

The long and winding road to gambling disorder treatment

Presented at the Alberta Gambling Research Institute .

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DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST



I receive partial salary support from the Alberta Gambling Research Institute (AGRI) a government agency.

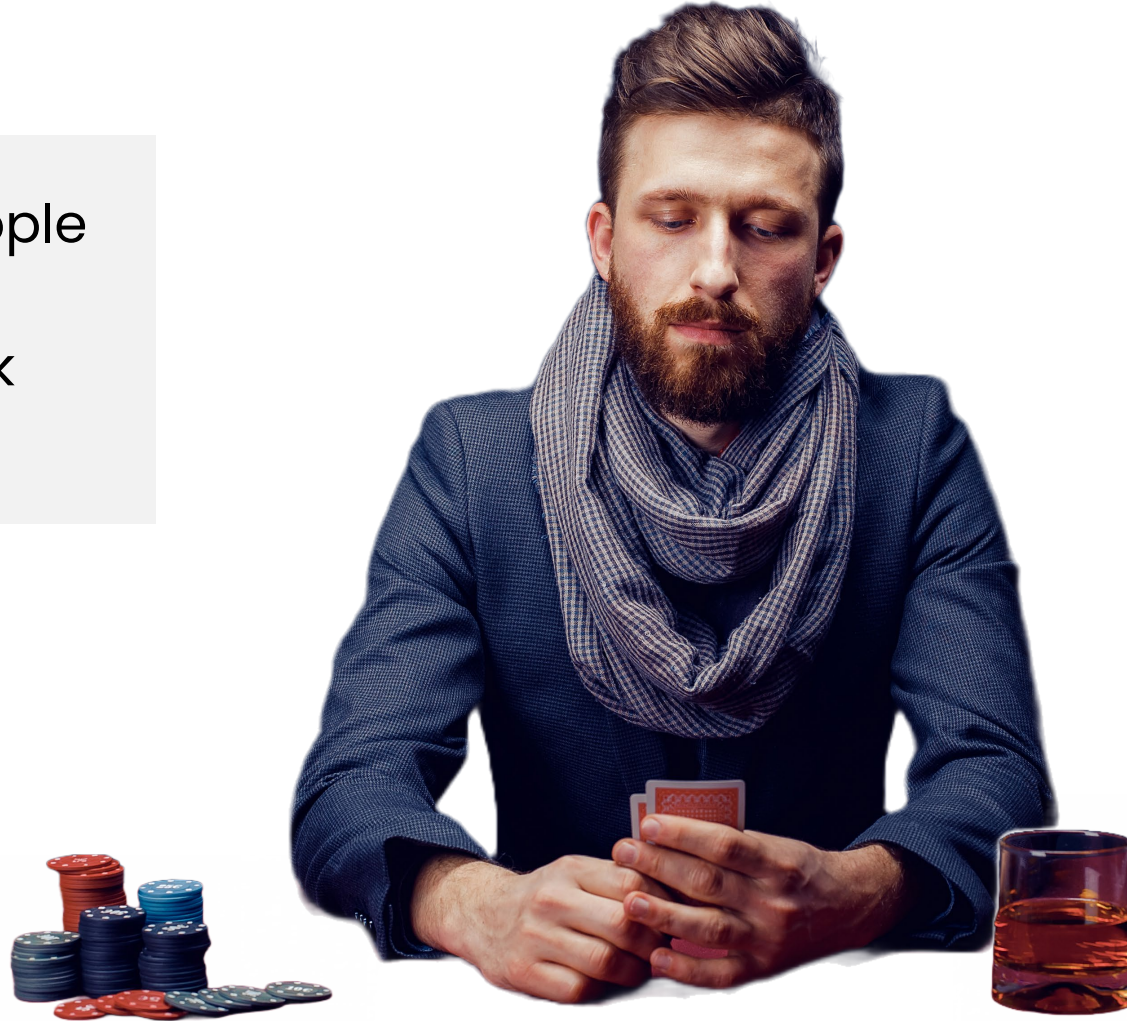


This research was funded by AGRI.

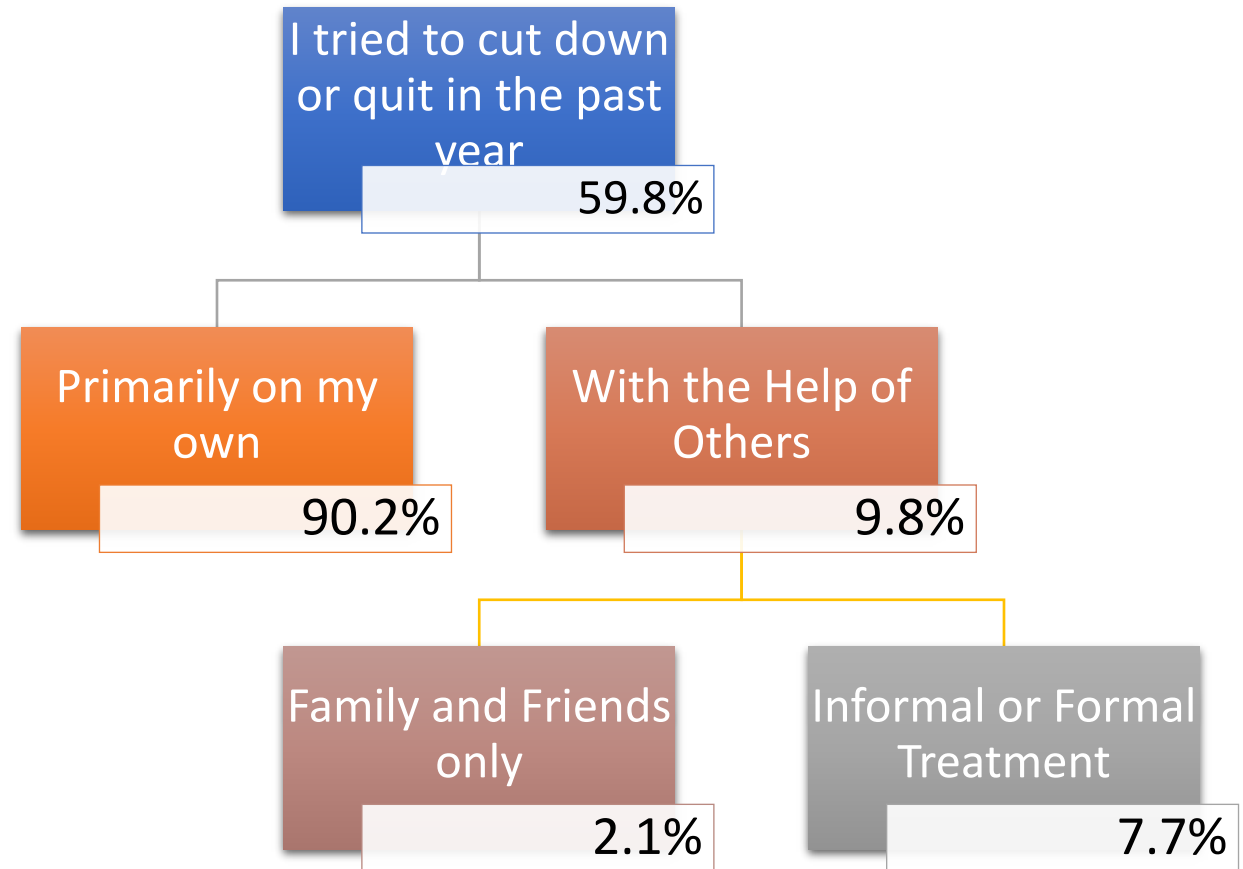
I also have unrelated research grants From CIHR and Health Canada

