

B.C.'s Responsible Gambling Strategy and Three Year Plan (2011/12 – 2013/14)

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 continue to take an 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 its 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. Create public awareness of risks associated with gambling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase public knowledge of problem gambling issues and program services. ▪ Inform the public about responsible gambling strategies and ways to make healthy choices when gambling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public awareness and communication. ▪ Education and training. ▪ Responsible gambling strategies.
2. Deliver gambling in a manner that encourages responsible gambling and informed choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inform gamblers about the risks involved in gambling, setting limits and playing within their means. ▪ Ensure policies promote responsible gambling practices. ▪ Increase awareness by promoting responsible gambling among players. ▪ Improve the skills and knowledge about responsible gambling among gaming workers. ▪ Conduct research that informs government, BCLC and the gaming industry on issues and best practices related to gambling, problem gambling and responsible gambling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policy development. ▪ Research and evaluation. ▪ Industry training. ▪ Information management.
3. Provide treatment and support to those impacted by problem gambling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuously improve efficiency and effectiveness of providing assistance to individuals experiencing problems with gambling. ▪ Increase access to services. ▪ Evaluate clinical outcomes and conduct best practices research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Treatment services for problem gamblers, and those affected by the gambling of a relative, friend, or colleague.

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 B.C., which includes responsibility for 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. The branch contracts with responsible gambling officers (also known as GameSense Advisors, or GSAs), prevention specialists and clinical counselors to assist in delivering services.

British Columbia Lottery Corporation

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

Gaming Service Providers

Gaming service providers must comply with all gaming regulations, responsible gambling standards and advertising standards. They are encouraged to 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 seeking 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 third 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. Using a variety of treatment approaches, counselling can provide solutions.

Definitions (continued)

Responsible Gambling

Responsible gambling is a healthy approach to gambling in which adults who choose to gamble are provided the tools and information they need to make informed choices. By combining responsible gambling education, information about the games, and the risks associated with gambling, British Columbians are able to make educated decisions about their play.

Responsible gambling occurs through the collective actions and shared responsibility among a number of stakeholders, including government, gaming operators, regulators, treatment providers, community groups and individual gamblers.

2. Detailed Three Year Plan (2011/12 to 2013/14)

Goal 1: Create public awareness of risks associated with gambling.

Objectives:

- To increase public knowledge of problem gambling issues and program services.
- To inform the public about responsible gambling strategies and ways to make healthy choices when gambling.

Performance Measures	Target
Number of prevention presentations.	Number of presentations in 2009/10 was 1,700. Target is to increase that by 5% each year for the next three years.
Percentage of prevention presentation participants who report an increase in knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do they know the signs of problem gambling? ▪ Do they know where to get help if needed? ▪ Do they know about responsible gambling strategies? 	90% of participants will report an increase in knowledge post presentation.
Percentage of prevention participants who report an increase in knowledge six months after a presentation (year two and three).	75% of participants will report an increase in knowledge six months after presentation.
Awareness of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BCLC's voluntary self-exclusion program; ▪ GameSense Info Centres; ▪ GameSense information which BCLC offers about responsible play. 	Increase awareness of BCLC's responsible gambling initiatives. Baseline* awareness among past year players is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BCLC's voluntary self-exclusion program (48%); ▪ GameSense Info Centres (34%); ▪ GameSense information which BCLC offers about responsible play (32%). *BCLC Market Insight Monitor

Component and Initiatives	Resp.	Target Audience
1.1 Problem/Responsible Gambling Awareness		
1.1.1 Province-wide responsible gambling awareness media campaign for general public.	BCLC	General population.
1.1.2 Create, produce/publish and distribute problem and responsible gambling materials (posters, brochures, takeaways, etc.) and distribute province-wide.	GPEB	General population.
1.1.3 Continue to develop and update BCResponsibleGambling.ca and GameSense.ca .	GPEB & BCLC	General population.
1.1.4 Deliver problem and responsible gambling awareness presentations around the province to a range of audiences (seniors, students, etc.).	GPEB	General population.
1.1.5 Local responsible gambling initiatives.	GPEB	General population.
1.1.6 Promote use of BetStopper by BC parents.	BCLC	Youth/parents.
1.2 Targeted Responsible Gambling Awareness		
1.2.1 Develop comprehensive strategies for high risk populations.	GPEB	Targeted audiences.

Goal 2: Deliver gambling in a manner that encourages responsible gambling and informed choice.

Objectives:

- To inform gamblers about the risks involved in gambling, setting limits, and playing within their means.
- To ensure policies promote responsible gambling practices.
- To increase awareness by promoting responsible gambling among players.
- To improve the skills and knowledge about responsible gambling among gaming workers.
- To conduct research that informs government, BCLC and the gaming industry on issues and best practices related to gambling, problem gambling and responsible gambling.

