

# **DEVELOPING AND EVALUATING STAFF TRAINING IN RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING IN SEARCH OF A BENCHMARK**

## **Lead Author:**

Research assistant  
Gambling Treatment and Research Clinic  
Michelle Beckett  
The University of Sydney  
Level 2, Brain and Mind Centre, 94 Mallet Street, Camperdown, NSW, 2050  
E: [michelle.beckett@sydney.edu.au](mailto:michelle.beckett@sydney.edu.au)  
T: +61 (2) 9114 4157

## **Co-author:**

Professor Alex Blaszczynski  
Director, Gambling Treatment and Research Clinic  
The University of Sydney  
Level 2, Brain and Mind Centre, 94 Mallett St, Camperdown, NSW, 2050  
E: [alex.blaszczynski@sydney.edu.au](mailto:alex.blaszczynski@sydney.edu.au)  
T: +61 (2) 9114 4363

## **Abstract: Paper Presentation**

Staff training in gambling venues is a crucial element of strategies designed to help prevent or minimise gambling related harms. Studies evaluating staff training have reported increases in employees' knowledge of gambling disorders and improved skills in identifying customers experiencing gambling-related issues in venues. Reported outcomes, however, are modest with limitations including a lack of skills in approaching high risk customers, in addition to reductions in learned information over time. The University of Sydney Gambling Treatment and Research Clinic, in collaboration with ClubsNSW Australia and RG+ Ontario, has developed a novel staff training program that is designed to enhance employees' skills, knowledge and confidence to proactively approach and assist customers showing signs of distress. The program also aims to provide employees with the skills to tailor responses to the unique needs of the customer. A comprehensive assessment model for program evaluation is applied to include rigorous measurements at multiple stages of implementation alongside pre and post outcome measures. Long-term follow ups are also being conducted to identify influential factors resulting in potential decline of knowledge and skills over time among participants. The comprehensive training program is intended to be transferable for wider roll-out into gaming venues across Australia.

## **Research implications**

Although previous studies examining staff training in gambling venues have evaluated outcomes, minimal focus is placed on the implementation of programs. Our research aims to identify the specific factors that influence program efficacy so these practices can act as a benchmark for future development.

### **Biography of all authors**

**Michelle Beckett BA**, is a research assistant at the Gambling Treatment and Research Clinic at the University of Sydney. She received her BA from the University of British Columbia, in Canada and has been working in gambling research since graduation in 2016. Currently she is leading the implementation and evaluation of the new customer service training program in responsible gambling. Her research interests include behavioural science as it relates to occupational settings and decision-making process.

**Professor Alex Blaszczynski BA, MA, Dip. Psych., PhD, MAPSs**, is the director of the Gambling Research and Treatment Clinic, and a clinical psychologist by training. Professor Blaszczynski has in excess of thirty years extensive clinical and research experience in understanding the psychology of gambling. He has published in excess of 160 peer-reviewed articles, has received multiple grants in excess of \$3 million, has authored or co-authored four books on gambling, and developed a conceptual pathways model explaining the aetiology of pathological gamblers.