

Responsible Gambling Built to Matter

Language, Empathy, and Player-Centred Design

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Before we decide
where we need to go
we need to understand **where we have been**



Non-Rational Thinking

When luck feels personal





Perhaps **better knowledge** would lead to **better choices**

The Slot Machine: What Every Player Needs to Know

(Wohl et al., 2010, 2013)



Better knowledge matters.



Misconceptions can be **corrected**.



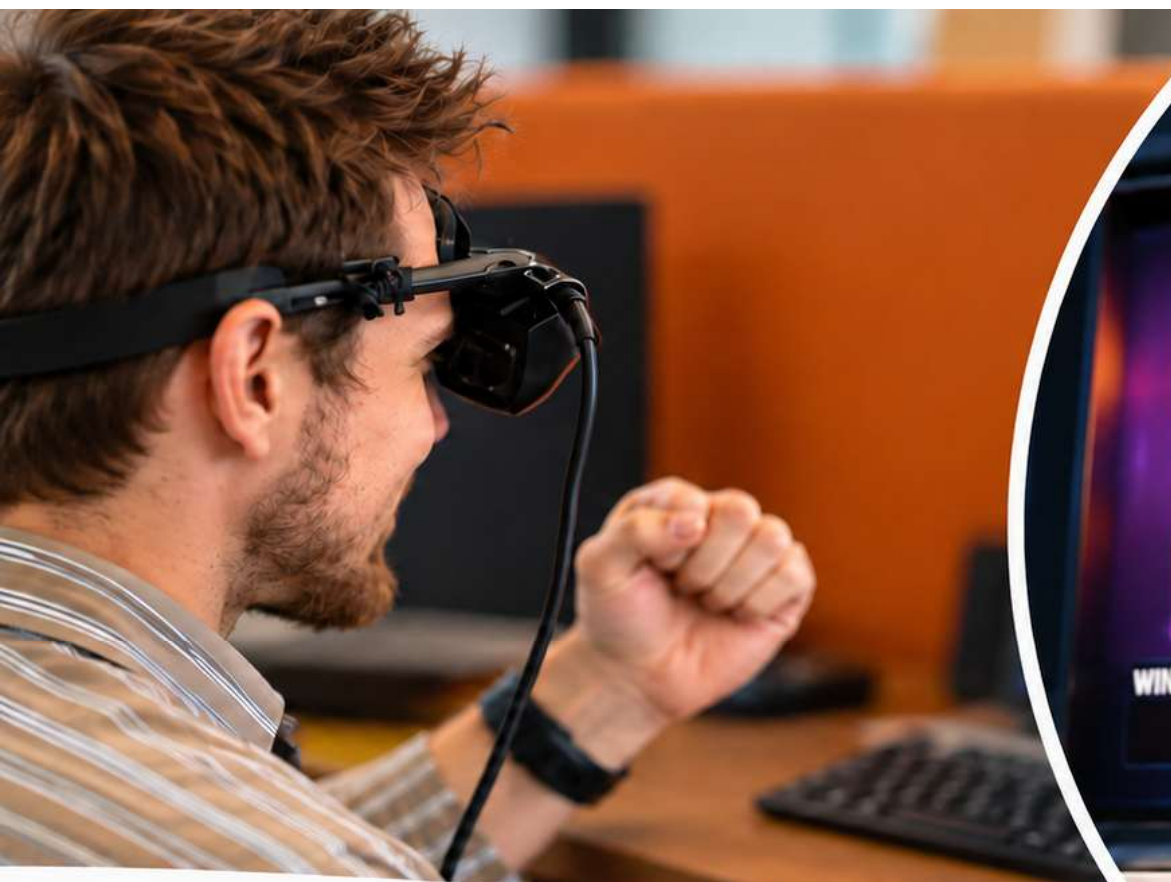
Gambling literacy can **improve**.

