Responsible gambling Training: How do we know what's working?

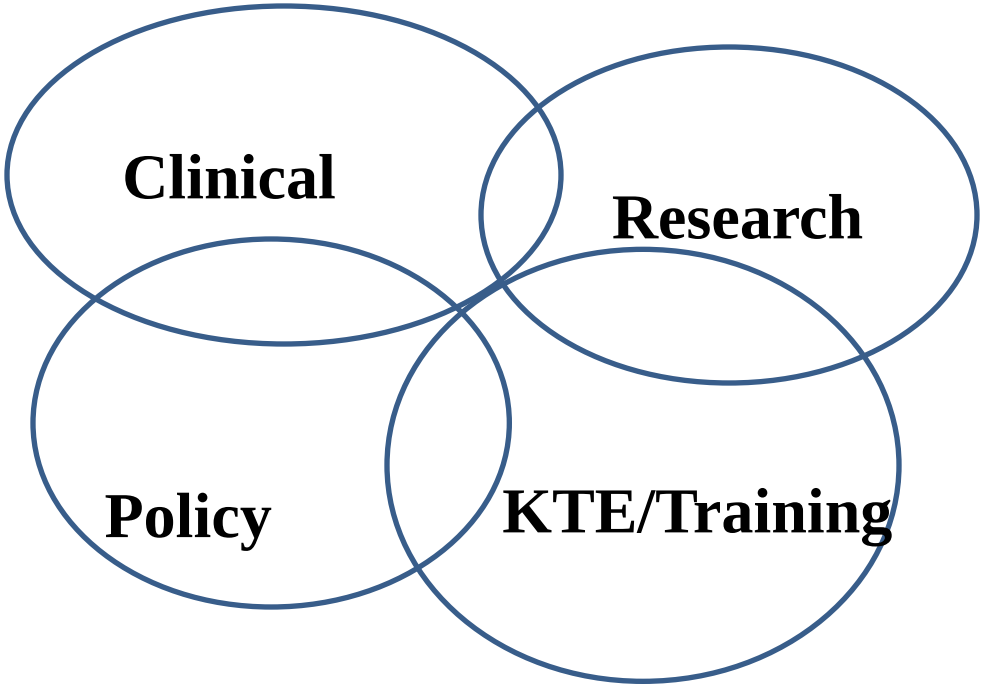
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Responsible Gambling Training: The Essentials

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Objectives

- Provide publicly available presentation
  - Summary and highlights of responsible gambling training research, legislation, and standards
  - Current consensus on “the essentials” of responsible gambling training
  - Q & A format to highlight key questions

Intended Audiences

- Responsible gambling implementation teams
- Gambling regulators, operators, employees
- Academics, researchers
- Policy advisors, consultants, developers

Responsible Gambling (RG)

- Objectives of RG programs:
  - Prevent and reduce possible harms from gambling
  - ↓ development of problem gambling

- Objectives of RG training:
  - ↑ employee knowledge, attitudes, and skills
  - Ensure employees are able to assist players in need

Responsible Gambling Training

- Developed by gambling operators, government agencies, and/or external companies
  - Independently and/or collaboratively
  - Wide range of RG training content and formats

Responsible Gambling Training:

What do the experts have to say?

Responsible Gambling Training

- Blaszczynski, Ladouceur, & Shaffer, 2004
  - Reno Model provided key principles for RG policies:
    - ↓ prevalence/incidence of gambling-related harm
    - Evaluate policy to reduce gambling-related issues
    - Identify short- and long-term priorities
    - Create action plan to address priorities
    - Use findings from research to develop policies

Responsible Gambling Training

- Blaszczynski et al. (2011) outlined fundamental and minimal principles for RG programs
  - Communications
    - Presentations to public re gambling, odds
    - Advertise treatment programs and helplines
    - Ethical advertising
  - Employee training & enforcement of underage play
  - Self-exclusion readily available
  - Modify environmental features contributing to excess play

What do the experts have to say?

Expert Consensus:

Employee training an important component of RG programming

It is crucial for both RG programs and RG training to be grounded in theoretical and empirical research

Is Responsible Gambling Training Effective?

A Review of the Empirical Research

Is RG Training Effective?

- Ladouceur et al., 2004
  - 1211 video lottery terminal retailers, Canada
  - Immediately following training
    - ↑ importance, understanding of harmful gambling
    - ↑ knowledge how/when to identify and intervene
  - 6 months later
    - Approached players with greater frequency
    - Discussed resources more than a change of play

Is RG Training Effective?

