

Internet Based Support For Concerned Significant Others (CSOs)

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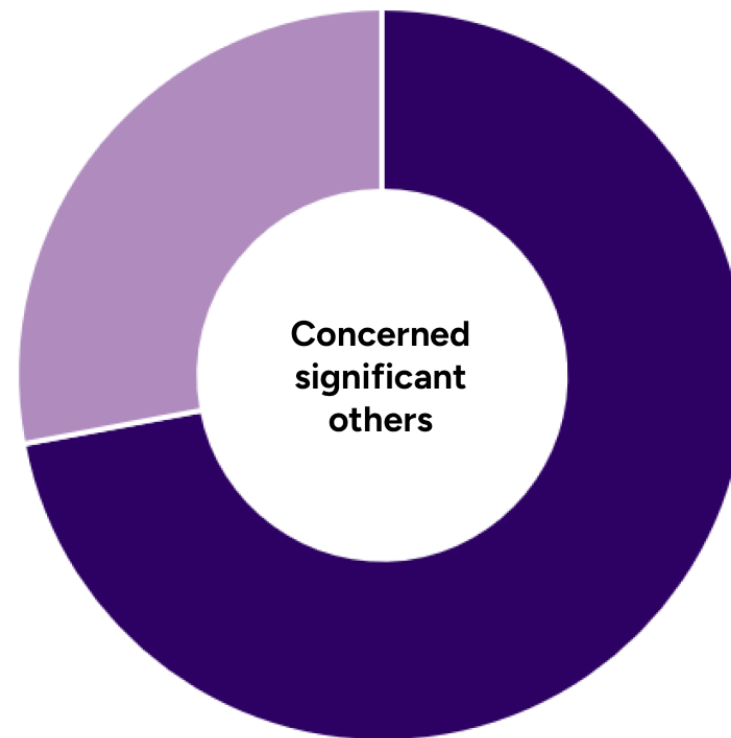
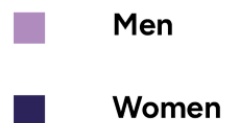
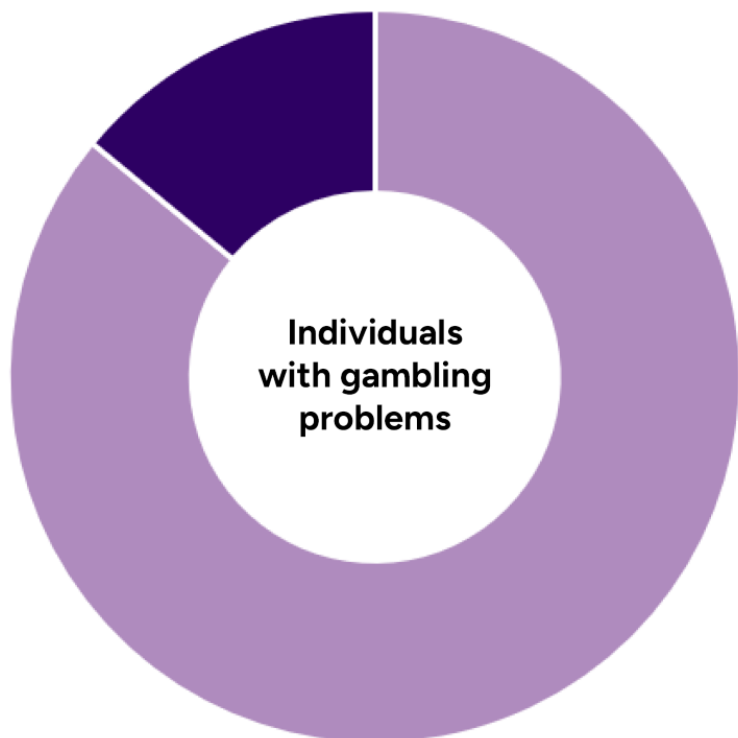


The Swedish National Gambling Helpline

- Run by the Centre for Psychiatry Research on behalf of the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.
- Provide anonymous support by phone and chat.
- Motivational interviewing and counselling.
- Not treatment. Prevention and self help.

