

NCPG AFFILIATE’S GUIDE FOR CASINO EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBLE GAMING TRAINING PROGRAMS

March 2016

This guide was developed by the State Affiliate Chapters (“Affiliates”) of the National Council on Problem Gambling (“NCPG”) to provide guidance for Affiliates to conduct and advise on the training of casino employees. While this document was initially developed for the training of casino employees, the basic principles likely apply to any type of gaming and for community awareness programs.

Requirements and regulations for responsible gaming training vary greatly between jurisdictions and within different segments of the industry so Affiliates are advised to obtain a copy of the statute, regulations, policies, etc., if any, related to responsible gaming training, compulsive and problem gambling plans, advertising requirements, self-exclusion, exclusion, intoxicated gambling, underage gambling and unattended minors. Affiliates are also urged to work directly with the regulators or advise the casino(s) to consult their regulators for more information.

Responsible gaming training program services may include:

- Drafting and/or review of plans, policies and procedures,
- Developing and delivering materials for:
 - In-person training
 - Online training
 - Written training
 - Training of trainers and/or
 - Recording of in-person training
- Review of casino advertising, promotions, RG/PG materials and/or signage

Employee responsible gaming training should stress:

- The National Council on Problem Gambling’s 24-hour confidential Problem Gambling Hotline number: 1-800-522-4700
- The state’s Problem Gambling Helpline number and how to make contact
- The manner in which to notify the appropriate management and/or security personnel
- The components of the casino’s responsible gaming program
- The role of management and security personnel
- The manner in which the casino employees can assist patrons who request help
- The manner in which casino employees can provide problem gambling materials to patrons who request help
- Information regarding available problem gambling resources and casino’s self-exclusion program including the manner in which to:

- Provide written information about responsible gaming and the helpline number
- Know where to find an answer if the employee does not know it
- Know the basics about the following and be able to share it verbally:
 - Complaint resolution
 - Self-exclusion program
 - Description of games and odds
 - Awareness of suicide risk
 - Problem gambling signs
- The manner in which to dispel erroneous beliefs about gaming and gambling technology
- “Canned” responses to common patron statements and questions

Employee responsible gaming training should also include basic guidelines for patron interaction such as:

- When interacting with patrons who exhibit signs of problem gambling or verbally express emotional distress, it is imperative for employees to adhere to facility plans, policies and procedures
- Tips on how to listen/interact without judgment and how to handle distressed patrons calmly:
 - Listen with respect
 - Show concern
 - Use rational/logical reasoning with patrons
 - Provide a problem gambling brochure which should contain the problem gambling helpline number and information about problem gambling resources
 - Contact a member of management or security personnel

Generally, upper management of a casino already knows the importance of employee responsible gaming training programs. However, they may not be familiar with the Core Values of the NCPG. Therefore, when approaching, or responding to a request from, a casino and/or regulators, regarding responsible gaming training, keep in mind that those Core Values are:

- **Neutrality:** We do not take a position for or against legalized gambling. We advocate solely for those affected by problem gambling.
- **Collaboration:** We believe that our mission is best served by the collaborative action of a broad range of people and organizations.
- **Respect:** We will treat all those affected by problem gambling and all stakeholders with respect.
- **Credibility:** We will strive to be an objective, accurate and reliable source of information for all those concerned with problem gambling.

Finally, the attached materials may be provided to a casino and/or regulators. However, such casino(s) and/or regulators should be advised that this document is not intended to constitute actual training materials or to serve as an actual training course or session.

CASINO EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBLE GAMING TRAINING PROGRAM

The following provides an outline of....[INTRO TO CASINO/REGULATORS].

Your employee responsible gaming training program should address employee responsible gaming training, compulsive and problem gambling plans, advertising requirements, self-exclusion, exclusion, intoxicated gambling, underage gambling and unattended minors. The [NAME OF AFFILIATE] is your resource in the development, implementation and ongoing oversight of a comprehensive employee responsible gaming training program.

