

PROMOTING A CULTURE OF RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING

As part of its mandate to educate South Africans on issues relating to gambling, the National Gambling Board, in conjunction with the NRGF, launched a three-month awareness campaign in June. The campaign is aimed at lower-income communities, where the negative effects of problem gambling are most keenly felt. To this end, the campaign comprises advertisements on minibus taxis, buses and trains, as well as radio advertisements. Several well-loved South African celebrities have endorsed the campaign, including the Rose of Soweto, boxer Dingaen Thobela, soccer star Mark Fish, and Generations stars Connie Ferguson and Vusi Kunene.



DON'T LET PROBLEM GAMBLING KNOCK YOU DOWN

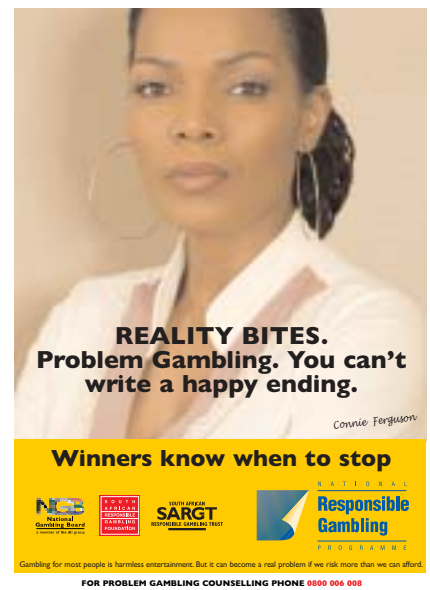
Gambling for most people is harmless entertainment. But it can become a real problem if we risk more than we can afford.

WINNERS KNOW WHEN TO STOP



FOR PROBLEM GAMBLING COUNSELLING PHONE 0800 006 008

Above and below: examples of the new public service campaign



NRGP AND NGB LAUNCH new awareness campaign CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

“But public awareness of the risks inherent in gambling is equally important.”

In order to prevent people from becoming problem gamblers, he said, the public needed to be made aware how gambling worked, how to gamble sensibly, and how to recognise the danger signals.

“This is why my Board, with the co-operation of the NRGF, initiated this awareness campaign to complement existing NRGF efforts. Help is available,” said Marasha.

The public awareness campaign is aimed at less affluent South Africans in LSM categories 2-5, and will focus on commuter media, as well as advertisements and promotions in the community and mainstream press. It will take place over a three month period.

NRGP news.

NATIONAL RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING PROGRAMME

A public/private sector initiative of government regulators and the gambling industry in South Africa

NGB AND NRGP LAUNCH new awareness campaign

GAMBLING INDUSTRY BRINGS ECONOMIC BENEFITS, BUT SOCIAL COSTS MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AND DEALT WITH: FISMER

Speaking in June at the launch of the new awareness campaign, funded by the National Gambling Board (NGB) and the National Responsible Gambling Programme (NRGP), to promote responsible gambling, NGB chairperson, and vice-chairperson of the SA Responsible Gambling Trust, Chris Fismer, said that the gambling industry had done much to stimulate new investment, encourage tourism, create jobs, and give opportunities to the previously disadvantaged.

“But we must exercise great care that we do not ignore the fact that with gambling comes the risk of individual dependency and financial stress.”

Mr Fismer said that by making gambling more available, there was always a danger that people would gamble excessively, causing damage to themselves and their families.

“That is why we developed new legislation and instituted strict regulations to ensure that gambling licensees complied with government’s objective of minimising the incidence of problem gambling. The industry in South Africa has fulfilled our expectations in this regard, and for this they deserve recognition, as does the NRGp which has played a full part in local and national efforts to deal with this important issue.”

Mr Fismer said that in 2001 the NGB had established the SA Advisory Council on Responsible Gambling (SAACREG) and the South African Responsible Gambling Trust (SARGT), an internationally unique private/public sector partnership, with oversight of the NRGp, to bring together all relevant stakeholders

in a cohesive, focused endeavour to promote a culture of responsible gambling in the country.

“The Trust, and the NRGp, because they are independent of any sectoral interest, are not only credible, but effective, integrating as they do the concerns, insights and resources of industry, regulators, and government at all levels. This is a model for jurisdictions in other countries to follow.”

He said South Africa had come a long way since the time the industry was confined to homelands, or was part of the illegal, illicit economy in the country’s urban areas.



Chris Fismer (left) and Themba Marasha (right) of the NGB with responsible gambling ambassadors Dingaan Thobela and Mark Fish

EXPERTS address NRGF winter seminar during flying visit

Regulators, interested NGOs, public servants and the local gambling industry recently had an unexpected opportunity to bring themselves up to date on developments elsewhere when three well-known analysts and academics passed through South Africa on their way back from Malawi where they addressed a meeting of the Gaming Regulators Africa Forum (GRAF) attended by delegates from 16 countries.

