

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a compilation of the proceedings from the 13th Annual Conference “*Problem Gambling: Everyone’s Issue*,” presented by the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc. held at the Grosvenor Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, on May 17-18, 2007. The purpose of the conference and Roundtable Exchange were to examine several of Florida’s diverse populations struggling with problem gambling issues and identifying innovative approaches to increasing awareness and supports at the local level through community mobilization.

The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling’s (FCCG) Executive Director, Pat Fowler, identified the background for the conference and Keynote Speaker Colonel William Janes, Director of the Florida Office of Drug Control, set the stage for the building of partnerships and the focus of the annual forum. Director Janes’ outlined information on systems of delivery and how to impact systematic change. From there, participants heard from experts on the conference’s target populace –youth, older adults, women, and culturally diverse populations. These presentations were followed by topic experts focusing on coalition building, faith based initiatives, and problem gambling specific programming in place by national, state and local organizations.

Each topic was prefaced by a short recap of state of the art data and each speaker brought to the conference some of the most innovative programming for problem gambling at the local, state, national and international levels. All of these outstanding efforts are in keeping with FCCG initiatives and will serve as a blueprint for similar and expanded efforts in both the short term and future.

In addition, the Roundtable Exchange, held on day two of the conference, consisted of a brainstorming session of practical ideas for increasing awareness and support services to persons in need of assistance for a gambling problem. All presenters and participants were asked to respond to a series of questions stemming from presentations and associated dialogues. A summary of recommendations resulting from the Roundtable follows.

Roundtable Exchange

1. *How can we help motivate all members of the gaming industry to “walk the walk?”*

- ⇒ A certification program for the gaming industry will serve as motivation to detail and implement a responsible gaming program for employees and patrons. Include reports on implementation, data, etc.
- ⇒ Offer recognition for quality programs, such as awards and through promotion via public relations materials.
- ⇒ Educate the industry to understand that such programming will deter potential liability issues and improve its image as a community partner that is “not just out for your money.”
- ⇒ Promote assistance available through the FCCG by material dissemination in departments of human resources, employee assistance programs, unions, etc.

- ⇒ Identify a person to direct and oversee the responsible gaming program and ensure accountability methods are built into the program.
 - ⇒ Use real life stories whenever possible to “make it real” for those unfamiliar with the issue.
2. ***How can we best cultivate multi-disciplinary understanding about problem gambling at the local level?***
- ⇒ Offer continuing education opportunities to educational, professional, and civic and faith based groups.
 - ⇒ Educate educators regarding the importance of providing specific information and developing programs for coaches, teachers, Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), as well as treatment providers.
 - ⇒ Educate licensing and certification boards to include problem gambling related questions to their examinations.
 - ⇒ Add gambling questions to intake, assessment and history forms currently in use.
 - ⇒ Utilize media, print and electronic billboards, etc., to send a simple, strong and consistent message.
 - ⇒ Make posters, signage, flyers and brochures available in gaming venues and among gaming vendors for distribution.
3. ***How do we gain legislative support for lending laws/enforcement based upon ability to pay and real credit worthiness?***
- ⇒ Share examples of adverse consequences from predatory lending practices with real people and real stories.
 - ⇒ Lobby legislators to pass legislation that would require reports of bad risks be made to lending agencies, mandate screening for bad checks, and allow for self-exclusion of bad risks from lenders, similar to how self-exclusion is done with casinos.
 - ⇒ Do not allow high risk credit individuals to put their homes up as collateral.
 - ⇒ Work with Consumer Credit Counseling Services at their national and regional conferences and have them present locally on the issue.
 - ⇒ Use faith based coalitions to support high risk credit reporting legislation and to increase access to legislative representatives.
4. ***How do we work with faith based organizations to secure support for responsible gaming, while increasing awareness about problem gambling?***
- a. Provide educational opportunities to congregations, not just internal community members, but entire congregations (e.g. those who operate bingo etc.).

- b. Approach the Council of Churches and ask to be on the agenda at the next meeting.
 - c. Reach out to faith based service provider organizations, such as Jewish Family Services, Lutheran Social Services, Catholic Family Services, The Salvation Army, etc.
 - d. Provide literature and materials to faith based entities, which can be distributed to persons who will not attend Gamblers Anonymous meetings or professional counseling, but will present for help at houses of faith or to faith leaders.
 - e. Work through existing networks of training, education, outreach and awareness ministries.
 - f. Identify the gatekeepers for denominational services and offer materials and support to Haitian, Hispanic, Asian and other communities.
5. ***How do we motivate school districts to incorporate the FCCG's state--funded and Florida Department of Education approved problem gambling prevention and intervention curriculum?***
- ⇒ Draw positive media attention to the schools utilizing the curriculum and reward usage for innovative programming with an incentive.
 - ⇒ Inquire of teachers what the barriers are to using the curriculum, obtain feedback and determine how the FCCG can help.
 - ⇒ Request a college student athlete to speak to high school students and secure a high school athlete to address elementary school students during assemblies.
 - ⇒ Offer an essay and poster contest to promote problem gambling awareness.
 - ⇒ Present curriculum to school personnel, PTAs, and Boards of Education, and encourage pilot testing at the regional level with positive results leading to program expansion.
 - ⇒ Offer Public Service Announcements (PSAs), pop up windows on the computer, online messaging and other approaches to promote the need for the program.
 - ⇒ Gather testimonials from satisfied teachers, students and parents who enjoyed or benefited by the program.
 - ⇒ Include the use of evaluation and research tools, such as pre-post measures so data collected can be used for advocacy.
6. ***How do we motivate colleges to implement campus wide programming on problem and compulsive gambling?***
- ⇒ Disseminate the University of Central Florida's (UCF) R.E.A.L. program on problem gambling, designed by the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, to deans of students, coaches and counselors requesting that Resident Advisors, Peer Advocates and

