



ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

OVERVIEW

When you're ready to launch your *Pause Before You Play* campaign, use these best practices to help effectively distribute printed, digital, and multimedia materials. For more guidance, check out the [Case Study Document](#) to see examples of how other organizations have used the resources to promote problem gambling prevention.

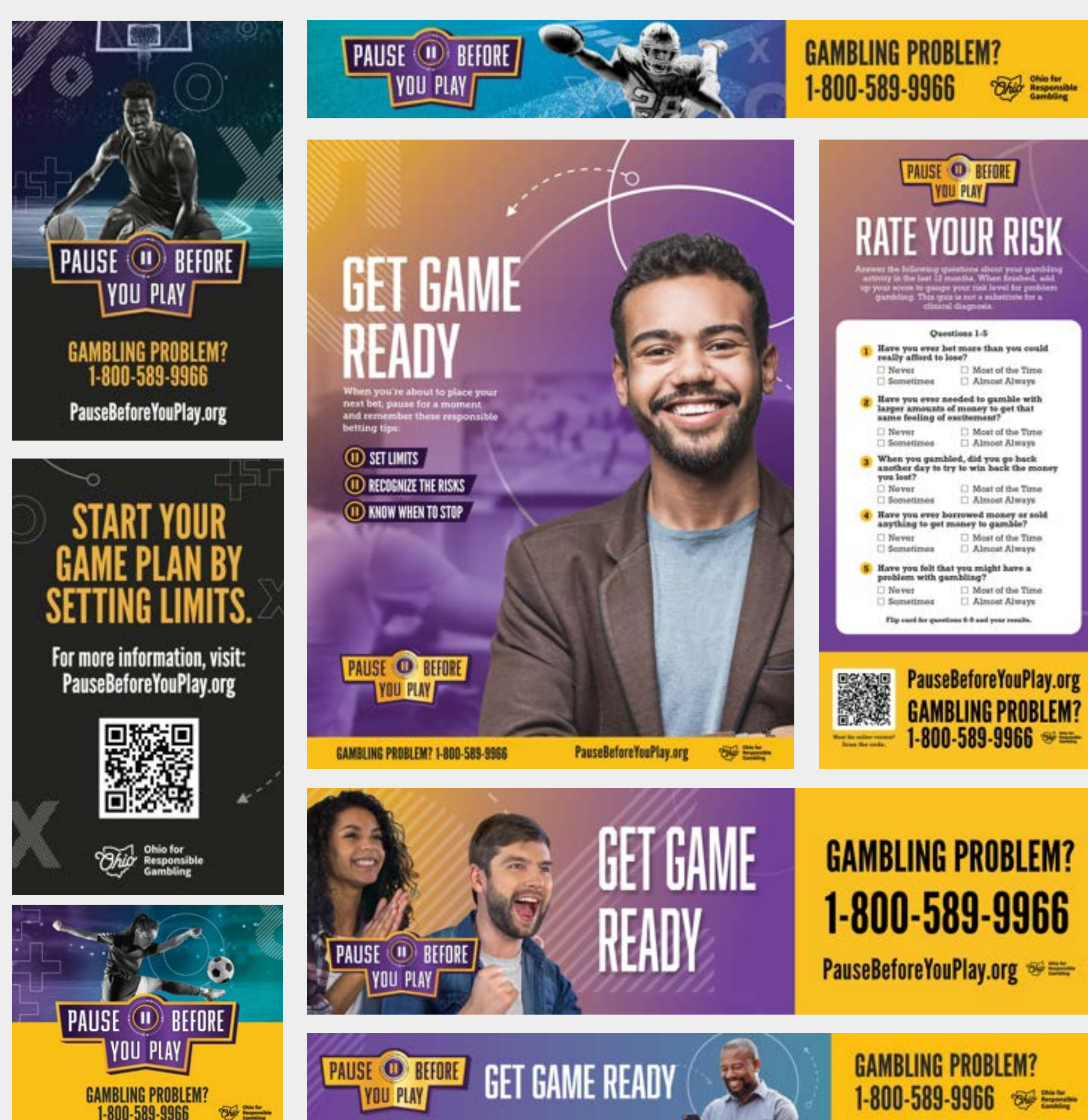
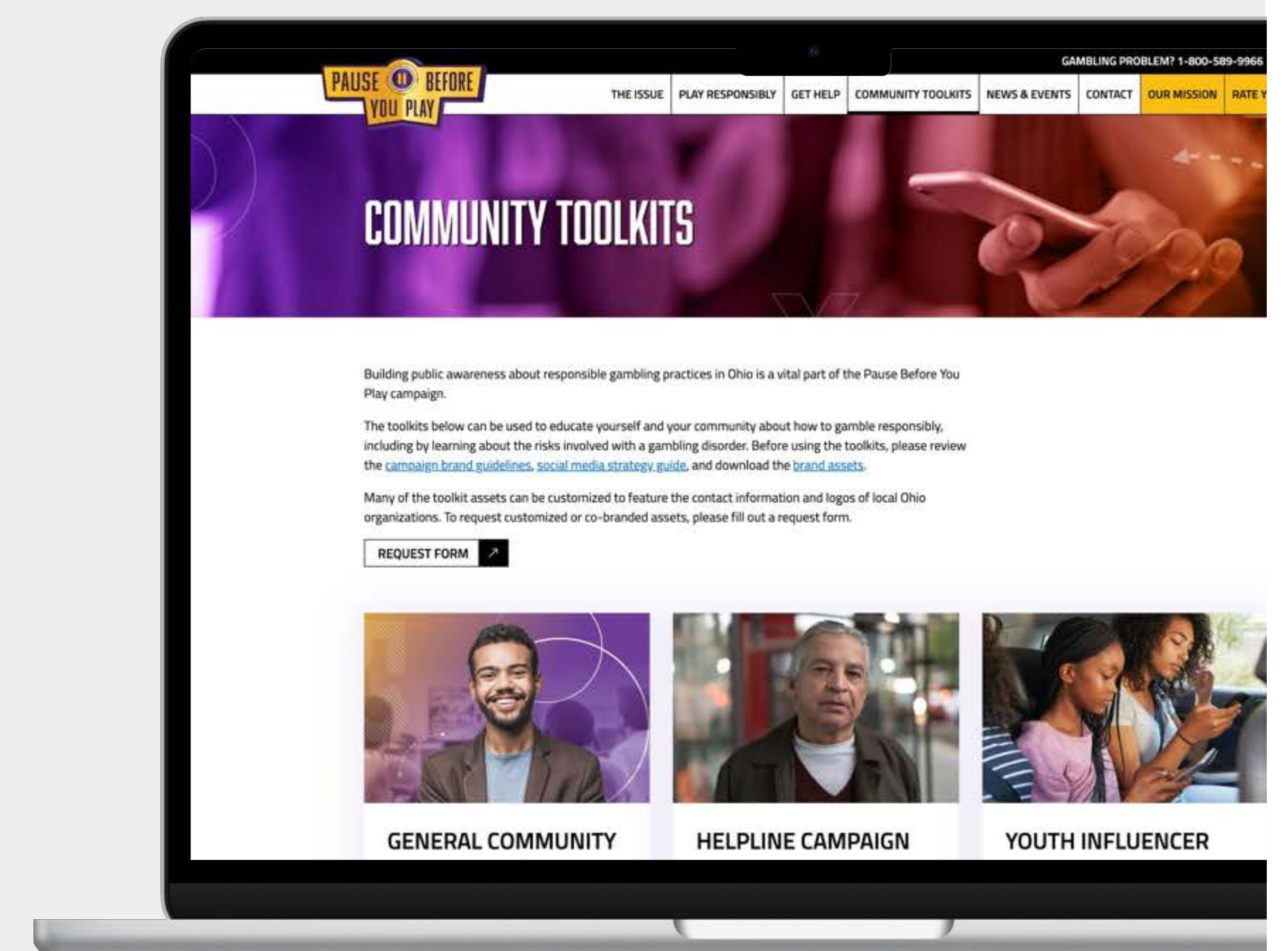
GETTING STARTED

