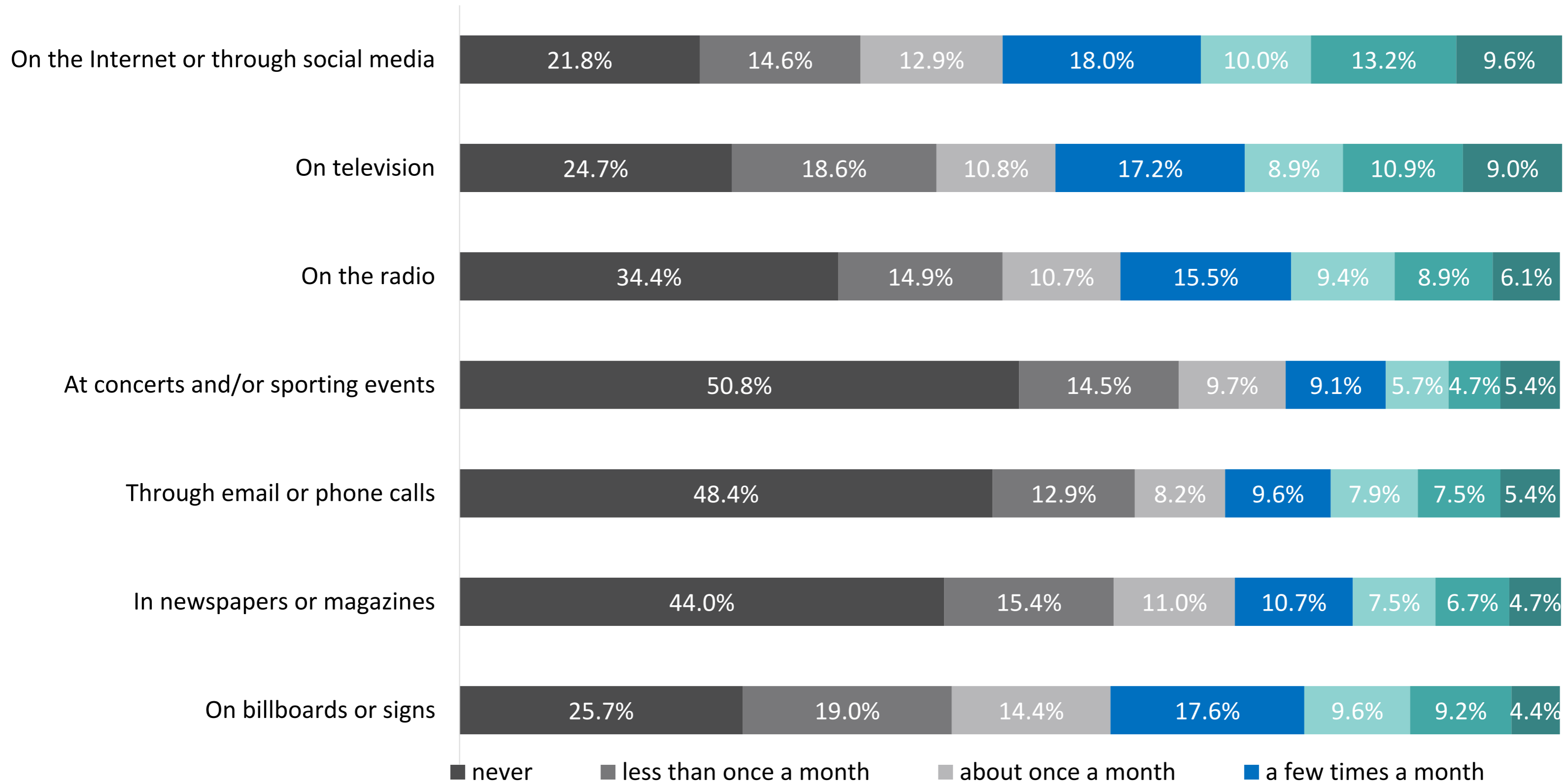
Although talking to staff about RG was reported as the least likely way to learn about games, this may reflect that many players still view RG related staff, to some extent, as concerned with problematic gambling rather than assisting them in having more positive everyday playing experiences. One suggestion to counter this perception, would be for GameSense staff to run sessions on how to play different games, during which RG information could also be included. For example, “First decide how much money you want to spend for the evening.”