*Education can change what people know.
It cannot guarantee that knowledge wins the competition for behaviour.*

Building the Tool

*We created tools that could help.
Then we waited for players to use them.*





**BUILD RG TOOLS
WELL AND THEY
WILL COME**




**PLAY
RESPONSIBLY**

Know your limits.
Control.

Lesson 1:

A tool cannot help the player who doesn't use it



Only a small minority engage with responsible gambling initiatives.

Understanding the Player

*The player responds not only to what the intervention does,
but to what it means.*



Empathy Engineering

A term more common in design and engineering than in psychology

The deliberate design of communications, tools, and environments around the player's psychological experience—not merely around the information we want the player to receive.

In psychology, its component parts are often studied under different names:

Perspective • Meaning • Emotion • Action



Why focus on the *red*, when most of your players are *green*?

Examples of Poor RG Messaging

Illustrative examples of vague, generic, or ineffective responsible gambling messaging.



7:19



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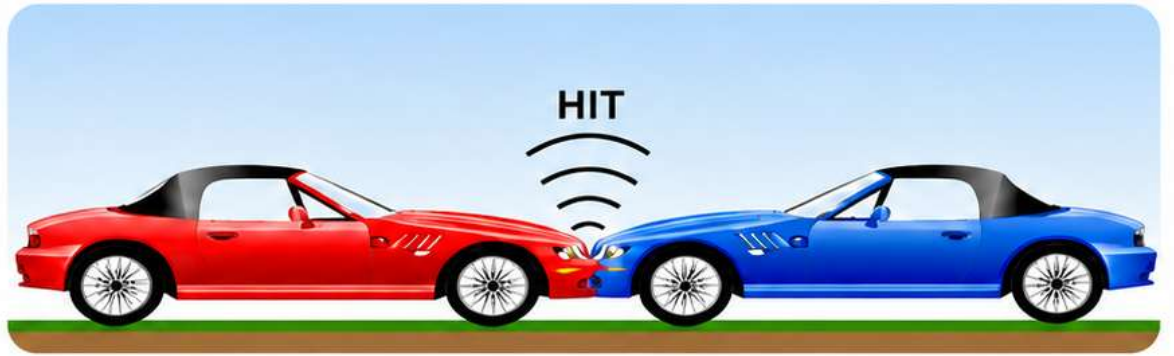


Notifications



Menu

LESSON 2: LANGUAGE MATTERS!



(Loftus & Palmer, 1974)

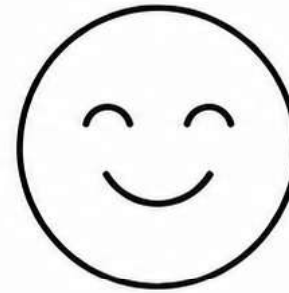
Emotion by Design

*Every responsible gambling
intervention creates an
emotional experience.*



MESSAGE

What we say
matters.