Here are some general best practices to consider before launching your campaign.

ACCESS *PAUSE BEFORE YOU PLAY* RESOURCES

Ohio for Responsible Gambling has created pre-generated printed, digital, audio, and video resources that are formatted for most publications and digital platforms. Visit PauseBeforeYouPlay.org/community-toolkits to access them.

If you need a size other than those offered in the toolkits or a new image based on your audience, contact info@pausebeforeyouplay.org for customized resources.



USING DIGITAL AND PRINTED RESOURCES TOGETHER

Printed and digital materials are most effective when used together as part of a broader strategy rather than as standalone items. Incorporating both in your campaign helps ensure you reach your audience with layered messaging both online and off.

Need help creating your campaign strategy? Check out our [Guide to Advertising and Outreach](#) for tips, including how to define your audience, determine your budget, and choose the right resources for your audience.

GENERAL TIPS

Whether using our pre-made materials or creating your own, remember: you only have a few seconds to grab your audience's attention. Keep materials simple to prioritize clarity and impact.

1. **Focus on key information** so your audience quickly understands the message.
2. **Choose eye-catching images** that support your message and hook the viewer.
3. **Add a clear call to action** so your audience can find more information related to their interests.

AVOID STIGMATIZING TERMS

In all campaign content, stay away from phrases and labels that suggest negative stereotypes, judgment, or shame. Use respectful language that recognizes your audience as a whole person rather than reducing them to their gambling decisions.

DON'T SAY:

- ✗ "Gambling addiction"
- ✗ "Problem gambler"
- ✗ "Struggling with gambling"
- ✗ "Gambling habits"

SAY INSTEAD:

- ✓ "Gambling disorder"
- ✓ "Someone experiencing a gambling disorder"
- ✓ "Experiencing the harms of gambling"
- ✓ "Gambling decisions"

When in doubt, use compassion. All materials should help audiences feel supported, not judged.

PRINTED MATERIALS DISTRIBUTION

Printed materials are a core component of the *Pause Before You Play* campaign. They create highly visible prompts in spaces where gambling decisions are being made and considered, such as college campuses, public transportation, and sporting venues.

CHOOSING PRINTED MATERIALS

When selecting materials, consider the audience, setting, and goal. Within this campaign, print materials support two primary goals.

GOAL #1: INTERRUPTING AUTOMATIC OR ROUTINE PLAY

This is likely your goal when distributing printed resources in settings where gambling frequently takes place. For instance, campaign posters can be placed in areas like gambling venues and workplace break rooms to prompt audiences to pause before betting.

GOAL #2: CREATING OPENINGS FOR REFLECTION, CONVERSATION, OR HELP-SEEKING

This is likely your goal when distributing printed resources in settings where gambling is not actively taking place but where high-risk audiences members frequent. For instance, educational handouts can be distributed in mental health clinics and universities to reinforce prevention messaging and promote support resources over time.



PRINTED MATERIALS DISTRIBUTION

ADVERTISEMENTS AND POSTERS

HOW TO USE THEM

Print ads and posters can prompt reflection from community members, creating natural opportunities for conversation. In some settings, their primary role is not discussion but disruption, encouraging people to pause and reflect before play begins or to interrupt “auto-pilot mode.”



WHERE TO USE THEM

- Bars, restaurants, casinos, racinos, and grocery stores that offer gambling opportunities. Place near entrances, walkways, or gambling activities.
- Medical, behavioral health, and counseling offices. Posters often spark informal questions and brief prevention conversations where individuals may already be reflecting on wellness and decision making.
- Correctional facilities, veterans organizations, college and university campuses, and other community organizations that serve high-risk populations. They reinforce messaging in spaces serving adults who may experience increased exposure or vulnerability.

WALLET AND RACK CARDS

Wallet and rack cards provide discreet, portable access to prevention messaging and resources. They help make support feel more approachable, especially for individuals who may not feel comfortable asking questions or discussing gambling in person.

HOW TO USE THEM

These materials work best when they are easy to take without drawing attention and when they reinforce messages people may already have seen elsewhere. They can also be handed out as take-home pieces after an event booth visit.



WHERE TO USE THEM

- Tabling at gambling venues, health fairs, conferences, and community events.
- Casino or betting venue customer service desks, bars, or restrooms.
- Locations where lottery products are commonly sold, such as bars, gas stations, and grocery stores.
- Community centers and libraries.
- Faith-based and cultural organizations.
- Medical and counseling offices.
- College and university campuses.
- Peer recovery and support programs.



PRINTED MATERIALS DISTRIBUTION

BILLBOARDS

Billboards are intended to raise awareness and introduce *Pause Before You Play* messaging beyond individual settings. They are not meant to convey detailed information but to plant an awareness seed. Keep content brief so that your audience can absorb the message easily.

WHERE TO USE THEM

When planning billboard placement, consider how people in your community travel to gambling or betting venues, sporting arenas, or entertainment districts. Strategic placement along these routes can reinforce the campaign message before gambling occurs.



EDUCATIONAL HANDOUTS



Educational handouts are teaching tools that provide more detailed information than posters or rack cards. These materials are most effective when paired with education, conversation, or training rather than passive distribution.

HOW TO USE THEM

Handouts work well during presentations, workshops, or training focused on problem gambling education. Providing participants with a tangible resource they can take with them helps reinforce learning and extend the impact beyond the initial interaction.

