



24-HOUR CONFIDENTIAL AND MULTILINGUAL

888-ADMIT-IT

HELPLINE EVALUATION SURVEY

2022-2023

**121 EAST 1st STREET
SANFORD, FLORIDA 32771
407-865-6200**

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DEFINITIONS

The following definitions provided are designed to help clarify some of the terminology used and help serve as a foundation for understanding the results.

1. **"FCCG"** – The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling.
2. **"Fiscal Year"** – the FCCG's fiscal year, which begins July 1st and ends June 30th of each calendar year.
3. **"Gambling"** - Gambling is the act of risking any item of value when the outcome is unknown or relies on chance. This means that gambling does not always require "real world money" and can take many forms, some of which may present as less obvious than others. For example, while playing slot machines and placing a wager on a horse race may be widely viewed as "gambling," other activities, such as purchasing lottery tickets, participating in bingo at the local senior center, betting on a basketball game with friends, or buying a loot box in a video game, are not frequently perceived as forms of gambling.

Simply, whether a person gambles at a land-based casino; on the Internet in the privacy of their own home; at an internet café, via a mobile app or otherwise; at a card room or bingo center; at a convenience store; in an office pool at work; or any other location, if anything of value is being risked on an unknown outcome that relies on chance, it is gambling.
4. **"Problem Gambling vs. Compulsive Gambling vs. Gambling Addiction vs. Gambling Disorder"** – interchangeable terms to define disordered gambling or someone who does not have the ability to gamble with control and/or experiences difficulties in their life due to their gambling. **Compulsive gambling** is a synonym for the clinical term, **"disordered gambling"**, which is classified as a Substance-Related and Addictive Disorder in the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) Diagnostic Statistical Manual 5. Initially recognized by the APA beginning in 1980, and previously referred to as **"pathological gambling"**, today **"disordered gambling"** is typically viewed and treated as an addiction. Like drug and alcohol addiction, compulsive gamblers often feel a physical "rush" when engaged in or thinking about gambling. Additional similarities to other addictions include being preoccupied with the activity, a decrease in tolerance that feeds the need to increase time and money spent gambling, engaging in illegal activities due to gambling, and experiencing withdrawal-like symptoms when forced to stop.

Disordered gambling is defined by the APA as a persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behavior leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as indicated by the individual exhibiting four (or more) of the following in a 12-month period and the behavior is not better explained by a manic episode:

1. Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement.
2. Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling.
3. Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling.
4. Is often preoccupied with gambling (e.g., having persistent thoughts of reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble).
5. Often gambles when feeling distressed (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed).
6. After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even ("chasing" one's losses).
7. Lies to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling.
8. Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling.
9. Relies on others to provide money to relieve desperate financial situations caused by gambling.

The term **"problem gambling"** is an all-inclusive term that refers to all gambling behavioral patterns that compromise, disrupt or damage personal, family or vocational pursuits and range from serious to severe difficulties. The symptoms include increasing preoccupation with gambling, a need to bet more money more frequently, restlessness or irritability when attempting to stop, "chasing" losses, and loss of control manifested by continuation of the gambling behavior despite mounting, serious, negative consequences. In extreme cases, problem gambling can result in financial ruin, legal problems, loss of career and family, and even suicide.

5. **“Prevalence”** - Prevalence refers to the total number of individuals in a population who have a disease, health condition or risk factor at a specific period of time or over a specified period of time, usually expressed as a percentage of the population. Prevalence is important because it makes it possible to calculate age and gender adjusted rates, as well as other variables that can be subsequently used to draw comparisons over a limited or a broad range of data for a set time or over a long-term period of time. Further, in the gambling addiction field, knowing the prevalence rates for different sub-groups within a population enable prevention, education, treatment, research, and other professionals to tailor programs, services, outreach approaches, and studies pending findings.

Prevalence studies completed in the gambling addiction field use different screening tools based upon the 9 diagnostic criteria, so while the APA only assesses for disordered gambling, which is a strict baseline, it is important to understand that researchers often determine reasonable ways to also assess for at-risk and problem gambling rates (1 APA criteria and 2-3 APA criteria respectively). Finally, social gamblers, also referred to in prevalence and other research, are individuals who participate in gambling but do not experience any adverse impacts and can partake in the activity safely without experiencing any difficulties. Simply stated, they set time and money limits and win or lose they can walk away unaffected.