The keynote address at this NRGF winter seminar was given by Professor Peter Collins, executive director of the NRGF, and updates on some NRGF projects were provided by Professor Don Ross and Professor Nelleke Bak.

The foreign speakers at the seminar were:

Professor Robert Ladouceur of Laval University in Quebec, probably the world's best-known social commentator on the industry, speaking on "Agreements and Disagreements about Responsible Gambling."

Mr Marc Etches, an advisor to 10 Downing Street who specialises in understanding the relationship between tourism and gambling, speaking on "Leveraging casinos to advance tourism: Lessons from the UK".

Mr Keith Whyte, executive director of the Washington DC-based US National Council on Responsible Gambling, speaking on "Recent Developments Relating to Best Responsible Gambling Practice in the USA and Elsewhere".



Professor Nelleke Bak, Keith Whyte, Professor Don Ross and Professor Robert Ladouceur

NGB AND NRGF LAUNCH new awareness campaign CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Today, in terms of its regulation and policy framework, South Africa has one of the world's most sophisticated and scrupulous gambling regimes. As a nation we have good cause to be proud of the incorruptibility and impartiality which characterises the administration and regulation of this industry," said Fisser.

NGB acting chief executive, Themba Marasha, said that following the introduction of South Africa's new gambling dispensation, there had been legitimate concerns expressed about the negative consequences of gambling.

"In a country such as ours, where poverty and social exclusion are widespread,

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we have a duty to ensure that gambling does not lead to broken families, debt and addiction. That is why we support the work of the NRGF, which is acknowledged internationally to be among the most comprehensive in the world."

Measures to address the "complex question" of problem gambling, he said, needed to be under-pinned and informed by research. "For this reason, in addition to national prevalence research conducted by the NRGF, we at the National Gambling Board commission our own wide-ranging socio-economic impact analyses to ascertain the effect and consequences of our country's gambling industry.

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COLLINS ASKS PERTINENT QUESTIONS – and answers them

PROFESSOR PETER COLLINS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NRGF, POSED AND ANSWERED SEVERAL KEY QUESTIONS IN HIS KEYNOTE SPEECH AT THE NRGF'S WINTER SEMINAR IN MAY.

On the question of “what are gambling regulators for?” he said the industry was more strictly regulated than others for two reasons:

- Public anxiety about the harm caused by irresponsible gambling – not just to the individuals concerned and their families but also to taxpayers and society as a whole because it promoted irresponsible attitudes towards money as an alternative to work, and a something-for-nothing mentality
- The public's desire to secure benefits from “painless” taxes - contributions to “good causes”, and fostering development by promoting job- and wealthcreating investment, such as in enhancing tourism product.

“These two sets of sometimes competing objectives define the job of gambling regulators,” he added.

A responsible gambling policy, he said, was one which restricted and strictly regulated (but did not ban) the availability of legal gambling, the aim being to:

- Minimise negative social impacts, especially the harm caused to gamblers and others by excessive or problem gambling; and
- Maximise economic benefits in terms of fun for customers (the “consumer

surplus”), bringing in foreign currency, keeping local currency at home and redistributing wealth from richer to poorer rather than the other way around.

This required a public-private partnership to ensure that the industry was profitable – and that the public got the lion's share of the profits – and was not perceived as ruining lives by exploiting human weakness.

Regarding profitability and problem gambling, Professor Collins pointed out that profits depended on what governments allowed, forbade and required gambling institutions to do. What governments did, in turn, depended on public opinion, which was largely formed by perceptions. Did gambling exploit the poor and vulnerable, or provide harmless entertainment for those who could afford it?

“The unholy alliance of prohibitionists and industry protectionists is unhelpful,” he added.

A national responsible gambling programme could help, he said, by enabling both industry professionals and regulators to say truthfully that everything that could reasonably have been done to minimise the harm caused by excessive gambling was, in fact, being done, and by ensuring that the industry paid for but did not control the services needed to achieve this.

Professor Collins said that a number of NRGF problem gambling research projects were currently being worked on by the National Centre for the Study of Gambling – a core research team which included

psychologists, psychiatrists, economists, statisticians and cognitive scientists which was located at the University of KwaZulu-Natal but spread over four universities.

He also announced that an NCSG book - “*Midbrain Mutiny: The Picoeconomics and Neuroeconomics of Disordered Gambling*”, by professors Don Ross, Carla Sharp, Rudy Vuchinich and David Spurrett – would be published by the MIT Press in March 2008.

Professor Don Ross himself expanded on the work of the NCSG, listing current projects as:

- A national longitudinal prevalence study, using econometric methods in order to seek causal factors for different levels of interest in gambling (not just problem gambling).
- A study of the extent to which poverty makes people more vulnerable to the influence of factors for gambling problems.
- A continuing study of “co-morbidities” (other problems that often accompany gambling problems), using both brain imaging and behavioural experiments. In this regard he added: “Co-morbidities differ from country to country, and what we know about co-morbidities in Africa is – nothing.”