- Giroux et al., 2008
  - 2432 casino employees, Canada
  - Immediately following training
    - ↑ understanding of chance and problem gambling
    - ↑ knowledge of how to identify/refer player in need
    - ↑ confidence in value of/capacity to provide assistance
    - ↑ knowledge and perceived benefit of intervention
  - 6 months later
    - Knowledge and attitudes maintained
    - ↓ confidence re adequacy; time/capacity to intervene

Is RG Training Effective?

- Dufour et al., 2008
  - 826 VLT venue employees, Canada
  - Immediately following training
    - ↑ understanding of problem gambling
    - ↑ desire to assist, awareness of how to identify
    - ↑ awareness of how/when to intervene
    - ↑ assistance of pseudo-patron
  - 8 months later
    - Knowledge partly maintained, not behaviour change

Is RG Training Effective?

- Wong & Poon, 2011
  - 63 casino employees, Asia
  - Immediately following training
    - ↑ understanding of chance
    - ↑ knowledge of signs of problem gambling
    - ↑ knowledge of when/how to intervene; ↑ willing/competent;↑ empathy; ↓ helplessness
  - 12 months later
    - Knowledge, confidence maintained
    - Approached players with greater frequency

Is RG Training Effective?

- LaPlante et al., 2012
  - 217 casino employees, US
  - Immediately following training
    - ↑ understanding of luck
    - ↑ knowledge of problem gambling
    - ↑ understanding that promotion of RG does not require clinical tasks
  - 1 month later
    - ↑ retention of new knowledge; training less effective in correcting erroneous beliefs

Effectiveness: Training Content

Topic	1	2	3	4	5
Responsible gambling		X		X	X
Chance & randomness	X		X	X	
Gambling myths		X			
Problem gambling/ Harms associated with gambling		X	X		X
Causes of excessive/harmful gambling	X	X	X		
How to identify signs of excessive/harmful gambling	X	X	X	X	
How to intervene with players in need/distress	X	X	X	X	
Available resources		X	X		

1. Ladouceur et al., 2004; 2. Giroux et al., 2008; 3. Dufour et al., 2008; 4. Wong & Poon, 2011; 5. LaPlante et al., 2012

* RG training content as described within article text

Effectiveness: Research Design

Design	1	2	3	4	5
Large sample size	X	X	X		X
Comparison/control group	X		X		
Self-reported knowledge, attitudes, behaviours	X	X	X	X	X
Observed behaviours			X		
Follow-up/second assessment after training	X	X	X	X	X

1. Ladouceur et al., 2004; 2. Giroux et al., 2008; 3. Dufour et al., 2008; 4. Wong & Poon, 2011; 5. LaPlante et al., 2012

Is Responsible Gambling Training Effective?

Research Conclusions:

Empirical research is limited but supports the impact of RG training on employee self-reported knowledge, skills, and activities

Evidence restricted to casino and VLT venues

Evidence for implementation and for impact on players at risk (including rates of problem gambling in players at the venue) is needed

Are the Components of Responsible Gambling Training Supported?

A Review of the Empirical Research

How to identify players in need?

- Delfabbro et al., 2007
  - Evaluated potential indicators of problem gambling
  - 125 industry employees
  - Most employees received RG training
    - Primary obstacle was perceived lack of training
    - Most important indicators were strong emotional reactions
  - ≥ 3 indicators observed, 90% likely a problem gambler

How to identify players in need?

- Delfabbro et al., 2012
  - 303 venue employees, Australia
  - Employee perceptions of at-risk gamblers
    - Accurately assessed gambling frequency
    - Poor ability to determine presence/absence of problem gambling
    - Yet - players identified as at risk by employee had higher self-reported problem gambling scores

How to identify players in need?

- Thomas et al., 2014
  - Tested 52-item Checklist of Visible Indicators in > 500 EGM players
    - All more likely in problem than low risk gamblers
    - Most rare behaviours strongest indicators
  - Used to create 36-item Gambling Behaviour Checklist for EGM venue staff
    - Use was linked to improved observation and awareness of problem behaviours
    - Staff usually observed approximately 10 behaviours before responding
    - Typical response included general discussion and placing the player under observation

How to identify players in need?

Research supports a wide range of player behaviours to identify those in need, including:
- Gambling frequency, duration, & expenditures;
- Anger & depression;
- Social behaviours, rudeness & hostility

Evidence suggests that gaming venue employees can gauge numerous gambling behaviours but have limited accuracy in categorizing players (determining presence/absence of problem gambling)

How to support players in need?

- Gainsbury et al., 2014
  - 730 players, Australia
  - ↓ Player awareness of resources
    - < 50% aware of telephone support
    - < 33% aware of in-person support
  - ↑ Barriers to seeking help
    - Shame
    - Denial of problem
    - Lack of desire for professional help
    - Concern regarding cost of services

How to support players in need?