6. **“Methods for Reaching the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine”** - To assure that anyone in need of information or assistance for a gambling problem can obtain the help they need, in a format they are comfortable, the FCCG’s Problem Gambling HelpLine can be contacted by calling or texting 888-ADMIT-IT (888-236-4848), by emailing (fccg@gamblinghelp.org), through chatting online (gamblinghelp.org), or visiting FCCG social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As seen at the state level, nationally and internationally, with greater normalization, availability, accessibility, and new forms of gambling emerging, overall gambling has dramatically increased throughout North America and in Florida. This has resulted in an increased need for the 888-ADMIT-IT Helpline. The Helpline represents the front line of support for individuals experiencing gambling problems as well as their loved ones. Florida continues to rank amongst the top 3 states in the country for both population and for consumer spending on gambling activities and according to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2022 Population Report was the fastest growing state (Perry, Rogers, & Wilder 2022). As the population increases, so will the number of individuals with gambling problems and the concomitant demands placed upon FCCG and its Helpline. There is a documented need for problem gambling supports and services in Florida. According to the most recent survey of publicly funded problem gambling services in the United States, Florida ranked #1 in the country for the most contacts to its Helpline. With the population of Florida continuing to grow and greater number of gambling venues available to Floridians, the services provided to Floridians through its Helpline remain crucial. In spite of continued increased revenues from commercial casinos (a 6.9% increase during the 2022 year [American Gaming Association, 2023]), and the state operated lottery, according to the most recent survey by the National Association of Administrators for Disordered Gambling Services (NAADGS) (2021), Florida ranked 34th out of 42 states in the U.S. with specifically funded problem gambling services.

The FCCG is committed to monitoring and adapting to the many changes in gambling patterns and behaviors that are developing, and to addressing the associated challenges and harms facing problem gamblers and their families. Funding provided for problem gambling services in Florida is insufficient to meet even the current needs of Floridians impacted by a gambling problem (their own or that of a loved one), let alone adequate to support the provision of the additional necessary problem gambling supports for Florida's residents that are, and have been lacking for more than a decade now.

The FCCG continues to play a pivotal role in directly helping problem gamblers and their loved ones, the training of professionals to work with problem gamblers and their families, and in providing a wide diversity of services throughout the state, including responsible gambling supports to gambling facility operators. The confidential and multilingual 888-ADMIT-IT Problem Gambling Helpline, one of the largest in the nation, continues to operate 24-hours per day/365 days per year, meeting an important need for Florida residents. The information contained in this evaluation survey report attests to the fact that the FCCG fulfills an essential statewide need. On a larger level, the FCCG has helped develop and promote national standards of excellence both for problem gambling Helplines and for professionals working with problem gamblers and their families.

Each year the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling (FCCG) encourages Helpline contacts to provide feedback about the Helpline services received to determine its' efficacy and ways in which it can be improved. This annual outcome evaluation is designed to gauge the effectiveness of the FCCG's 24-hour Helpline service in meeting its intended goals and objectives, to determine users' perceptions about their contact with the Helpline Specialist, to identify the use and efficacy of recommended resources and programs offered, and to assess the individual's overall experience and satisfaction with the Helpline services. The annual evaluation continues to serve as an invaluable resource for program development needs, training, and the ongoing improvement of Helpline operations.

During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the FCCG continued to offer a wide variety of problem gambling services and supports to Florida residents via the 888-ADMIT-IT Problem Gambling Helpline. Among all survey completions, the results suggest an overwhelming number of positive changes resulting from contacting the Helpline. These are evident in the Tables provided throughout the report and also reflected in the personal commentaries as reported verbatim from survey participants.

Some of the most notable findings from the 2022-2023 Annual Helpline Outcome Evaluation Survey include:

- Of greatest importance was the finding that overall, 78% of survey respondents reported decreased gambling behaviors following contact with the 888-ADMIT-IT Helpline (63% reported that the gambling had either stopped completely or had been significantly reduced, while an additional 15% of respondents advised of a small reduction in gambling). Similar trends have been noted for the past several years in the FCCG's Helpline evaluations and is indicative of the essential role the 888-ADMIT-IT Helpline plays for Florida residents impacted by problem gambling. These trends also parallel changes in life satisfaction, improved financial positions, and optimism about the future. While no mental health indices were assessed, these behaviors all point to an improved mental health condition both for the gambler and their loved ones, post-Helpline contact.

