



COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHEET

MAKE YOUR STRATEGY

Creating a Communications Plan With the Pause Before You Play Campaign

For organizations interested in utilizing the campaign messaging through your own social media and advertising channels, this worksheet is designed to guide you through creating your own communications strategy that best suits your goals. This worksheet is a starting point to help you start your *Pause Before You Play* journey. Contact info@pausebeforeyouplay.org for questions.

#1 SET GOALS

Communications plans start with setting a goal. The following questions will help you determine your goal for sharing *Pause Before You Play* if you are unsure.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO PROMOTE PAUSE BEFORE YOU PLAY?

- ☐ Increase awareness of problem gambling prevention resources
- ☐ Encourage conversations about gambling behaviors
- ☐ Promote gambling-related harms help and support services
- ☐ Reach individuals at risk of gambling-related harms
- ☐ Educate parents, caregivers, educators, or families
- ☐ Other

Tips

- One common way to set achievable goals is to follow SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.
- Wondering if you have the time and money to carry out your goal?
 - See [Working With Different Budgets](#) for more information.

#2 SELECT AUDIENCES

An audience is a group of individuals that collectively make up the people you want to reach with your message. For *Pause Before You Play*, audiences are defined by different demographics, interests, and behaviors.

WHO DO YOU WANT TO REACH?

- ☐ Community members
 - ☐ High-risk populations (i.e., African Americans)
 - ☐ Parents, caregivers, and educators*
 - ☐ Youth*
 - ☐ Young adults and college students
- ☐ Fellow professionals
- ☐ Clients of my organization
- ☐ Other

WHAT MESSAGES ARE MOST RELEVANT TO YOUR AUDIENCE?

- ☐ Gambling should remain a form of entertainment, not a way to make money.
- ☐ Setting spending limits before gambling can help you stay in control.
- ☐ It is important to recognize warning signs of gambling-related harms.
- ☐ Support and resources are available for anyone affected by gambling.
- ☐ Talking openly about gambling can reduce stigma and encourage help-seeking.
- ☐ Gambling and sports betting can have long-term effects on individuals.
- ☐ Other

WHAT ARE THEIR GAMBLING MOTIVATIONS?

Motivations are the *why's* behind your audience's behaviors. Knowing what motivates your audience to engage in gambling will help you determine how you want to approach your messaging.

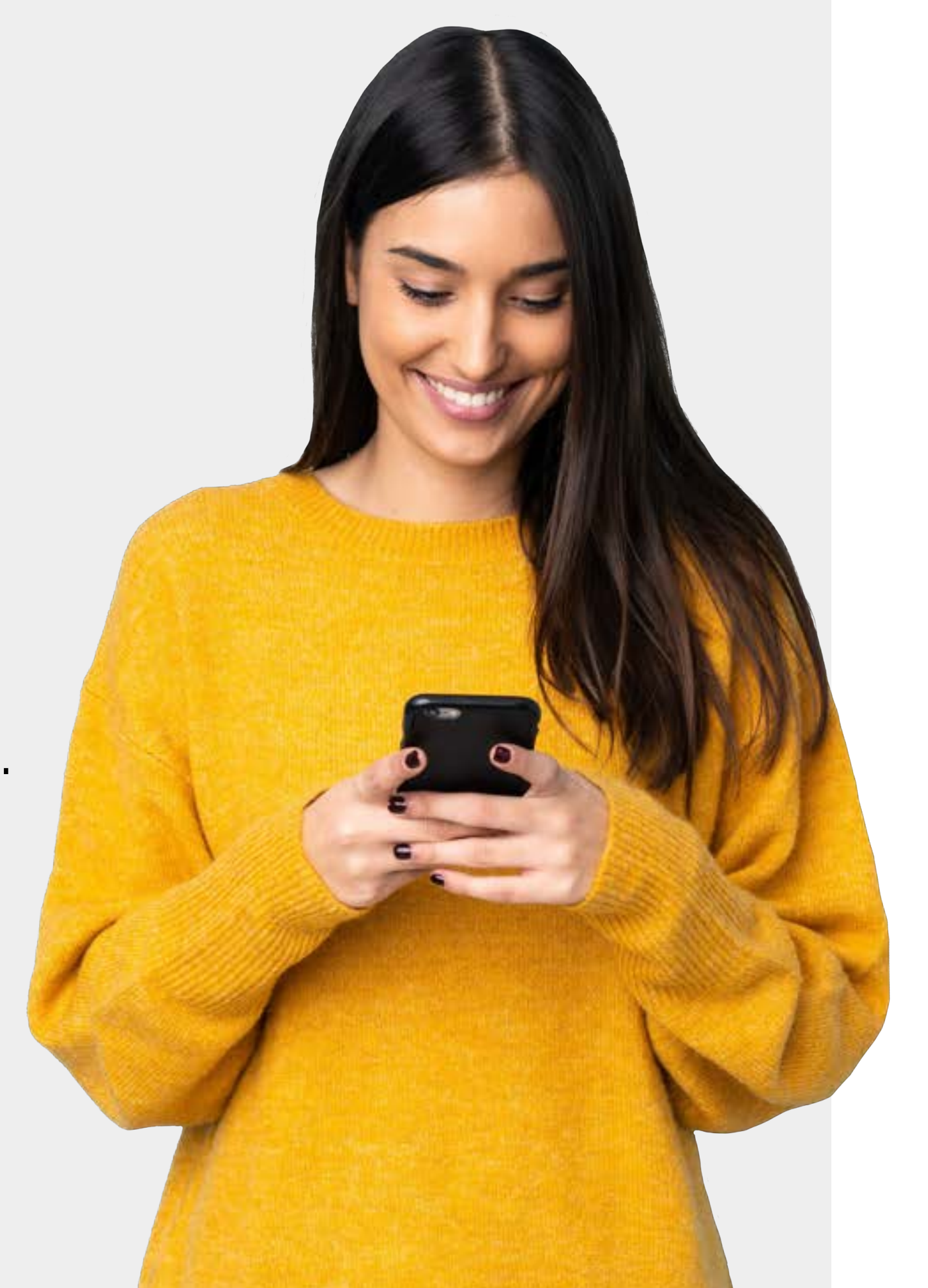
Acceptance: Certain audiences (i.e., youth, college students) may engage because their friends engage and they want to be included.