FEELING

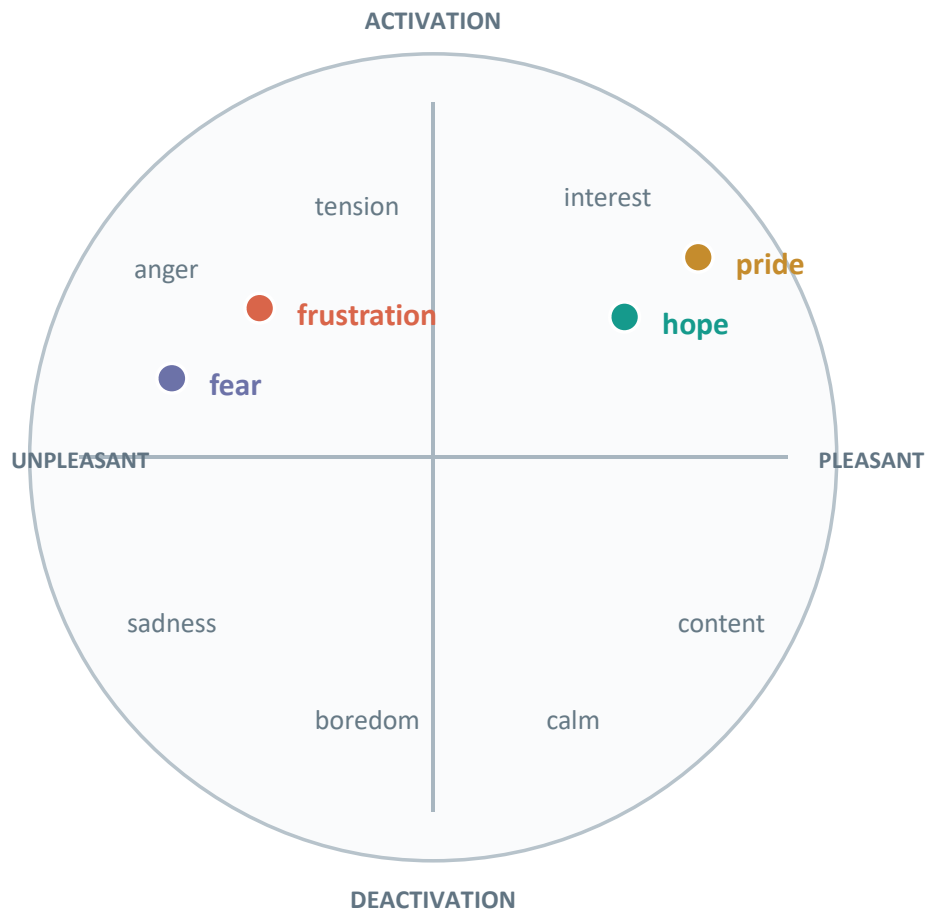
It creates an
emotional experience.



ACTION

It can shape what
people do next.

Circumplex of Emotions: Behaviour stems from feelings (not thoughts)



People protect their autonomy—even from help.



—
“Don’t do that!”



—
Reactance



—
Resistance

The **positiveplay** *Approach*

Wood, Wohl, Tabri, & Philander, 2017



Positive messages and imagery are more persuasive



Negative messages and imagery make people look away



Positive messages are relevant to all players



Positive play focuses on two conceptual issues

Assessment

How do we know that
players are gambling
responsibly?

Encouragement

Are we eliciting
positive, activating
emotions?

The Positive Play Scale

• THERE ARE FOUR SUBSCALES ACROSS TWO CATEGORIES: •



Beliefs



Personal Responsibility

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



Gambling Literacy

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



Behaviours



Honesty & Control

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



Pre-commitment

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



Together, these four subscales capture the key **beliefs** and **behaviours** that support **Positive Play**.

Players can be placed into positive play categories



Using the PPS over time

Initial use of the PPS with a sample of players provides a snapshot of levels of responsible gambling. When the PPS is administered again to the same players, it can be used to help identify changes in players' responsible gambling-related beliefs and behaviours.



Positive Play: Benchmarking

low PPS medium PPS high PPS

Personal
Responsibility

9%

17%

74%

Honesty &
Control

14.5%

18.7%

66.8%

Pre-commitment

18.4%

22.3%

59.3%

Gambling
Literacy

31.7%

26.8%

41.5%



TAILORED ASSESSMENT

Lottery play is unique. A tailored scale better captures what influences positive play beliefs and behaviours.



Why create the Positive Play Scale: Lottery Edition (PPS-L)?



EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

Helps identify opportunities to design relevant interventions and education that promote responsible lottery play.



RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING (RG) POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Provides data and insights specific to lottery play to help optimize RG programs and protect players.



RESEARCH ADVANCEMENT

Advances understanding of positive play in lotteries and supports evidence-based strategies for responsible gambling.

The Positive Play Scale: Lottery Edition

• THERE ARE TWO SUBSCALES: •



FINANCIAL CONTROL

The extent to which a player believes they have control over how much they spend on lottery play.