Professor Ross said that the NCSG's prevalence study was breaking new ground, because “all previous studies were based on the psychology angle, but in this one we measure the econometrics.”



obituary for **Desmond Prince**

Our very sincere condolences go to the sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren of veteran telephone counsellor Desmond Prince, who died suddenly on 1 July, 2007.

He was well-known in the NRGF for his kind nature, his language skills and empathy for callers. He was highly respected for his knowledge on addiction and formed part of the core group of the counselling line.

Desmond had served on the NRGF's problem gambling counselling line since April 2004. He also did stand duty at numerous public awareness exhibitions and represented the NRGF as a facilitator interfacing with the beneficiaries of social grants and social pensions at the AllPay paystations.

He was much valued by his colleagues for his sense of responsibility and willingness to help in any crisis at work. His sense of humour will be sorely missed by all.

He will be greatly missed by all in the NRGF.

Collins warns UK operators: **IF YOU DON'T DO IT, THE GOVERNMENT WILL**

A recent article by Andrew Gellatly on the www.gamblingcompliance.com website quotes the NRGPs Professor Peter Collins as saying that the UK gambling industry must shape its own response to problem gambling before a government-imposed levy took the initiative away from it.



Professor Peter Collins

Peter Collins, who was instrumental in the creation of South Africa's internationally-respected National Responsible Gambling Programme, recently addressed industry leaders over the attention that needs to be paid to problem gambling.

His conclusions are a wake-up call to an industry in the UK that appears divided over the best way to meet the Gambling Commission's call for an industry-wide commitment to protect the vulnerable.

"The UK Government is looking for anything which will mitigate the two-year avalanche of terrible publicity to which it has (mostly unfairly) been subjected over its handling of gambling," Collins told gamblingcompliance.com.

"They may think they could justifiably accomplish this by saying: 'We have given the industry every chance over five years to demonstrate their good faith and self-regulate. They have failed even to raise 33p in every £1 000 which they win off players to help those who develop devastating problems as a result of gambling. So now we are going to impose a levy so that we can address this problem fully and effectively.'"

The sort of levies Collins warns about are the kind that have been imposed in New Zealand and Australia. The figure for NZ is now close to 80p per head since the Government took responsibility for problem gambling, and in New South Wales, Australia, the figure is 2% of gross gaming revenue.

If the same levy were applied in the UK it would translate to £180m, up from a current yearly industry contribution of £3m. "And the Daily Mail will still say: 'This is a derisory contribution.'"

Collins is not opposed to a levy because of its high costs to the industry – he genuinely believes that the private sector can be a better way to allocate the money than governments, which, when they see how much money can be raised by taxing the gambling industry, can rarely resist the temptation to redirect that money elsewhere.

"It's like the taxation on petrol," he says, "It just ends up getting spent on other things. In New Zealand the government was so attracted by the amounts they could raise from a gambling levy that they just spent it elsewhere."

In South Africa Collins was integral to the creation of the National Responsible Gambling Programme, which is now operated by The SA Responsible Gambling Foundation who tendered for a three-year contract to deliver a programme of treatment, prevention and research.

Its budget is based on 0.1% of GGR for all sectors except the Lottery, and the group is supervised by the SARGT, composed of four regulators, four industry professionals and an independent chair.

In addition to running a 24/7 phone counselling service, the NRGPs conducted three prevalence studies in 2001, 2003 and 2005. In Collins's opinion, some of the most important work is done via its relationships with the media: "In South Africa we have consent that every ad for a gambling operator has a certain amount of warning space with the text 'winners know when to stop';" he says.

In addition the NRGPs place adverts locally in press communication and on radio, and runs an extensive stakeholder service with government, industry, community leaders, the international research community and, above all, the media.

"We are currently compiling a programme of distance learning for every school in the country on the risks associated with gambling and other activities," says Collins. "It involves teaching maths and money management, as well as ideas as simple as showing what the inside of a slot machine looks like."

As a result the NRGPs has achieved phenomenal brand recognition – a media survey showed that a quarter of the population in Gauteng, the area in which Johannesburg is located, said they recognised the NRGPs logo.

Collins argues that the UK's discourse around problem gambling does not adequately represent the realities of the gambler's behaviour. "I don't like the phrase 'protecting the vulnerable';" he says, "it suggests a mysterious group who have problems that other people don't."

In reality, says Collins, for most people in the UK, if gambling is a problem "it is in the way that shopping and debt are a problem. The substance that is being abused is money, and the issue is impulse control."

Collins notes that approximately 1% of gamblers have a predisposition to pathological gambling. "Their brains are wired for addiction," says Collins, "and this may be treatable medically in the same way as chronic alcoholics."