Financial gain: People may start sports betting or gambling simply because they believe it can lead to quick wealth.

Impulse: Risk-oriented individuals (i.e., college students) may start sports betting because of the high-risk, high-reward mechanisms that make the game feel exciting.

Need: Some individuals may see gambling as a form of income to pay for rent, groceries, and other basic living necessities.

Entertainment: Certain groups (i.e., sports fans) may start betting because it appears as a fun activity related to their interests.



*Change The Game Ohio

For youth gambling prevention and resources for parents, caregivers, or educators visit [ChangeTheGameOhio.com](https://www.changethegameohio.com).

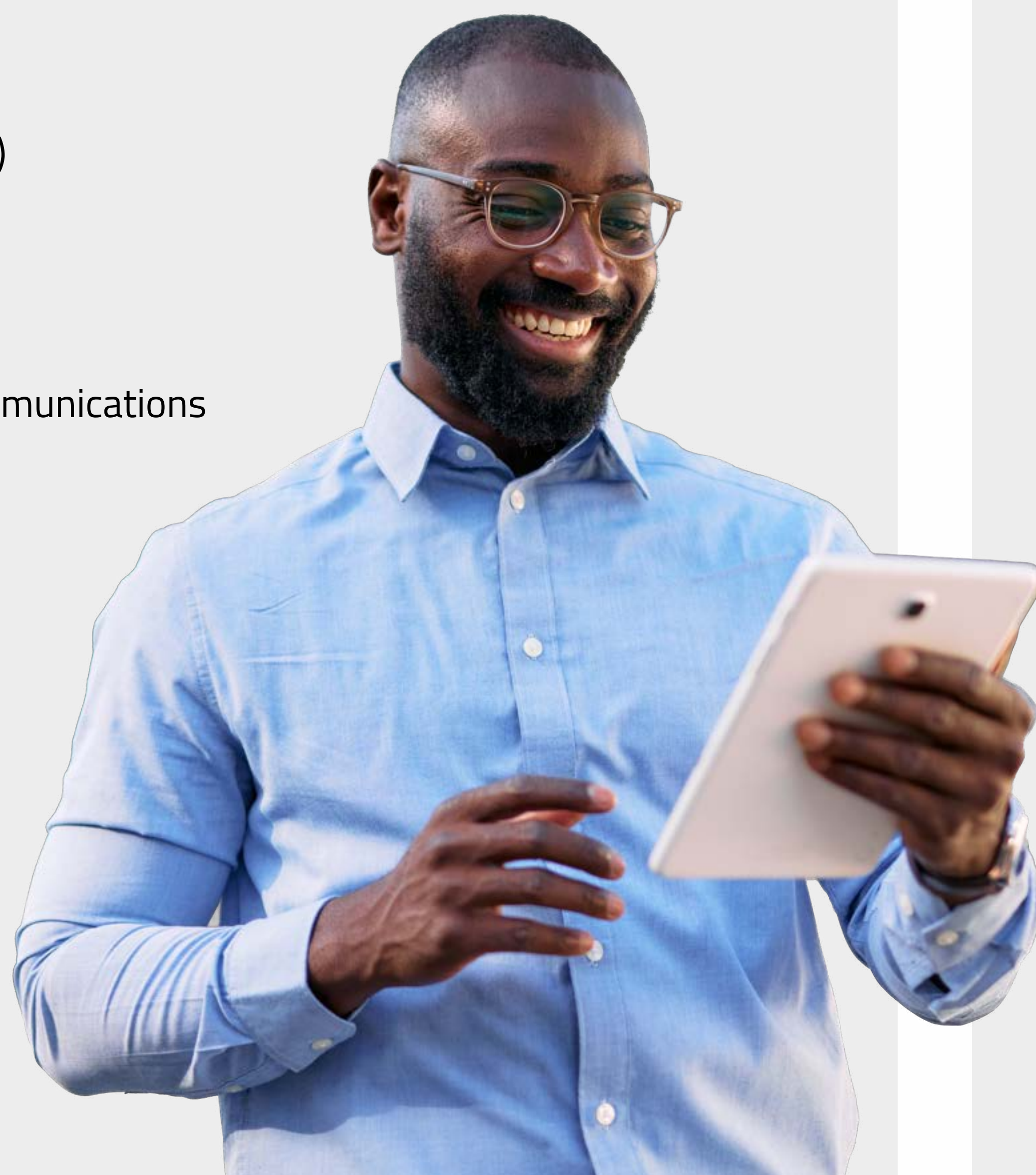
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#3 CHOOSE WHERE TO BEST REACH YOUR AUDIENCES

