

B.C.'s Responsible Gambling Strategy and Three Year Plan (2008/09 – 2010/11)

The majority of people play games of chance for fun and entertainment. A small percentage of the population develops gambling habits that are harmful to themselves, their families and/or their work environment. Another small percentage is at moderate risk of developing such problems. Problem gambling has become a larger public issue. Governments and gaming providers are taking a more active role in promoting responsible gambling.

This paper outlines B.C.'s Responsible Gambling Strategy and related three year plan.

1. Responsible Gambling Strategy

In May 2003, the Province of British Columbia introduced a Responsible Gambling Strategy. This Strategy engages government, the gaming industry, health and social agencies, and individuals who gamble to work together in developing a gaming industry that fosters responsible gambling. The goals, long term objectives and approaches employed in the Strategy are as follows:

Goals	Long Term Objectives	Primary Approaches
1. Reduce the incidence of problem gambling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase public awareness of problem gambling issues, services, and risk management strategies. ▪ Inform gamblers of risks, and encourage playing within their means. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public awareness and communication ▪ Education and training ▪ Risk management
2. Reduce harmful impacts of excessive gambling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuously improve effectiveness of assistance to individuals experiencing problems with gambling. ▪ Reduce the consequences of problem gambling behavior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Treatment services for problem gamblers, and those affected by the gambling of a relative, friend, or colleague.
3. Ensure the delivery of gambling in a manner that encourages responsible gambling and healthy choices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the promotion and delivery of responsible gambling practices and policies. ▪ Improve responsible gambling knowledge within the gambling industry, and among problem gambling service providers and allied professionals. ▪ Conduct research that informs government, BCLC and industry on issues related to gambling, problem gambling and responsible gambling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policy ▪ Research and evaluation ▪ Industry training ▪ Information management

A philosophy of shared responsibility drove the establishment of the B.C. Partnership for Responsible Gambling (BCP). The collaborative efforts of the Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch (GPEB), B.C. Lottery Corporation (BCLC), B.C.'s gaming service providers and local governments, will enable further development and implementation of evidence-based policies and programs that encourage healthy gambling practices.

Responsibilities

Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch

The Branch is responsible for the regulation of gaming in the province which includes developing and implementing legislation, policies, and public interest standards. The Branch is responsible for the provision of problem gambling services, responsible gambling initiatives and managing the Province's gambling research agenda.

British Columbia Lottery Corporation

BCLC is responsible for the conduct and management of gaming in the province, which includes retail and facilities-based responsible gambling programs.

British Columbia Partnership for Responsible Gambling

The Partnership is the main conduit for cooperation and collaboration between partnership members. Through its steering committee, the Partnership provides localized perspective on opportunities for responsible gambling initiatives, to aid in their delivery where appropriate, and to disseminate responsible gambling information to local communities.

Gaming Services Providers

Gaming services providers must comply with all gaming regulations, responsible gambling standards and advertising standards. They are encouraged to: participate, as appropriate, with Partnership initiatives; seek opportunities to enhance responsible gambling programs; and develop and enhance consumer protection practices in gaming venues.

Host Local Governments

Host local governments are responsible for participating, as appropriate, with Partnership initiatives; seeking local opportunities to enhance responsible gambling programs; and encouraging collaborative work between local services and the Province's contracted problem gambling prevention providers.

Evaluation

The effectiveness of the Strategy and plan will be monitored regularly and enhanced as required. In addition, a third party evaluation of appropriate components of the Strategy will be completed in order to measure increased understanding and awareness.

Although problem gambling is unique in its presentation and treatment, linkages to other addiction services, family physicians, credit counselling and other support services will be strengthened and maintained.

Responsible gambling experts will be consulted and initiatives will be evaluated on an ongoing basis. This is the second three-year plan to be developed under the Strategy.

Definitions

Problem Gambling

The term "problem gambling" describes gambling behaviours that compromise, disrupt or damage personal, family or vocational pursuits. It is a treatable condition. Counselling, using a variety of treatment approaches, can provide solutions.

Definitions (continued)

Responsible Gambling

Responsible gambling refers to a safer approach to gambling involving informed and educated decision making by consumers. Responsible gambling also incorporates harm minimization approaches. This means developing initiatives designed to improve the health and well-being of people affected by problem gambling.

Responsible gambling occurs in a regulated environment where the potential for harm associated with gambling is minimized and people make informed decisions about their participation in gambling.