"Another 4% are like binge drinkers- they get into trouble with gambling because they don't know what they're doing. They don't understand there is no lady luck, that certain machines do not get 'hot'. What they need is consumer education."

Collins believes the sort of voluntary levy level that would be required in the UK would be similar to that in South Africa - around 0.1% of GGR, or just under £10 million.

"I shouldn't be surprised if the figure came out to be less than 0.1%," says Collins "but it's vital that this is agreed by the industry, because a government-imposed levy creates an antagonistic relationship, where the industry sees the government as gouging money for a levy that will largely be wasted by the government."

In the UK treatment for problem gambling is currently provided by Gamcare, and in Collins's estimation they do a superb job: "As far as treatment is concerned the UK is well supplied - there is an extensive and high-quality service all around the country." But he argues that the UK still has to catch up with South Africa in its use of the media.

"In South Africa, out of a much smaller budget, we spend a great deal on ads in newspapers, exposing common myths about gambling – you haven't yet got as far as that in the UK."

Collins's proposal is that the UK industry give the Responsibility In Gambling Trust (RIGT) a commitment for approximately £20 million over the next four years (including the three million for this year) "so that it can fund the legitimate needs of current treatment providers, roll out a highly visible public awareness campaign, commission practically useful and reliable research including a longitudinal study of gamblers."

Because there is no way of determining the extent to which different forms of gambling cause problem gambling, different sectors, including mobile and television gambling, should, he argues, contribute equally.

Collins remains uneasy with the Government's proposals to "white list" offshore jurisdictions so their operators can advertise in the UK – while he concedes that EU law makes it impossible to exclude several jurisdictions, he says: "What I would have liked to have seen is a situation where anyone who advertises in the UK should also be licensed in the UK. So whether you were an online or land-based operator you wouldn't be able to advertise unless you paid UK taxes," he concludes.



Andile Tapila, Makholwa Makapela and Ntando Piliso of the Western Cape Gambling and Racing Board



Mark Etches with GrandWest GM, Graham Vass

ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL VISITOR



UK Parliamentarian John Greenway (fourth from left) and Joanna Dannhorn (third from right) visited the NRG head office where he met with (from left to right): Barbara van der Spuy, Dr Rodger Meyer, Euginia Budaza, Andrew Fraser, Loren Jordaan, Hazel Petrig and Professor Peter Collins of the NRG.

OUT WITH THE 18TH CENTURY, in with the 21st – US expert

Thanks particularly to the Internet, gambling availability, participation and revenues will continue to expand globally in the next five to ten years, and new research will “revolutionise our understanding and definitions of gambling and problem gambling behaviour”.

That is the opinion of Keith Whyte, executive director of the United States’s long-established National Council on Problem Gambling.

Speaking at the NRGPs winter seminar in late May, Mr Whyte said that “18th Century viewpoints and laws on gambling will be obliterated by 21st Century technology”.

The National Council on Problem Gambling, founded in 1972, is a grassroots non-profit organisation with branches in 34 out of 50 states in the USA. It works with the US government, the gambling industry and communities on programmes and services aimed at assisting problem gamblers and their families. It adopts a neutral stance on legalised gambling.

Mr Whyte envisaged five future trends:

TREND 1

Public-private partnerships – of the sort South Africa had so successfully pioneered with the NRGPs – had to be built, with all the primary stakeholders joining forces to form a “hollow state model” consisting of NGOs and the private sector which “can do it better, faster, cheaper” because “we are able to press for funding and attention to this issue that state agencies cannot”.

TREND 2

Stakeholders must determine standards and develop strategy by clarifying what they thought, knew and could prove by a continuous process of evaluation and improvement. How must success or failure be measured? There should be enforceable regulations as a condition of licensure, with industry-wide codes

of conduct, and stake-holders must “stop re-inventing the wheel and maximise global collaborations”.

Mr Whyte gave a detailed presentation of the NCPG’s “PETER” strategy (prevention, education, treatment, enforcement and research).

TREND 3

The impact of technology and its possible implications had to be taken into account – would there be advanced surveillance technology, gambling licences or mandatory use of player/smart cards? There would be benefits for the gambling industry as regards tracking and bonusing, as well as the players.

Mr Whyte raised the possibility of machine modifications, based on research and player data which could affect debit and credit access, sizes of bets, speed of play, and mandatory cash-outs or breaks in play and involuntary warning messages.

TREND 4

There would be increased public awareness – most people would know someone with a problem, or have seen a public-service announcement.

TREND 5

Definitions and criteria might change, with “pathological” and “problems” categories, and possibly sub-types.

Mr Whyte saw the future as an “opportunity to reframe the Issue. We’ve done so much with so little over the last 35 years. Now we have the opportunity to change what it means to be a problem gambler”.

The past he summed up as “stigma, shame, indifference, rare services, more likely to fail”, while the future promised “acceptance, support, broad and deep services, more likely to succeed, recovery!”