The Challenge

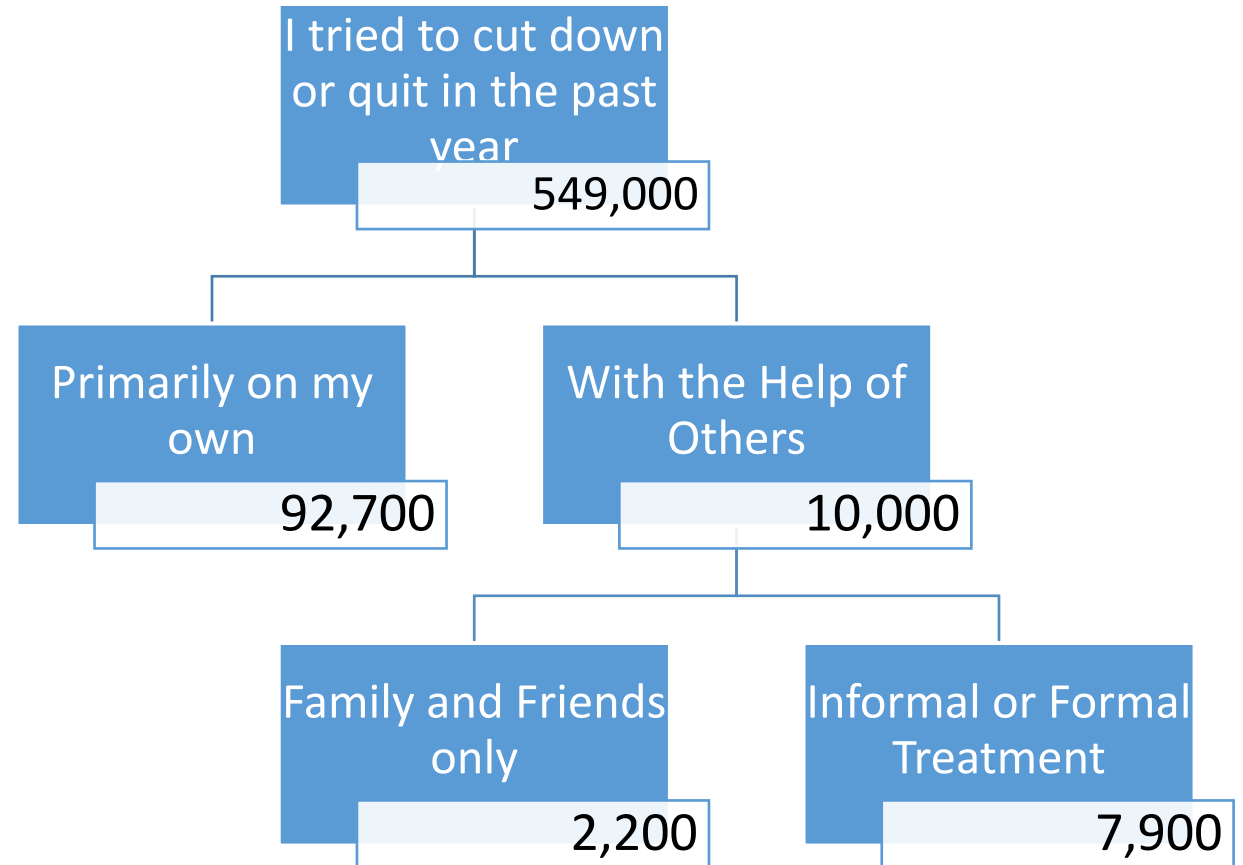
One in five people
with
problem gambling seek
treatment
(Bijker et al., 2022)



Change Attempts Among People with Gambling Problems?



How many Canadians are making change attempts?



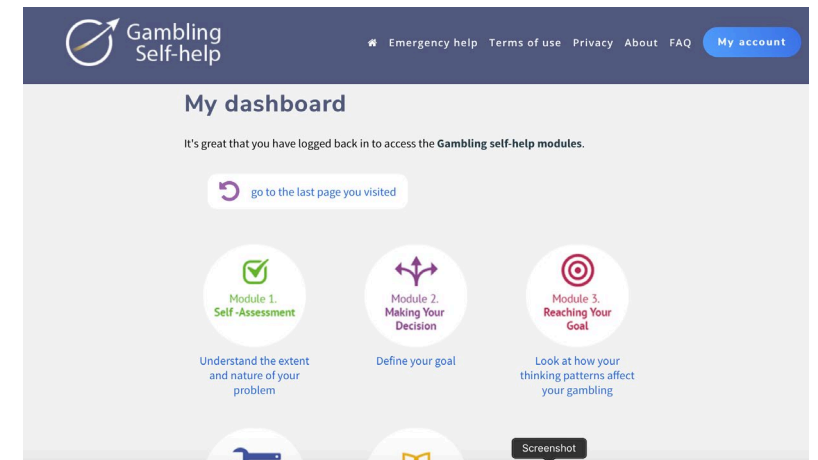
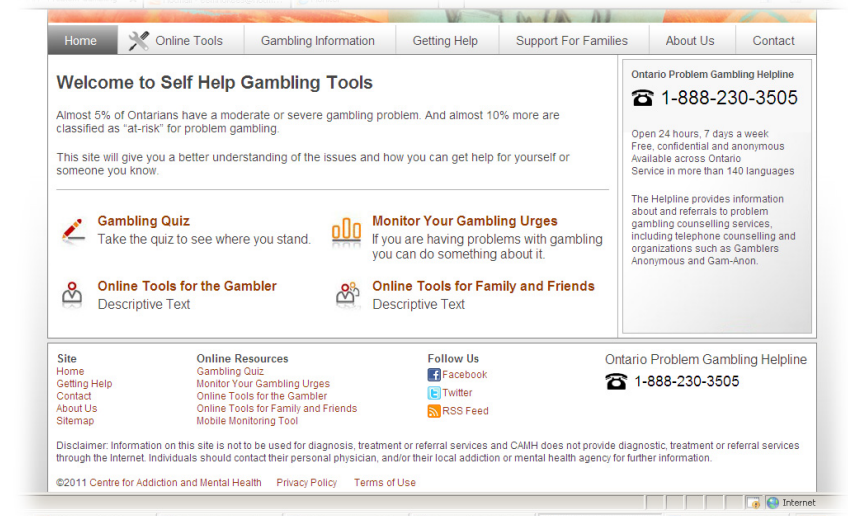


Take-home messages from ANP

- Variety of pathways to recovery.
- Variety of types of support accessed, none perceived as more helpful than others
- Self-recovery is a very popular route
- Routes to treatment are also varied
 - Family/Friends, Clergy, Health professionals, Venue, Web all play important role.