Responsible gambling occurs as a result of the collective actions and shared ownership by individuals, communities, the gaming industry and government to achieve outcomes that are socially responsible and responsive to community concerns.

(The Queensland Responsible Gambling Strategy: A Partnership Approach Queensland Government, Treasury, February 2002)

2. Detailed Three Year Plan (2008/09 to 2010/11)

Goal 1: Reduce the incidence of problem gambling in BC

Objectives:

- To increase public awareness of problem gambling issues, services, and risk management strategies
- To inform gamblers to know the risks, their limits and how to play within their means.

Performance Measures	Target
<i>Percentage of public that are satisfied or very satisfied with efforts to address problem gambling</i>	<i>Increased from 17 to 30 per cent over next the three years</i>
<i>Percentage of prevention presentation participants who report a significant increase in knowledge of responsible gambling practices</i>	<i>Increase from 43 per cent to 50 per cent over the next three years</i>
<i>RPIC effectiveness</i>	<i>At staffed sites increase RGO information exchange with players and facility staff from 400 per month to 1,600 per month over the next three years. Establish a baseline at all newly staffed locations.</i>
<i>Player awareness and knowledge of responsible gambling practices</i>	<i>Baseline to be developed</i>

Component and Initiatives	Resp.	Target Audience
1.1 Problem/Responsible Gambling Awareness		
1.1.1 Province-wide problem gambling awareness campaign.	GPEB	General Population
1.1.2 Responsible gambling awareness campaign (if approved).		
a) Develop and deliver campaign for general public.	GPEB	General Population
b) Develop and deliver campaign for players.	BCLC	
1.1.3 Publish problem gambling materials (posters, brochures, takeaways, etc.) and distribute province-wide.	GPEB	General Population
1.1.4 Publish and distribute responsible gambling materials.		
a) Creation and production of responsible gambling awareness materials and distribution of materials to public.	GPEB	General Population
b) Creation of player focused materials that compliment GPEB's awareness materials. Distribute BCLC and GPEB materials to players (gaming venues and lottery retail outlets).	BCLC	
1.1.5 Continue to develop and update Partnership website.	GPEB	General population
1.1.6 Deliver responsible gambling awareness presentations around the province to a range of audiences (seniors, students, etc.).	GPEB	General population
1.1.7 Local responsible gambling initiatives (i.e. awareness weeks, local advertising, etc.).	BCP	General population
1.1.8 Enhance Responsible Gambling Information Centre (RGIC) program.		
a) Strategic program development	GPEB & BCLC	Casino and community gaming centre patrons
b) Day-to-day site management of RGICs.	BCLC	
c) Staffing RGICs with Officers and a Coordinator.	GPEB	
d) Provision of appropriate resources (e.g., kiosks, informational materials, computers, etc.).	BCLC	

Goal 1 (continued)

1.2 Targeted Responsible Gambling Awareness			
1.2.1	Develop comprehensive First Nations specific strategy (rural and urban).	GPEB	First Nations communities
1.2.2	Develop comprehensive youth specific strategy.	GPEB	Pre-18 population
a)	Elementary School prevention resource (educational tool) and provincial roll-out ("Know Dice").	GPEB	Elementary students
b)	Develop prevention resource for high schools.	GPEB	High school students
c)	Deliver "Know the Score" program at post-secondary institutions	GPEB	College students
d)	Launch friends4friends website	GPEB	College students

Goal 2: Reduce the harmful impacts of excessive gambling

Objectives:

- To continuously improve effectiveness and efficiency of assistance to individuals experiencing problems with gambling
- To reduce the consequences of problems related to gambling.

Performance Measures	Target
<i>Client satisfaction with counseling services delivered by problem gambling counsellors</i>	<i>Client satisfaction ratings (very good or excellent) maintained at 98 per cent</i>
<i>Percentage of problem gambling clients that report spending less money gambling as a result of counselling</i>	<i>Clients reporting spending less money gambling maintained at 96 per cent</i>
<i>Percentage of problem gambling clients who report an improvement in their overall quality of life as a result of counselling</i>	<i>Increase from 82 per cent to 85 per cent over the next three years</i>

