

# Newslink

Problem Gambling News & Information

A source of news, views and trends

**CF** Canadian Foundation On  
**CG** Compulsive Gambling  
(Ontario)

Spring 2000

## On the Road Again

### FEATURE ARTICLE

By Morri Behrmann

Rachel likes being with her friends and sisters. She sees them weekly – sometimes more than that. She spends the day with them. They have fun together. They have a routine – they go to the casino at Rama or visit the slots at Mohawk. Mostly they drive there, but often they take the bus.

“It’s so convenient and they make it so easy,” she says, obviously excited and satisfied with the incentives offered by the casinos and tracks. “Look, this is what Casino Rama sends me, look at these coupons,” she points out animatedly. “Right now there is a special to Rama. For \$5, a couple can get a bus ride and an all-you-can-eat buffet lunch – each! It’s worth it! Where else can you get a day’s entertainment for this amount of money? Besides, it’s a social occasion. We chat on the bus for an hour and a half. We do our own thing in the casino ‘till lunch time, have lunch together, then play the machines a bit more before getting the bus back to the Promenade.”



“Sounds pretty typical,” says Pat Fowler, Executive Director of the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling and an expert in gambling and seniors. “Rachel has identified several of the reasons why more and more seniors are gambling. Besides the easy access, convenience and opportunity to socialize, it’s an inexpensive way for most to dress up, get out of the house, and avoid loneliness. It can be an expedient way to escape depression from loss of all kinds faced by seniors: spouse; family; profession; health or even physical beauty.”

According to Fowler, the expansion in gambling opportunities over the past decade has coincided with a greater acceptance of gambling among seniors. Not only are there a growing number of seniors but also more of them are gambling. In the past, as people aged, gambling activity declined. Today the opposite is true.

The National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago looked at gambling by age group in 1975 and again in 1998. It found that the proportion of people gambling

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## ONTARIO UPDATE:

See summer issue for extensive coverage of problem gambling initiatives in Ontario.

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- Journalists, students and teachers looking for background information or working on a gambling-related project

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Since its inception in 1983, the Foundation has been providing the public with information about problem gambling and responsible gambling. We have continuously advocated for a comprehensive public awareness campaign to maximize the impact of prevention messages. Our view has been that it is important to inform the people of Ontario about the potential risks of excessive gambling just as many organizations provide information about the risks of alcohol abuse.

CFCG(O) is very pleased that the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care has now agreed to sponsor such a program.

The Canadian Foundation on Compulsive Gambling (Ontario) has been asked to develop a broad-based awareness campaign in collaboration with the Wolf Group – an internationally acclaimed communications agency and an expert advisory committee. The program is really just in its infancy but there are some things we do know now. For example, it will be province-wide in scope involving co-ordinated messages, materials and media ads. It will address both prevention and availability of treatment. Through the life of the program, it will reach out to all the citizens of Ontario

through the balanced use of provincial and local programming. The campaign strategies will be evaluated on an on-going basis to continuously improve their effectiveness and impact.

The awareness initiative will be planned in collaboration with an advisory committee involving The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, 2 representatives of the Designated (Counselling) Agencies, The Gaming Secretariat, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, The Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation, The Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline, the planned Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre, and the Ontario Horse Racing Industry Association.

When fully implemented, it is expected that all the organizations on the advisory group, the local Designated Agencies and many others will share in the delivery of the public awareness program. For this reason, the advisory group adopted the title "Ontario Partners for Responsible Gambling" as the overall umbrella title for the program.

Stay tuned - there is a lot more to come.

Jon E. Kelly, Ph. D.



## Fast facts – Canada

**In 1999, \$8.1 billion was generated from some form of non-charity gambling activity, three times the \$2.7 billion of seven years earlier.**

**At least one person gambled in 63% of households with an annual income of less than**

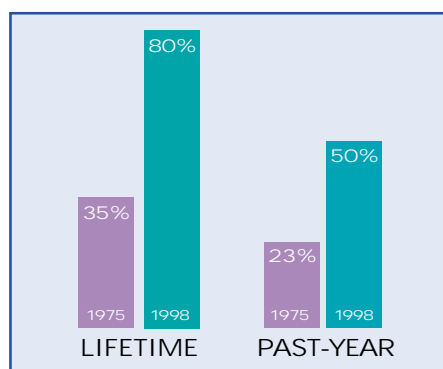
**\$20,000. For households with incomes of \$80,000, the figure is 84%.**

**Between 1992 and 1999, the number of jobs in the gambling industry more than tripled, from 11,900 to 39,200.**

# “...it’s just too good of a deal”

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that are over 65 years old has increased dramatically. For lifetime gambling, the percentage of seniors gambling rose from 35% in 1975 to 80% in 1998. For past-year gambling, it rose from 23% in 1975 to 50% in 1998. In each case it has more than doubled (see chart). In contrast the percentages of all the other age groups have increased only marginally or have fallen.



## Percentages of senior's gambling in 1975 and 1998

In Canada there are approximately 3.8 million people over the age of 65 representing 12.36% of the population. Statistics Canada expects this figure to almost double to 7.75 million people by 2026. The Social Gaming Survey conducted jointly by the Angus Reid Group and Gemini Research in British Columbia in 1993 found that 28% of all gamblers were 65 and over.

Kathie Neufeld is the Provincial Problem Gambling Consultant for seniors in British Columbia. Together with her colleagues she is attempting to profile seniors who gamble. Based on The Social Gaming Survey, responses from helpline callers and senior gamblers in treatment, Neufeld has begun to develop a clearer profile of older gamblers in British Columbia. She says that seniors gamble for leisure with their spouse, or alternatively, gamble to create distance from a spouse or relative; or they gamble as a means of asserting independence and freedom

from a past or current controlling relationship. What also sets seniors apart – they have an average of 7.7 free hours a day.