- The results of this Helpline Outcome Study reveal that Floridians utilizing the 888-ADMIT-IT Helpline report feeling significantly better since speaking with the FCCG Helpline Specialist, and were satisfied with the services that were provided. Overall, feedback continues to be overwhelmingly positive, with 98% of respondents reporting the Helpline Specialist was knowledgeable or very knowledgeable about problem gambling issues; Ninety-six percent (96%) of respondents advising the Specialist understood the reason for their contact to the Helpline; Almost all of survey respondents (99%) recalled the FCCG Helpline Specialist as caring, sensitive, and supportive of their needs, and 94% of respondents reported that they would be willing to speak with the FCCG Helpline Specialist again. To demonstrate how the Helpline generally, and Helpline Specialists in particular, can impact upon a person's life, the following highlights key feedback received, verbatim, by survey respondents, attesting to its efficacy and success in helping individuals whether suffering from problem gambling or having a loved one with a gambling disorder. (See **Table 8** section of the report for all comments provided in this regard)
- The number of contacts to the 888-ADMIT-IT Helpline from Florida citizens seeking help has continued to increase, with the current fiscal year receiving 2,067 individuals requesting help. Telephone calls, live chats and text messages from those in need, all continued to increase by substantial amounts during the current fiscal period.
- During the current fiscal year, two-hundred and fifty (250) individuals reached out to the FCCG's Helpline for help or information regarding a gambling problem through the text messaging platform. This represents a 166% increase in Floridians seeking problem gambling related supports via the text messaging platform compared to the past fiscal year (2021/2022), and a 324% increase in help service text contacts when compared to Helpline data from the 2020/2021 fiscal year.
- In 2022/2023 one-hundred and three (103) individuals reached out to the FCCG for help or information regarding a gambling problem through the live chat platform (available on the gamblinghelp.org website). This represents a 47% increase among individuals seeking problem gambling related supports via the live chat platform compared to the previous fiscal year (2021/2022), and a 203% increase in help seeking services via live chats from the 2020/2021 fiscal year.
- The current evaluation summary of 888-ADMIT-IT Helpline contacts included 146 participants, with 69% (N=101) of participants being problem gamblers, and 31% (N=45) being loved ones (a family member or friend of the gambler). The distribution for loved ones consisted of concerned family members (60%), spouses/cohabitants/significant others (33%), and friends (4%).
- Survey respondents were distributed across 33 counties throughout the state but were more heavily concentrated in high density populations located predominantly in South Florida where the FCCG's 888-ADMIT-IT Helpline advertising funding is restricted to (Miami-Dade 19%; Broward County 14%; Palm Beach County 8%; Orange County 5%).
- Overall, 96% of the individuals completed the survey in English while 4% completed the survey in Spanish. With regards to race, 49% identified as White, 22% as Hispanics/Latinos, 21% as Black/African American, 4% as Asian, 1% as Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and 1% as American Indian/Alaska Native or other (1%).
- The ages of participants ranged from 18 to over 75, with 59% being between 26 and 54 years old. Twenty two percent (22%) were seniors (ranging in age from 61- to more than 75).
- Among those individuals responding to the survey, 39% were married, 34% were single/never married, 14% were cohabitating, 12% were divorced/separated and 1% were widowed.
- The precipitating reason for Helpline contact, as reported by survey respondents, were relationship problems (30%), recent financial losses (20%), overspending (18%), difficulty paying bills (10%), overextended debts (7%), seeking a self-help support group referral (6%), mental health problems (4%), relapse (4%), homelessness (1%), and seeking a treatment referral (1%).