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Help seekers 2023



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Concerned significant others

- Approximately 50% of individuals with PG rely on informal help from their CSOs. ¹
- For every individual with PG on average six persons are negatively affected. ²
- Negative impact on the CSO such as: ³
 - financial
 - relationships
 - psychological health
 - work/study



1. Clarke, D., et al., *An overview of help seeking by problem gamblers and their families including barriers to and relevance of services*. International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, 2007. **5**(4): p. 292-306.

2. Goodwin, B.C., et al., *A typical problem gambler affects six others*. International Gambling Studies, 2017. **17**(2): p. 276-289

3. Langham, E., et al., *Understanding gambling related harm: a proposed definition, conceptual framework, and taxonomy of harms*. BMC Public Health, 2016. **16**(1): p. 1.

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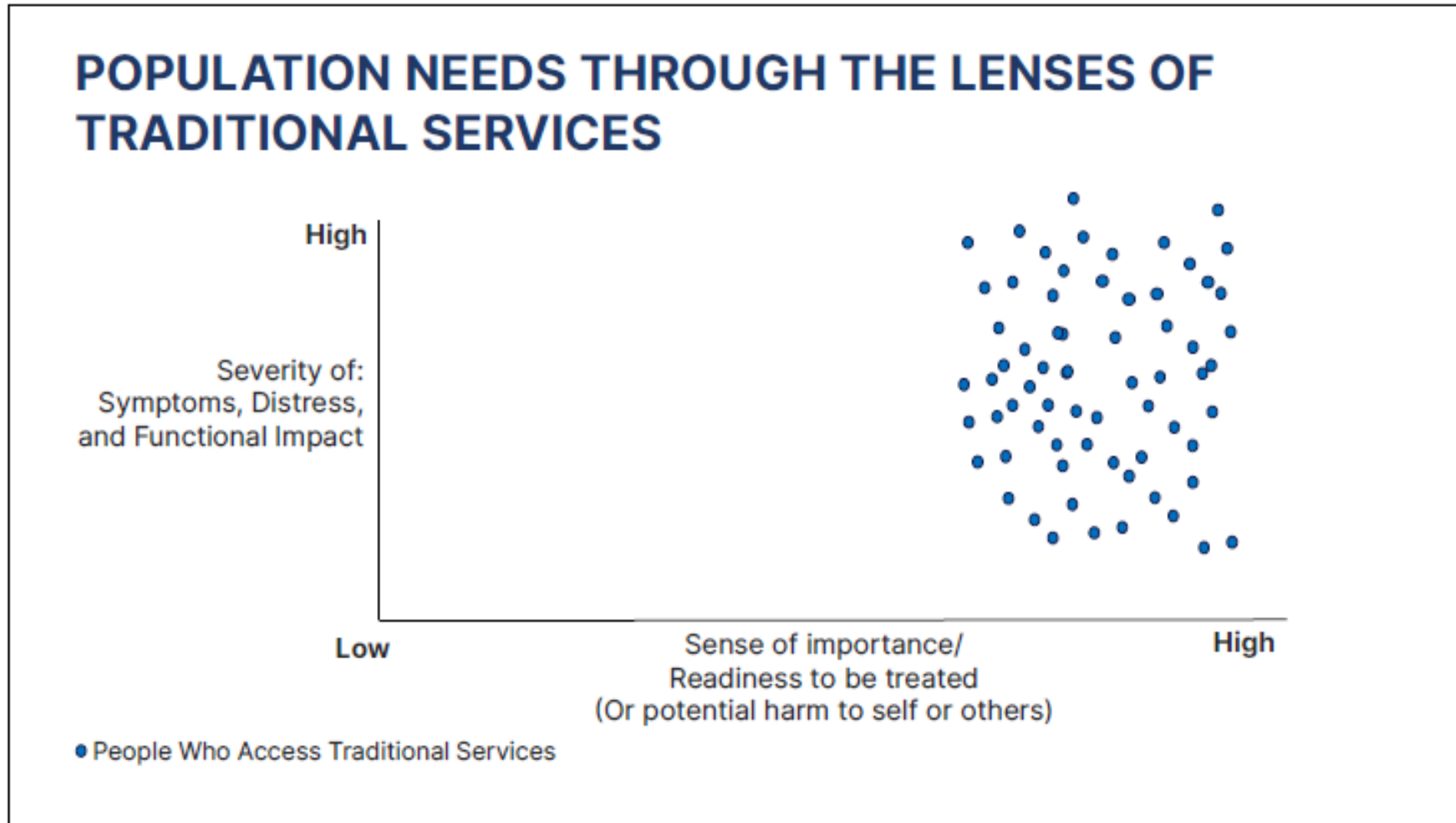
Help opportunities for CSOs

Previous interventions have aimed at:

- a) Involving the CSO to help the individual with PG to reduce or quit gambling.
- b) Supporting the CSOs in their own right. Coping strategies, psychoeducation about gambling and PG or reducing depression and anxiety.

