

Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc.

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Our Mission:

The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc. (FCCG), established in 1988, is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) educational and advocacy corporation under contract with Florida state government. The FCCG's primary mission is to help persons adversely affected by difficulties due to problem and compulsive gambling. The FCCG maintains a neutral stance on the issue of legalized gambling while seeking to assist citizens in need of support. Governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, the FCCG is an affiliate of the National Council on Problem Gambling.

Gaming *focus* A Newsletter for Industry Members

Volume 2, 2008

Go For the Gold!

Does your facility take pride in its efforts to promote responsible gaming practices over and above what is required by minimum regulations? If so, the newly developed program, the Gold Standard Responsible Gaming Player Protection Certification, is the perfect vehicle to not only ensure that your facility's efforts have maximum impact, it also recognizes your facility as an industry leader. Any gaming facility operating legally in the state of Florida is eligible to *Go for the Gold*.

Created by the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc., in partnership with gaming facilities across the state, the Gold Standard Certification is the highest level of statewide recognition for excellence in responsible gaming player protection that a facility can receive.

Performance in seven key areas is the major focus of the certification process.

1. Codes of Practice: Policies and Procedures;
2. Automated Teller Machines, Credit, Check Cashing, and Access to Money;
3. Employee Training;
4. Signage;
5. Barring and Self-Exclusion;
6. Underage Gambling; and
7. Help for Problem Gamblers.

Established to promote the awareness of performance excellence as an increasingly important element in competitiveness, not only does the certification recognize facilities with exceptional player protection practices, it also aims to increase the understanding of the requirements for performance excellence.

Participation is open to any gaming facility operating legally in the state of Florida. While the process may focus most heavily on gaming facilities that offer slot machine play, such as casinos, or pari-mutuel facilities that have electronic gaming machines, applying for Gold Standard Certification is strongly encouraged for anyone who offers a form of gambling. It is suggested that poker rooms and pari-mutuel facilities apply as well, if they offer, or would like to offer, an inclusive responsible gaming player protection program.

The criteria used to establish the parameters of the Gold Standard program are based on effective practices for responsible gaming and player protection. These criteria were gathered from a variety of perspectives including representatives from the gaming industry and experts in the field of compulsive gambling.

There are significant benefits to implementing a comprehensive Responsible Gaming and Player Protection Program which include:

- An acknowledgement of the facility's commitment to help patrons who experience difficulties due to gambling.
- Increasing protections for gaming industry and a recognition that the behaviors of problem gamblers can negatively impact the industry reputation.
- Providing facility staff with tools, training and protocols to deal with patrons experiencing difficulties due to their gambling.
- Reducing harm to identified problem gamblers by having procedures in place to limit losses.
- Providing internal support and employee assistance to facility staff that may be experiencing a gambling problem.
- Ensuring that people in need of assistance are aware of the 24-hour helpline service that can offer them problem gambling specific information and referrals.

Participants in the Gold Standard Responsible Gaming and Player Protection Certificate Program truly embrace the spirit of such a program and their exemplary achievements deserve recognition. Not only will they be given signage indicating their Gold Status to prominently display on their property, but they will also be recognized in the industry newsletter, on the FCCG website, via press releases and more.

To help your facility *Go for the Gold* contact the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling at 888-ADMIT-IT or via email to fccg@gamblinghelp.org and request an application for the Gold Standard Certification.



Special acknowledgement goes to Art Laughlin, GM, Palm Beach Kennel Club, for his efforts in bringing together members of the gaming industry to participate in FCCG's "Meeting of the Minds Forum" to discuss and plan development of Florida's Responsible Gaming Player Protection Program (RGPPP). This forum and group worked together to form the foundation for the current RGPPP and ultimately provided the vision for a level of excellence in programming that has become the Gold Standard. Thanks, Art, for your ongoing support over the years.