Pat Fowler says that seniors, as a special population group, are more vulnerable to the risks of excessive gambling. She says that many seniors have never gambled before, or have gambled in only a limited way. “It’s all new for them, they have not had experience and are unaware of the risks,” she believes.

“In contrast to their pre-retirement life, gambling is now socially acceptable and universally accessible. They see their friends gambling. Gambling opportunities are designed specifically for them – buses pick them up where they congregate. Social groups arrange outings for them to casinos and tracks. Some have access to gambling on the Internet in their own homes. For the first time, many have the money, time and freedom to gamble.

“Therefore, when they encounter problems they are often confused by their own behaviour and are embarrassed that they cannot control the activity.”

Rachel agrees that some seniors get into trouble. But she bristles at the suggestion that older people don’t understand the risks. “Speaking about my group of friends and family, we all led responsible lives and put our kids through school and university and paid off mortgages. Most of the time we spend \$30 or \$40 dollars during the day. My sister doesn’t go to movies or restaurants. This is her entertainment. She is single and knows that she alone is responsible for the rent and food. She has her set amount and when that is spent, its time to go home. None of us borrow money to play. When we are done we wait for the others and watch them play.”

“ we all led responsible lives and put our kids through school and university and paid off mortgages”

“Most people think the same way of seniors and gambling as Rachel does, and herein lies the danger,” says Fowler. “Since most seniors have lived exemplary lives – meeting their responsibilities and obligations, maintaining control of their lives, etc., they themselves, as well as others, assume they will be able to control their gambling. This is not true in all cases. What we are forgetting is that we are talking about addiction not bad behavior.”

Fowler continues: “While it’s true that most seniors will have no problems with gambling, they are definitely part of a vulnerable population. We should be aware of other issues that relate specifically to seniors. For example, I am concerned for those suffering from various age-related illnesses like Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia or with diminished capacity to make rational decisions. Also, seniors faced with substantial financial loss find it difficult or impossible to recover their loss.

“The gaming industry has a responsibility towards seniors too,” argues Fowler. “They make it as easy as possible for all seniors to participate. That’s fine. But I think they also have a duty to ensure that their marketing to seniors is responsible. All their promotional material, signs at the casinos and on the buses should contain information about problem gambling – what it is and where they can get help.”

“To ensure that seniors are able to make the best decisions about their gambling they have to have the best information about gambling. We should focus on ways to reach seniors with words and symbols with which they can identify and which they find credible and respectful,” states Fowler. “We should

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### Newcastle, Australia

A research team says that the blink of a person's eye may identify people at risk of becoming compulsive gamblers. They will look at people's eye-blink responses and brain waves to test their theory that compulsive gambling is linked to obsessive-compulsive disorder.

### Seoul, South Korea

It turns out that South Korea boasts the highest proportion of online trading in the world. Online brokering accounts for 40 percent of stock market turnover, eclipsing even the U.S.

The number of people using the Net is expected to nearly double this year, aided by the proliferation of Web-enabled cell phones, wireless personal digital assistants and Internet TVs - not to mention the country's 12,000 Net cafes, where online traders gather and gamble.

### First Nations and the Internet

Finance Minister Paul Martin flatly rejected a proposal by the Kahnawake Mohawks to establish an offshore haven on their reserve. The Kahnawake plan includes a bank, a securities exchange and a regulatory authority. Martin's comments make it clear that Ottawa would view any such move as illegal under Canadian law. In Milford, Connecticut, Attorney General Richard Blumenthal and the attorneys general of 34 other states are seeking to shut down an Internet gambling site run by Idaho's Coeur d'Alene Indian Tribe. It allows subscribers to place bets through

their computers. The Attorneys General claim the site violates the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988. The act allows gambling to take place only on Indian lands.

### Los Gatos, California

Initially developed to protect children from the "dark" side of the Internet, SurfWatch software is now increasingly being used by corporate managers to filter out gambling and sex

are seeking to enter one of many gambling sites in Armenia today that offers everyone a free ticket to take part in its lottery game or bingo. Lotteries, slot machines and gambling casinos are now part of the day-to-day life of a large number of Armenians – so large a number that sociologists are speaking of a major change in the national culture. Armenia's enduring social hardships make gambling one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy.

### Montgomery, Alabama

A Waffle House waitress who received a lottery ticket worth \$10 million as a tip does not have to share the jackpot with her co-workers, the Alabama Supreme Court has ruled. Four employees claimed they had had a verbal agreement with Tonda Dickerson to split any winnings from a lottery ticket given to her by a breakfast regular as a tip. In addition, the regular expected a new pickup truck from any winnings. But the Judge said the verbal agreement amounted to a contract founded on "a gambling consideration" and was not enforceable.

### Sydney, Australia

David Fraser, a senior lecturer in law at Sydney University, tells (ABC NewsRadio) his book *Cricket and the Law* does deal with the origins of the Laws of Cricket as a device to give certainty for gambling on the game. "However, readers might want to read my *Balls, Bribes and Bails: The Jurisprudence of Salim Malik* for insights on match-fixing. I'll gladly provide a copy to anyone interested." 🎲

Internet sites. This dramatic shift highlights the increase in the number of companies that provide their employees with Internet access. It also beats monitoring what sites employees log on to.