SEEN AT THE NRGPs WINTER SEMINAR



Felicia Roman, General Manager of the Golden Valley Casino, Johan van Wyk of GrandWest, JP Mouton, Slots Manager of Golden Valley Casino and Anton Engelbrecht, also of Golden Valley Casino.



Mercy for **GUN-WIELDING** compulsive gambler

COMPULSIVE GAMBLER JOHANNES DE WET NEL HAS HAD FIVE YEARS LOPPED OFF HIS JAIL SENTENCE FOR ROBBERY AFTER THE SUPREME COURT OF APPEAL FOUND THAT HE HAD ACTED “IN AN ALMOST PANIC CONDITION” AFTER AN 11TH-HOUR ATTEMPT TO RECOUP SOME OF HIS LOSSES WENT SOUR, ACCORDING TO A RECENT REPORT IN THE STAR NEWSPAPER IN JOHANNESBURG.

Nel's case amounts to recognition that compulsive gambling is a quantifiable ailment, and sets a precedent for the future.

In 1999 Nel was sentenced to 15 years by a Port Elizabeth Regional Court magistrate when he pleaded guilty to holding up the Lorraine Entertainment Centre with an empty revolver and escaping – although not for long - with more than R32 000.

HOW IT STARTED...

Nel's migration from gambler to gunman started in 1994, when he became addicted to jousting with Lady Luck. With an income of about R117 000 a month from a Telkom guarding contract and a gardening service, he hit gambling venues in a big way.

In 1998 alone he spent about R400 000.

By that time Nel was recognised as one of the top 10 local gamblers and enjoyed a privileged status at the local gambling houses, entitling him to free accommodation, food and drinks. But then both his luck and his money ran out. By the end of 1998 his finances were in very bad shape, and the end came on 5 February 2000, when Telkom cancelled the guarding contract.

CROSSING THE LINE

On 19 February 2000, by which time Nel was in such dire straits that he could not pay his security guards' wages, he crossed the line. He had gone to the Lorraine Entertainment Centre with R1 200 he had borrowed from a money-lender, had an initial winning streak which netted him R4 500 and then made the classic mistake of not quitting while he was ahead.

Having lost all his winnings, he decided to stage a robbery. He went home to fetch a balaclava helmet and his licensed revolver, and put a false registration-plate on the front of his car. Having unloaded the

revolver, he returned to the Lorraine Entertainment Centre with the balaclava over his face, locked the staff in the women's toilets and made off with R32 595.

The police arrested Nel the same day, by which time he had stashed most of his loot - and gone off with R500 to the 777 Casino.

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Nel pleaded guilty and called a clinical psychologist to testify in mitigation of sentence. The psychologist said Nel's low self-esteem had driven him into a fantasy world, adding that he had a personality defect which had left him with a pathological gambling problem and a narcissistic personality. As a result, the psychologist said, he was now in the final phase of an addiction in which gambling completely dominated his life; he would remain a danger to society unless he received treatment.

Unmoved by the testimony, Nel's guilty plea or his protestations of remorse, the magistrate jailed him for 15 years. But last month, eight years after the amateurish robbery, the Supreme Court of Appeal reacted favourably to Nel's plea for a reduction of his sentence.

MERCY JUDGMENT

Mr Justice Dunston Mlambo held that Nel's financial predicament resulting from his gambling addiction was “clearly pivotal” in his decision to rob the Lorraine Entertainment Centre, and inextricably linked to relevant factors such as his remorse and his first-offender status, which should have received “appropriate consideration and effect”.

Nel's “almost panic condition” had been illustrated by “the absurdity and improbability of how he went about committing the robbery.”

The “DON’T DO IT” approach: Does it work?

DOES THE MUCH-USED “DON’T DO IT” MESSAGE IN GAMBLING-PREVENTION CAMPAIGNS AIMED AT THE YOUTH REALLY WORK? A NEW STUDY ON THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGNS AS A STRATEGY FOR GAMBLING PREVENTION AMONG ADOLESCENTS SHOWS THAT IT IS OFTEN REJECTED BY YOUNG PEOPLE AS BEING PATRONISING.

As a result, many youngsters react negatively to this type of message, and this sometimes triggers defiant or rebellious behaviour, says the study, “Social Marketing Campaigns for Youth Gambling Prevention: Lessons Learned” (published in the *International Journal of Mental Health Addiction* in 2006).

The study says media-based prevention programmes have long been employed as tools to address high-risk behaviours, but social marketing has yet to be used as a strategy to address problem gambling among adolescents. As a result it would appear to be especially relevant, given the recent rise in the portrayal of gambling in the mass media, often glamourising and normalising games and practices.

Thirty high-school focus groups were held, involving 175 participants (95 males and 80 females) aged 12 to 18 years. The aim was to explore adolescents’ exposure to prevention campaigns and their message content, and communication preferences for a youth gambling social marketing campaign.

