



RSA

Harm Prevention and Minimisation Training

Introduction

For the majority of people, gambling is a form of entertainment and poses no problem. A small percentage of people are problem gamblers:

- 0.5% of adults are problem gamblers;
- A further 1.5% are moderate-risk gamblers; and
- A further 5.6% are estimated to be low-risk gamblers, mostly experiencing a few gambling-related harms.

The aim of the training is to remind both the staff and the venue manager of their obligations when a person may be having difficulties with their gambling.

All staff who work with the gaming machines must receive problem gambling awareness training. An employee who has received problem gambling awareness training must be present at the venue at all times when the gaming machines are operating.

It is best practice for new staff to receive training from their manager before they start work at the gaming venue. It is best practice for all staff to undertake refresher training every 12 months (or within one month of any legislative change being made to the harm minimisation requirements).

What is Problem Gambling?

Problem gambling exists when there is a lack of control over gambling, particularly the scope and frequency of gambling, the level of betting and the amount of leisure time devoted to gambling.

A person with a problem with gambling causes harm to themselves and to at least 5 other people close to them (family, friends, work colleagues etc).

The Ministry of Health figures indicate that 60.76% of people who access problem gambling counselling services cite gaming machines as their main form of gambling (10.53% casino gaming machines, 50.23% gaming machines in pubs and clubs).

The Signs of a Potential Problem Gambler

A person may be identified as a potential problem gambler if a combination of the following general signs is present:

- Gambles for long periods (three or more hours) without taking a break;
- Gambles most days;
- Finds it difficult to stop at closing time;
- Becomes angry at or stands over other players;
- Is rude to other gamblers or staff;
- Complains to staff about losing;

- Puts large wins straight back into the machine;
- Tries to withdraw money two or more times;
- Has EFTPOS withdrawals repeatedly declined;
- Leaves venue to find more money to gamble;
- Tries to play two or more machines;
- Plays intensely without reacting to what's going on around them;
- Plays very fast (high spend per line);
- Shows frustration (grunting/groaning, playing roughly);
- Shows some signs of distress (looks depressed, sweating, nervous/edgy); and/or
- Has gambling rituals or superstitions (rubbing, talking to machine).

A person may be identified as a potential problem gambler if any of the following strong signs are present:

- Gambler tells staff that gambling is causing them problems;
- Shows obvious signs of distress (crying, holding head in hands, shaking);
- Has an angry outburst towards staff, customer or machine (shouting/swearing, kicking/hitting machine);
- Appearance or personal hygiene deteriorates significantly;
- Tries to borrow money from customers or staff;
- Gambles from opening to closing;
- Friends or family raise concerns about the gambler; and/or
- Goes out of their way to avoid being seen at the venue (including asking staff to not let others know they are there).

All staff are expected to be able to recognise the signs of problem gambling and to know how to confidently respond to the signs of gambling harm.

If a person starts to show any of the general signs of a problem gambler, the first step is for the venue staff to enquire whether they are OK. This early, low-level intervention is discussed further below.

If a person over a period of time shows a pattern of behaviour that would indicate they are a problem gambler, or demonstrates any of the strong signs of gambling harm, formal, high-level intervention should be undertaken by the venue manager.

All potential signs of problem gambling should be recorded using the incident forms (found in the gaming compliance folder behind the bar). Details of all approaches made and exclusion

orders issued should also be recorded using the incident forms.

Low Level Early Intervention

If a person displays some, or all, of the following general problem gambling indicators during the visit:

- Negative body language, such as head resting on hand;
- Emotional distress;
- Expressions of frustration, such as sighing, talking to the machine;
- Claims that the machines were malfunctioning;
- Rudeness or shortness with venue staff;
- Expresses frustration verbally when interacting with staff; and/or
- Makes comments to staff such as:
 - “I’m meant to get home to the kids, but another few minutes won’t hurt”;
 - “I can’t really afford it but I think I’m getting close to a win...”; or
 - “I need to go but I want to win some of my money back...”

the venue staff should enquire whether the person is OK and suggest that they should consider stopping gambling for the day. The intervention could include a comment to the person such as:

- Questioning whether it was a good idea to withdraw further money;
- Asking if the person is OK;
- Suggesting that the person take a break;
- Suggesting that the person leave the venue; and/or
- Asking the person about their gambling.

High-Level Formal Intervention by the Venue Manager

If the venue manager sees a pattern of behaviour and believes the person is experiencing difficulties related to their gambling or some of the strong signs of gambling harm; the venue manager has an obligation to approach the person and offer information and advice about problem gambling. The advice must include information about the venue’s self-exclusion procedure.

Step 1 - The Approach

- The approach should be made by the venue manager or if the venue manager is not available, a person authorised by the venue manager to act on their behalf.

- The person must at all times be treated with respect, sensitivity and a willingness to help.
- Before making an approach the manager or designated person must be well prepared, i.e. have a problem gambling pamphlet, problem gambling letter, and a blank exclusion order on hand.
- Politely approach the person at an appropriate intervention point such as when they come into the venue the following day, and ask to speak to them privately, in a separate, quiet area.
- Commence a discussion by using open, non-judgmental comments such as:
 - Is there a problem that I can help with?
 - Has something upset you?
 - Can I help?
 - Are things OK?

Step 2 - Learn More

- Listen.
- Do not argue with the person.
- Be non-judgemental and do not make assumptions.

Step 3 - Identify What Action Needs to be Taken

If the person is displaying signs of problem gambling, the venue manager has an obligation to:

- Provide information to the person about the characteristics of problem gambling, including recognised signs of problem gambling – this is set out in the problem gambling letter;
- Advise the person of the potential dangers of problem gambling - this is set out in the problem gambling letter;
- Provide advice on the odds of winning - this is set out in the problem gambling letter;
- Tell the player how to access problem gambling services – this is set out in the problem gambling brochure; and
- Explain the self-exclusion procedure.