### Yerevan, Armenia

Every morning, scores of mostly elderly men and women form a long line. They are not waiting for pension benefits or relief aid in the freezing winter weather, but rather, they



# King for a Day

By Marcy Dibbs,  
Program Consultant  
Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse  
Commission (AADAC)

**K**ids! How do you get through to them about anything? How do you engage them with something they can relate to? Something they can identify with?

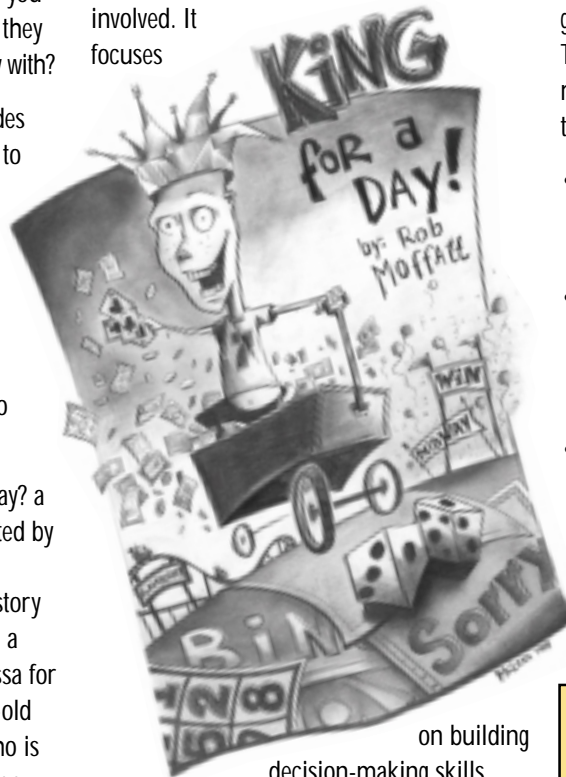
One way is to develop a play that includes kids, speaks their language and relates to them. The Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) did just that. They put together a high energy, action packed, music-filled production, which catered to kids in grades 4 through 6. The message was clear. It was simple, easy and straight to the point. Gambling comes with risks.

Thus began the odyssey of King for a Day? a play written by Rob Moffatt and presented by Quest Theatre Company. It deals with gambling and problem gambling. The story begins with eleven year-old Luke facing a long summer with only his sister Vanessa for company. Then he meets a twelve-year-old boy named Tim, from Great Britain, who is visiting his grandmother for the summer. The boys become quick friends and entertain themselves playing games with each other and Vanessa. Not just any games – all the games they play involve some form of gambling, a bet or a dare. Tim is a very experienced gambler, having adopted these habits from his family. The others are eager to learn. They are quick to catch on to the tricks and traps of winning and losing.

The games and the lesson about gambling come to a head during a trip to the summer fair. Luke is forced to choose between taking care of his sister who is sick, or going along with Tim's urging to play all of the midway games. The tension between the two boys rises as Luke struggles with the painful

dilemma facing him. The play ends with the boys examining their friendship and if it can survive.

King for a Day was designed to stimulate students to think and talk about gambling and the risks involved. It focuses



on building  
decision-making skills.

The play encourages kids to understand that when decisions are made, there are consequences, which impact their lives in many ways. The play toured 138 schools for four months. After each performance, students were encouraged to ask the performers questions about gambling, problem gambling and the risks involved.

Although evaluations show that the production was well received, AADAC recognizes that one-hour of entertainment is not going to equip children with the tools necessary to help them make good decisions about responsible gambling. For this reason, King for a Day is only one small part of an ongoing comprehensive prevention strategy designed

to inform and engage Alberta youth. AADAC also undertakes a wide range of prevention initiatives that are grounded in prevalence and focus group research with youth, parents and other key influencers.

These include general awareness about gambling and problem gambling – through TV and print ads, print and video classroom materials and display items, as well as targeted messages to:

- parents – be aware of the behavior you are modeling for your children, and monitor their activities
- educators/school counsellors – recognize the signs of youth gambling or the impacts of parental gambling, and know where to refer
- at-risk populations – (self) screen and (self) refer for further assessment

In addition, AADAC provides information on education, treatment and training services and helps address problem gambling. 

## POSTER CONTEST

CFCG(O) is so excited about its latest contest for kids. This time, the Foundation felt a poster contest would be fun and very effective. The posters need to have a strong visual impact about prevention of youth problem gambling. Two iMAC computers will be given away for both the best English and French posters. All Ontario students in grades 9 and 10 can try their hand at creating this public service message, which may be used in a province-wide prevention campaign. The posters can be of any art form, or be computer generated but they must be in colour and have contrast and impact.

# The Operative Term in Soci

Gerry Frascione, President and CEO of Wolf Group Canada, looks at the challenges facing social marketing

Social marketers face the same challenges as commercial marketers – trying to get a new product to market. No matter what the issue, they need to gain public acceptance and increase their profile if they are to make a difference.

The marketing environment in which we operate has never been as complex as it is today. At the same time, the needs that exist in our society have never clamoured louder for our attention. To make an impact, social marketers have become sophisticated marketers.

The speed of communication is increasing at an unbelievably rapid pace. As is the sheer number of resources that people access to gather information, including the pervasiveness of the Internet. There's a lot of noise out there. And it's getting louder. The choice people face is either going deaf, or filtering out excess noise. They're choosing the latter. They have two filters: media selectivity – people are becoming much more selective in what they read, the web sites they access, and the stations they listen to or watch. And message selectivity. People retain only what is relevant to them.

So how can organizations make a true impact through social marketing? How can social marketers ensure that their voice is heard? How do they communicate the importance and worthiness of their cause? Here are some of my thoughts.

