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Responsible Gaming Programs: Intent and Implications

Knowledge.

Research.

Innovation.

IPG INDIANA COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING, INC.

Mid-Central Problem Gambling Fall Conference
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Current
- Responsible Gaming Consulting Lead at the International Gaming Institute and Logan Avenue Consulting, LLC
- President of the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling
- Highly sourced advisor domestically and internationally

Background
- 25-year career background involving extensive leadership progressing responsible gaming policy
  - Vice President of Responsible Gaming Policies and Compliance at Caesars Entertainment
  - Responsible for many "firsts" in the industry
- Appointed to the Nevada Governor's Advisory Committee on Problem Gambling
  - Served as Chair of the Sub-Committee on Problem Gambling Prevention
- Member of the Board of Directors of the International Center for Responsible Gaming
- Doctorate in Public Policy

Agenda

Brief overview of problem gambling

Deep dive into responsible gaming

Framework

Intent

Policy approaches

Operational perspective

Policy considerations for operators

Policy considerations for government
& regulatory bodies
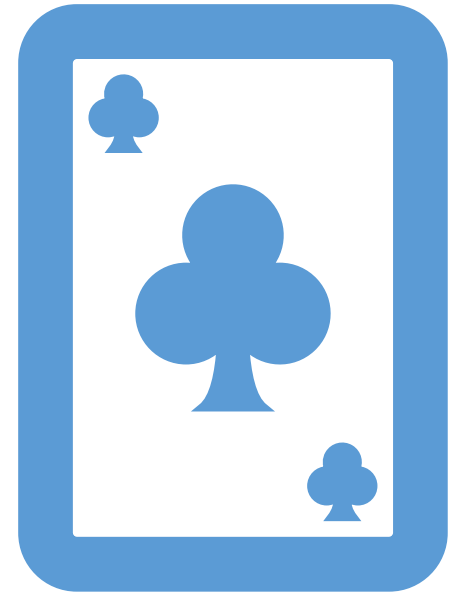
Opportunities related to sports betting

What is Problem Gambling?

- People with gambling problems are those whose gambling significantly interferes with their personal, professional, and financial lives.

- Gambling disorder is a mental health disorder and a behavioral addiction.

- What causes a person to become a problem gambler is poorly understood. Most have co-occurring disorders, such as depression, anxiety disorders, and/or drug and alcohol abuse.
  - Neurological, biological, psychological, genetic, social factors
  - Difficult to diagnose and often overlooked

What is Responsible Gaming?

- The PRIMARY objective of Responsible gaming is to set up policies & practices designed to prevent & reduce potential harms associated with gambling

- Holistic approach based on a scientific framework

The Reno Model

1) Commit to reducing the prevalence of gambling-related harms;

2) Inform and evaluate public policy aimed at reducing gambling-related harms;

3) Identify short and long-term priorities and establish an action plan to address these priorities;

4) Use scientific research to guide the development of public policies and industry-based strategic policies, and;

5) Monitor and evaluate outcomes of the action plan using scientific methods.

Formulated while the researchers convened in Reno, hence the name.

Source: Blaszczynski, B., Ladouceur, R. & Shaffer, H. (2004). A Science-based Framework for Responsible Gambling: The Reno Model, *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 20 (3), 301-317.

What are RG Programs Trying to Accomplish?

- The PRIMARY objective of responsible gaming programs is **prevention**

- Responsible gaming programs ≠ problem gambling programs

Collaborative Efforts

➢ Promote responsible play but understand that gaming is a business
  - Is customer-driven and must be customer-friendly
  - No unjustified intrusion

➢ Based on scientifically-proven processes
  - Avoid unintended consequences

Policy Approaches

- Policies often lack clarity, consistency, comprehensiveness and defined objectives within and across state borders and national boundaries.