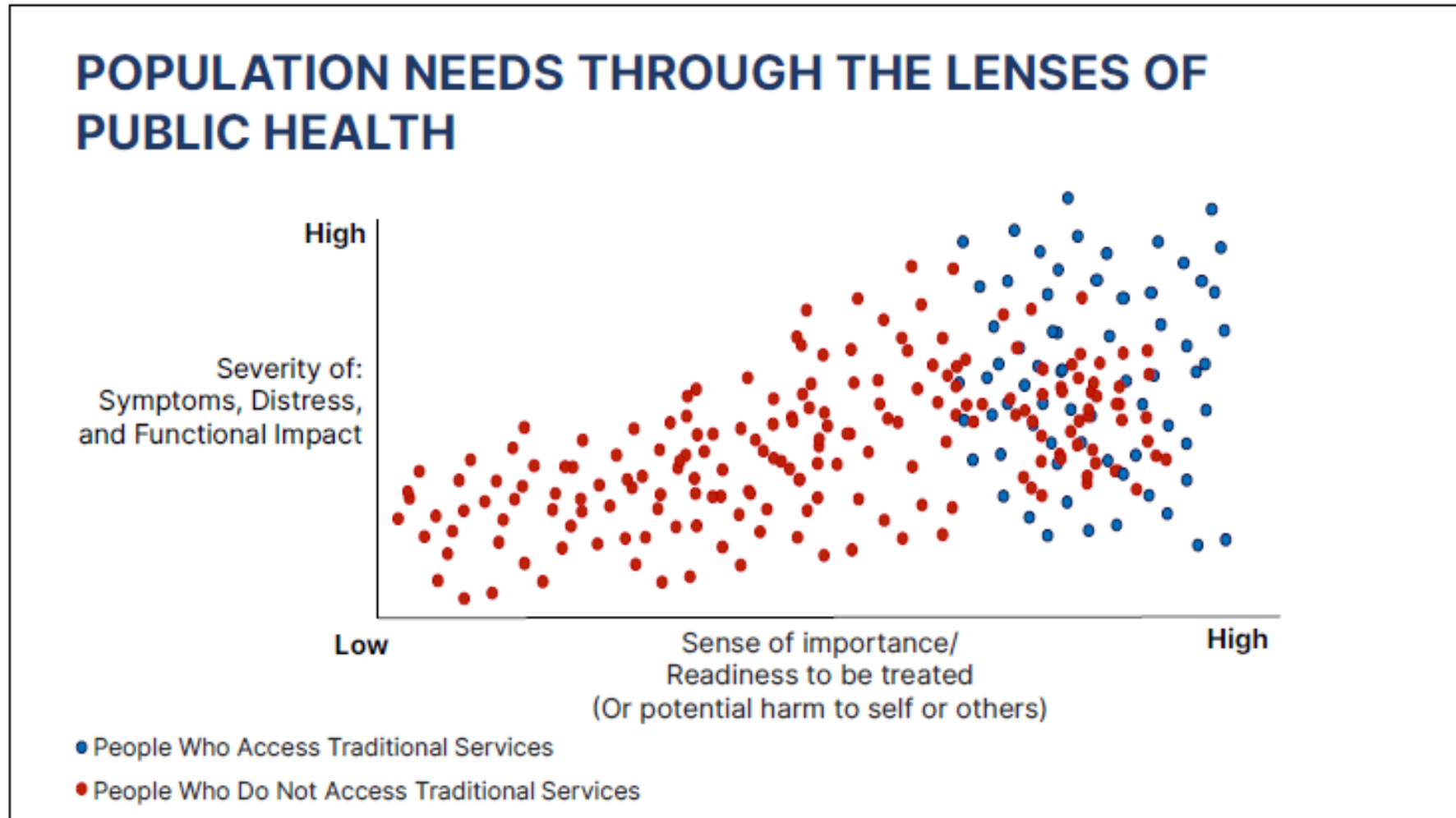


Internet based support - Why



Baumel, A. (2024, August 16). How many digital mental health interventions does it take to change a lightbulb? Invited talk at the Centre for Psychiatry Research, Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden.