Cutting through the clutter is something everyone talks about, but only the most successful marketers actually do. With the enormous number of messages competing for consumers' attention, branding has the

power to make the significant difference to grab people's attention and evoke immediate recognition for what the 'brand' stands for.

Defining your purpose and creating emotional equity is the cause that will help define 'your brand'.

*"Cutting through the clutter is something everyone talks about, but only the most successful marketers actually do."*

It is important to ensure that the creative aspect has impact and that the message being communicated is consistent across all communications vehicles. This is the foundation of all your marketing efforts. But defining a brand goes beyond the establishment of your mission statement, vision or values.

## Branding The Issues

Social marketing aims to influence ideas and behaviour. You're marketing, but you are not necessarily selling a product or service. You are trying to create awareness and understanding, and ask people to change their behaviour to support the issue. If you can effectively 'brand' issues, use the same methods as traditional marketers.

For a social marketing campaign to credibly brand an issue, messages must clearly resonate with the target audience. If your campaign is honest, open, quickly and easily understood, and memorable, it will make an impact.

For instance, Molson's "Take Care" campaign effectively brands the responsible drinking issue. When the brand essence is fully communicated, people will feel it in their hearts and minds. This is nowhere more true than in social marketing. If they don't feel it, nothing will happen.

## Savvy To Be Successful

Social marketers have had to become much more savvy to be successful. They have come a long way from simply developing and distributing public service announcements about their causes. They hope that someone would run them and that the target audience would get the message. They understand the need to access researchers and media buyers who can place advertising where it makes strategic sense, and advertising agencies that can develop impactful creative work to communicate their messages. With new expertise and communications tools at their disposal, they can better ensure that marketing efforts are fully integrated. It's more vital than ever that they speak to consumers with one consistent voice.

The United Way is a good example of this. There is a universal understanding that the United Way is the guardian of the community. Their services are extensive but their message is highly focused. The core idea is that the 'united way' is the way to help the most in responding to a diverse array of social issues. It's something consumers readily identify with, and respond to. This core understanding of what the brand is about has certainly resonated with consumers.

They use integrated communications resources to create broad reaching campaigns. Their messaging is consistent in advertising, direct marketing, via spokespersons and volunteers, in their publicity, and particularly in the drive that goes directly to corporations to rally employees to participate in United Way fundraising.

# al Marketing is 'Marketing'

## Research And More Research

Conducting research and evaluating programs in social marketing is just as important as conducting research for a consumer brand. Understanding your audience's social and demographic make-up and psychosocial features, provides a solid platform from which you can speak to them about the issues. Benchmarking attitudes of the publics' concept or perception of a cause before initiating a program, then evaluating changes over time is critical. You've got to understand consumer perceptions if you are to track and evaluate the effectiveness of a communications program.

The campaigns I alluded to earlier to prevent drinking and driving is a good example: the campaigns are highly targeted to specific demographic groups, which based on statistics, have a greater tendency to drink and drive. The frequency of the message increases seasonally, during holiday weekends, when it is anticipated that more drinking will take place. The selected media (usually television and outdoor) is also matched to the demographic profile.

The Canadian Cancer Society has also been extremely adept at using and applying credible research. It has served as the foundation for their prevention and education campaigns for smoking cessation.

## It's The Idea. It's Always The Idea

You need a great idea to change attitudes and influence behaviour, and ultimately make a difference. The genesis of great creative ideas lies in being thorough – doing research, and having a complete understanding of the brand and target audience. From this come great ideas so forceful, convincing and relevant, they cannot and will not be ignored.

The most impactful social marketing campaigns (just like the most impactful product campaigns) come from simple ideas: to

increase awareness about child safety to parents and kids. The National Child Safety Council was the first organization to put missing kids' photos on milk cartons. This very direct messaging reached the target in their homes,

*"Preaching doesn't work. Bringing issues out into the open and fostering a greater understanding of them does."*

at meal times, when moms and kids would be together, and could talk to each other about the issue. The great, simple idea here is creation of a new, relevant media vehicle – with the added bonus that the frequency of the message is outstanding.

Another example of effective social marketing communication via packaging is Kellogg's recent partnership with Kids Help Phone. A 24-hour hotline that kids can access for counselling. Kellogg's put the Kids Help Phone logo and information on more than 12 million cereal boxes to increase awareness about the issues and the service. In effect, the boxes became breakfast cereal billboards for the charity.

## Best Friends

Social marketers' greatest assets are their allies. Messages have greater impact if they have strong advocates. A powerful message needs a powerful voice at the community and national level. Allies include government representatives, the media, corporations,

professional associations, and local community groups.

The 'Just Say No' campaign to end drug use among youth in the U.S. gained a great deal of immediate attention because of Nancy Regan's endorsement and her solid commitment to the issue. Her involvement was extremely influential in launching the campaign and driving awareness for the issue on a very large scale.

Rallying celebrity spokespersons to a cause can help draw a great deal of attention to your issues. The media attention that 'star quality' can generate for an issue skyrockets awareness. Take for instance the numerous celebrities, like Madonna, who have leant their name, and given a great deal of their time and support, to AIDS awareness campaigns. New allies add voices to the cause. New voices speak to new audiences. That broadens the reach of your message.

## Personalizing Real Issues

Preaching doesn't work. Bringing issues out into the open and fostering a greater understanding of them does. The message you communicate the first time out must be immediately compelling, carefully crafted and be very properly targeted. If people are turned off by your message the first time, they will tune it out the second time.