10

Gambling
advertising



In the last 12 months, how often have you seen or heard advertisements/commercials for gambling via the following?



Correlations between PPS scores and recall of gambling advertisements

Honesty & control, Personal responsibility and Pre-commitment, were not meaningfully correlated with the frequency of observing any forms of gambling advertisements.

However, negative correlations were observed for respondents who scored low on *Gambling literacy*, indicating that they were more likely (than those who scored higher on *Gambling literacy*) to have seen gambling advertisements via the following:

- On the Internet or through social media ($r = -.302$).
- Through emails or phone-calls ($r = -.373$).
- In newspapers or magazines ($r = -.379$).
- At concerts and/or sporting events ($r = -.379$).

Correlations between PGSI scores and recall of gambling advertisements

In the last 12 months, how often have you seen or heard advertisements/commercials for gambling via the following?	Strength of correlation	Pearson correlation coefficient (r) value
On television	moderate	.388
On the Internet or through social media	moderate	.419
Through email or phone calls	strong	.521
On billboards or signs	moderate	.423
In newspapers or magazines	strong	.507
On the radio	moderate	.417
At concerts and/or sporting events	strong	.511

Recall of all forms of advertising were correlated with higher PGSI scores. Disordered gamblers may be more likely to be exposed to some forms of gambling advertising due to a high level of gambling engagement (e.g., watching sports on television, at sporting events or reading sports related magazines or newspapers). However, the strongest degree of correlation related to the recall of direct advertising received via emails or phone calls.

Gambling advertising

Key findings:

Gambling advertisements were most frequently seen or heard via digital formats such as social media and the Internet, followed by television and radio. Static media such as newspapers, magazines and billboards were the least likely advertisements to be recalled.

Players who were relatively low in *Gambling literacy* reported the greatest amount of exposure to gambling-related advertisements.

Direct marketing via emails and phone calls was most strongly and positively correlated with problem gambling as measured by the PGSI.

Implications:

RG information may also be most effectively communicated via digital formats wherever possible.

That those relatively low in *Gambling literacy* reported the greatest amount of exposure to gambling-related advertising may indicate that either advertising reinforces erroneous gambling perceptions and/or that high frequency multi-game players (who tend to score very low on *Gambling literacy*) are exposed to a high level of gambling advertising.

Gaming companies and players should be made aware that direct advertising is linked to problem gambling. At-risk players could be encouraged to block emails and phone-calls from gaming companies. Gaming companies could be discouraged from advertising to players directly, unless they are certain that at-risk players will not be included (perhaps by way of player account data and algorithms that assess risk).