Gaming Industry is in Unique Position:

- The gaming industry is in a unique position to positively impact upon a segment of the patron population who may be in need of assistance for a gambling problem.
- The approach is not to prohibit gambling, but to put into place programs that can help to minimize the negative impact gambling can have on the percentage of gamblers who are unable to gamble with control.

I. Why is a Responsible Gaming Program Important?

Most individuals who gamble do so for pleasure and without difficulty. However, there are people who cannot gamble with control – problem gamblers. As a responsible member of the gaming industry, you already know the importance of responsible gaming programs. You also know that your employees will likely encounter someone with a gambling problem. But did you know that problem gambling can negatively impact your patrons, employees and business? And that responsible gaming programs are good customer service and can limit liability?

➤ Impacts

It is important for you and your employees to understand the issues associated with problem gambling and how it impacts upon your patrons, your employees and your business. Such impacts can include:

- Patrons with behavior patterns that can compromise, disrupt or damage personal, family or vocational pursuits.
- Employees who feel stress due to inability to assist a patron in distress.
- Business with problems and concerns rather than a social entertainment environment.

It is also essential to recognize that your employees can develop a gambling problem, even if they are restricted or prohibited from placing bets at your facility.

➤ Customer Service

Providing and promoting responsible gaming through a responsible gaming program that includes annual employee responsible gaming training is good customer service. Good customer service entails responding to a patron who is in distress, regardless of the cause of the distress. There may be many reasons for a patron's

distress, and if it is a gambling problem, your employees should be trained to provide specific assistance, such as providing a problem gambling brochure, notifying management or security personnel and/or other steps as set forth in your company's policies.

➤ Limitation of Liability

A responsible gaming program that includes employee responsible gaming training can limit the liability and risk for your casino and your employees. If you adopt a "see something, say something" approach, problems may be identified sooner. And a comprehensive responsible gaming program that includes policy review and documentation of incidents could be your best defense in the event of a lawsuit. Further, it is in your casino's best interest to have such a program in place for media inquiries and in the aftermath of a devastating event such as violence, embezzlement, child neglect or suicide.

II. What is Responsible Gaming?

Gambling is a recreational activity for the vast majority of adults who participate, regardless of their age, income, education or socioeconomic status. Within the United States, most people have gambled at some point in their lives; many of whom have done so within the past year.

Responsible gaming is social gambling. Social gamblers participate in gambling activities in a responsible manner without experiencing any negative impacts on any aspect of their life.

Responsible Gaming Is:

- A fun and entertaining form of recreation.
- Sticking to limits with regard to time and money.
- Playing with expendable entertainment funds.
- The ability to temporarily or permanently exclude oneself if the gambler feels he or she is experiencing a concern about gambling behavior.

Responsible Gaming Is Not:

- Gambling with money is borrowed from credit cards, future paychecks, or family funds allocated for expenses.
- The cause of problems at home, on the job, legally or financially.
- Intended to take the place of personal relationships.
- An obsession.
- A means to resolve a financial crisis, an escape from stressors, grief, or other feelings, or a replacement for other addictions.

Overall, responsible gamblers engage in other forms of recreation and social events and utilize non-gambling stress reduction activities.

III. What is Problem Gambling?

Since 1980, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) has defined “pathological gambling” in its Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) as a mental health disorder of impulse control. The term “problem gambling” is a broad term defined by the National Council on Problem Gambling that refers to all of the patterns of gambling behavior that compromise, disrupt or damage personal, family or vocational pursuits.

Problem Gambling Is:

- A complex condition, an addiction, often with serious consequences, such as:
 - Financial (e.g., credit card debt, pay-day loans, inability to pay bills)
 - Spiritual/Psychological (e.g., depression, suicide)
 - Social (e.g., isolation, withdrawal)
 - Family (e.g., neglect, abuse, divorce)
 - Vocational (e.g., decline in work performance, loss of job, sick days, dropping out of school)
 - Physical health - (e.g., higher rates of cardio-vascular and gastro-intestinal issues)
 - Legal issues - (e.g., fraud, embezzlement, bankruptcy, bad checks)
- Frequently connected to other addictions and mental health disorders:
 - People in recovery from drugs or alcohol often see gambling as an alternative and many of the same patterns of addiction emerge.
- A hidden disorder that has a higher rate of suicidal ideation/attempts than other addictive disorders:
 - Threats of suicide must be taken seriously.
- Treatable:
 - Help is available and treatment works.