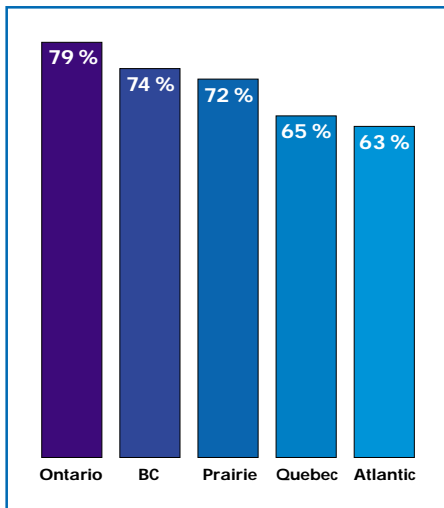
The Labatt's 'Know when to draw the line', and the Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) campaigns are both examples of highly effective social marketing. They speak the right language, clearly communicate their message and most importantly, 'personalize' the issue. People react positively, because the campaigns are involving: "Hey, that could be me." The issues these campaigns address have become part of the fabric of our daily lives, not just someone else's problem.

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# Gambling Attitudes in Ontario

By Jason J. Azmier,  
**Director of Gambling Studies**  
**Canada West Foundation**

*The Calgary-based research institute Canada West Foundation recently released the results of a national gambling survey as part of a 3-year examination of gambling in Canada. One finding is that public opinion on gambling in Ontario differs significantly from the rest of the country. The following analysis examines these differences.*



**Figure One: Gambling Participation by Region**

Ontarians embrace gambling more than other Canadians. They gamble more, are more accepting of gambling in their communities, are more aware of the positive elements of gambling and are less concerned about gambling as a social problem than other Canadians. Such as:

- Six in ten Canadians believe that, on the whole, gambling is acceptable. Two-thirds of Ontarians view gambling as acceptable.
- Seven in ten Canadians have gambled in the past year, whereas eight in ten Ontarians indicate they have gambled over this period.

- Two-thirds of Canadians believe that gambling-related problems have increased in the last three years in their province. Only half of Ontarians indicate that gambling problems have increased.
- Half of Ontarians indicate they like to gamble when opportunities arise. Only 36% of Canadians like to gamble when given the option.

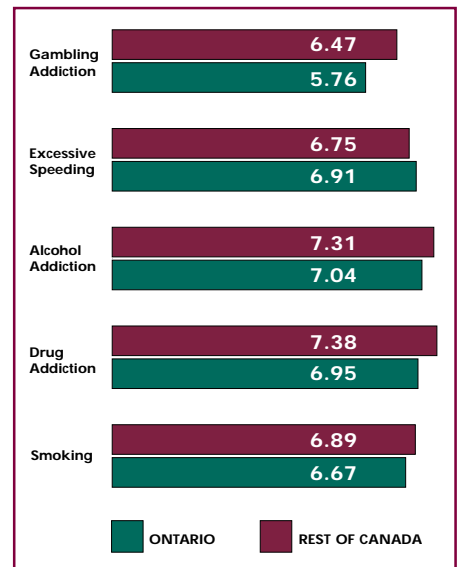
So why is Ontario different on so many important opinion issues? Some possible explanations don't work. For example, it is unlikely that there are less gambling-related problems in Ontario if there are more gamblers. There are no regional differences in the number (77%) of individuals that believe government should do more to limit the negative effect of problem gambling in Canada.

It is equally unlikely that problem gambling has less of a negative impact in Ontario because of better gambling treatment programs. Only 35% of Ontario respondents agree that enough services are available to help problem gamblers, less than the rest of Canadians (38%).

Rather, I suggest the reason for Ontario's unique attitudes appear linked to the combined impact of a greater awareness of the benefits of gambling and a lesser awareness of the social costs of gambling.

Survey data suggest that Ontarians see more positive aspects of gambling than other Canadians. Contributing to this impact appears to be the more highly visible tourism and casino industries in Ontario than elsewhere in Canada. For example:

- Two-thirds of Ontarians believe that gambling has increased overall employment in Ontario. Only half of the rest of Canada believe that gambling has a positive impact on employment.
- 42% of Ontarians agree gambling is necessary to increase tourism compared with only 35% of the rest of Canada.



**Figure Two: Seriousness of Social Problems in Canada**

A second contributing element is the concern demonstrated by Ontario respondents for the impact and costs of problem gambling. The data suggest that Ontarians seem either less concerned or less aware about the impact of the problems of gambling on individuals and communities. Specifically, survey findings suggest:

- Ontarians believe gambling is a less serious social problem than other Canadians, on a scale of 1 (not serious) to 10 (very serious), gambling addiction was rated as a 5.76 in seriousness by Ontarians and a 6.48 by other Canadians.
- Only 36% of Ontario respondents agreed that gambling was an unfair tax on the poor, compared with 46% of the rest of Canada.
- Six in ten Ontarians agree that an increase in gambling leads to an increase in crime, less than the two-thirds of the rest of Canada.

Although these data show Ontarians as unique for their attitudes among Canadians, these differences rarely show a total shift in

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# Prevention Strategies: What Works?

By Michelle Craig

**H**ow do you get someone to wear a bicycle helmet or sunscreen, or get people to gamble responsibly and avoid financial ruin? What strategies work to prevent people from behaving in ways that could harm themselves or others physically, financially or emotionally?

The answer lies in prevention programs; initiatives that challenge people to think differently and change (or maintain) their positive behaviour. There are many of them, but only the good ones work. The question is, what makes one prevention program a winner and another a failure? Is there a secret formula to a successful prevention program?