Patron Enjoyment and Safety: Priorities at Isle Casino Pompano Park

by Daren Nenortis, Training Manager, The Isle Casino at Pompano Park

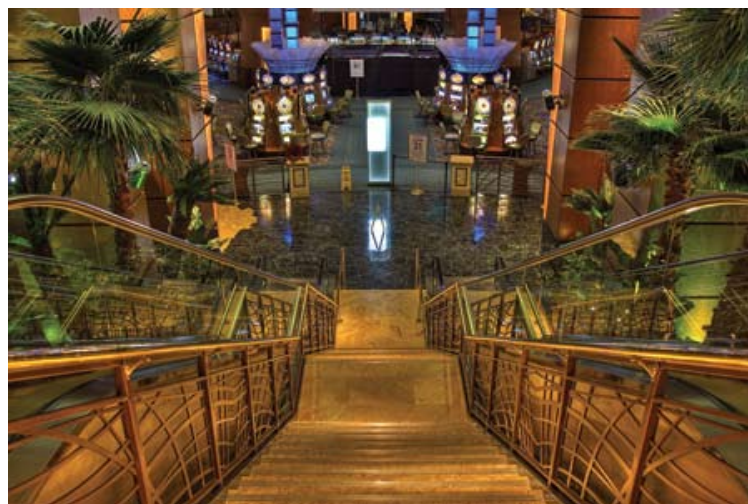
I was very excited when asked if I could write a brief article regarding our responsible gaming program at The Isle Casino at Pompano Park. It is something that we take quite seriously here, as well as a subject that is close to my heart. I began my casino career with the Isle in March of 2007, and my prior work history had been entirely in Human Resources, working for various industries including the military, retail, and education. Like many of the team members that I've met over the last couple years, I had little or no knowledge of the gaming industry. With that lack of knowledge came some common misconceptions such as "the man behind the curtain" controlling the slot machine jackpots. I have also learned that there are many misconceptions regarding problems with gambling and what casinos will do to assist those that need help.

As an entertainment venue we promote fun and entertainment, at the same time realizing that there are patrons in our facilities that need assistance when the fun and entertainment are replaced by uncontrollable debt and despair. Knowing that one of the most difficult steps for a problem gambler is to admit that they have a problem in the first place, we need to be sensitive to the situation by using indirect strategies to reach out to those that might need assistance. One example is displaying our exclusion policy brochure prominently throughout the facility, on the top of our ATM's, Cashier counters, and Player's Club counters. There are even some slot team members that carry the exclusion brochures in their belts to be in plain view of the customers. These brochures contain information on how patrons

can determine if they have a problem and, if so, how they can get help. We have a strict exclusion policy that bans the patron from our property for a period of 5 years after which they must submit a written request to be allowed back on our property. If they are found on the property while the exclusion contract is in effect, they will be warned the first time and charged with trespassing if they return again. All of our team members are trained in our new hire orientation on how to address the situation of a guest requesting exclusion and are required to repeat the training every year.

We have also increased the visibility of the HelpLine number in the past year. Many of our staff wear badge holders provided through the FCCG that display the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine number. Most recently we have added the HelpLine number to all ATM machine screens in the casino and grandstand. We also display the number on all promotional materials including all advertising and in house materials. These steps have been taken so that when the problem gambler is finally ready to take the next step, they know where they can pick up a brochure and have the number they need to call to get help.

While a responsible gaming program on its own can be effective, we have also added



a responsible drinking program. The Isle prides itself on serving alcoholic beverages to our guests responsibly and has policies in place which specify that a guest may not be served more than two drinks in an hour and the purchasing of either rounds or doubles is prohibited. If a guest becomes visibly intoxicated, our staff takes the appropriate steps to either cut them off or remove them from the gaming floor, striving to ensure that they do not leave the premises without proper transportation. All team members at the Isle are also TIPS certified, which is ordinarily a certification required only for bartending staff. We believe it is important for all team members to be educated on the effects of intoxication while gaming and the liabilities involved when working in an environment that serves alcohol.

If a team member has a gambling problem, we have taken steps to reach out to them, as well as their immediate family. They can receive assistance with gambling problems or other issues that require special help, by accessing a 24 hour hotline through LifeWorks. If needed, they can set up a meeting with a counselor and the first two sessions will be covered through the company.

I am proud to work for a company that takes so many steps to help our customers and team members. We never take for granted that our community has a choice of where they decide to spend their time and money, and we want to ensure them that we will do everything we can to make sure they have a great time, including providing appropriate assistance if needed.



*For his commitment to responsible gaming and player protection programming, Daren Nenortis was inducted into the 2008 **Who's Who of Prevention Leaders in Florida**. Recognized by both the Florida Office of Drug Control and the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling for his role in problem gambling prevention, Daren was presented with the Gaming Industry Award at the Florida Statewide Prevention Conference on October 1 in Orlando.*



FLORIDA GAMING SUMMIT PANEL DISCUSSION

Building Responsibility into an Expanding Market

The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Hollywood was the site of the 2008 Florida Gaming Summit. Pat Fowler, Executive Director of the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, was invited to discuss responsible gaming as one of three panel members in a session called, "Building Responsibility into an Expanding Market." Examining programs that are currently in place in Florida to address prevention and how operators are, or should be, developing responsible gaming programs, was the focus of the session. Also participating on the panel were John Fontana, President of Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Tampa and Daren Nenortis, Training Manager at The Isle Casino at Pompano Park.

Ms. Fowler discussed the fact that there are currently no uniform standards in

Florida regarding responsible gaming. With the passage of referendums in Broward and Miami/ Dade to allow slots in pari-mutuel facilities, minimum responsible gambling statutes and regulations were established for these facilities only. Aspects of responsible gambling addressed by the new statutes and regulations include training and education of employees, compulsive gambling prevention programs, required signage and posting of the 24-hour helpline number, as well as stipulations for self-exclusion programs.