others use the resource kit to share their positive experiences. Be sure counseling staff is trained on assessing and treating problem gamblers and those they negatively affect.

- ⇒ Insert a program summary relating to gambling addiction and other select materials in new student orientation packages.
- ⇒ Incorporate problem gambling specific programming as a required component of a three credit course.
- ⇒ Award and recognize University Presidents and employees who are utilizing the FCCG/UCF program.
- ⇒ Along with PSA's on campus radio, ads in newspapers etc., purchase a crawler on the Saturday sports show on game day featuring the FCCG's Helpline number.
- ⇒ Use a catchy theme with posters, brochures, and free community seminars.
- ⇒ Hold a 5K walk/race to increase awareness and increase exposure.
- ⇒ Prepare materials for campus fellowships to use and distribute.
- ⇒ Problem gambling programming should be incorporated as a mainstay into campus curriculum (i.e. institutionalized), automatic with special promotions offered twice each year at a minimum.

7. *If you had one place to start in each community, where would it be and why?*

- ⇒ Women
 - Health departments, family planning centers and OB/GYN offices, since many women are apt to visit their OB/GYN doctors versus other health care professionals.
 - Women on the Way, the Southern Women's Show, expo opportunities, and health fairs to share information and literature, and to offer free screening.
 - Ads in women's magazines and on women's TV programming (Oxygen network, etc.).
- ⇒ Youth
 - Schools are the best place to reach the greatest number of students.
 - Detention centers and substance abuse treatment programs for high risk students.
 - Malls for free screenings with giveaways, utilizing popular stores, pod-casts, etc.
 - Police Athletic Leagues (PALs).
 - My Space.com ads, restaurants and other locations where young people frequent.
- ⇒ College students
 - Greek students, part of responsible campus life.
 - Athletic department, team captains.
 - Counseling center and financial aide office.

- ⇒ Older adults
 - Meals on Wheels, providing trained observers with information to share.
 - Geriatric substance abuse services where co-occurring disorders are very common and support is available for life skills management.
 - Senior centers, furnishing material and spending time at sites developing relationships and allowing staff to observe responses to the topic.
 - SAGES Duval County conferences and services.
 - Assisted Living Centers need identification, awareness and Helpline information
- ⇒ Multi-cultural populations
 - Multicultural welfare agencies, train staff to watch for status changes and degree of loss of funds.
 - English as a Second Language programs, have materials in native language available.
 - Faith based church programs that serve multicultural populations.
 - Culture specific clubs and look to multicultural staff to help.
 - Immigration offices, post signs in Spanish etc.
 - Beauty parlor, barber, grocery stores, placemats and shopping carts.

8. ***How can we realistically raise awareness and sensitivity of senior service providers regarding problem gambling?***

- ⇒ Church social action committees often already have programs in place for older adults and can add gambling information to existing protocol.
- ⇒ Work with the City government Office of Senior Services to include information on problem gambling health, family and financial issues.
- ⇒ Offer materials to AARP, RSVP, and SCORE for use in their mailings to their memberships.
- ⇒ Educate and train the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and the Florida Association of Service providers about the issue and gain their support in disseminating FCCG literature.
- ⇒ Inform the Florida Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the Florida Coalition for Optimal Mental Health and Aging so they also can share materials and information, hold trainings etc.
- ⇒ Collaborate with retired commissioners or State Representatives asking for support, connections, contacts and advice.

9. ***How can we encourage businesses and corporations to incorporate an approach to problem gambling similar to drug and alcohol prevention, education and treatment?***

- ⇒ Contact CFOs and Human Resource Directors of large companies and share data on absenteeism, theft and lost productivity. Share evidence that treatment works.
- ⇒ Encourage use of newsletters to increase awareness and share information, promote Helpline, etc.

- ⇒ Recognition and awards programs with incentives to encourage successful design and implementation of responsible gambling awareness programs.
- ⇒ Include information in new employee orientation materials, provide to Employee Assistance Professionals, Union representatives and managers.
- ⇒ Conduct onsite in-service education and awareness programs that are fun and interesting.
- ⇒ Offer Public Service Announcements for internal and external use with last five seconds highlighting company information.