Problem Gambling Is Not:

- A moral weakness.
- A lack of self-control.
- Just about gambling too much.
- Confined to a particular gender, age group, ethnic group, or social class.
- About "bad people."

Problem gambling occurs when gambling negatively impacts upon one or more aspects of a person’s life. The amount of time or money a person spends does not, in and of itself, indicate a problem, absent other behaviors.

Behaviors Associated with Problem Gambling May Include:

- Increased frequency of gambling activity (e.g., amount of time and money spent gambling, thinking about gambling, ways to get money to gamble, or how to hide past gambling behavior or losses).
- Unsuccessful attempts to control, cut down, or stop gambling and often restlessness or irritability when unable to gamble, cut down or stop gambling.

- Gambling as a way to escape problems or relieve feelings of boredom, depression, anxiety, grief, or helplessness.
- Chasing losses, often returning to win back money lost, usually when initial loss was beyond available resources (e.g., writing bad checks, spending rent money or borrowing on paycheck).
- Lying to loved ones and others about extent of gambling at the risk of jeopardizing a significant relationship, job, educational or career opportunity.
- Secretive behavior (e.g., hiding lottery tickets or betting slips, or having bills sent to work or another address).
- Bragging about wins, not talking about losses.
- Frequent mood swings, which are elevated when winning and depressed when losing.
- Floating money in bank accounts, borrowing from petty cash, or taking family funds allocated for other uses in order to gamble.
- Borrowing money, often lying about what the money will be used for, relying on others for living expenses, and struggling to pay for family needs.
- Continuing to gamble despite negative consequences (e.g., financial problems, relationship strife, and threats of divorce or losing their job).

Problem Gambling Impacts on Families:

- Family relationships can be severed and destroyed by someone experiencing serious gambling difficulties - up to and including the ultimate severance -- suicide.
- Families can suffer from unmet basic needs as the result of problem gambling and often experience financial, physical and emotional difficulties.
- Families can be made homeless as a direct result of problem gambling.
- Indications are that domestic violence rates are higher among problem gamblers which may include child neglect and child abuse.

IV. What is a Self-Exclusion Program and How Does It Work?

Self-Exclusion is a process that allows a patron to request to be banned from legalized gaming activities and to be prohibited from collecting any winnings, recovering any losses or accepting complimentary gifts or services or any other thing of value at a casino. While not a panacea, self-exclusion programs are an integral component to any responsible gaming program. Self-exclusion is an option that allows patrons to remove themselves from the temptation to gamble. Often, patrons request to be self-excluded in instances when they have lost control over their gambling and are no longer in charge of their behavior. Self-exclusion is not a contract by which a casino must keep the patron out of the casino. Rather it is a tool to be used by a patron, preferably used in conjunction with some form of treatment, in order to refrain from gambling.

V. Are There External Signs of Problem Gambling?

Problem gambling is referred to as a “hidden illness.” You cannot see it in a patron’s eyes or smell it on their breath. There are no track marks. Therefore, employee responsible gaming training is important in order to help your employees to be aware of signs and symptoms that could indicate an issue of problem gambling. On a daily

basis, your employees at all levels come into contact with patrons on the gaming floor, in the parking lot, in restrooms, in bars and restaurants and elsewhere on the property. As such, employees are often the first ones to see behaviors and/or to hear statements made by or about patrons experiencing difficulties due to their own gambling behavior or a loved one's gambling.