Component and Initiatives	Resp.	Target Audience
2.1 Problem Gambling Treatment Services		
2.1.1	Provide free problem gambling treatment services through the Problem Gambling Program (PGP) wherever required to anyone with problem gambling issues or affected by someone with problem gambling issues.	GPEB Problem gamblers
2.1.2	Where appropriate, provide PGP clients with a range of therapy alternative (retreats, groups, day treatment, etc.)	GPEB Problem gamblers
2.2 Toll Free 24 hour Help Line		
2.2.1	Provide facilitated referrals to counseling services and links to other community services.	GPEB Help Line Callers
2.3 Problem Gambling Training		
2.3.1	Level 1 – Introduction to problem gambling (delivered via Justice Institute of B.C.)	GPEB Allied professionals, mental health professionals
2.3.2	Level 2 – Advanced knowledge and skill development for PGP service providers. Alternate problem gambling training delivery options	GPEB PGP Service Providers
2.3.3	Allied Professional Education Program	GPEB Allied professionals
2.4 Ensure Effectiveness of Services		
2.4.1	Collect PGP data to ensure counseling and prevention services are efficient and effective.	GPEB General population

Goal 3: Ensure the delivery of gambling in a manner that encourages responsible gambling and healthy choices

Objectives:

- To improve gambling delivery by increasing the promotion and delivery of responsible gambling practices and policies.
- To improve the skills and knowledge about responsible gambling within the gambling industry and amongst problem gambling service providers and allied professionals.
- To conduct relevant and valid research studies that will inform government, BCLC and the gaming industry on issues related to gambling, problem gambling and responsible gambling.

Performance Measures	Target
<i>Compliance by BCLC and service providers with responsible gambling and advertising and marketing standards</i>	<i>Establish a baseline compliance rate</i>
<i>Percentage of gaming workers who have completed Appropriate Response Training (ART)</i>	<i>80% of gaming workers will complete ART within 4 months of GPEB registration</i>
<i>Increase staff knowledge of how to respond to customers showing signs of distress</i>	<i>Baseline to be developed</i>
<i>Retained knowledge of ART content</i>	<i>Baseline to be developed</i>

Component and Initiatives	Resp.	Target Audience
3.1 Protecting the Public Interest		
3.1.1 Audit and enforce BCLC and service provider compliance with advertising and marketing standards (e.g., graphics and usage guidelines).	GPEB	BCLC and gaming industry
3.1.2 Audit and enforce BCLC and service provider compliance with responsible gambling standards, policies and guidelines for industry.	GPEB	BCLC and gaming industry
3.2 Problem/Responsible Gambling Research		
3.2.1 Manage provincial research agenda for responsible gambling and problem gambling including coordination with national research priorities (e.g., Social and Economic Impact Study, Provincial Prevalence Study, etc.).	GPEB	General population
3.3 B.C. Partnership for Responsible Gambling		
3.3.1 Manage Partnership Steering Committee.	GPEB/ BCLC	Partnership members
3.3.2 Conduct annual Partnership forums in consultation with industry experts to increase stakeholder understanding of issues and solutions.	GPEB/ BCLC	Partnership members
3.4 Canadian Partnership for Responsible Gambling		
3.4.1 Inter-provincial partnership to enhance knowledge and understanding of gambling and responsible gambling.	GPEB/ BCLC	Government, BCLC & industry

Goal 3 (continued)

3.5 Facility Based Responsible Gambling Programs and Features			
3.5.1	Appropriate Response Training (ART) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver ART to all gaming industry staff. • Evaluate and refresh training curriculum. • Develop an e-learning course for frontline CGC and bingo staff. • Review and implement recommendations arising from ART evaluation. 	BCLC	Gaming industry staff
3.5.2	Voluntary Self-Exclusion (Time Out Program) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide individuals experiencing difficulty with gambling with self-exclusion option. • Evaluation of self-exclusion program. • Implement program and administrative enhancements 	BCLC	Gaming facility players
3.5.3	Responsible Gambling Features on Equipment Research and develop responsible gambling features for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic gaming machines; and • Internet based lottery games. 	BCLC	Gaming patrons
3.5.4	Compliance with Public Interest Standards BCLC and service providers compliance with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising and marketing standards; • Responsible gambling standards, policies and guidelines (i.e., clocks, RG information); and • Security and surveillance standards. 	BCLC/ Service Providers	BCLC and gaming industry
3.5.5	Service Provider Initiatives Service provider commitment to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse and publicly display a commitment to BCP and responsible gambling standards, policies, guidelines and philosophy. 	Service Providers	Gaming patrons
3.6 Evaluation of Responsible Gambling Strategy			
3.6.1	Evaluate Strategy and set out goals for next three-plan.	GPEB	General population