Participants strongly endorsed advertisements presenting real-life stories with an emotional appeal that portrayed the negative consequences associated with a gambling problem. They also recommended using simple messages which illustrated the basic facts of gambling and raised awareness in a non-judgmental manner.

Of existing prevention initiatives, tobacco-prevention campaigns were among the most visible and memorable, particularly one which appealed to most participants because of its use of humour, although expressed a dislike for ads which used too much.

The second most-recalled category was advertisements for drinking-and-driving prevention, many of which depicted the consequences of drinking that went beyond the individual, and did so through the use of emotion.

The use of fear and shock appeared to be an important factor in participants’ ability to recognise and associate such behaviour with serious repercussions; the use of emotion could be considered a positive component, the study concluded, because images of serious accidents and death left some participants feeling disturbed and uncomfortable.

The compilers found it interesting that while the majority of participants stated that they were not directly affected by media prevention messages, most were able to recognise and identify benefits to teenagers in general. The benefit most mentioned by participants was the provision of important information about the risks that would help them to make up their own minds. The participants’ perception of several existing strategies indicated that they were ineffective and therefore needed to be avoided in any social marketing campaigns targeting the youth.

The participants were highly critical of campaigns which lacked a balanced perspective, and several groups voiced their frustration with biased messages that focused mainly on negative and/or harmful aspects, saying they found such ads unrealistic.

Campaigns with the “don’t do it” approach not only failed to transmit the prevention message but might, in fact, have precisely the opposite effect, several participants stating that authoritative messages of this type triggered rebellious or defiant behaviour.

Depicting the negative effects of gambling was widely recommended as a primary content requirement – a confirmation of previous research which suggested that campaigns citing negative health effects were linked with positive measurable outcomes. Participants suggested that gambling prevention campaigns should demonstrate the harmful effects of excessive gambling behaviour and identified four primary categories of possible consequences: problems affecting the individual; problems affecting family and friends; financial concerns; and suicide.

Relevant personal consequences associated with a gambling problem would be an important feature to illustrate, with attention being drawn to health effects, missing school or work and the risk of multiple addictions. But participants cautioned that portrayal of the personal costs of gambling should not be excessively dramatic.

A majority of the focus groups also drew attention to the importance of depicting the harm that family and friends could suffer as a result of a person’s gambling problem. Some of the youths felt that the emotional harm caused by conflict, tension, lying, stealing and reduced quality time with family and friends would be an effective campaign strategy. Others highlighted the financial impact of a gambling habit on loved ones.

Several focus groups raised the issue of financial consequences, indicating that an illustration of how money lost on gambling could have been used for more constructive endeavours would be an essential campaign aspect. Participants generally believed that the “denormalisation” approach was not effective. Individuals who did support the denormalisation approach thought it could help to counterbalance the many advertisements, television shows and other media messages that promoted and encouraged gambling, and recommended that such messages illustrate the reality of gambling – for example, that there were more losers than winners.

Some groups interpreted the denormalisation strategy as being “preachy” and expressed concern with campaigns communicating “gambling is not cool” messages. It appeared that younger teenagers might be more strongly influenced by a “gambling is not cool” message than older teenagers; older participants suggested that their age-groups were more independent thinkers and hence would not be influenced.

This approach, the study concluded, might therefore be ineffective for those youths who reacted rebelliously to prevention messages.

Another unexpected finding was that several groups suggested a responsible gambling message as being a more appropriate strategy for a youth prevention campaign, stating that most of their peers gambled and thus a responsible gambling approach would better reflect the reality of gambling among this audience.

In general, most focus groups strongly recommended using real-life stories of adolescents who had been affected by gambling problems. Specifically, groups recommended using guest speakers share their personal stories and experiences at school assemblies. Participants regarded the use of actual stories that touched on the audience’s emotions as an effective method for communicating prevention messages.

NRGP schools/youth programme

THE NRGPs SCHOOLS AND YOUTH PROGRAMME IS NOW WELL UNDER WAY, PROFESSOR NELLEKE BAK REPORTED AT THE NRGp WINTER SEMINAR.

The NRGp together with the NGB, has spearheaded the introduction of responsible gambling at schools, using training sessions, workshops and drama presentations. Now the programme is looking to implementing a structured curriculum in schools country-wide and also extending the resource to youth groups and other clients.

According to Professor Nelleke Bak, the programme consists of a phased process, with buy-in from relevant stakeholders, the purpose of which was:

- To reduce the incidence of problem gambling among youth.
- To provide young people with information about gambling in South Africa, and explain how it worked.
- To increase learners' ability to make healthy lifestyle choices and manage their money wisely.
- To develop learners' awareness of risk behaviour and help them to act responsibly

The main target groups, she said, were students in Grades 7 to 9 (13 to 15 years old) and Grades 10 to 12 (16 to 18), youth groups (18 to 35) and first-time earners.