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Internet based support - What



- Available for several different conditions.*
- Treatment with a therapist or unsupported course.
- Benefits:
 - May reach individuals who would not seek support otherwise or engage them earlier
 - Efficient
- Challenges:
 - To make it user friendly
 - Adherence
 - Support behavioural change

* Andersson, G., Titov, N., Dear, B. F., Rozental, A., & Carlbring, P. (2019). Internet-delivered psychological treatments: From innovation to implementation. *World Psychiatry*, 18(1), 20-28.

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Study design



**Karolinska
Institutet**

- Randomized controlled trial with a wait-list control. Waitlist will get access 8 weeks later.
- One module a week for five weeks. Unguided, sms twice a week.
- Follow up pre- and posttreatment, 3 times during the treatment and again 3, 6, and 12 months following treatment completion.
- Aiming for 170 participants.

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Research questions

The main research questions of this project are to evaluate whether a self-guided internet-delivered program can:

- Enhance psychological and well-being for CSOs of someone with PG?
- Enhance quality of life for CSOs of someone with PG?
- Enhance relationship functioning for CSOs of someone with PG?

Measurements

Primary outcomes:

- Primary measure will be the Kessler Psychological Distress 6-item Scale.

Secondary outcomes:

- Depressive symptoms will be measured with the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 .
- Anxiety symptoms will be measured with the Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item scale.
- Relationship satisfaction will be measured with the Relationship Assessment Scale.
- Gambling-related family stress will be measured with the Family Member Impact.
- Coping mechanisms will be measured with the Coping Questionnaire.
- Brunnsviken Brief Quality of life quality scale to measure quality of life.

Choosing the content

Focus group-
CSOs

Focus group-
Helpline staff

National survey-
Professionals
working with
CSOs

Survey-
International
experts

Choosing the content

Focus group- CSOs

- Information about gambling and gambling problems.
- Not a quick fix. Might be life long.
- Normalise being in a crisis.
- Small steps to aid empathy fatigue.
- Information about enabling.

Choosing the content

Focus group-
Helpline staff

- Information about gambling, gambling problems and being in crisis.
- Explore motivation to help or step back. "What does helping mean?"
- Different needs for different types of CSOs.
- Strengthen autonomy.