Providing Information About the Characteristics of Problem Gambling, Including the Recognised Signs of Problem Gambling.

A person who has a moderate problem will typically:

- Conceal the amount of money spent on gambling (dishonest about amount spent and where household funds are going).

- Chase losses.
- Borrow money to gamble or pay debts.
- Have a high level of expenditure (losing more money than they can afford on a regular basis).
- Use gambling as a way of escaping problems.
- Feel guilty about their gambling.
- Have arguments with friends and family about their gambling.

A person who has a severe problem may show the following signs:

- Relationship break-ups.
- Obtaining money illegally to continue to gamble.
- Significant levels of debt.

How to Advise of the Potential Dangers of Problem Gambling

The potential dangers of problem gambling include:

- Feelings of guilt.
- Feelings of depression.
- Financial problems, including debt or poverty.
- Problems at work (ranging from poor performance to fraud).
- Alcohol or substance abuse.
- Breakdown of relationships.
- Family violence and suicide.

Providing Advice on the Odds of Winning

The return to players on a non-casino gaming machine is required to be set between 78% and 92% (most machines are set at 91.5%). This means that for every dollar put into the machine, an average win will be 91.5 cents.

How to Provide Information About How to Access Problem Gambling Services

The person should be advised of one of the 0800 numbers that are available and given a pamphlet on the problem gambling services that are available. Calls are confidential. Callers can remain anonymous if they wish.

Helplines:

- Gambling Problem Helpline 0800 654 655. The Gambling Problem Helpline is available

24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- Asian Problem Gambling Service 0800 862 342 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).
- Pasifika Problem Gambling Helpline 0800 654 657.
- Maori Problem Gambling Helpline 0800 654 656.
- Gambling Debt Helpline 0800 654 658.

An anonymous, free text service (8006) is available. Support via email is also available (help@pgfnz.org.nz).

Face to Face Counselling:

Details of the local organisations that provide face-to-face counselling can be found at www.choicenotchance.org.nz.

Explain the Self-exclusion Procedure

The venue manager should advise the person that they can identify themselves as a problem gambler and request to be excluded from the gambling area for a period of up to two years. The venue manager should also tell the person that this means that they will then be asked by staff to leave if found to be in the gaming area during the exclusion period.

The venue manager should also advise the person that if the manager has reasonable grounds to believe that the person is a problem gambler, the manager can ban them from the gambling area for a period of up to two years.

Exclusion orders must be issued to self-identified problem gamblers. If a person does not self-identify as a problem gambler, the venue manager may still exercise their discretion and issue an exclusion order.

A copy of the exclusion order must be given to the person, and a copy must be retained on site.

The exclusion period specified in the order should be a minimum of three months. Exclusion orders issued for days or weeks are likely to be ineffective.

Once issued, the exclusion order cannot be revoked, rescinded or withdrawn.

The venue manager or person acting on behalf of the venue manager must remove any person who enters the gambling area in breach of an exclusion order issued. Failure to remove an excluded person is a criminal offence punishable by a fine of up to \$500.00. A member of the police may, if called on to assist, use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to effect the removal.

It is not a requirement that the person must sign the exclusion order in order for it to be effective.

Example of When Formal, High-Level Intervention is Required

Betty has been coming to the venue for the last two months. Initially she would only spend five minutes in the gaming area, and on some visits, not go into the gaming area at all.

Over the last month, the staff have noted in the incident forms that Betty has been spending up to two hours in the gaming area. Betty has been making three or four trips to the bar to get \$100.00 cash out each time. This week Betty spent up to three hours in the gaming area. She is now coming in during the day and spending the entire time on the gaming machines. Betty does not socialise with other people at the venue. Before coming up to the bar to request a further sum of cash from EFTPOS Betty kicks the gaming machine and swears at the machine. When Betty's EFTPOS card is declined she asks whether she can borrow \$100.00.

Example of What to Do

The staff member at the bar refers the request to borrow funds to the venue manager, Helen. Both the staff member and Helen have noted Betty's recent behaviour, using the incident forms.

Helen asks to speak to Betty at a quiet table in the corner of the bar. Helen orders a coffee for both herself and Betty. Helen has with her an envelope that includes the problem gambling letter, problem gambling pamphlets and two blank exclusion orders.

As they sit down Helen asks Betty how is she doing and comments that Betty now appears worried when playing the machines, rather than enjoying the time spent. Betty is reluctant to admit to a problem. Betty does, however, comment that she is having arguments with her husband about the time spent at the venue and how money is now becoming tight.

Helen gives Betty the problem gambling letter that sets out the signs and consequences of problem gambling and the odds of winning.

Helen gives Betty a Health Promotion Agency brochure and reminds Betty that the advice is free and confidential.

Helen then tells Betty that if she wishes she can exclude herself from the gaming area for a period of up to two years.

Helen also advises Betty that if she has reasonable grounds to believe Betty has problems with her gambling, she can issue Betty with an exclusion order.

Betty is adamant that she does not have a gambling problem. Betty does not identify herself as a problem gambler and does not decide to self-exclude.

Helen then advises Betty that she has concerns about Betty's gambling and that she will be issuing Betty with an exclusion order for twelve months. Helen then completes the exclusion order form. Two photos are taken of Betty, one face on and one on a ¾ angle. Copies of the form are given to Betty, and one copy kept for the club's file. Helen then informs the other staff of the exclusion order and places the photos and a copy of the exclusion order on the wall in a staff-only area of the venue.