The professionals involved in the process were teachers, youth-group co-ordinators and social workers.

Phase 1 of the programme – the development of teaching and learning materials – was nearly complete, and a start had been made with Phase 2, which consisted of training teachers and piloting the teaching and learning resource in Grades 7 to 9 in about 10 schools in each of the provinces.

Phase 3 would consist of obtaining feedback from relevant participants, teachers, learners and officials to assist with modifying the material before implementing it in all schools. In Phase 4, the same process would be used to develop and drive the education of youth in Grades 10 to 12.

Phase 5 would see the development of material for youth groups, the launching of school programmes and projects aimed at promoting responsible gambling, and adapting the material for industry professionals and social workers to use.

Professor Bak described the programme's format as flexible, so that it could be used by learners of differing ability, and adaptive for use by professionals such as teachers, youth counsellors and social workers. The focus was on interactivity, engagement and having fun.

Familiar examples and issues made it relevant to the actual conditions of the users, so that "being Africa-focused makes it both pertinent and

unique". It adopted a neutral stance towards gambling, not promoting or condemning but aiming at informing students of the nature of gambling and the risks involved.

The core content covered basic principles and aspects, with links for elaboration in other learning areas such as mathematics, economic and management sciences, languages and social studies.

Materials used were paper-based text, a comic, a CD ROM and a website. This made the content adjustable for various contexts. The different media used reinforced face-to-face instruction and could also be used easily for distance education.

The content for Grades 7 to 9 covered the following aspects:

- An overview of the history of gambling, different kinds of risk behaviour, games of chance and games of skill.
- The reasons – sound, and irresponsible or uninformed – why people gambled. This included myths, superstitions and illusions of control.
- How gambling worked – unlinked events, random numbers and the probabilities of winning and losing, the odds in coin-tossing, dicing, Lotto numbers, slot machines and fafi. Also included were house advantage and the costs of betting games.
- Risks and responsible gambling in which the player retained control.
- Identifying a gambling problem in one's self or others, the consequences of problem gambling and how and where to get help.

Grade 10 to 12 students were given tuition in additional topics:

- The cost of gambling – to the South African economy as well as to the individual player. This topic included discussion of paying for what the player wanted, and situations when costs exceeded returns (in other words, problem gambling) and how to get help.
- How to be a smart gambler by identifying risk behaviour and taking responsible action, and basic budgeting to handle one's time and money wisely.
- How gambling worked – a discussion about roulette, internet gambling, horse- racing and sports betting.
- Gambling and advertising – the use of persuasive language in advertising and the spatial arrangements of betting contexts.
- Gambling and the community, a student-led research project and community survey.
- The morality of gambling, to encourage critical thinking about broader socio-economic and political issues.

NRGP WORKSHOP ON PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING

A group of 21 treatment professionals and nine problem gambling line counsellors from the NRGPs headquarters attended a one-day workshop on pathological gambling presented by international expert Professor Robert Ladouceur of Laval University, Quebec. He is possibly the world's best-known social commentator on the industry and author of the book *Understanding and Treating the Pathological Gambler*.

The workshop covered advanced training in the treatment of pathological gamblers and how to implement difficult therapeutic interventions, through role-playing aimed at identifying the "cognitive traps" or internal monologues that keep gamblers locked into the vicious cycle of gambling addiction.

"The aim is for the treatment professional to lay the ground for creating a cognitive dissonance in the gambler's mind, so that he/she is forced to reconsider and correct these erroneous perceptions – and to seek help," said Ladouceur.

"The main cognitive distortions are the gambler's exaggerated belief in systems and his illusion of control over luck. Losses are never interpreted as such, but rather as near-wins – and the gambler usually sees causal links where none exist.

"He is also highly motivated by superstitious behaviour and emotional reasoning, so he cannot see that every game is a new game – or understand the concept of randomness, that the cards or dice have no memory!

"The challenge for therapists is how, without being confrontational, to modify the gambler's convictions, so he challenges his own predictive skills and abilities."

The delegates were informed about diagnostic and evaluation procedures as well as solutions.

Solutions he mooted included voluntary self-exclusion, avoiding places where gambling took place and assertiveness training that resulted in gamblers refusing invitations to join friends who gambled.

"The truth of the matter is that most gamblers only seek help when they are in the despair phase. And the irony is that most gamblers in the losing phase consider themselves to be in the time-out phase of the winning phase."

SEEN AT THE WORKSHOP FOR TREATMENT PROFESSIONALS



Theresa Rossouw, Alec Rossouw, Gawie Smit and Bill Skinner

Farhana Mohammed (left) and Thandiswa Gxaba

HELP FOR US HELPLINES

Casino helplines for people with gambling problems exist all over the United States ... but the counsellors' qualification requirements vary widely, according to Christine Reilly, executive director of the Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders.

