

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GAMBLING

Odds of Winning Top Prizes¹

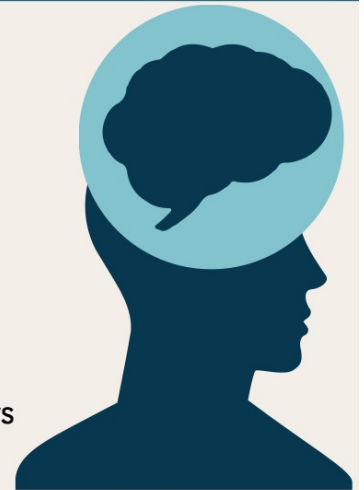
Lotto 6/49: 1 in 13,983,816
Word Up Scratch N'Win: 1 in 500,000
Criss Cross Break Open: 1 in 1,425
Slot Machines: 1 in 32,000-30,000,000



If the chances of winning are slim, why do people continue to gamble?

Brain Circuitry

- ♥ Gambling causes feelings of excitement or relaxation.²
- ♠ Our brains have a reward system that creates pleasure when we anticipate and then receive a reward.³
- ♦ The expectation of a reward causes an event stronger reaction than when we receive the award.³
- ♣ The neurotransmitter dopamine is released when we behave in ways that result in rewards.⁴
- ♥ Gambling machines and activities are designed to increase anticipation and promote rewards.⁵



Operant and Classical Conditioning⁶

In psychological terms, gambling utilizes operant and classical conditioning:

1.

A player wins a prize and becomes excited.

2.

The gambling behaviour is reinforced.

3.

Prizes are given randomly, so the player thinks they will win again if they are persistent.

4.

The physical environment (i.e. sounds, lights, smells) becomes a stimulating trigger for gambling.

Operant Conditioning

Classical Conditioning

Social Benefits⁷

Some gambling activities provide opportunity for individuals to gather and socialize.

Various gaming environments offer competitive activities.



Individuals can escape their everyday lives and join the gambling scene which has a unique culture of identities, sounds, and vocabulary.



*Please see reverse for reference list.

References

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