- Gainsbury, 2014
  - Review of self-exclusion
  - Under-utilized, but several benefits
  - 67% rated programs as somewhat or very effective
    - 70% rated staff effective in explaining program
    - 33 – 50% acknowledged breaching agreement

How to support players in need?

- Boutin et al., 2009
  - Evaluation of venue responsible gambling centre
  - Survey 1: 335 players, Canada
    - 95% felt in control of gambling behaviour
    - Appreciated visit, would recommend it to others
  - Survey 2: 141 players, Canada
    - Improved understanding of games
    - No change in gambling or RG strategies

How to support players in need?

Research suggests that players are not aware of the resources available, and may hold inaccurate beliefs about the nature of those resources (e.g., costs)

Research supports the benefits of the most common resources available, namely responsible gambling centres and self-exclusion

How do employees view RG?

- Hing et al., 2011, 2013
  - 48 employees of hotels, clubs with EGMs, Australia
  - Endorsed capacity to identify players in need
    - Gambling frequency, duration, intensity; irritability
  - Unlikely to approach player unless player abusive, violent, threat to self or others
    - Endorsed numerous concerns

How do employees view RG?

- Lee et al., 2013; Song et al., 2015
  - 307 casino employees, South Korea
  - Social responsibility and responsible gambling initiatives linked to employee:
    - Organizational trust
    - Organizational commitment
    - Job satisfaction
    - Customer orientation

How do employees view RG?

- Quilty, Robinson, & Blaszczynski, 2015
  - 130 casino employees, Canada
  - Employees reported:
    - Training and encouragement of RG implementation
    - Range of observed/useful signs of player distress
    - Effective responses to player distress as a challenge
  - ↑ perceived challenges and exposure to problem gambling linked to ↓ employee job satisfaction
  - Employees highlighted the need for further training in sensitively responding to such signs

How do employees view RG?

Research suggests that employees are aware of problem gambling in venues but have numerous barriers to responding to players in need

RG training is desired and valued

RG initiatives are linked with important outcomes, from job satisfaction to organizational trust

Issues: Educational Format

- Current best practices in adult learning
  - Multiple learning lessons
  - Small number of learners per session
  - Using a diverse range of teaching practices
  - Actively involving learners throughout process
  - Immediately applying newly learned information

Dunst & Trivette (2012)

Issues: Knowledge Dissemination

- Much research contained within internal reports or "grey literature," such as:
  - Smitheringale (2001)
    - Manitoba Problem Gambling Customer Assistance
    - ↑ knowledge & practical skills to identify and assist
    - ↑ recognition & approach, maintained 3 months later
  - Ladouceur & Ferland (2007)
    - Casino employee training: ↑ knowledge & attitudes re RG and problem gambling, maintained 3 months later

Issues: Knowledge Gaps

- Impact of RG training on problem gambling prevalence
- Impact of trainer credentials on training effectiveness
- Value of venue implementation procedures
- Impact of RG training on employee problem gambling
- Relative impact and cost-effectiveness of RG training
- Links between RG training and culture and social responsibility, job satisfaction and performance

Summary & Conclusions: Empirical research supports the validity of the two primary components of responsible gambling training: how to identify and how to support players in need

Evidence supports the acceptability, feasibility, but also complexity of implementing RG training principles, according to employee report

Important research gaps remain

Responsible Gambling Training: What Legislation & Regulation is in Place?

RG Legislation: Canada

- Legislation of gambling in Canada
  - Gambling illegal except where made legal through Criminal Code of Canada and sanctioned by province
  - Government of Canada has minimal involvement beyond Criminal Code prohibitions/permissions
- Provincial regulatory or operational regimes differ
  - Different prohibitions/permissions
  - Different ownership, operation, accountability

Canadian Partnership for Responsible Gambling (2010)

RG Legislation: Canada

- Ontario: Ontario Lottery and Gaming (OLG)
  - Operates lotteries, casinos and slots
  - Four priorities: public trust, player experience, partnerships, profit
  - Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario regulator
    - Standard 2.5 includes employee support of players showing signs of problem gambling:
    - 1. Employees receive Registrar-approved training
    - 2. Players provided with contact information of ≥ 1 organization supporting problem gamblers

RG Legislation: Canada

- BC: Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch (GPEB)
  - Regulates all gaming, ensures operator integrity
  - Relevant RG training standards:
  - 3.2 Ensure venue staff who interact with players receive training
  - 3.3 Train staff to provide RG/help information
  - 4.5 Facilitate regular interaction with players as standard practice