- The primary gambling problem amongst survey respondents varied by both gender and age. Female gamblers (N=38) were reported to be more likely to have a primary gambling problem related to gambling machines (62%), online gambling (13%), card/table games (11%), and the lottery (8%). However, it is important to note that the data is based upon a small sample size (N=38). Among male problem gamblers (N=106), they reported their primary favorite gambling activity was online gambling (27%), cards/table games (24%), electronic gambling machines (22%), and the lottery (14%). Younger individuals (ages 18-30) were more likely to report online gambling problems (57%), with middle age gamblers (ages 31-49) reporting a wider distribution of problematic behavior. Among these individuals, 28% reported online gambling problems, 23% noted electronic gambling machines, 23% preferred card/table games and 9% were addicted to the lottery. Older gamblers, ages 50-60, reported problems with electronic gambling machines (44%), 28% had card/table game problems, and fewer experienced online gambling problems (3%). Seniors (ages 61+) experienced difficulties with electronic gambling machines (59%), lottery gambling (22%), and online gambling (11%), with fewer reporting card games (4%).
- A primary goal of the HelpLine Specialist is to listen to the concerns of the individual contacting the HelpLine, provide support and encouragement, to acknowledge their difficulties and to explain and offer recommendations and resources based upon their individual circumstances. There are a wide range of recommendations and resources provided by the HelpLine Specialist. For the 2022-2023 fiscal year, on average, 5.4 recommendations were made to each survey respondent. Self-help support groups such as Gambler's Anonymous and Gam-Anon were among the most often recommended services, together with self-help literature including the FCCG's *A Chance for Change Workbooks* and supporting reading materials, followed by referrals to professional counseling and treatment services. The FCCG has also found that the Workbooks provided to contacts were helpful when reviewed and used (92% reported they were helpful). The FCCG's Peer Connect Program, the FCCG's Online Program for Problem Gamblers (OPPG) launched during the 2021-2022 fiscal year, and referrals to self-exclusion programs – including those for land-based gambling facilities, access to cash options, and online gambling, and ad blocking self-exclusion tools – were also among the most often recommended suggestions and were helpful when individuals followed through on the recommendations.
- An increasing number of survey respondents (99%) heeded at least one of the recommendations or resources provided by the HelpLine Specialist. This certainly attests to the level of confidence contacts had with the Specialist. The recommendations provided by the HelpLine Specialist, given their extensive expertise and experience, have proven to be valuable. Individuals who reported following through on the recommendations provided by the HelpLine Specialist showed greater improvement, attesting to the importance and efficacy of HelpLine recommendations, although speaking with the Specialist also appeared to have a positive impact. This year, more than three-quarters (77%) of survey respondents who acknowledged following at least one of the recommendations provided during the initial HelpLine contact, reported a reduction in the gamblers gambling behaviors. More than one-third (39%) of respondents who reported following at least one recommendation provided by the FCCG HelpLine Specialist reported that the gambler had completely stopped gambling since the initial 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine Contact.
- While abstinence is often the intended goal, initial calls to complete the survey were made after a two-month period following the initial HelpLine contact, it may have required more time to see the true impact of the recommendations provided. However, improvement should not only be measured by whether one has stopped gambling. More specifically, progress is typically monitored by determining a number of factors, such as relationship difficulties, financial challenges, etc. For example, 78% of the gamblers who had followed through on the recommendations provided by the HelpLine felt better about themselves, 61% reported improvement in their finances, and 87% were more optimistic about their future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the growing population and strong possibility of sports wagering being reinstituted in Florida, the demand for problem gambling services will significantly increase. The FCCG, is the primary state resource for Florida's problem gamblers, loved ones, and affected others, and continues to work closely with gamblers, family members, treatment providers, gambling operators, and other partners, professionals and organizations, to increase public awareness about problem/disordered gambling and to aid and provide relief from difficulties experienced due to gambling-related problems. The FCCG remains committed to expanding its efforts to help train professionals in the field, work with gambling operators, regulators, governmental agencies, mental health and medical treatment providers, legal and financial professionals, and to raise awareness among others who service the disordered gambling population. The FCCG maintains excellent relationships with slot-licensed gambling industry operators in Florida, and provides expertise, training, recommendations, signage, and resources for facility responsible gambling programs and messages. The 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine provides a highly valued platform and is a very important first step for many problem gamblers, loved ones and concerned others in order to gain a better understanding of gambling disorders and their concomitant associated harms. It provides an invaluable resource to the state who substantially benefits from the increasing revenues generated by the gambling industry. The HelpLine is continually monitored and adjustments are made when necessary. The FCCG's HelpLine by any standards is doing an exemplary job in minimizing the negative impact associated with disordered gambling. Funding provided for problem gambling services in Florida is not sufficient to meet even the current needs of Floridians impacted by a gambling problem (their own or that of a loved one) now, let alone adequate to support the provision of the additional necessary problem gambling supports for Florida's residents that are, and have been lacking for more than a decade now. The need for FCCG's services has been and will only continue to grow in the coming years.