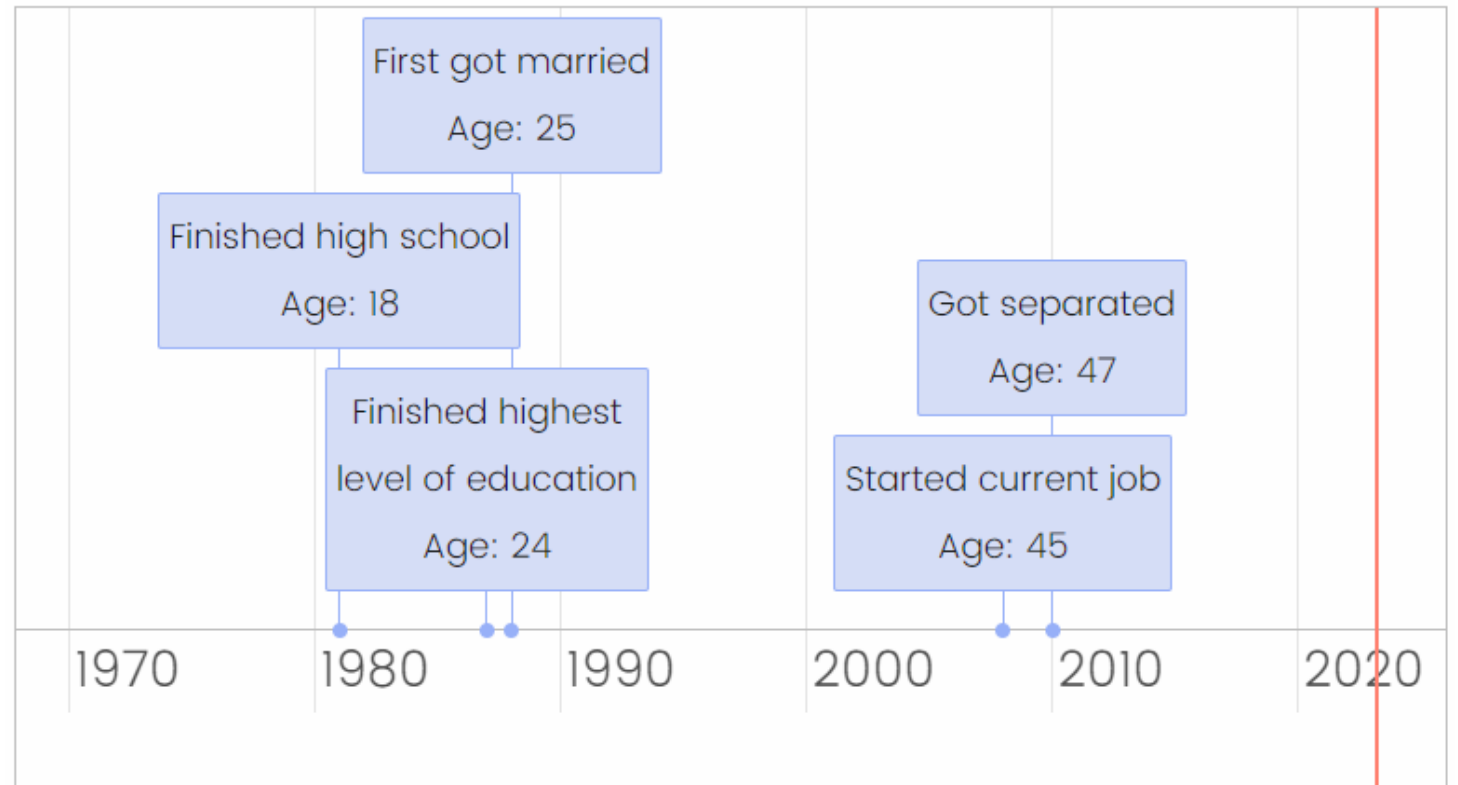
Promoting self-recovery

- Recent trials in
 - Switzerland
 - Canada
 - Australia
 - Likely elsewhere
- Available to the public
 - Not so much in Canada
 - Australia
 - Likely elsewhere



Pathways to Treatment Study

- A deeper dive into the experiences and timelines of addressing gambling problems
- Life History Survey method
- Target N= 500 people in treatment across Canada

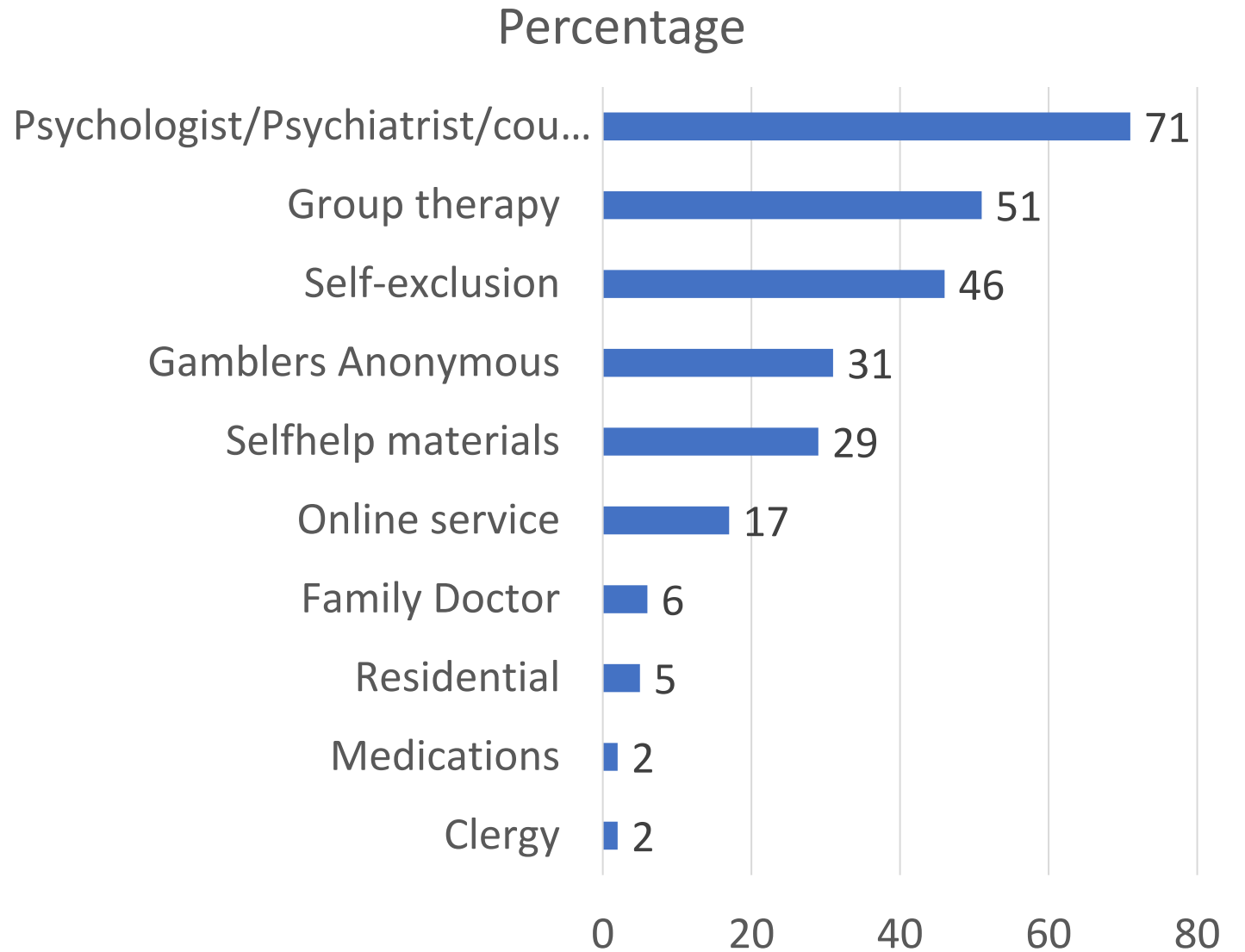


The sample.

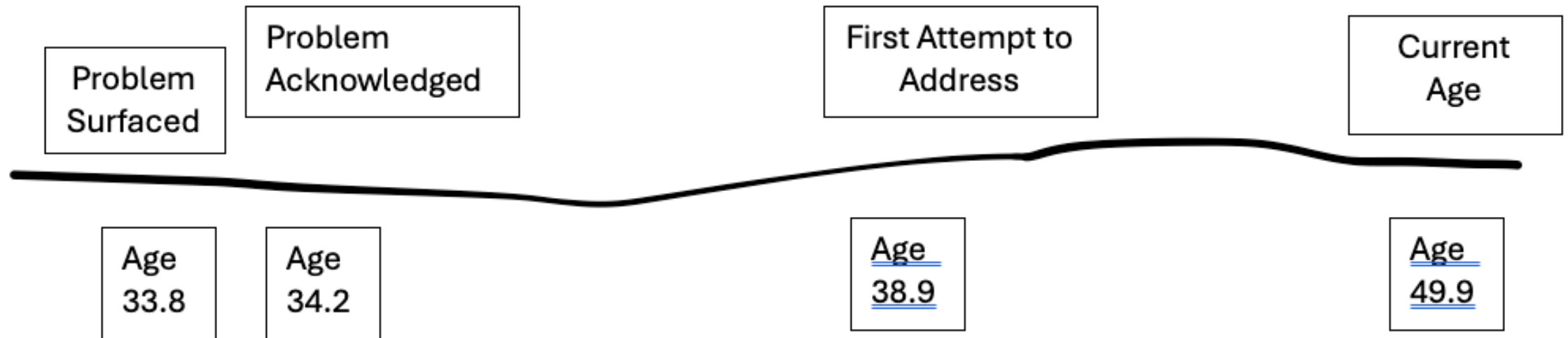
N= 65

- Gender
 - Man – 55%
 - Woman- 43%
 - Other- 2%
- Age- M = 49.9, SD = 15, range 18 to 86
- Ethnicity
 - White- 83%
 - Indigenous – 8%
- PGSI. M= 16.7, SD = 7.5
- Type of gambling causing problem – EGMs- 85%