HOW WILL YOU SHARE CAMPAIGN MESSAGES?

- ☐ Social platforms
 - ☐ Facebook
 - ☐ Instagram
 - ☐ X (formerly Twitter)
 - ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Email newsletter
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Internal employee communications
- ☐ Community events
- ☐ Printed materials
- ☐ Digital signage

Learn how to choose the right platform for your audience on the [Social Media Platforms Overview](#) document.



#4 SELECT YOUR CONTENT

WHAT TYPE OF CONTENT WOULD YOU LIKE TO CIRCULATE?

Pause Before You Play recommends three different topics of content. Depending on your organization and goals, you may want to spread each topic evenly or focus on one.

1. *Pause Before You Play* tips
2. Prevention awareness
3. Helpline and get help

WHICH CAMPAIGN RESOURCES WILL YOU USE?

- ☐ Social media graphics
- ☐ Sample social media posts
- ☐ Handouts and fact sheets
- ☐ Presentation materials
- ☐ Posters, billboards, and print ads
- ☐ Digital ads
- ☐ Videos and radio spots
- ☐ Website content
- ☐ Newsletters and blogs

Learn how to choose the right resource for your audience on the [Guide to Advertising and Outreach](#) document.

#5 CHOOSE A TIMELINE

If your organization already has a plan and schedule for posting on social media, *Pause Before You Play* social media posts can be added to them. If not, the following questions will help you figure out how often to post.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU PLAN ON SHARING ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

- ☐ Regularly
 - ☐ Once a week
 - ☐ A few times a week
 - ☐ Every day
- ☐ Event-based
 - ☐ Before or during gambling decision points
 - ☐ During periods of increased gambling activity (sports seasons, major events, holidays)
 - ☐ During Problem Gambling Awareness Month in March
 - ☐ In settings where people already engage with health, wellness, or community supports

Tips

- Unlike social media, the frequency of how often you advertise will impact your budget. Ensure your budget aligns with your timeline using the [Working With Different Budgets](#) worksheet.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU WANT TO ADVERTISE?

If your organization already has an advertising or content plan, you can add *Pause Before You Play* to that. If not, the following questions will help you figure out how often to share.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ A regular presence | ☐ Content-based presence |
| ☐ Continuous | ☐ Daily |
| ☐ Event-specific | ☐ Weekly |
| ☐ Demand-specific | ☐ Monthly |
| | ☐ Quarterly |
| | ☐ Annually |