RG Legislation: USA

- Legislation of gambling in USA
  - Federal restrictions re interstate and online gambling
  - States empowered to regulate or prohibit gambling
    - Most states permit gambling in some form
    - State and municipal licensing regulation
  - Social responsibility and RG programming practices and policies vary across states
    - Legislation rarely specifies form of such activities

RG Legislation: Australia, New Zealand

- Legislation of gambling in Australia & New Zealand
- Majority of legislation at state and territory level
- Comprehensive RG codes of conduct/practice
  - Some voluntary and others mandated
  - Developed with stakeholders
- Training requirements and content varies
  - All follow nationally specified competency unit

RG Legislation: Australia, New Zealand

- Nationally specified competencies include:
  - Knowledge
    - Gambling industry; Government & industry role in RG
    - Development and impact of harmful gambling
    - Harm minimization; Benefits of RG
    - Problem gambling; Signs of problem gambling
    - Roles of employees in providing RG services
    - Available services and referral procedures
  - Skills
    - Communication and interpersonal skills appropriate for players endorsing gambling difficulties

What Legislation & Regulation is in Place?

Summary & Conclusions: Canada and the U.S.A. stipulates the need but not the form of gambling venue staff training in RG.

Australia provides a cohesive and detailed approach, outlining the necessary content to be included in staff training.

Responsible Gambling Training: What Standards Are in Place?

What Standards Are in Place?

- Canadian Gaming Association
  - All provincial RG programs adhere to these principles:
    - Check identification; prevent minor access to gambling
    - Offer voluntary self exclusion
    - Incorporate responsibility messaging in advertising
    - Ensure players can easily locate free helpline
    - Strategy to guide RG to be funded, delivered
    - Participate in national RG sub-committees

What Standards Are in Place?

- American Gaming Association
  - RG training goal to reduce potential player harm
  - Required training topics include:
    - behavioral signs of problem/pathological gambling
    - procedures for assisting players identified as such
    - RG policies

What Standards Are in Place?

- American Gaming Association
  - Pledge to employees:
    - Will educate employees on responsible gaming, and associated policies and procedures
    - Will train frontline employees
    - Will implement communications to improve understanding of RG policies and procedures
    - Will post responsible gaming information, including help line number, where employees congregate

What Standards Are in Place?

- Australasian Gaming Council
  - RG strategy includes research to guide policies & procedures, including staff training in:
    - Legislation, regulation, codes, local RG policies/products
    - Signs of possible problem gambling
    - Actions to be taken in the presence of such signs
    - Available support and counselling services
    - Avoiding judgment or attempts to diagnose/counsel

What Standards Are in Place?

- RG Check standards address training requirements
- Standard: Staff understand importance of RG and are knowledgeable about role and expectations
- Accreditation Criteria
  - *Content* - Policies and practices; problem gambling & RG; skills in implementing procedures, messaging
  - *Format* – Upon hiring & regular retraining; Based on adult education principles
  - *Empirical Basis* – Based on best evidence; Evaluated

What Standards Are in Place?

Summary & Conclusions: Standards in Canada include RG components but not explicit direction for RG training. Accreditation solicited by Canadian gambling operators does include specific RG content.

Australia and the U.S.A. outline direction in RG training content and delivery.

Responsible Gambling Training: What ARE "The Essentials?"

RG Training: Essential Knowledge

- Required knowledge:
  - Nature of games & chance
  - Nature of problem & harmful gambling
  - Nature of supports for those with gambling issues
  - Available local supports for those with gambling issues

RG Training: Essential Skills

- Required skills:
  - How to identify players with possible harmful gambling
  - How to respond following a customer service framework to players with possible harmful gambling, including:
    - How to dispel of gambling myths / education re games
    - How to communicate with players in distress
    - How to effectively provide information about available supports

RG Training: Essential Format

- Required format:
  - Consistent with best practices in adult education
  - Repeated and evolving training
    - Responsive to changing employee need
    - Responsive to dynamic gaming context

RG Training: Conclusions

- Published research for RG training programs
  - Many strengths
    - Content generally consistent with standards
    - General information as well as practical, scenario-based content appropriate to local need
  - Areas for growth:
    - Explicit delineation of roles & boundaries is needed

      e.g., ↓ response to signs of moderate severity
    - Repeated training over time is crucial
    - Implementation of responses after training requires attention

RG Training: Conclusions

- Frontline employees of gambling venues are uniquely positioned to identify those with gambling difficulties and to proactively intervene to provide appropriate referrals

- The identification of the essentials of RG training for frontline employees will optimize this component of gambling operator social responsibility programming

Responsible Gambling Training: The Essentials as a living document:

- Questions and comments regarding the content of this presentation are welcome, please direct to Dr. Lena C. Quilty, lena.quilty@camh.ca
- Content will be updated on an annual basis

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