Current
Treatment
(N =65 ; M
= 2.8)



Attempting Change

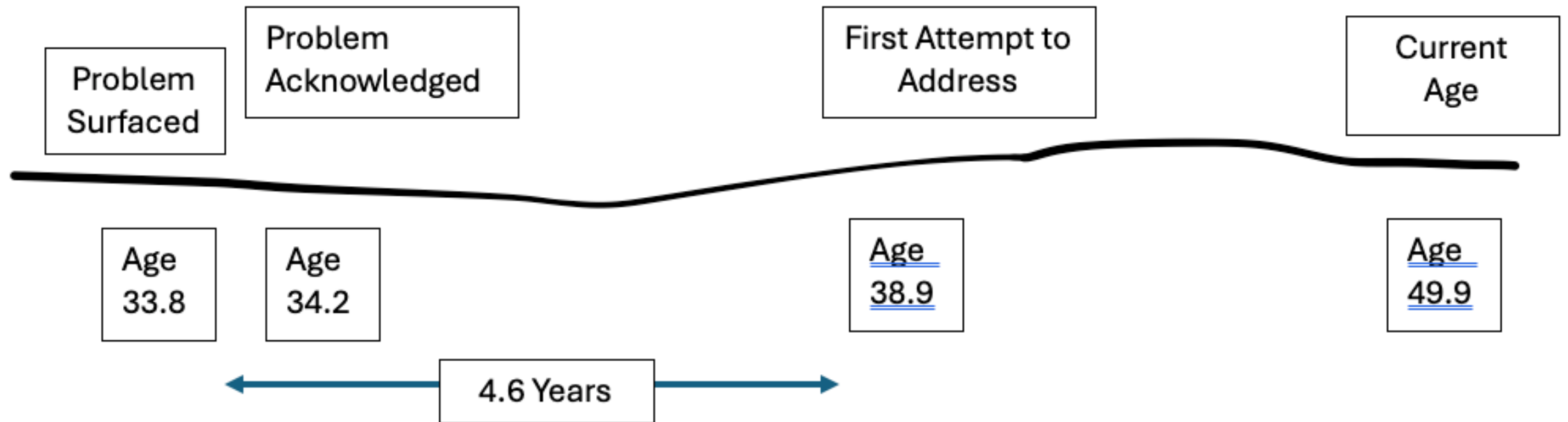


Problem Acknowledged: What did you notice?

96 reports. N= 65, M = 1.5 per person

	Of people
Financial problems	40%
Changes in gambling engagement	37%
Impaired control over gambling	22%
Preoccupation	20%
Emotional Aspects	12%
Relationship impacts	8%

Time Lag to Change



What led to the tipping point?

111 reports. N= 65, M = 1.7
per person

	Of people
Financial problems	77%
Quality of life concerns	29%
Relationship impacts	22%
Change in gambling engagement	17%
Impaired control over gambling	14
emotional impact, preoccupation	<10%

What did you do?

81 actions . N= 65

	Of people
Seek formal or informal help	37%
Stimulus control- e.g., blockers, self-exclusion, stayed away	40%
Harm reduction- e.g., setting limits, limiting \$ access	25%
Replacement activities & relationships	12%
Spontaneous recovery	N = 1

Where did you turn? First and Early Attempts

	Percent choosing as first choice	Helpfulness (not at all to extremely)
Family & friends	77%	Somewhat/Quite
Self-exclusion	64%	Somewhat/Quite
In person counselling	62%	Somewhat/Quite
Gamblers Anonymous	58%	Somewhat/Quite
Online/Telephone counselling	50%	Somewhat

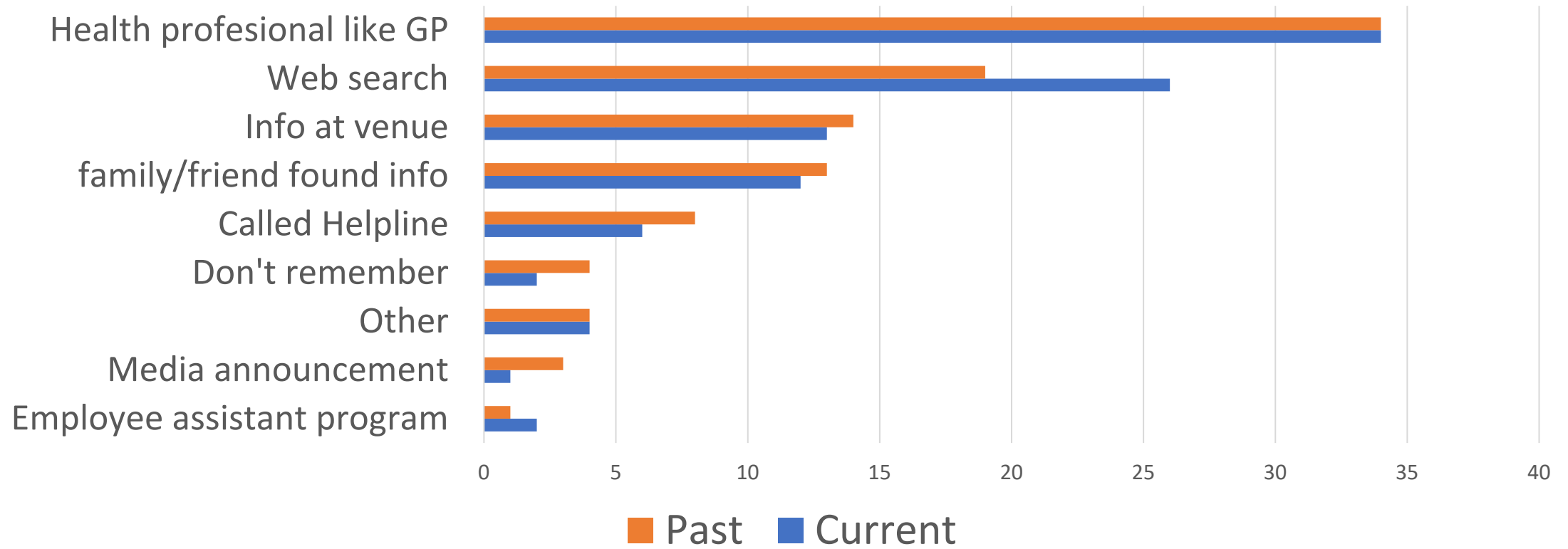
Where did you turn? Later Attempts

	Helpfulness
Group therapy (professional led)	Quite
Self-help materials from books or online	Somewhat
Infrequent (<10 people)	
<i>Residential</i>	<i>Quite/Very</i>
<i>Family Doctor for counselling</i>	<i>Not at all/somewhat</i>
<i>Clergy for counselling</i>	<i>Somewhat/quite</i>
<i>Medication for family dr. or psychiatrist</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>