Absent state regulations for any other gambling facilities, efforts to promote responsible gaming practices are strictly voluntary. Stated Pat Fowler, "The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling applauds the efforts of the facilities that demonstrate a true commitment to the industry, staff, patrons and community, by implementing and maintaining responsible gaming practices whether mandated or not. To recognize these facilities, FCCG has created The Gold Standard Responsible Gaming Player Protection Certification Program." (See page one for details on the program.) Ms. Fowler went on to describe the seven key elements of the

program and provided a glimpse of the facility training program's DVD contents developed by FCCG. (See page 4 for details on the training program, *Improving the Odds*.)

Attendees were then apprised of the responsible gaming policies in place at The Isle Casino at Pompano Park by Daren Nenortis. These include on-site training, a self-exclusion policy, an alcohol policy, and an employee assistance program. "We are committed to further enhancing our efforts to promote responsible gaming practices and continue to work with the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling to meet these goals," affirmed Nenortis.

John Fontana gave a glimpse of the responsible gaming practices utilized at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Tampa and emphasized the importance of a Responsible Gaming Player Protection Program to the industry and its patrons. Addressing the attendees, Fontana asserted, "The Seminole Tribe of Florida is very proud of its long term voluntary commitment to the programs of the FCCG. With the help and guidance of Pat Fowler and the FCCG staff we have been able to create and maintain a very effective Responsible Gaming Program that includes employee training and guest awareness components as well as a self-exclusion program."

TRANSFORMING communities & lives

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The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling would like to extend its sincere appreciation to our sponsors for their support of the FCCG Board Meeting and Luncheon and FCCG Monsignor Joseph Dunne Awards Derby Lane Palm Beach Kennel Club

Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc.

**Gambling addiction is real.
The signs are there.
Are you seeing them?
24-HOUR HELPLINE:
888-ADMIT-IT**

IMPROVING THE:ODDS

RESPONSIBLE GAMING & PLAYER PROTECTION PROGRAM

Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc.

Introducing: Improving the Odds

Improving the Odds is a training program designed for employees of the gaming industry that can be used as part of a facility's Responsible Gaming Player Protection Program.

The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling spearheaded a collaborative effort that involved current research, industry management and employees, as well as people whose lives are impacted by problem gambling, to create this program. *Improving the Odds* utilizes a DVD format that is specifically designed to give employees the tools they need to identify and properly assist customers who are experiencing difficulties related to gambling.

Not only are gaming facility employees expected to provide high quality customer service in performing their job, guests depend on the facility to provide them with a safe and enjoyable entertainment venue. This training will help fulfill both expectations by:

- Presenting an overview of pathological gambling, including characteristics that might indicate a gambling problem;
- Giving keys to distinguish action gamblers from escape gamblers as their behaviors are at opposite ends of the spectrum and require different approaches;
- Demonstrating how to professionally respond to a guest requiring assistance within the limits set up to protect all parties;
- Discussing the relationship between problem gambling and substance abuse; and

- Allowing employees to test their new skills by using actual accounts of problem situations.

The DVD was filmed at two Florida gaming facilities, The Isle Casino at Pompano Park and Mardi Gras Gaming. Employees from these facilities, as well as Gulf Stream Park Racing and Casino, worked with FCCG to create a relevant curriculum in a real world setting. FCCG extends a sincere thank you to everyone involved for their hard work and dedication to this effort.

The first training sessions using *Improving the Odds* were presented by FCCG employees at these same Florida facilities in October. The program was well received, with several comments indicating how employees enjoyed seeing their co-workers in the DVD. Other comments showed an overall positive response to the training program.

"I really was not looking forward to this mandatory training and was afraid I would fall asleep. It turns out that the presentation was so upbeat, I enjoyed it and learned a few things."

"The training DVD was well done and realistic. The people who had problems in the video looked a lot like some of the people I see every day. It's good to know what I am supposed to be doing when I come across someone in trouble."

Working at this place day in and day out makes you kinda lose perspective. The training and DVD made me look at things a different way."

Everyone benefits when a facility increases customer and employee awareness about problem gambling. To schedule a training session for the employees at your facility, contact FCCG through the helpline at 888-ADMIT-IT or by email at fccg@gamblinghelp.org.

Share with us...

As an employee of a gaming facility, you are part of a group of people faced with unusual challenges, special situations and unique opportunities that most other employees can only imagine. The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling would like to devote a portion of each Gaming FOCUS to you in a shared forum called "From the Floor". In this space we will post your thoughts, stories, or funny moments regarding the gaming industry from where you stand. You are encouraged to call, email or forward your thoughts by mail and then look for your comments, along with those of your fellow employees from gaming facilities around the state, in the "From the Floor" section of the next issue of Gaming FOCUS.

from
THE FLOOR

Through your eyes... in your words.

ATTN: Gaming FOCUS
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