- Consequently, there is no consensus as to what constitutes "best practices" and how to maximize outcomes.
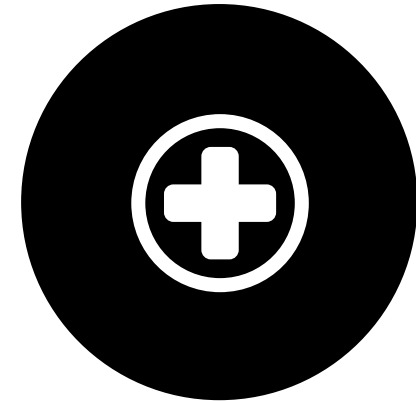
Policy Approaches

REGULATORY

RESPONSIBLE GAMING

PUBLIC HEALTH

Comprehensive Approach: Major Components

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Education and consumer awareness campaigns in venues and communities

- Dispelling myths about "beating the odds"
- Encouraging consumers to set limits
- Improving awareness of potential signs of problem gambling
- Providing consumers knowledge of how to access assistance
- Educating consumers as to how gambling works

Responsible provision of gambling

- Staff training to encourage responsible gaming
- Self-exclusion and self-restriction, including unilateral exclusion by gaming venue

Services and resources for those experiencing problems

- 800 hotlines and web-based access to assistance
- Network of trained counselors and other community health providers

Operational Perspective

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Responsible gaming program impacts every part of the operation

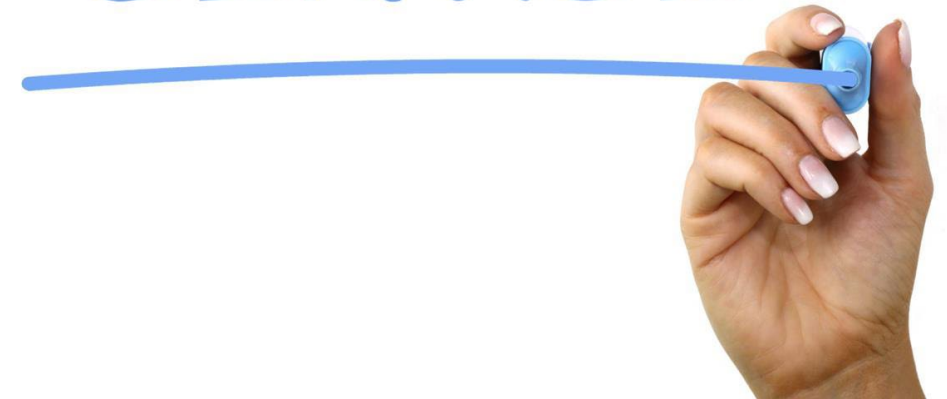|		
Gaming	Cashiering	Credit
Marketing & Promotions	Player Rewards	Advertising
Hotel	Security	Information technology
HR & Training	Internal audit & Compliance	Food & Beverage

Operational Perspective

➢ Expand beyond compliance model
  - Narrow-view
  - Simply checking off a box
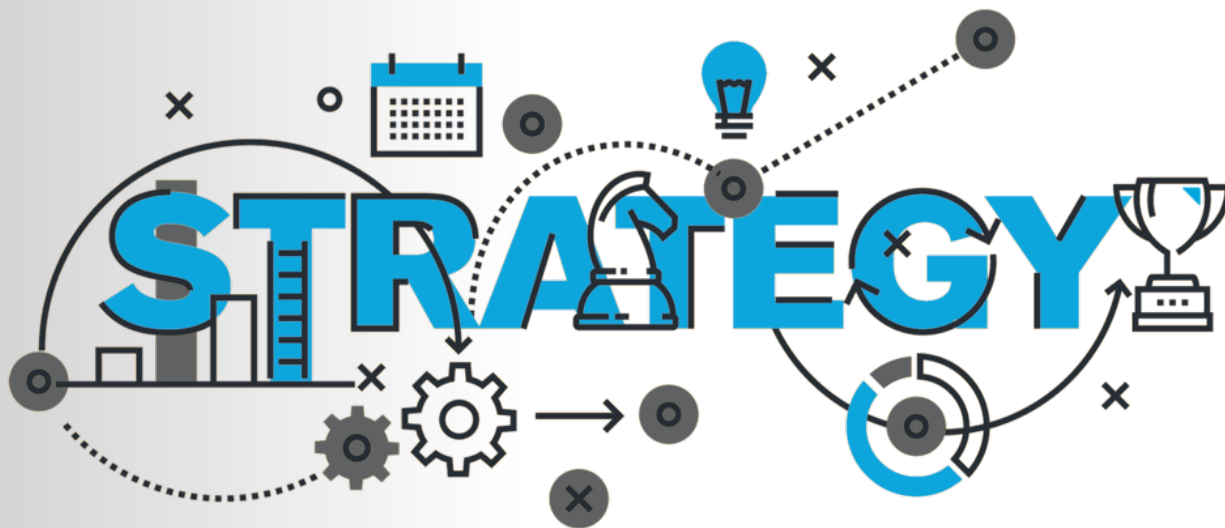
Operational Perspective