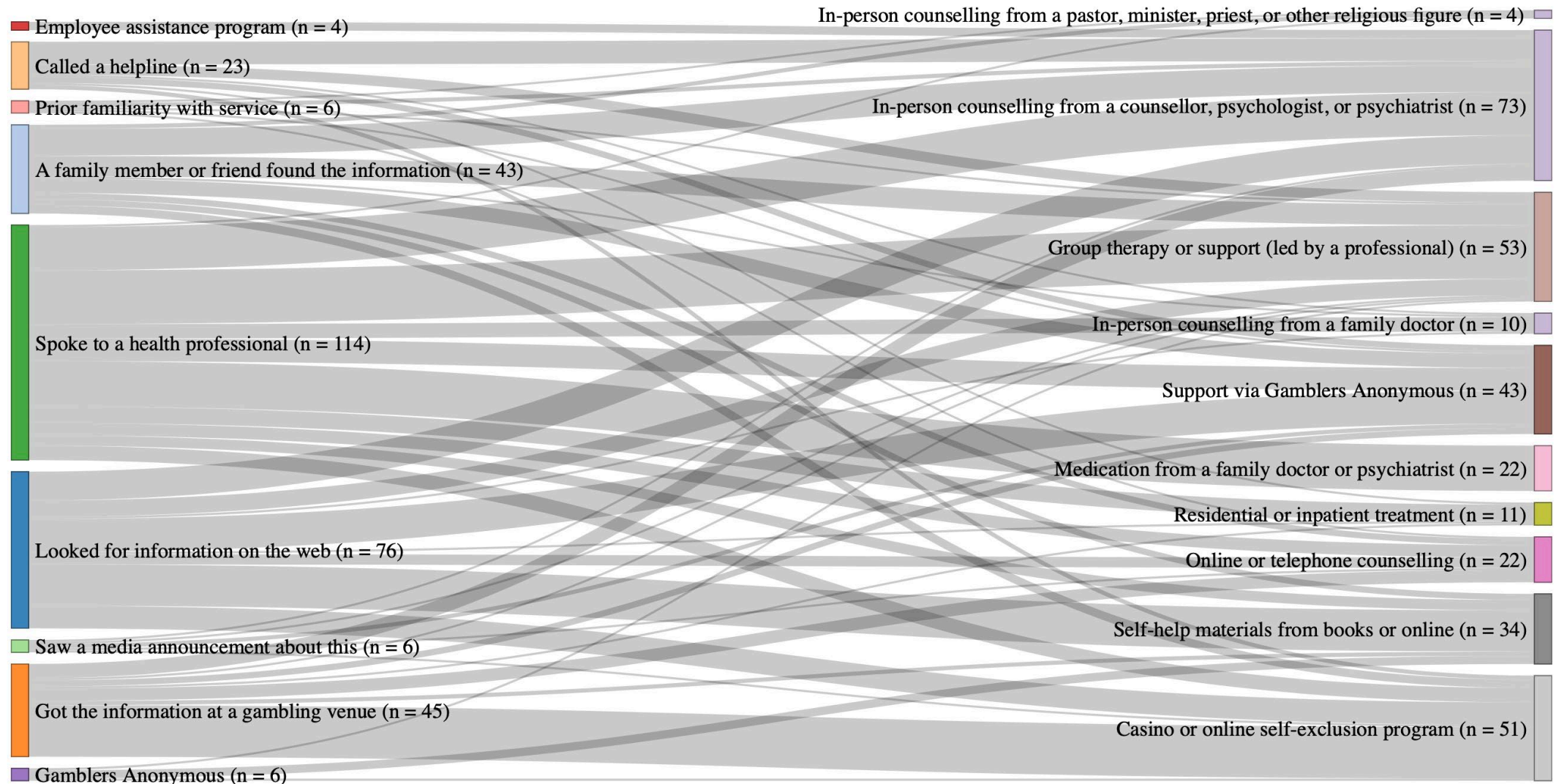
Observations so far

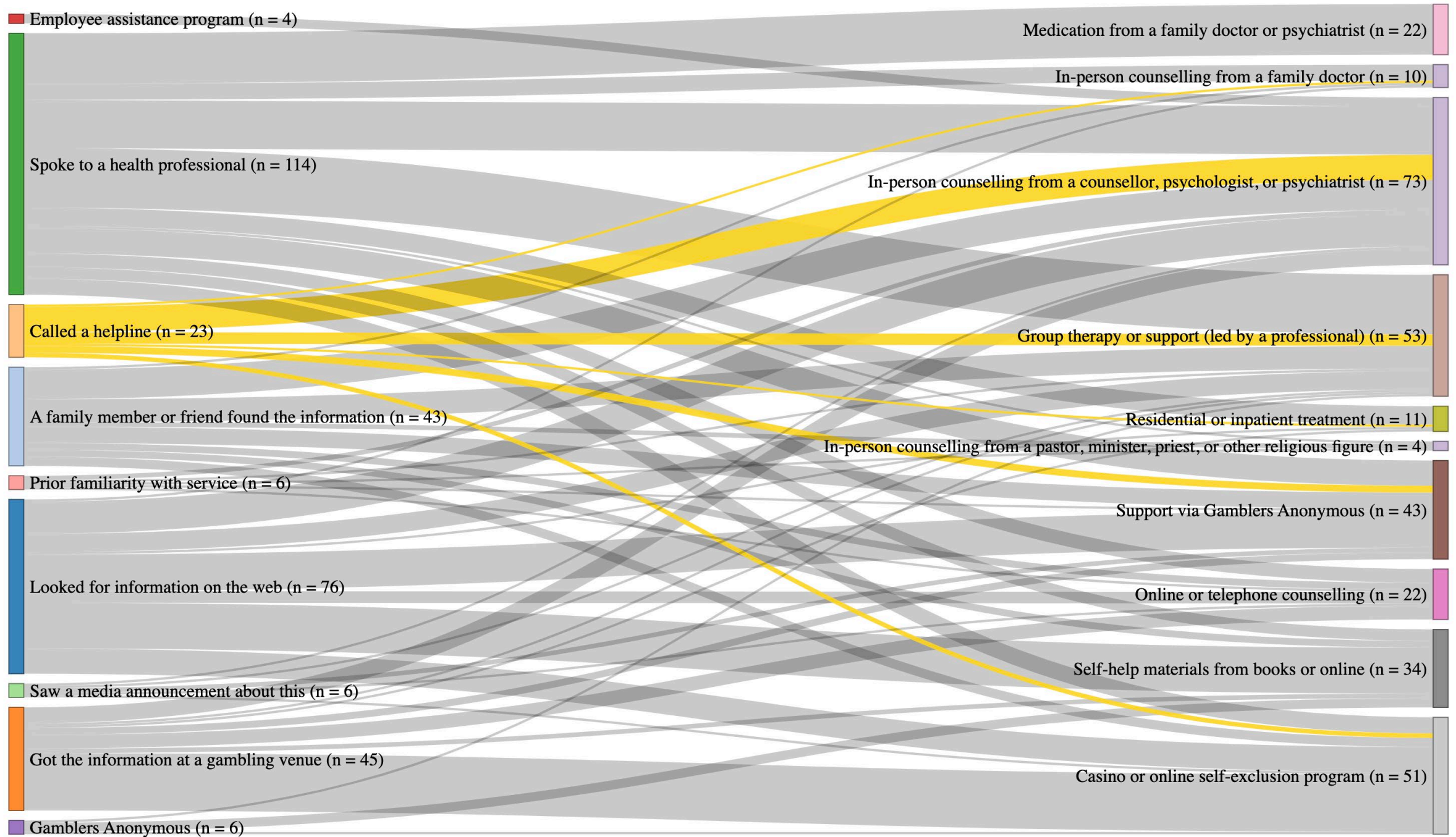
- That darned lag - how to we get people to act sooner on their concerns?
- People do more than one strategy, including many harm reduction options.
- No prominent or more effective treatment choice.