VI. What is the Role of Casino Employees?

Your employees are the eyes and ears of your casino operation and they are often the first point of contact or "first responder" to patrons. While employees are not counselors, they do provide liaison support to guide patrons to the help they need. Employees can assess situations and present circumstances to management or security personnel in order to determine next steps which may include:

- Notifying management and/or security personnel
- Providing problem gambling information to a patron
- Listening in a respectful and non-judgmental manner
- Understanding the risk of suicide and violence

Guidelines for Employees:

- It is important for employees to promote responsible gambling by adhering to a set of guidelines:
 - Don't encourage patrons to play longer or for higher stakes
 - Don't feed patrons' superstitions or myths about gambling such as:
 - Machine is hot or cold.
 - Practice makes perfect.
 - You're lucky today.
 - I'll watch the machine while you take a break.
 - Patrons can control the outcome of the game.
 - When asked, provide accurate information such as:
 - Gambling is a game of chance.
 - The odds of any given game are ___ to ___.
 - Slot machine payout is random.
 - In the long run, the odds of winning are against you.

VII. Are there Guidelines for Dealing with Minors and Unattended Children?

Although only persons who meet the legal requirement are permitted to gamble, as you know, it is not uncommon for underage individuals to attempt to enter your casino to engage in gambling activities and underage drinking. Also, unfortunately, it is not uncommon for a problem gambler to leave a child in a car or bring him/her into a facility. Therefore, it is important to implement a clear policy regarding minors and unattended children that includes employee awareness and corrective action.

Important Points for Employees:

- Be aware of casino policy and age requirements

- Be alert to minors who may be inside the casino, outside the casino or in a parked car
- Contact security if you suspect someone in the casino is underage
- Alert security if you suspect a child is unattended

VIII. What Should Gaming Operators Know About Employee Problem Gambling?

As discussed above, gaming industry employees are more likely to have gambling problems than the general population. Therefore, it is important for your employees to know about resources for help for problem gambling. You may also want to establish an Employee Assistance Program that specifically addresses employee gambling problems. Additionally, your casino should:

- Reassure employees that if they enter into treatment it will not result in negative repercussions (e.g., fired or demoted because of problems with gambling)
- Offer self-exclusion for your employees
- Offer to transfer an employee to a non-gambling related position
- Restrict or reduce employee access to personal cash:
 - Paychecks should not be receivable in cash
 - Do not cash employee paychecks at the casino
 - Do not provide pay advances

Establish Clear Policy Regarding Gambling by Employees:

- It is important for your casino to establish clear policies regarding employee gambling at your facility. While it is best to prohibit such activity, if your casino’s policy permits gambling by employees, the following are some considerations to include in your policy:
 - Employees may not gamble when in uniform
 - Employees may not gamble when wearing their gaming license identification
 - Employees may not gamble when “on the clock” or acting as a representative of the casino
 - Employees are prohibited from accessing online gambling sites at work

IX. What Special Training Should Security and Management Undergo?

Although every employee has an important role to play within a responsible gaming program, it is imperative for management and security personnel to comprehensively understand the casino’s program including associated provisions, policies and procedures. Management and security personnel will benefit from more extensive and in-depth responsible gaming training so they are equipped to address various situations that arise.

Key Points for Special Training:

- Consideration should be given to providing separate and more comprehensive training for policy makers, managers, supervisors and security personnel, who will develop and implement the responsible gaming program to ensure they:
 - Understand how to appropriately handle responsible gaming-related incidents such as:
 - Self-exclusion forms

- Complaint/protocol process
- Problem gamblers
- Suicidal customers (understand how to address situations when arise)
- Are able to talk to a distressed patron or problem gambler in a private area to maintain confidentiality
- Know how to respectfully refer a distressed patron, problem gambler or disgruntled patron to a superior, if necessary

XI. Where Do We Go From Here?

Responsible gaming programs are intended as clear plans, policies and procedures to address varying situations that will emerge when encountering patrons who may be experiencing problems because of gambling.

Final thoughts:

- The intent of an employee responsible gaming training program is not to convert your employees to “therapists,” but rather to provide your employees with a higher level of understanding and flexibility to appropriately assess a situation, when arising, so that your employees have the ability to determine a course of action. The employee responsible gaming training programs may include approximately 40-45 minutes of basic training. Therefore, it is essential to reinforce this information annually. Additionally, as mentioned above, management and security personnel should undergo special training at least annually.