Since joining the Foundation in February, I have been trying to find the answer. I have looked at program evaluations, literature and conducted personal interviews. It soon became clear to me that there is no simple answer or magic formula. Prevention programs that work combine several elements and strategies.

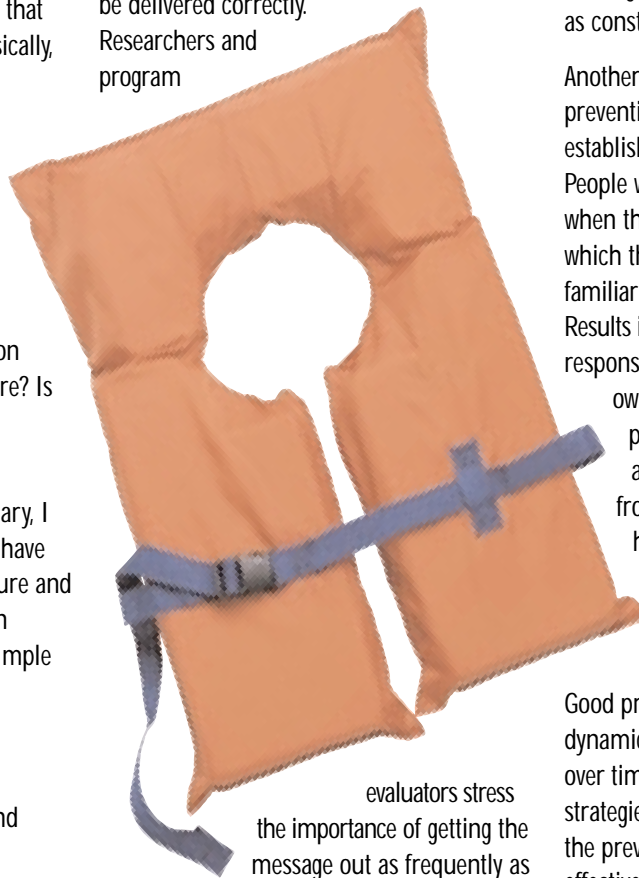
Successful programs always inform and motivate people; they never preach.

Prevention initiatives can take on several different forms and be found in different places. Some are delivered through mass media such as posters, pamphlets, commercials or billboards. Others use specific events, such as running/bicycle races or concerts. School curricula have also been used as a way of getting messages across.

Prevention activities have not been adequately evaluated or found to be reliably effective, in all cases, with all groups, (Gerstein, & Green, 1993)<sup>1</sup>, nevertheless, in the past decade there has been a dramatic increase in research and advancements in the field of prevention. It is among these papers

and evaluations that I am searching for the best examples of what works and what does not work.

I have found that even when a program has the right elements, it still has to be delivered correctly. Researchers and program



evaluators stress the importance of getting the message out as frequently as possible in different ways, or at


least from different angles. A poster on it's own will be only minimally effective. Combining it with a commercial, an event and a mail insert, for example, increases it's effectiveness. This is because the audience receives the same message again and again, reinforcing the new idea or suggested behaviour change.

Prevention programs can be used for different purposes. For example, communities can successfully use mass media messages to frame public discussion around important issues. They can use mass media tools such as radio broadcasts, TV, outdoor advertising and

so on to reinforce community programs and events. They can also help maintain an idea or behaviour by providing help line numbers and support information. For further reinforcement brochures, posters, key chains or fridge magnets can be distributed to serve as constant reminders of the issues at hand.

Another strategy for ensuring a successful prevention program is to partner with established, credible community programs. People will more readily accept messages when they are comfortable with the context in which the messages are delivered and are familiar with the people delivering the messages. Results indicate that individuals take greater responsibility for their own actions within their own communities when prevention programs are presented in this way. An added bonus is a familiar spokesperson from the community who has had first hand experience with the problem behaviour. In this way, prevention messages are perceived as preventive and not repressive.

Good prevention programs are designed to be dynamic and flexible. They allow for change over time and incorporate multiple prevention strategies. This maximizes the likelihood that the prevention initiative will be relevant and effective for program participants throughout their life span.

Although prevention advancements over the last decade have been substantial, more needs to be done, particularly in the area of compulsive gambling. I am hoping that my efforts to document prevention intervention accomplishments will set the stage for the Foundation and its partners to introduce state-of-the-art prevention programs to the problem gambling field. 

*1 Gerstein, P.R. & Green, L.W. (Eds) 1993 Preventing Drug Abuse: What do we know? Committee on Drug Abuse Prevention.*

# The Problem Gambler - Financial and Related Costs

By Diane Lamb  
Alberta Alcohol and  
Drug Abuse Commission

Social gamblers have full control over their gambling, including how much they spend on the activity. However, the financial consequences can be critical for those who lose control to an addiction. With money so easily accessible through bank machines and credit cards, it's easier than ever before to bankrupt a household.

The stress resulting from financial pressures can be overwhelming, resulting in depression, family and legal problems, and suicide.

The Addictions Foundation of Manitoba and Saskatchewan Health recently tracked all clients who sought treatment for a gambling problem over a one-year period. The March 1999 published report shows that the financial cost to individuals and their families is great.

## The Financial Costs

Many problem gamblers simply do not have the cash they need to cover their gambling expenses. Eventually they need to obtain the money elsewhere to cover their losses and to keep gambling. Money that would otherwise cover basic living costs is gambled away, while money owed on credit cards and other debts increase.