11

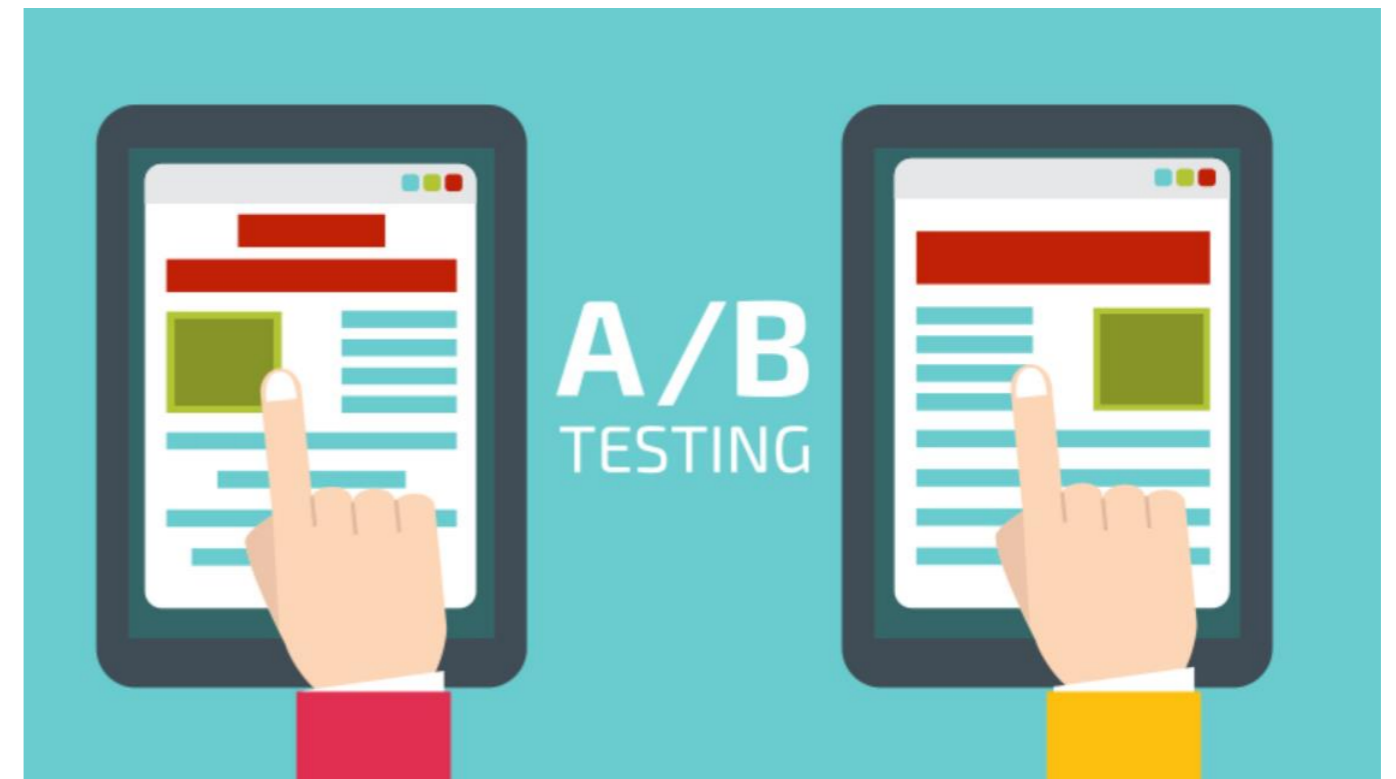
Ideas for
increasing
Positive Play in
Massachusetts



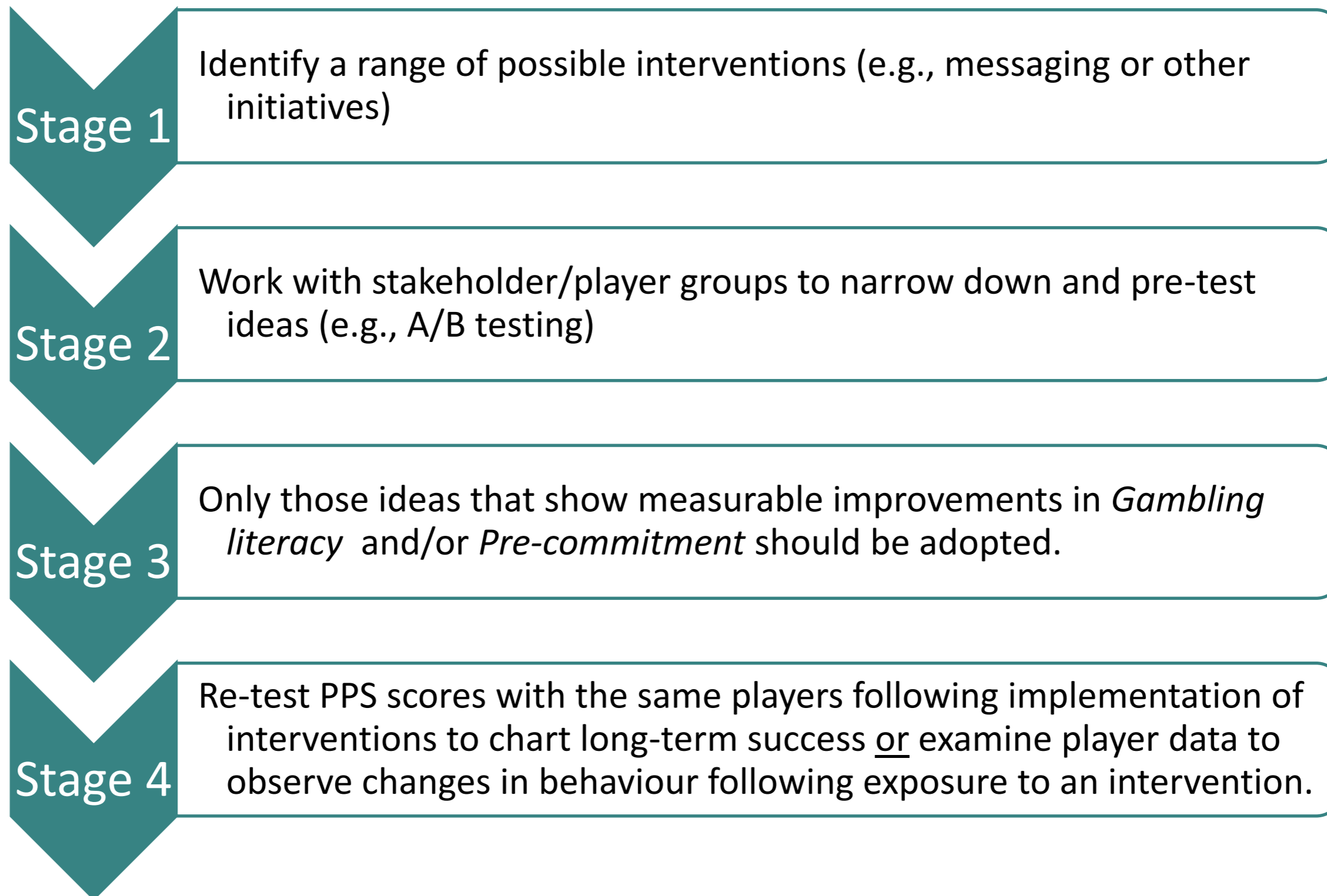
Increasing *Gambling literacy* and *Pre-commitment* scores amongst players in Massachusetts