LOTTERY LITERACY

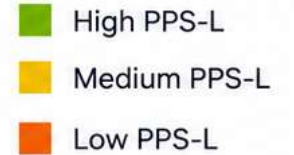
The extent to which a player has an accurate understanding about the nature of lotto/scratch card play.



Stronger financial control and higher lottery literacy lead to more **informed choices** and **healthier play**.

PPS-L Benchmarking

Higher financial control is associated with higher PPS-L, while lottery literacy shows more room for improvement.



LOTTERY LITERACY

Total sample
(n=1,051)

35.2%

33.4%

31.4%

Lotto only
(n=329)

24.6%

31.9%

43.5%

Lotto+ other
games (n=699)

40.2%

34.0%

25.8%



Lottery literacy is lower across all groups.



FINANCIAL CONTROL

Total sample
(n=1,051)

20.2%

22.1%

57.7%

Lotto only
(n=329)

7.0%

15.2%

77.8%

Lotto+ other
games (n=699)

26.5%

25.3%

48.2%



Financial control is stronger, especially among Lotto only players.

PPS-L Scores by Sex

low PPS-L medium PPS-L high PPS-L

Lottery Literacy

Male

28.9%

31.5%

39.6%

Female

32.7%

36.0%

31.3%

Financial Control

Male

14.9%

22.8%

62.3%

Female

12.7%

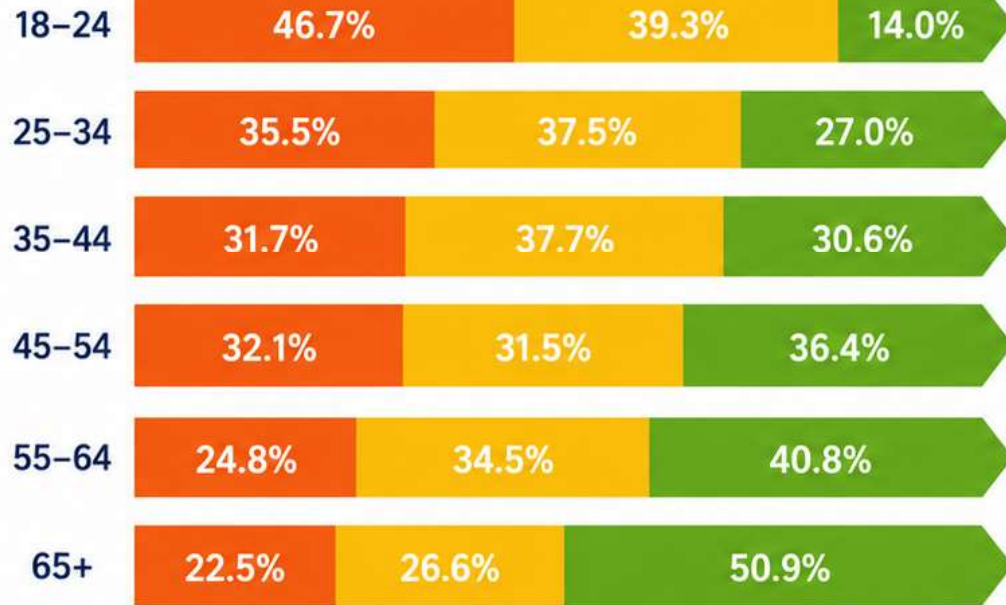
19.6%

67.7%

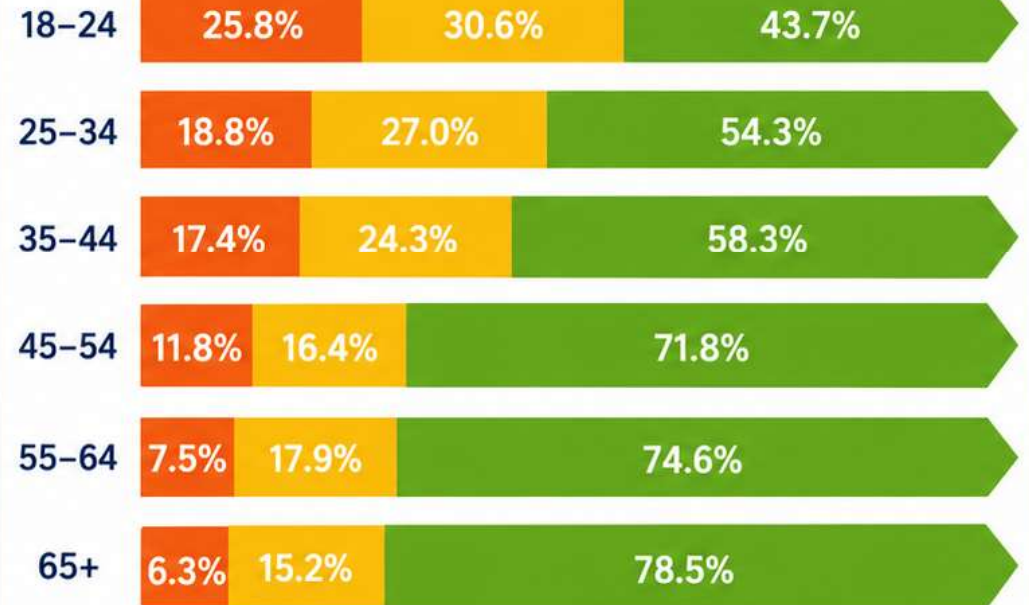
PPS-L Scores by Age

