

Prevention Target: Young Adults

Cheryl Currie, M.Sc.

Manitoba Gaming Control Commission

Manitobans and Gambling Study (2003)

- **Quantitative survey** (n = 1,309 adults)
 - 117 young adults (18-24 yrs)
- **Young adults – 3 characteristics**
 - Gambling misperceptions
 - Problem gambling awareness
 - Gambling behaviour
- **Findings support 2001 Ontario study**
(Wiebe, Single & Falkowski-Ham)

Public Education - Focus

1. Myth-busting
2. Responsible play
3. Problem gambling



- Demographics
- Focus groups - To determine most effective mediums/messages
- 5 young adult groups – 3 urban, 2 rural

Messaging

- Friend to friend – not parental or authoritative
- Become a “smarter” player
- “In the words we use.”
- Tone: blunt, serious, personal and realistic
 - “Give us the harsh facts”

“I just remember those frying-egg commercials, ‘this is your brain, this is your brain on drugs.’ **It was like cause and result.** That would really work, rather than just saying ‘set limits’ or some vague statement like that.”

1. Myth-Busting

- Focus on VLT/slot machine play
- Most pervasive myth -
 - The longer a machine is played, the more payout potential is accumulated
- Professional myth-buster – Al Daly



Myth-Busting - Quotes

- Previous plays don't affect present plays.
- Persistence does not pay off.
- The machine does not become 'due for a win' or 'go cold' after a win.
- The odds are always exactly the same, no matter how long you've been playing – it's just which split second you hit the button.

2. Responsible Gambling

- Set/stick to limits – future-oriented
 - “If you want a future, you gotta get your priorities straight. Set limits on your gambling.”
- Limit setting stronger with concrete examples of what that actually entails...

Responsible Gambling - Quotes

- Set your limit before you go.
- Make sure your bills are paid first.
- When you run out of money, don't go to the bank machine to get more.
- Don't blow what you can't afford.
- Recognize impulses to deviate from your limits.

3. Problem Gambling

- Young adults identified extreme, end-stage mental health effects very well
- Less able to identify developing signs
 - “If, inside, you know what you just did was stupid or irresponsible, listen to yourself.”
- Belief they could gamble to make money
 - “You can’t rely on the machines to feed you your rent money.”

Mediums

- Message must find gamblers
- “Where we hang out”
- Onsite is too late
- Captive audience
 - Bathrooms
 - Public buses and bus shelters
 - Coffee time, student papers



Northern communities

- Myth-busting more difficult
- Promote responsible play by stressing the impact of irresponsible play on the family.
 - “Show the impact on kids and everyone pays attention”
 - “Think of your kids first.”
 - “Don’t neglect your family.”
- Most important medium – **Radio**

Next Steps

- We are working closely with a communications firm to develop the campaign
- Campaign to be released: Fall, 2005