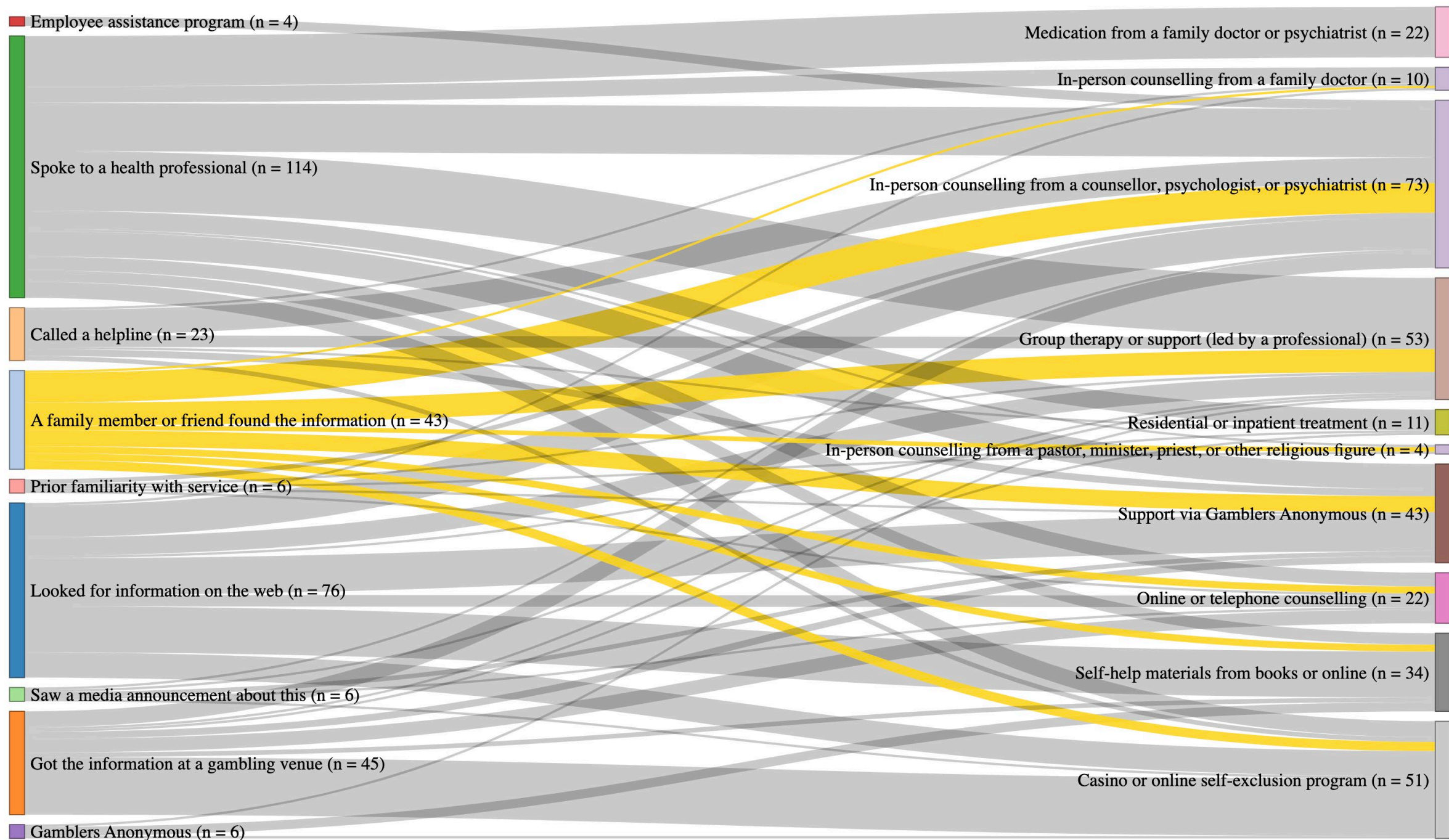
How people became aware?