low PPS-L medium PPS-L high PPS-L

Lottery Literacy



Financial Control



As with the PPS, PPS-L scores increased as age increased.

How do we encourage positive play?

And is it really better than
traditional harm-reduction?

Harm-Reduction Messaging vs. Positive Play Messaging

Message Source: National Council on Problem Gambling

Harm-reduction frame

Checking tools like My Spend before you play helps you avoid overspending, stick to your plans, and reduce the risk of harm and developing a gambling problem.

More negative affect

Leveraging Social Norms to Improve Positive Play



Most players believe setting limits helps keep gambling fun and in control.

80%

of players agree



Most players think it is important to follow positive play habits.

85%

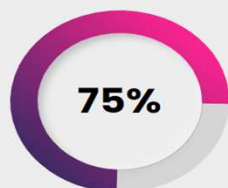
of players agree

Seeing what most players do
→ can **inspire** you to take
positive action too.

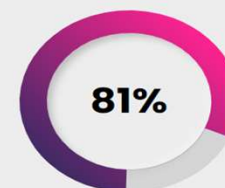


All done, now take a look at your results!

Your positive play score is:



The average player score was:



Your Score
Average player
score

Openness:

86%
89%

Gambling Knowledge:

52%
84%

Self-Reflection:

86%
94%

Planning:

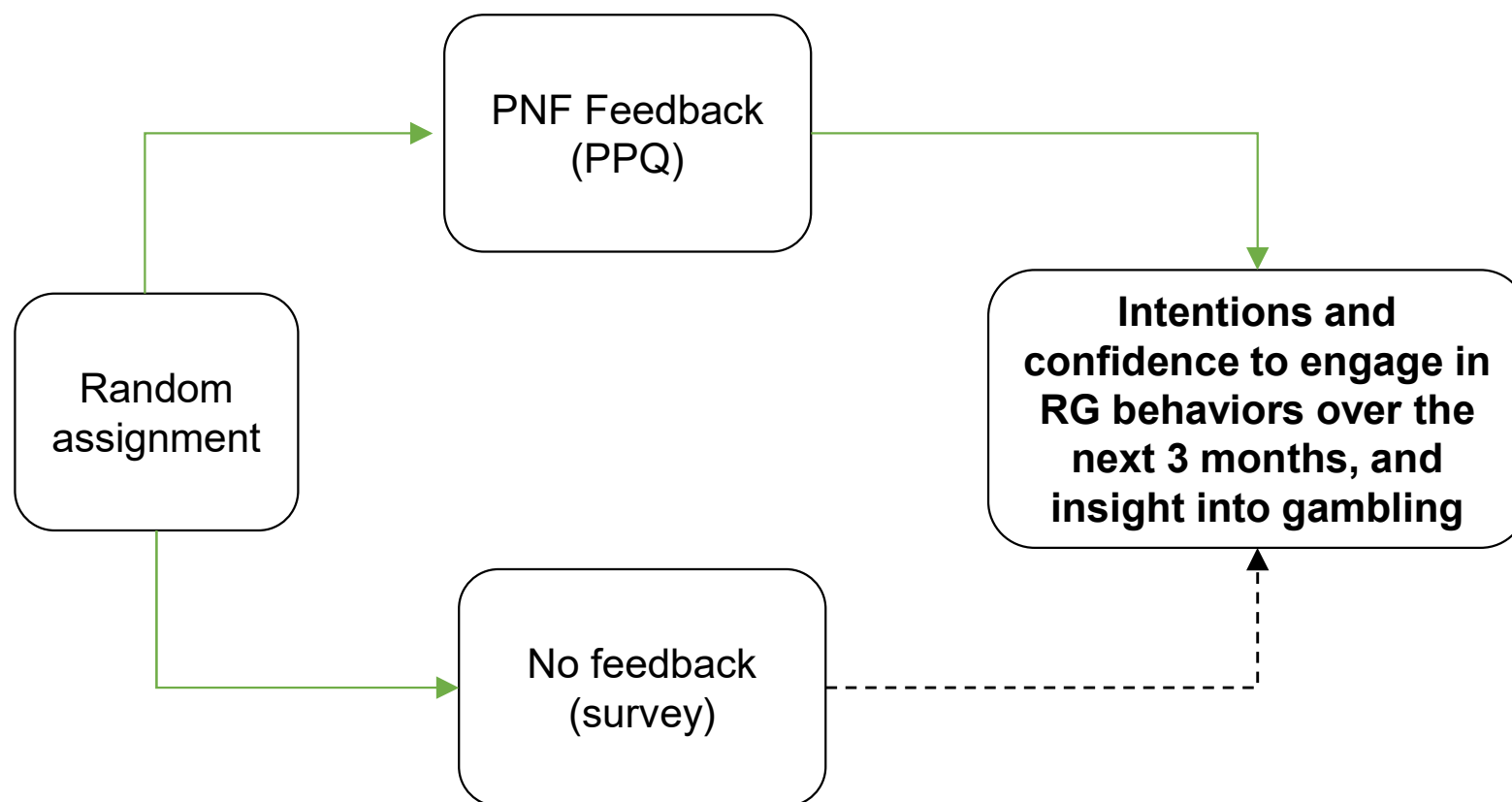
75%
90%

Your overall score is the combined four scores for each element. Take a look at each element to see your individual scores. Click next to find out more about your scores in each of the sections and discover more ways to play positively.

NEXT

demo.positiveplay.org/quiz/

Positive Play Quiz: Evaluation



Preliminary evidence suggests fostering positive play reduces spend per session while slightly increasing visits.



LOWER SPEND PER SESSION

Players who engage in positive play may spend less during each visit.



SLIGHTLY MORE VISITS

At the same time, the number of visits appears to increase slightly.



GOOD FOR PLAYERS

Encourages more measured play.



IMPORTANT FOR OPERATORS

Lower spend per session may be offset by slightly more visits.

Positive play may shape how people spend — and **how often they return.**

Preliminary findings.

How do we move forward?



Take risks. Innovation in responsible gambling will not come from compliance thinking.



Collaboration. Researchers, operators, and regulators need to work together.



Prove the impact. Good intentions are not enough. We need real-world evidence.

Intellectual Humility

A willingness to recognize the limits of our knowledge and let evidence refine our beliefs.