Performance Measures	Target
Player awareness and knowledge of responsible gambling practices.	Player awareness of responsible gambling activities: increase to 82% (baseline 79% 2010/11 BCLC Market Insight Monitor)
Increase awareness and usage of GameSense Information Centre educational tools and resources among gaming facility customers.	Increase number of "meaningful interactions" by 10% (baseline 34,000 for 2010-11) (BCLC internal data).
Percentage of gaming workers who have completed Appropriate Response Training (ART). Retained knowledge of ART content.	90% of gaming workers will complete ART within 3 months of GPEB registration. 80% of employees with 5+ years of service in the gaming industry, will have completed ART Refresher course.
Effective deployment of responsible gambling elements at gaming facilities.	All BCLC casino and community gaming centres certified under Responsible Gambling Council's RG Check program. BCLC maintains Level 4 accreditation with World Lotteries Association RG Framework.

Component and Initiatives	Resp.	Target Audience
2.1 Responsible Gambling Programs and Features		
2.1.1 Continue to develop a range of educational materials for access to players.	BCLC	General population/ gaming patrons.
2.1.2 Continue to enhance the GameSense program.	BCLC	Gaming patrons.
2.1.3 Operate GameSense Information Centres.	GPEB & BCLC	Casino and community gaming centre patrons and staff.
2.1.4 Deliver ART to all gaming industry staff.	BCLC	Gaming industry staff.
2.1.5 Provide voluntary self-exclusion option to individuals experiencing difficulty with gambling.	BCLC	Gaming patrons.
2.1.6 Develop, pilot, evaluate and implement a re-entry program for self-excluded patrons.	GPEB	Voluntary self-exclusion participants.
2.1.7 Integrate responsible gambling features into electronic gaming machines and PlayNow.com .	BCLC	Gaming patrons.

Goal 2 (continued)

Component and Initiatives		Resp.	Target Audience
2.2	Continuous Improvement		
2.2.1	Conduct complimentary provincial research agenda on responsible and problem gambling in collaboration with other partners as appropriate.	GPEB & BCLC	General population.
2.2.2	Inter-provincial partnership to enhance knowledge and understanding of gambling and responsible gambling through Canadian Partnership for Responsible Gambling.	GPEB & BCLC	Government, BCLC, and industry.
2.2.3	Commitment to maintain World Lotteries Association Level 4 certification.	BCLC	Gaming patrons, general public.
2.2.4	Implement RG Check (Responsible Gambling Council program that includes certification of casinos and community gaming centres).	GPEB & BCLC	Gaming facilities.
2.2.5	Inter-provincial Lottery Corporation Responsible Gambling sub-committee.	BCLC	Other Canadian gaming operators.
2.2.6	Participate in VSE intervention research with the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Council.	BCLC	Casino VSE enrollees.

Goal 3: Provide treatment and support to those impacted by problem gambling.

Objectives:

- To continuously improve effectiveness and efficiency of assistance to individuals experiencing problems with gambling.
- To increase access to services.
- To evaluate clinical outcomes and conduct best practices research.

Performance Measures	Target
Develop implementation plan for training all GPEB clinical providers in an evidence-based case management model for monitoring client outcomes.	Target - Feb 2012.
Implement ongoing training and supervision of all GPEB clinical providers. Establish baseline for effective client directed outcomes.	Target - Feb 2013.
Establish program baseline for client short and long term treatment outcomes. Measure outcomes and compare to best practices in other jurisdictions and use in strategic direction for future program development.	Target - April 2014.

Component and Initiatives	Resp.	Target Audience
3.1 Treatment and Referral Services		
3.1.1 Provide problem gambling treatment services through the BC Responsible and Problem Gambling Program, including individual counselling and day treatment programs.	GPEB	Problem gamblers.
3.2 Increase Outreach and Services		
3.2.1 Provide facilitated referrals to counseling services and links to other community services through the 24 hour help line.	GPEB	Problem Gambling Help Line callers.
3.2.2 Alternative service delivery programs.	GPEB	Problem gamblers.
3.2.3 GamTalk (on-line peer support group).	GPEB	Problem gamblers and others.
3.3 Problem Gambling Training		
3.3.1 Continue Allied Professionals Training that leads to early identification and intervention.	GPEB	Allied professionals.
3.4 Outcome and Evaluation		
3.4.1 Pilot Feedback Informed Treatment (FIT) program.	GPEB	Problem gamblers.
3.4.2 Compare FIT program outcomes to industry baselines.	GPEB	Problem gamblers.
3.4.3 Launch a longitudinal outcome study for the Problem Gambling Program to begin in 2011/12 and completed in 2013/14.	GPEB	Problem gamblers.
3.5 Annual Review of Responsible Gambling Strategy		
3.5.1 Review Strategy, update goals and evaluate effectiveness.	GPEB & BCLC	General population.