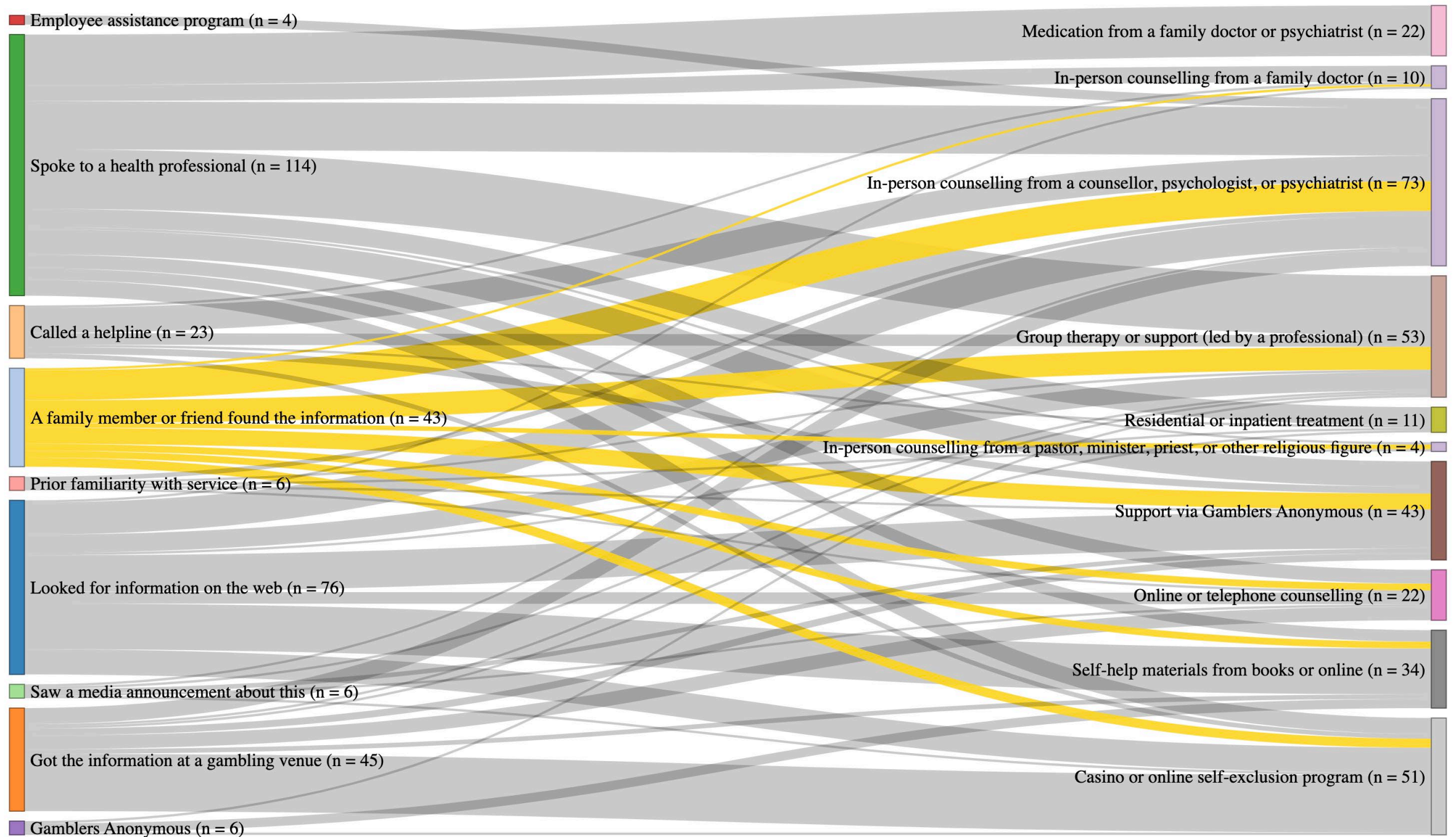


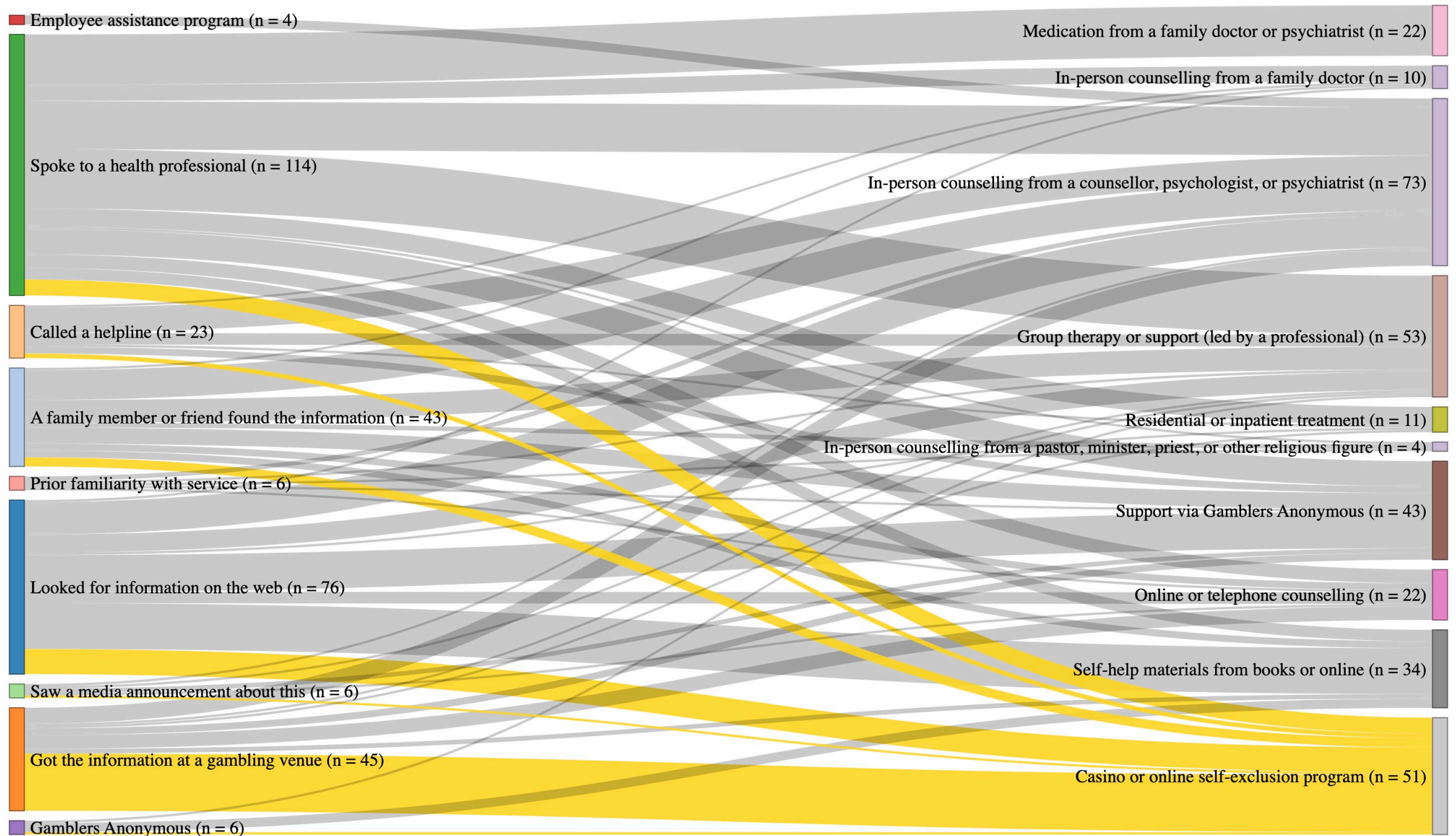
Making connections

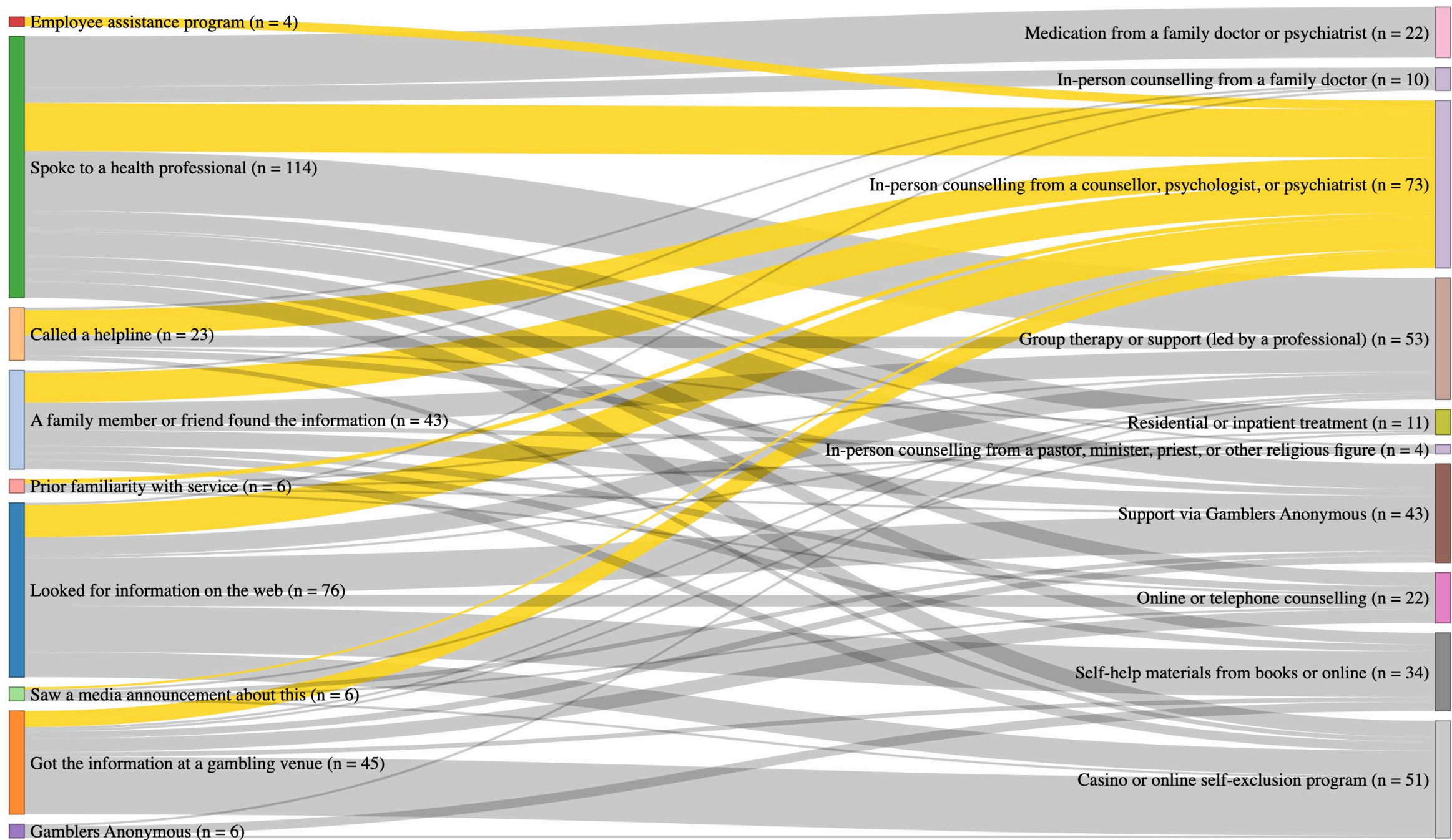









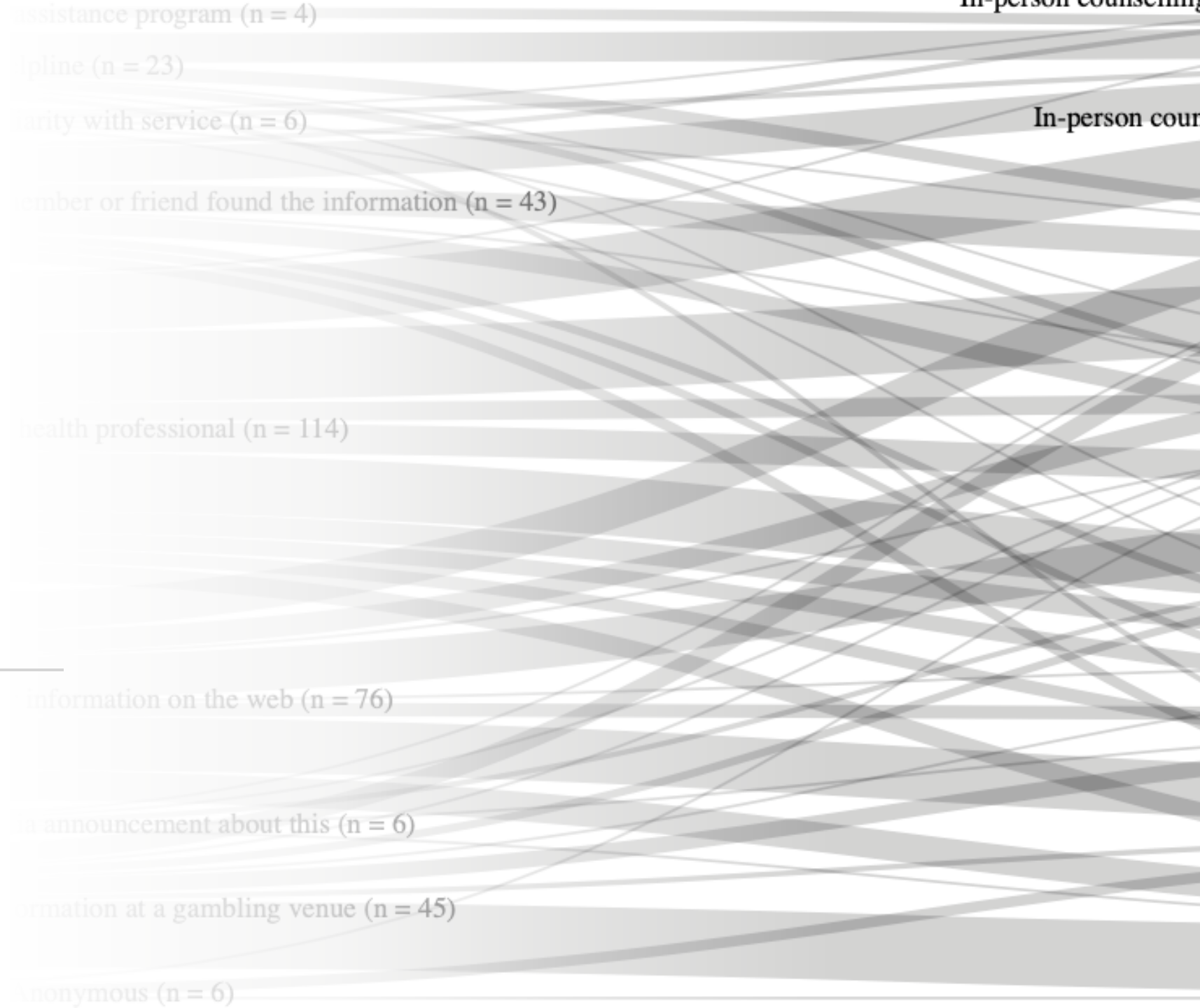






Online Link to Interactive Figure

<https://gambling-research.github.io/pathways/>

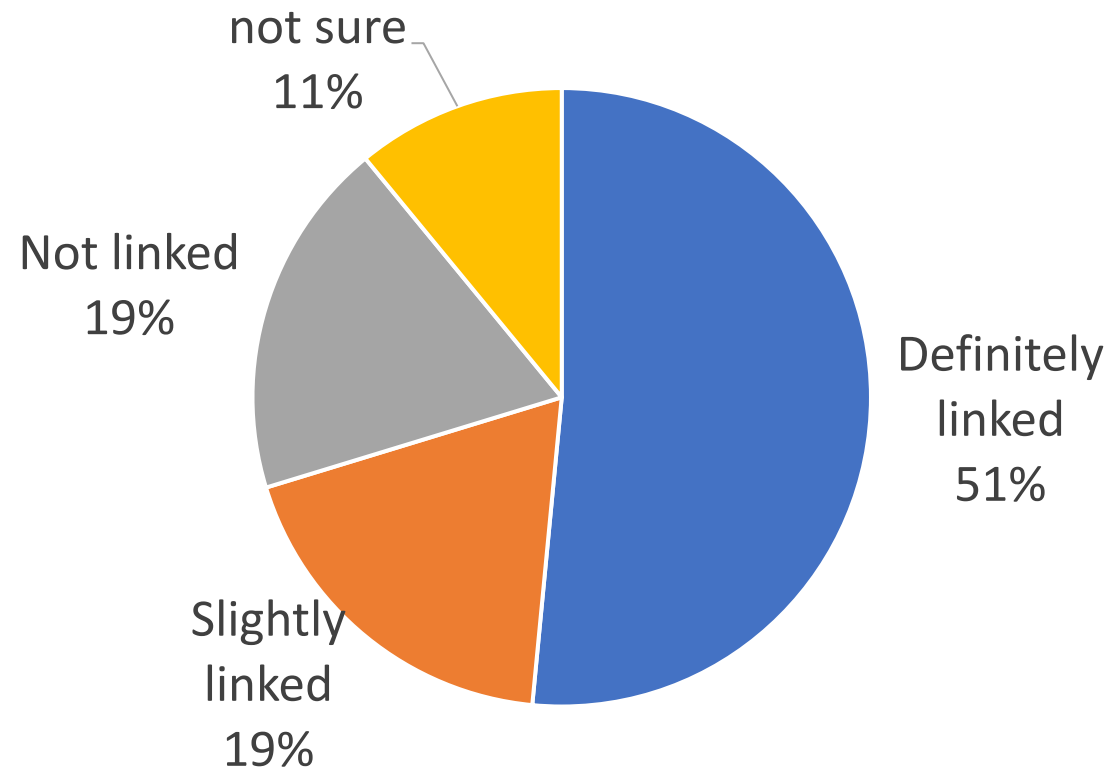


More complexity- Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders



What about mental health and substance Use problems?

Do you think your gambling problems are related to mental health and/or substance use (alcohol, cannabis or other drugs) problems?



Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment

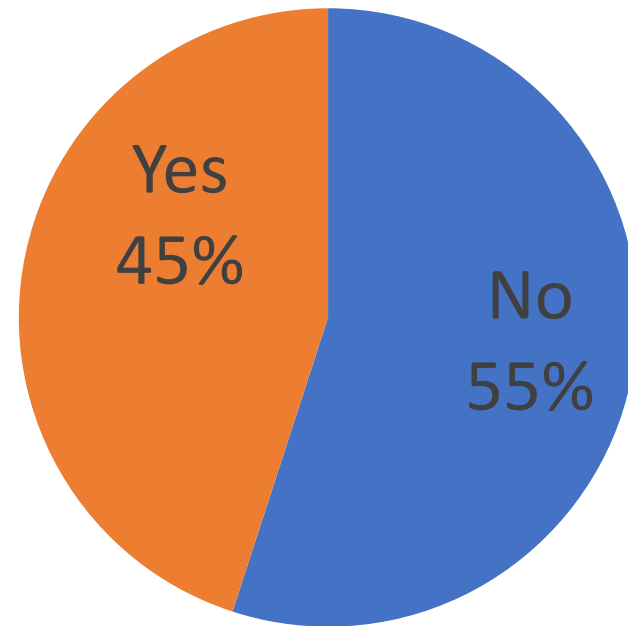
Substance Use
Treatment
Age 30

Mental Health
Treatment
Age 34.6

Gambling
Treatment (formal)
Age 42.2

Other behavioural addictions?

- Past 12 months “over involvement” that led to “significant negative effects for you or others”
- Sex or pornography, overeating, exercise, shopping, social media, video games, internet use





Implications

- Lots to learn about how mental health and gambling addiction are intertwined
- Implications for prevention as well as treatment
- No wrong door idea makes sense but the doors must lead to the right places.

Thank you

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