Responsible gambling needs messaging that is empathetic to the player, attentive to their experience, and guided by science.



| Player



Experience



Science |

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Extra Slides

Items that compose the PPS beliefs subscales

Personal Responsibility



Gambling Literacy



Items that compose the PPS behaviours subscales

Honesty & Control

Pre-commitment



Items that compose the PPS-L Beliefs subscales

Lottery Literacy



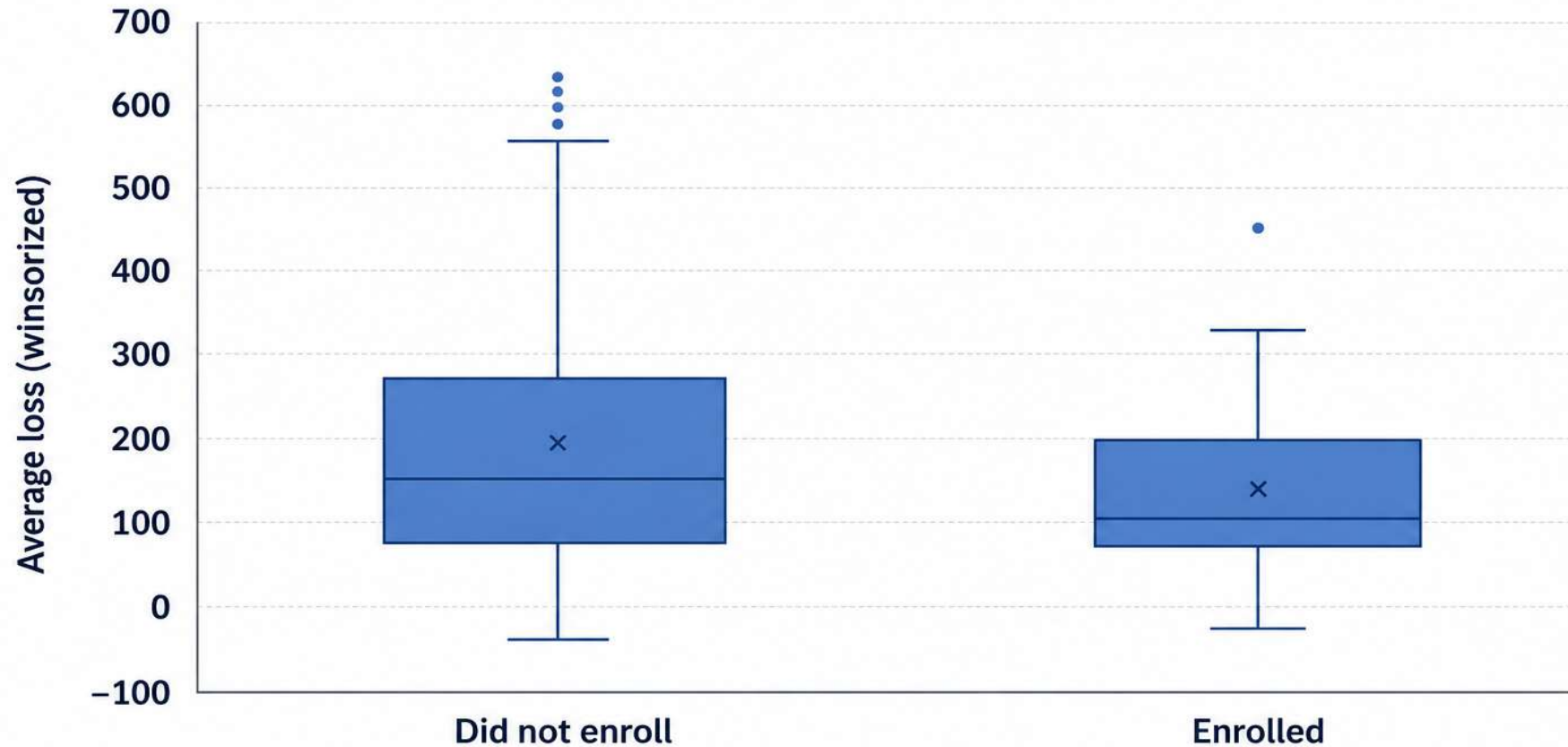
Items that compose the PPS-L Behaviours subscales