In a recent article she said that one of the most visible resources for individuals with gambling concerns was the toll-free helpline numbers often posted in casinos, printed on lottery tickets and featured in public service announcements on television and radio.

Since the quality of care offered by helplines or other interventions should be a priority, she added, her institute and the National Centre for Responsible Gaming had devoted a session to the subject at the last NCRG Conference on Gambling and Addiction.

A preparatory search of scientific literature had revealed that very little had been written about helplines, so to provide the conference panel with background her institute reviewed the materials available online and carried out a telephone survey of 27 helplines.

Helpline administrators were asked about the credentials and training of their personnel; the nature of the services provided; the geographical scope; funding sources; advertising sources; and the volume of calls.

"We found that nearly all gambling helplines offer the same services, including distribution of educational materials, referrals to Gamblers Anonymous and treatment professionals, and crisis counselling, Reilly said.

However, "it is interesting that this near-unanimity on the purpose of a helpline was not matched by the responses to questions about credentials and training of helpline personnel.

"Although all of the respondents require some sort of training for the staff answering helpline calls, there was no agreement on other aspects of personnel qualifications. Nearly 50% had no educational requirements, while 25% required a graduate degree (e.g. a master's degree), 21% a four-year college degree and 8% a high-school degree.

"For 50% of the helplines, certification and/or licensure is mandatory, and only one-third provide clinical supervision.

"Clearly, there is no consensus about what constitutes the ideal qualifications and training needs for a helpline worker. While some



NRGP NEWS

Gambling line counsellors who attended the workshop are (from left to right): Andrew Fraser, Nadia Marsh, Simone Smith, Michelle Jaftha, Tanya Damon, Desmond Prince and Miriam Philiso

Four new staffers have joined the NRG P counselling line during the past few months.

They are Simone Smith, Tanya Damon, Nadia Marsh and Michelle Jaftha. Three of them – Simon, Tanya and Nadia – were invited to join the prestigious Golden Key membership – placing them among the top 15% of students worldwide.

All the counsellors have done the basic counselling skills course, which involved lots of roleplaying, and courses to improve their listening, communication and motivational interviewing skills. They also boned up on all aspects of gambling addiction.

All have shadowed older, more experienced counsellors on the line for a while, to learn the ropes – hear them at work counselling callers, learn the correct referral procedures and the general office administration.

They also attend intensive three-hour training sessions with coordinator Barbara van der Spuy each week.

NADIA MARSH

Nadia, 24, who lives in Crawford, is also a graduate from the University of the Western Cape. She completed her B Psychology degree in 2003.

She did her internship at the selfhelp organisation called Maraloeng, that does psychometric testing in schools.

She enjoys socialising with friends to get some balance in her life.

SIMONE SMITH

Simone, 23, lives in Kuils River and completed her B Psychology honours degree at the University of the Western Cape in 2006.

She did her internship at the Saartjie Baartman Centre. She is still single, loves reading, walking on the beach and doing yoga.

She describes herself as a caring person, a good listener, who is non-judgmental and likes being there for others.

MICHELLE JAFTHA

Michelle Jaftha, 37, is married, with two children aged 14 and 16.

Also a UWC BA graduate, she did an honours degree in Psychology during 2006. She has a superb command of Afrikaans and is a excellent conversationalist.

She did voluntary counselling work in the trauma room at the Salt River and Steenberg police stations for three years. She was involved with student orientation week at university,

She wrote the Social Auxiliary Work board exam at the end of June.

TANYA DAMON

Tanya Damon, 22, studied at the University of Cape Town and completed her honours degree last year. This is her first official job.

She has served as a volunteer at the Red Cross Children’s Hospital since she was 17 years old, working in various wards.

Her interests include playing the piano – up to Grade 7 level examinations – and she loves jazz and Latin American dancing.

She has aspirations to complete her masters in Psychology – and do a thesis on how divorce affects children, their social competency, their scholastic ability, as well as aspects of their personality.

HELP FOR US HELPLINES

maintain that a paid staff with graduate training in a clinical specialty should be the standard, other helplines use volunteers with little or no education other than in-house training.

“It might be useful for the organisations that sponsor helplines to revisit the issue of educational qualifications and training needs of their personnel. The recent explosion of new research on gambling has made this an opportune time to re-evaluate strategies for

assisting individuals with a gambling problem ...

“As new research changes our understanding of the disorder, we will need to adjust intervention, prevention and treatment strategies accordingly.”

Reilly noted that new resources for such a re-appraisal would become available from the University of Iowa’s Prairieland Addiction Technology and Transfer Centre, which recently

launched a two-year study of the health-care providers focussed on gambling disorders.

“Helpline operators could benefit from the findings and recommendations of this project (and) we encourage helpline operators to take advantage of the development of evidence-based resources and to keep in mind that the dictum, “First, do no harm,” applies even to straightforward activities like disseminating educational materials.”

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