BACKGROUND

Florida has a long history of licensed, regulated gambling on pari-mutuel activities. Pari-mutuel wagering is currently authorized on thoroughbred, harness and quarter horse racing, as well as, on jai alai games. Licensed pari-mutuels may offer poker games or dominos at the pari-mutuel facility. Additionally, licensed slot machine gaming may be conducted in Broward and Miami-Dade Counties at eligible pari-mutuel facilities. CS SB4-A (Chapter 2021-269, Laws of Florida) established the Florida Gaming Control Commission, to be administratively housed within the Department of Legal Affairs, Office of the Attorney General and provides for a Type Two transfer pursuant to s. 20.06(2), F.S., effective July 1, 2022, of all powers and duties, personnel, administrative rules, and funding of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, relating to the regulation of pari-mutuel wagering, slot machines, cardrooms, and the state compliance agency's oversight responsibilities for authorized gaming compacts. DPMW continues to serve as the licensed pari-mutuel regulator responsible for the duties and activities provided in Chapters 550 and 551, Florida Statutes and Section 849.086, Florida Statutes, as well as collecting and safeguarding associated revenues due to the state. FGCC is also now the State Compliance Agency (SCA) pursuant to Section 285.710, Florida Statutes, responsible for monitoring compliance with the provisions of the Gaming Compact between the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the State of Florida. (FGCC 2022).

In Florida, a variety of gambling activities are currently regulated and approved. These include:

- Pari-mutuel wagering on live and intertrack horse and jai-alai activities at licensed racetracks and jai-alai frontons.
- Casino gambling, including slots and table games, on certain Indian tribal lands.
- Lottery games offered by the state..
- Poker and Dominoes played for money, but only in a licensed cardroom.
- Penny-ante games including poker, pinochle, bridge, rummy, canasta, hearts, dominoes, and mah-jong may be played outside a cardroom only if the winnings of any player in a single game do not exceed \$10 in value.
- Slot machine gaming at one of the eight licensed pari-mutuel facilities located in Miami-Dade or Broward Counties.
- Bingo, sweepstakes, and drawings for chance, if they comply with state law. (FGCC 2022)

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO GAMBLING IN FLORIDA

Gambling opportunities and revenues are generated in Florida from a variety of venues including land-based casinos, cardrooms, electronic gambling machines, pari-mutuel and racing facilities, the lottery, sweepstakes, and charitable and tribal gambling. In May 2021, legislation authorizing land-based and mobile sports wagering was signed into law. The legislation ratified a new tribal-state gaming compact and created a new framework for legalizing sports wagering subject to operation by the Seminole Tribe of Florida. The compact also allows for the addition of craps and roulette and the building of more tribal casinos. On November 22, 2021, a U.S. District Court judge invalidated the Florida Seminole gaming compact with respect to sports betting and on June 30, 2023 the DC Circuit Court of Appeals overturned this ruling. The Seminole Tribe will likely resume sports wagering in the near future, making Florida the largest state by population with legal sports betting operations [Kredell, 2023].

During 2022, Floridian's also saw two ballot initiatives to expand commercial gaming in Florida fail to qualify for a statewide referendum. In February, an effort to expand commercial casino gaming to locations outside of Miami-Dade and Broward counties fell short when proponents were unable to gather a sufficient number of signatures to qualify for the November 2022 statewide ballot. The proposed initiative would have authorized existing pari-mutuel racing facilities in counties throughout Florida to be licensed to offer casino gambling, provided they agreed to invest at least \$250 million in developing a casino-resort and were located a minimum of 130 miles away from any of the Seminole Tribe's casinos. The ballot petition was supported by more than 814,000 Florida voters but needed approximately 80,000 additional voter signatures in order to qualify for a statewide referendum. A separate voter petition to authorize statewide mobile sports betting via commercial sportsbook operators also failed to qualify for the ballot [AGA 2023].