WHERE TO USE THEM

- Training and workshops for at-risk populations such as loved ones of those impacted by gambling disorder or those impacted by a substance use disorder. You can find more examples of at-risk populations at PauseBeforeYouplay.org/the-issue/.
- Community education presentations or awareness events.

LOGO STICKER

Logo stickers provide a simple way to extend the *Pause Before You Play* message into everyday spaces. These materials help keep the campaign visible over time through repeated exposure.

WHERE TO USE THEM

Stickers can be used as standalone giveaways or paired with other wellness or prevention materials for use on laptops, tablets, notebooks, water bottles, and more.

WHERE TO USE THEM

- Conferences, health fairs, and event giveaways.
- Wellness or prevention resource bundles.

DIGITAL MATERIALS BEST PRACTICES

Digital outreach materials are a key extension of the *Pause Before You Play* campaign. They allow messaging to reach adults before, during, and after gambling decisions, including in online environments where gambling may occur.

CHOOSING DIGITAL MATERIALS

When selecting digital materials, consider the platform, audience, timing, context, and goal. Similar to printed materials, digital materials serve two primary goals within this campaign:

GOAL #1: INTERRUPTING IMPULSIVE OR HABITUAL GAMBLING BEHAVIORS IN REAL TIME

This is likely your goal when spending advertising budget to reach high-risk individuals. For instance, targeted digital ads scheduled around major sporting events can help prompt viewers to pause before placing a bet.

GOAL #2: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION, CONVERSATION, OR HELP-SEEKING THROUGH REPEATED EXPOSURE

This is likely your goal when sharing social media posts on your organization's profiles. For instance, frequently sharing educational content and support resources helps equip viewers with information they can turn to when questioning their gambling decisions.

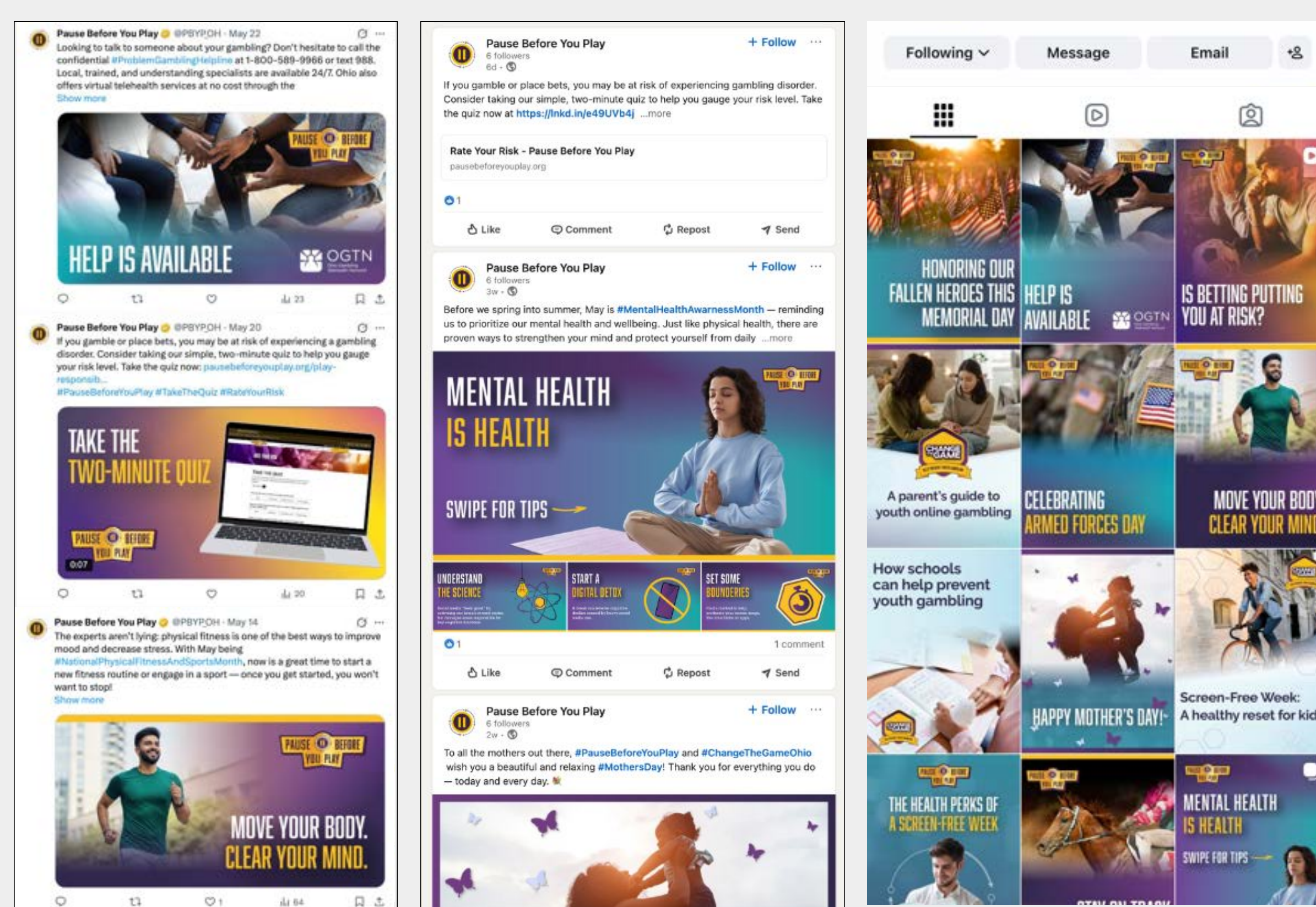
For more guidance on defining your goal and strategy, read the [Social Media Platforms Overview](#) guide.