➢ Customer service component
  - Fully integrated into operations
    – Training
    – Marketing
    – Customer relations
  - Fully integrated into customer experience
    – Messaging
    – Employee interactions

Operational Approach

Responsible Gaming Strategy

- Fully integrated into Company Culture
- Top down commitment
- Prevention focus
- Proactive, not reactive
- Clear expectations and objectives

Company Culture Impacts

- Attract, motivate and retain talented employees
  - Responsible gaming programs can enhance employees' perceptions and attitudes toward the company and customers
- Mean it, show it, reinforce it
- Measure it

Responsible Gaming Training

- Promoting responsible gaming, not treating problem gamblers

- Staff training to encourage responsible gaming, not "identify" problem gamblers

Responsible Gaming Training

- ➢ What are we trying to train?
  - • "Red flag" behaviors
  - • "Identifying" problem gamblers
  - • Helpline numbers

- ➢ Focus on prevention
  - • Promoting positive play
  - • Interacting when concerned not playing responsibly

- ➢ Most important components of training:
  - • Clear policy – what to do
  - • Identifying concerns – when to do it
  - • Specific procedures – how to do it

Employee Perspective

➢ **Care about others**

➢ **Experience concern**

➢ **Desire to act**

➢ **Casino managers are skilled communicators**

Responsible Gaming Training

➢ Employees want / need information

➢ Behaviors can be misinterpreted

➢ Recognize concern vs label / diagnose

➢ Individual responsibility

➢ Encourage reflection and motivate change

Enhance Existing RG Programs

➤ Target all players

➤ Boost customer contact with all players

➤ Focus on prevention
  • Be proactive in supporting customers
  • Engage with players before problems develop or need to self-exclude

➤ Balance advertising with RG-related messaging

Enhance Existing RG Programs

➢ There is no one-size-fits-all harm minimization strategy and message

➢ Encourage the use of limit setting tools

➢ Policies should include a plan for on-going evaluation and continuous improvement

Policy Considerations for Operators

Inform
- Inform customers of RG techniques, odds, and information on how to identify if they are not gambling responsibly

Educate
- Educate employees to promote responsible gaming and to properly respond to concerns that a customer may not be gambling responsibly

Support
- Support national and state problem gambling councils, helplines

Provide
- Provide EAP and insurance coverage for employees

Policy Considerations for Operators & Regulators

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Establish
- Establish supportive processes for those who may not be gambling responsibly, e.g. self-exclusion

Advocate
- Advocate for publicly-funded treatment and other problem gambling services

Make
- Make information about treatment options easily available

Fund
- Fund research to better understand gambling disorders and how to effectively promote responsible gaming

Policy Considerations for Governments & Regulatory Bodies

➢ Create awareness/prevention campaigns
  • Culturally relevant messaging
  • Differential targeting of potentially at-risk populations, such as youth or those with other mental health or addiction disorders

➢ Establish funding for treatment and research

➢ Ensure a network of qualified clinicians/treatment resources exist
  • Affordable
  • Accessible

Policy Considerations for Governments & Regulatory Bodies

➤ RG Integration
- Not confined to specific RG regulations
- Fully integrated into all regulations

➤ Engage RG/PG community

➤ Engage public health officials and researchers

Sports Betting RG Opportunities

➢ Public health approach for a more holistic "safety net"
- Prevention
- Education
- Treatment
- Regulatory
- Research

➢ Broaden stakeholder group
- Industry
- Government
- Leagues & Teams (and Players)
- Universities
- Media

Summary of Key Considerations when Developing RG Policy

Develop a sound Responsible Gambling framework

Focus on prevention

Never forget the ultimate decision to gamble or not belongs to the individual

Adopt an empirical/scientific approach

Evaluate the polices/programs you put in place

Collaborate with different stakeholders

Thank you

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