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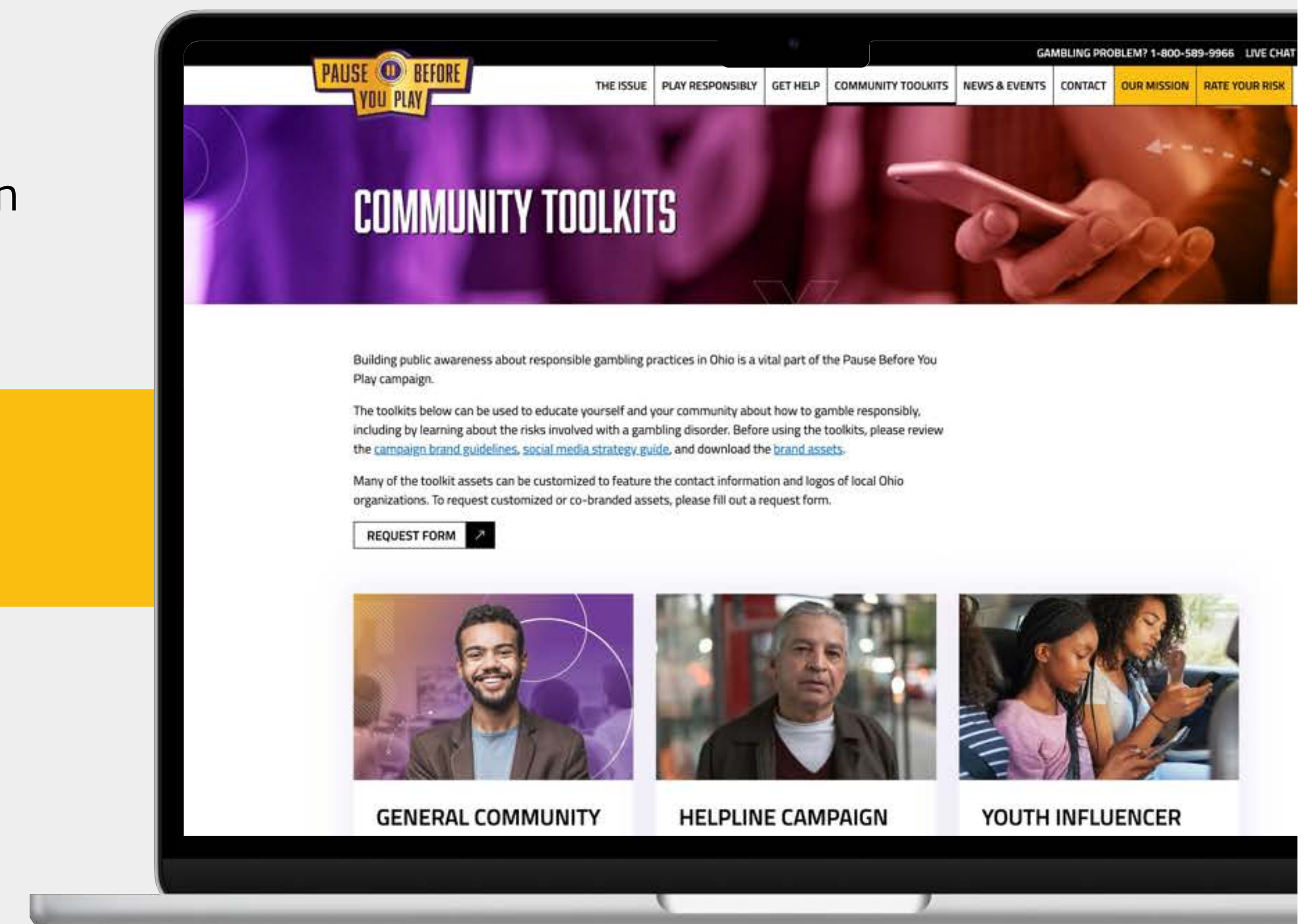
#6 CREATE YOUR PLAN

Now that you've gone through the Communications Worksheet, review the information you checked and select what resources you want to share.

CHOOSE A PAUSE BEFORE YOU PLAY TOOLKIT

Each toolkit is composed of a variety of assets (i.e., social posts, posters, videos) to help you begin outreach and advertising. If your audience does not fit directly into one, explore each toolkit to find what assets work best.

- [African-American](#)
- [College Student](#)
- [General Community](#)
- [Ohio Problem Gambling Helpline Campaign](#)
- [Online Gaming](#)
- [Spanish Translation](#)
- [Sports Betting](#)
- [Veterans](#)
- [Youth Influencer](#)



MAKE YOUR OWN MATERIALS

Pause Before You Play offers many resources to help you create your own materials for advertising and outreach. Please read [Campaign Advertising and Outreach Overview](#) to help you get started.

NEED CUSTOM RESOURCES?

- Advertisements and outreach materials can be customized at no-cost of your organization. Email info@pausebeforeyouplay.org to request custom assets.