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Social media posts provide a powerful way to reach your audience on platforms they already use, reinforcing *Pause Before You Play* messaging they've seen elsewhere. Unlike ads, posts on your organization's social media pages can be shared, saved, and revisited over time.

HOW TO USE THEM

Social media posts should be used to normalize pausing and setting limits, highlight support resources, and encourage peer-to-peer conversations.



POSTS ARE MOST EFFECTIVE WHEN THEY:

- Use short, reflective prompts rather than warnings.
- Are posted consistently as part of an awareness or prevention campaign.

WHERE TO USE THEM

- Organizational social media pages (Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn)
- Community group pages
- Event or awareness campaign feeds
- Paid social placements targeting adults in relevant age groups

View the [Examples of Social Media](#) document for more guidance and examples!

DIGITAL MATERIALS BEST PRACTICES

DIGITAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Digital advertisements appear in paid media outlets, allowing you to reach users beyond existing followers. Unlike social posts on your organization’s social profiles, digital ads use targeting like demographics, location, interest, and behavior to reach specific individuals who are at higher risk for gambling related-harm.

HOW TO USE THEM

Use platform ad tools to define your audience, set a modest budget, and schedule ads. Monitor performance metrics like clicks and engagement, and adjust targeting or messaging over time to improve effectiveness.

DIGITAL ADS ARE MOST EFFECTIVE WHEN THEY:

- Use clear, concise messaging with a focused call to action.
- Are timed strategically, such as during peak gambling seasons or major sporting events.
- Link directly to helpful resources or support services.



WHERE TO USE THEM

- Paid ad placements on social media platforms, using platform ad tools like Meta Ads Manager.
- Ad platforms like Google Display Network that serves banner ads to users on 35 million websites, mobile apps, and video platforms.

RADIO AND AUDIO SPOTS

Radio and audio spots are designed to reach people during routine activities such as commuting, working, or exercising.

HOW TO USE THEM

When sharing *Pause Before You Play* messaging, consider who your target listeners are and where they’re listening. Audio spots works best when they:

- Use nonjudgmental language.
- Encourage brief self-reflection rather than behavior change demands.
- Reinforce messages people may have seen elsewhere.

RADIO AND AUDIO SPOT BANK

We’ve created a suite of radio and audio spots that are ready to use. Visit PauseBeforeYouPlay.org/media-type/radio-spots to browse audio spots by audience type.

WHERE TO USE THEM

- Local radio stations.
- Streaming audio platforms and podcasts.
- Ads placed during sports broadcasts or talk programming.
- Background audio in venues or waiting areas (where appropriate).



DIGITAL MATERIALS BEST PRACTICES

VIDEOS (SHORT- AND LONG-FORM)

Videos are a highly effective way to provide captivating storytelling, create emotional connection, and model effective moments of pause.

HOW TO USE THEM

Videos can be used to introduce the campaign, make complex information easy to digest, and encourage help-seeking. Video content is most effective when it is:

- Short and focused for digital platforms.
- Paired with captions and accessible design.
- Integrated with social media, websites, or presentations.

WHERE TO USE THEM

- Social media platforms.
- Organization websites and landing pages.
- Streaming platforms and cable television.
- Digital advertisement platforms like Youtube.
- Movie theater pre-rolls.
- Trainings, workshops, or community presentations.

VIDEO BANK

- We've created a suite of videos that are ready to use. Visit PauseBeforeYouPlay.org/media-type/video/ to browse videos by audience type.