Financial Control



Effect of Enrollment on Money Lost

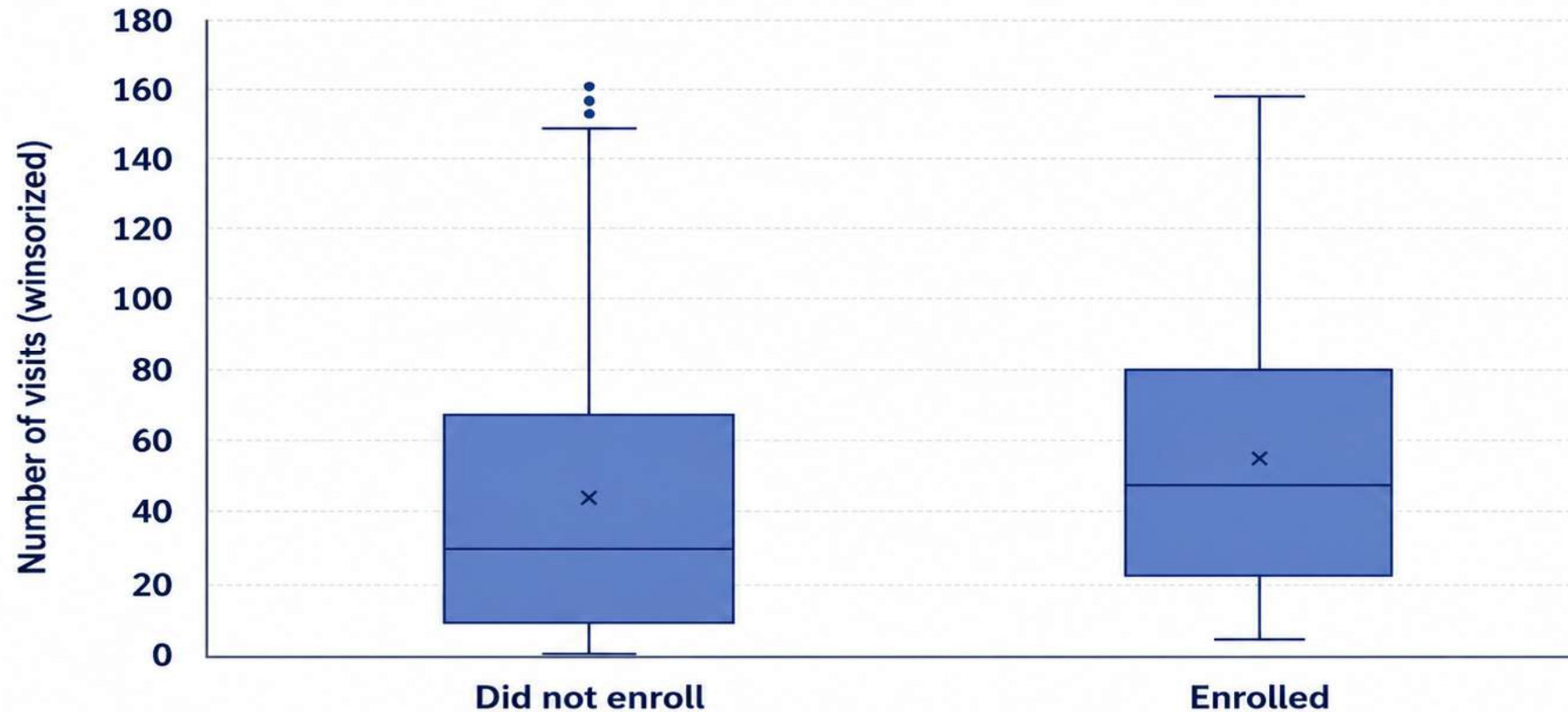
Average loss (winsorized)



Enrolled players tended to lose less on average.

Effect of Enrollment on Number of Visits

Number of visits (winsorized)



Enrolled players tended to visit more often.