Testing interventions before implementation is critical

- Without testing, we have no way of knowing if interventions work, how well they work, or if they have any unintended negative consequences.
- Responsible gambling world-wide has entered a measurement and evaluation phase. Only interventions that can be shown to work will be considered as effective.
- Effective RG strategy is both cost effective and fulfills the aim of supporting healthy play.



Four key stages for testing RG interventions to increase Positive Play



Ideas for increasing *Gambling literacy* scores in Massachusetts

➤ **Social Proof** a powerful way to influence people, by communicating what most others do

“most players in Massachusetts understand that.....”

“Gambling is not a good way to try to make money”

“Their chances of winning don’t improve after they lose”

“Playing more frequently doesn’t improve their chances of winning more than they lose”

➤ Validated Educational Videos (Social media, in-venue screens, TV)

See example animation video “What every player needs to know”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxMKhUMF-EE>

Ideas for increasing *Gambling literacy* in Massachusetts

- **Reward and/or reciprocity-** players need to see merit in attending to an RG message. Consider giving them something in return for responsible play (e.g., refreshment vouchers or swag for watching a player education video).
- **Provide a PPS Player Quiz-** a PPS based fun quiz for all players to learn about their playing style This type of quiz differs from traditional self-tests that focus on problem gambling which are not seen as relevant by most players.



Ideas for increasing Pre-commitment scores amongst Massachusetts players

- **Social proof** the idea that people are influenced by what others do

Did you know that.....

“83.6% of players in Massachusetts report that they consider how much money they are willing to lose before they play.”

“90.5% of players in Massachusetts agree that they should only gamble when they have enough money to cover their bills first.”

“90.8% of players in Massachusetts agree that they only gamble with money that they can afford to lose.”

- **Anchoring** communicate the average amount that Lotto or scratch ticket jackpot winners bet.

Ideas for increasing Pre-commitment scores amongst players in Massachusetts

➤ People like to be **consistent**, making a **commitment** encourages them to follow through

➤ Ask players how they will decide on a limit before they gamble

➤ Give them some options and ask them to tick which strategies they will use

➤ **Reduce friction and make RG the default**

We know that players prefer learning whilst they play. Try to make RG part of the overall gaming experience (e.g., make setting a limit the first step in playing). Have staff run sessions on how to play games and include RG information and features as part of the session. This will also help to destigmatize RG.

➤ **Develop Positive Language** for all player facing interactions and features

(e.g., avoid “limit setting” maybe “My money” or My bankroll”). Specific language needs to be developed and tested with players. Consider dropping the term “*Responsible Gambling*” from all player facing communications as the term is associated with problem gambling.



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PUTTING RESEARCH INTO PLAY