Choosing the content

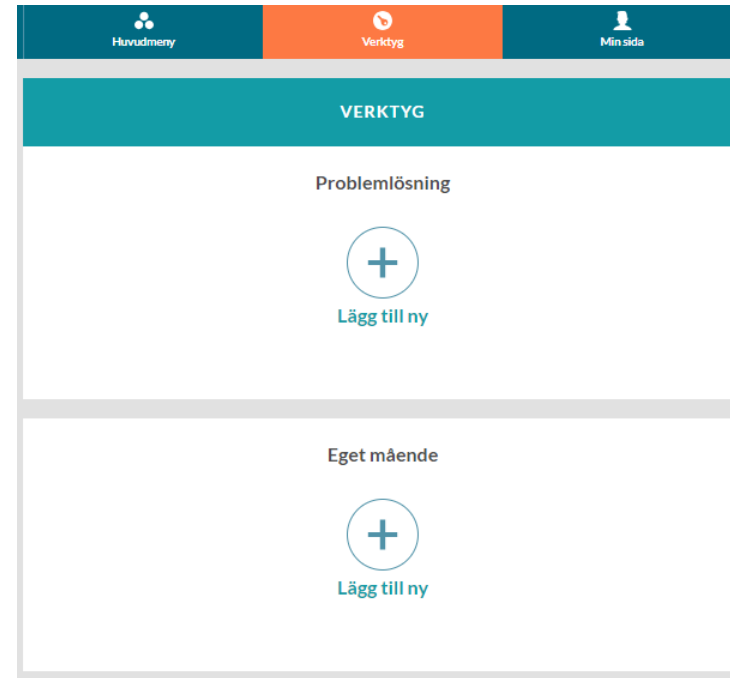
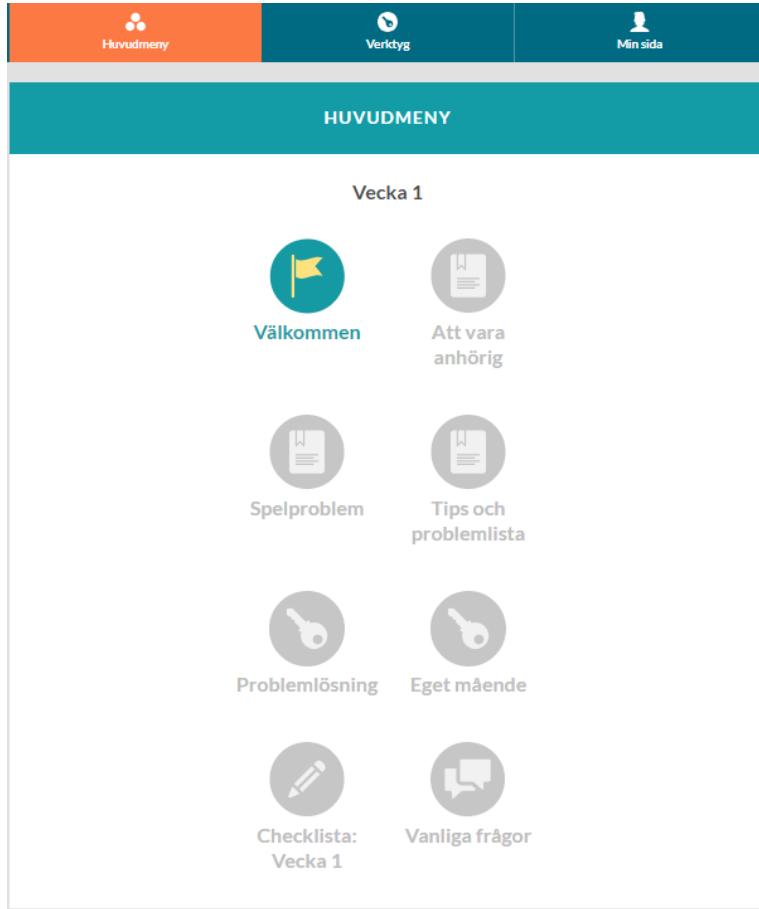
National survey-
Professionals working with
CSOs

- Most frequent response for why CSOs seek help was "To help the individual with gambling problem." (78%).
- Most frequent answer to what's most helpful was "boundary setting and protecting one's finances" and "supporting the CSOs wellbeing."
- Only 10% considered "Helping the individual with gambling problems" as helpful.
- Content that scored low was functional analysis, joint activities and motivation.

Choosing the content

Survey-
International
experts

- Similar to the national survey.
- Advice to not use the terms co-dependent or enabling.



Week 1



- Welcome and introduction



- To be concerned about someone
- Gambling problems
- List of problems and advice



- Problem solving
- Your own wellbeing





Week 2: Self care

- Your support team
- Activities for your well being
- Feelings of shame and guilt
- Guided by your values



Week 3: Targeting change

- Motivation
- Communication
- Boundary setting



Week 4: Positive direction

- Positive time together
- Difficult emotions and framing worrying thoughts
- Do more more of what works



Week 5: Path forward

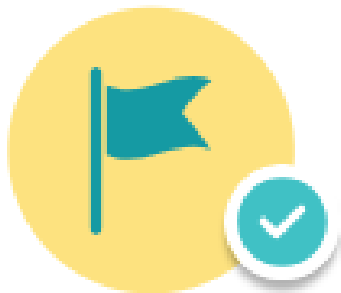
- Giving back responsibilities
- Relapse prevention
- Valued direction



- Problem solving
- Your own wellbeing

Test run

- Two men and five women.
- Six parents, one partner.
- All completed.



- + Relatedness. Liked films and avatars.
- + Provided structure.
- + Felt safe.
- + Less lonely.
- + Different users liked different parts.

→ Simplify the key exercises

Thank you!



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