A Critical Conversation on Responsible Gaming in Canada and Beyond

Lena C. Quilty, Ph.D., C.Psych.
Disclosures

- In the past 5 years, I have received funding from:
  - National Institutes of Health (NIH)
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  - Ontario Mental Health Foundation (OMHF)
  - Canadian Consortium for Gambling Research (CCGR)
  - Gambling Research Exchange Ontario (GREO)
Responsible Gambling (RG)

- Responsible Gambling (RG)
  - Policies and practices
  - To prevent and reduce potential harms associated with gambling
  - Diverse interventions to promote
    - Consumer protection
    - Community and consumer awareness and education
    - Community and consumer access to efficacious treatment

- Blaszczynski, Ladouceur, & Shaffer (2004, p. 308)
Responsible Gambling (RG)

- Blaszczynski, Ladouceur, & Shaffer, 2004
  - Reno Model provided key principles for RG policies
- Blaszczynski et al. (2011) outlined fundamental and minimal principles for RG programs
  - Communications
  - Employee training
  - Enforcement of underage play
  - Self-exclusion readily available
  - Modify environmental features contributing to excess play
Responsible Gambling Training: A Focused Example
Is RG Training Effective?

- Published/available research limited
- Restricted to VLT and casino employees
  - **VLT**
    - Ladouceur et al., 2004
    - Dufour et al., 2008
  - **Casino**
    - Giroux et al., 2008
    - Wong & Poon, 2011
    - LaPlante et al., 2012
Is RG Training Effective?

- Supports impact on knowledge, skills, and activities

Ladouceur et al., 2004; Dufour et al., 2008; Giroux et al., 2008; Wong & Poon, 2011; LaPlante et al., 2012
Is RG Training Effective?

- Numerous methodological strengths

Ladouceur et al., 2004; Dufour et al., 2008; Giroux et al., 2008; Wong & Poon, 2011; LaPlante et al., 2012
Is RG Training Effective?

- Important knowledge gaps
  - Impact of RG training on employee behaviors, player experience, problem gambling incidence
  - Impact of RG training on employee problem gambling
  - Links between RG training and culture of social responsibility, job satisfaction and performance
  - Relative impact, cost-effectiveness of RG training
  - Necessary format, trainer credentials
  - Necessary implementation procedures
Evidence for RG Training Content?

- How to identify players in need?
- Research supports a wide range of player behaviors to identify those in need, including:
  - Gambling frequency, duration, & expenditures;
  - Anger & depression;
  - Social behaviors, rudeness & hostility
- Evidence suggests that gaming venue employees can gauge gambling behaviors and harm
  - Combinations of indicators greater accuracy
  - More limited accuracy in categorizing players (presence/absence of problem gambling)

Delfabbo et al., 2007, 2012; Thomas et al., 2014
Evidence for RG Training Content?

- 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
  - Self-exclusion

Gainsbury et al., 2014; Gainsbury, 2014; Boutin et al., 2009
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 future research:
    - Impact & utility
    - Implementation after training
    - Explicit delineation of roles & boundaries
      e.g., ↓ response to signs of moderate severity

see www.camh.ca/gamblingcare/mediaroom/Pages/default.aspx
RG Programming: Impact & Issues

PREVENTION OF PROBLEM GAMBLING: A Comprehensive Review of the Evidence and Identified Best Practices

Robert J. Williams
Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences, and Coordinator, Alberta Gambling Research Institute
University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

Beverly L. West
Research Associate, Faculty of Health Sciences
University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

Robert L. Simpson
Ontario, Problem Gambling Research Centre
Queen's, Ontario, Canada

REPORT PREPARED FOR THE ONTARIO PROBLEM GAMBLING RESEARCH CENTRE AND THE ONTARIO MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND LONG-TERM CARE

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RG Programming: Impact & Issues

- Impact:
  - Variable evidence for different RG programs
    - Education, self-exclusion, employee training
    - Limited evidence for impact on problem gambling incidence
  - Disproportionate research regarding tertiary prevention, with a focus on gamblers, compared to primary prevention, with a focus on policy, structure
  - Much research contained within internal reports or “grey literature” of varied/limited accessibility
Fair Game: Producing gambling research
The Goldsmiths Report
R. Cassidy, C. Loussouarn, A. Pisac
RG Programming: Current Issues

- Issues:
- Challenges to research & innovation
- Research funding availability
  - Decreases in government/charitable funds
  - Complete objectivity possibly by any funding source (Wohl & Wood, 2015)
- Transparency & autonomy
  - In other areas, industry funding associated with pro-industry outcomes (Babor & Miller, 2014)
  - Research funding, methods, and reporting
    - Clear statements re source, restrictions, etc.
RG Programming: Current Issues

- Issues:
- Applications
  - Increases in commercialization, private sector partnerships
RG Programming: Current Issues

- Issues:
- Applications
  - Increases in commercialization, private sector partnerships
RG Programming: Current Issues

- Issues:
- Sustainability
  - Partnerships necessary for culture change
A Critical Conversation

- Janine Robinson, M.Ed., CPGC, RP
  - Advanced Practice Clinician & Educator
  - Problem Gambling Institute of Ontario, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

- Garry Smith, Ph.D.
  - Professor
  - Department of Government Studies, University of Alberta