Of the Manitoba clients who presented for problem gambling treatment, 35% lost between \$100 and \$500 and 27% lost between \$500 and \$1000 per month. Another 15% lost between \$1001 and \$2500. A small proportion of gamblers lost even more than this. For example, 5.1% lost between \$2500 and \$5000 and 4.8% lost over \$5000. In Saskatchewan, clients lost an average of \$1600 per month on gambling activities. The Manitoba study showed that clients funded their gambling in ways as shown in Figure One.

## The Personal Costs

The financial pressure increases as a person gambles more and more. Many incur debts that they are unable to repay, resulting in mental health, family, social and legal problems. The clients studied in Manitoba identified the following problems set out in Figure Two.

## Problem Gamblers and Suicide

The serious financial consequences faced by many problem gamblers place them at risk for suicide. Almost 40% of the Manitoba clients reported suicidal thoughts. Of these, almost half had attempted suicide more than once. This statistic is consistent with several studies completed in the United States that show one out of five pathological gamblers attempts suicide. The true number of completed suicide remains unknown.

## Helping Problem Gamblers Deal with Financial Pressures

A financial crisis is often what propels a problem gambler to seek help. Programs providing treatment for problem gamblers need to screen for financial problems and address debt management planning. Debt counsellors need to understand the dynamics of problem gambling as a possible root cause of financial difficulty. Crisis intervention workers need to be able to refer a problem gambler to the appropriate sources of help.

Many problem gamblers need support to address the financial consequences of their gambling addiction and helping professionals can provide this support when they have the necessary knowledge and skills. 🎲

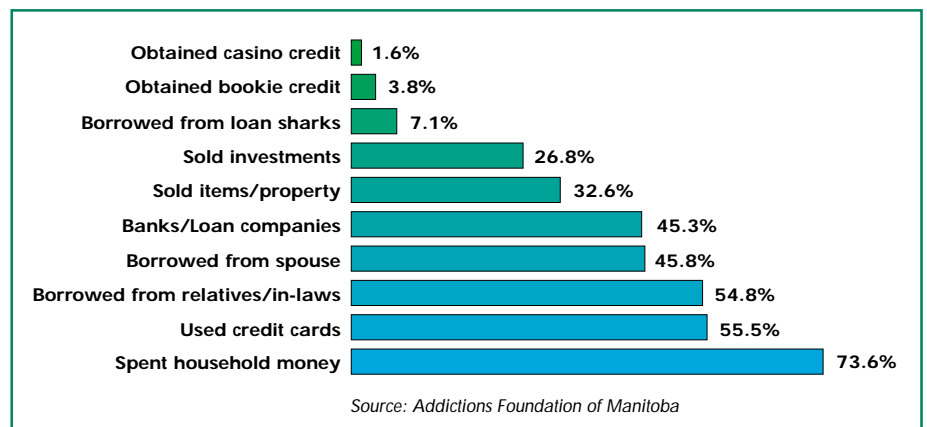


Figure One

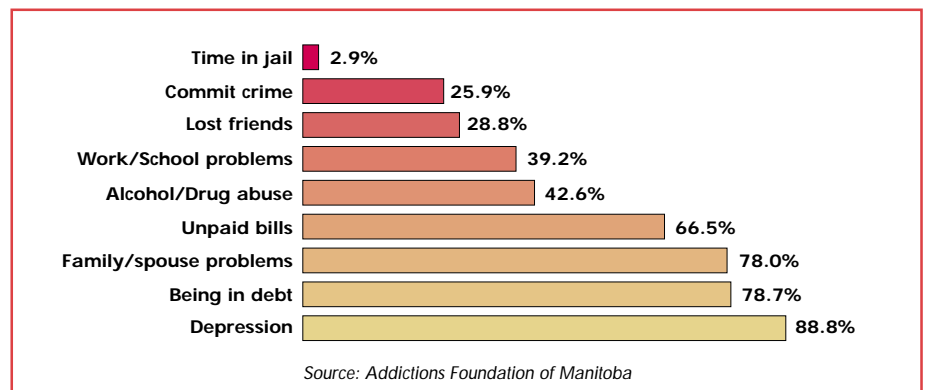


Figure Two

## Social Marketing...from page 7

And take for instance the work of the Canadian Cancer Society. They effectively brand 'cancer research' and the need for research funding by going one step further in creating emotional equity for their cause. They focus, personalize and humanize specific issues that consumers can relate to. It is much easier for a woman to relate to the need for giving to cancer research if she's responding to a message about breast cancer. And at the same time, the Cancer Society is educating and raising awareness about specific issues.

### Making A Difference

Social marketing isn't a cure-all. And advertising is not the only solution. But together with support programs, social marketing can make a difference. A lot of

social marketers don't have the huge dollars of the corporate world and therefore they have learned to use a variety of media at their disposal. An integrated approach using a balanced combination of advertising, public relations, and community relations can be extremely effective to help extend budgets and achieve a high return on investment. The right mix of these depends on the brand, the message and the audience.

### Remember It's Called Marketing

To make a difference, social marketers use and will continue to use all the savvy of marketers in traditional product marketing – they've branded issues that stand for something credible; they speak with one voice using all the means at their disposal; they understand the consumer intimately; and they monitor their progress. 🎲

## It's just too...continued from page 3

implement programs that minimize problems associated with gambling. And for those seniors who cannot control their gambling, we should ensure that there are cheap and accessible alternative programs and activities. Of course, those that need help for gambling problems should easily be able to access it."

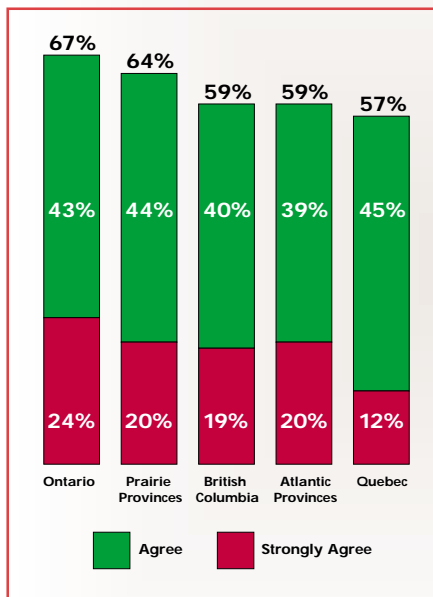
Back at the Promenade Mall, Rachel points to a group of seniors being dropped off at the casino bus stop. "That's a community group going to the casino for the day. I bet you most of them have never gambled. Probably, most of them won't gamble today at all; they are just going along for the ride and the special. But some of them will be back. It's just too good of a deal." 🎲

*Pat Fowler, Executive Director of the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, contributed to this article. She is an expert on seniors and gambling and an advocate for senior-specific programs and resources.*

**The FCCG provided the following tips**

## Gambling Attitudes...from page 8

attitude. Like other Canadians, Ontarians are still concerned about the underlying



**Figure Three: Agree with Acceptability of Gambling by Region**

problems of gambling, only to a lesser degree. And some issues, such as underage gambling and the need for public consultations are viewed as more of a concern for Ontarians than other Canadians.

Finally, it would be wrong to conclude from this analysis that there ARE more positive impacts in Ontario than elsewhere. Similarly, these data do not imply any LESS social costs in Ontario associated with gambling. At best, a public opinion study can only measure the perceptions of these costs and benefits.

### Methodology

*The survey interviewed a random sampling of 2,202 Canadians from across the country in June 1999. There is a 95% certainty that the results are accurate to within +/- 2.1%.*

*Copies of this survey and all gambling publications are available for download at the Canada West Foundation website: [www.cwf.ca](http://www.cwf.ca)* 🎲

## Tips For Seniors

Gamble recreationally and responsibly

Make gambling one of many activities you participate in

Decide ahead of time what you want to spend, and spend NO MORE

Consider any loss to be the cost of your entertainment

Avoid on-site cash machines for additional gambling money

Don't borrow money to gamble

Gamble for a set amount of time only

Gambling should not interfere with or be a substitute for family or other activities

Find out about the risks of gambling – age and life experience alone cannot protect you from the risks

If you feel you have a gambling problem seek help

New


# Appointments

**M**ichelle Craig comes to the Foundation as it's first Research Co-ordinator and is responsible for evaluating and presenting research project results. She also develops proposals for new research in the field of responsible and problem gambling. She also works in collaboration with The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Project Weathervane, a joint venture building baseline information about responsible gambling practices.

Michelle has worked for the York Region District School Board as a Research and Evaluation Assistant, where she supported teachers and school administrators in their use and understanding of research and evaluation practices.

Michelle's varied educational background consists of a Bachelor of Health Studies from Brock University, a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from McMaster University and a post-graduate Wellness and Lifestyle Management Certification from Centennial College.

Robin Wilner is the Foundation's new Office Administrator. She is responsible for the Foundation's office processes, accounts payable and receivable and liaising with the Board of Directors and suppliers. Robin recently worked for the Canadian Cancer Society as a Regional Administrative Assistant, overseeing the human resources and technical support areas of the Society, and as a Photo Researcher for OWL and Chickadee Magazines.

Robin has a diploma in Early Childhood Education from George Brown College and is currently working towards her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from York University. 

## Cultural Differences and Counselling

Following the article: Cultural Differences May Affect Counselling Relationship in the last Newslink edition, some readers have been asking for more information. Any inquiries about this article can be directed to its author, **Vicente Gannam** (vicente.gannam@moh.gov.on.ca or 416-327-4543) at the Substance Abuse Bureau of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

## WebSearch

Search the web and you will likely find several hundred problem and responsible gambling-related sites. However, the quality, reliability and usefulness of the information vary greatly. In this column we will recommend websites we feel are worth visiting, like [www.nati.org](http://www.nati.org). This very attractive site belongs to the North American Training Institute, a division of the Minnesota Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc.

NATI offers courses and products for service providers including those in related professions such as debt and financial counsellors, lawyers, casino employees and a host of others. You can even sign up for their Online Clinical Lecture Series.

Another attribute of this site is their online Teen magazine, *Wanna Bet?* With many attractive features, this publication, by kids and for kids engages them with interesting articles, interactive message boards and cool topics. The current feature article directs them to a valuable resource not only for them but also their parents and teachers. It encourages teens to participate in artwork, songwriting and discussion.

For those interested in seniors, they have products that describe how various issues may make senior citizens vulnerable to gambling problems and offers treatment options and resources.

A highly recommended site to visit. 

## Upcoming Events

**International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking** – Las Vegas, Nevada, June 12-16, 2000. For more information: [www.unr.edu/gaming](http://www.unr.edu/gaming) or contact: Judy Cornelius (775) 784-1442.

**14th Annual National Council on Problem Gambling Conference** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 6-8, 2000. For more information: [www.ncpgambling.org](http://www.ncpgambling.org) or contact: Keith Whyte (202) 547-9204.

## Write for Newslink

Do you have any new ideas, projects or research you would like to share? We would love to hear from you. Newslink is distributed internationally to over 2000 care-providers, politicians, researchers and gaming industry people. It is read by thousands more on our website. You can contribute. Contact us.

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