In March, Florida's commercial casino gaming industry entered a new regulatory era when the newly established Florida Gaming Control Commission held its first official meeting. The independent agency, overseen by a five-member commission, was created through legislation approved by lawmakers alongside the new Seminole compact in 2021. Previously, Florida's commercial racinos were overseen by a division within the state's Department of Business and Professional Regulation. Among the activities undertaken by the new commission in 2022 were establishing annual and long-term regulatory plans, hiring appropriate staff and developing a formal memorandum of understanding with the Seminole Tribe regarding the oversight of tribal gaming in Florida [AGA 2023].

The report of the Commission's work during its first year can be found at <https://flgaming.gov/pmw/annual-reports/docs/AnnualReport-2021-2022--1st%20FGCC--20221206.pdf>.

GAMBLING AMONG ADULTS IN FLORIDA

One way to measure the extent of gambling in Florida is to examine annual revenues generated by industry operations. However, it's important to note that these figures will never account for the magnitude of dollars spent every year by residents since millions are wagered on illegal gambling operations. Documenting this point are findings by the American Gaming Association (AGA) which estimates that bettors' nationwide wager \$511 billion with illegal and unregulated sportsbooks, iGaming websites (which generate the most revenue) and unregulated electronic gambling devices in bars, convenience stores and other non-casino locations. More specifically, these illegal operations generate an estimated revenue of \$44.2 billion, or almost 75% of the total generated by legal commercial casino gambling in 2022 [AGA 2023].

On the contrary, what is known is that in 2022, total statewide commercial casino gambling revenues from state regulated racinos/casinos amounted to \$694.0 million, reflecting a 6.9% increase from the prior year period [AGA, 2023]. According to the AGA, Florida's commercial racinos generated record annual gambling revenue for the 12th time in the past 13 years, with the exception of 2020 when operations were significantly impacted by COVID disruptions. The AGA study further revealed that while Florida's commercial casino operations are smaller than the southern states of Louisiana and Missouri, revenues grew at a far faster pace upon reopening following the pandemic.

In addition, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, which oversees 6 tribal casinos in the state, is responsible for the vast majority of Florida's gambling revenues, estimated at \$2.5 billion yearly, ranking third in the U.S. [Play FI, 2023]. The revenues generated by the one remaining tribal facility, operated by the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida, could not be identified at the time of this report. Further, in 2021-2022, the Florida Lottery ranked the highest among U.S. lotteries in total sales and the 6th highest among lotteries nationwide in per capita sales. Lottery transfers for 2021-2022 were \$2.33 billion, which is \$97 million (4%) more than the prior year period. It is also worth noting that total ticket sales for this period totaled \$9.325 billion [Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, 2023].

ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS ABOUT GAMBLING AND PROBLEM GAMBLING IN FLORIDA

In 2018 the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) commissioned IPSOS, one of the world's largest public opinion companies, to conduct a U.S. national consumer study to examine gambling attitudes and gambling experiences across America. A national sample of 3,000 adults was collected, and was representative of the U.S. population fallout based upon individual state population distribution. This sample was representative of the state of Florida based upon survey participation by 202 Florida residents.

In 2021 a follow-up survey (NGAGE 2.0) was conducted to determine current attitudes and beliefs about problem gambling as well as identify any changes from the 2018 survey. What did the Survey Find?

What do People Think About Gambling?

This survey, designed to gauge consumer opinions on gambling attitudes and gambling experiences across the country, found that gambling is a very popular American pastime. Three in four American adults report participating in some type of gambling activity in the year preceding the survey. Only 12% of adults claim to have never gambled.

Floridian's like to gamble MORE!

Data reported indicated that 79% of adult Floridians reported gambling or placing a bet during the past year (compared to only 73% on a national level). Additionally, more adults in Florida were found to have gambled on every form of legalized gambling in the state than the national average.

Florida gamblers bet on MORE activities than the national average.

The average Florida gambler bets on 6 different activities, with almost half (49%) reporting wagering on 7 or more different gambling activities.

And...Electronic Gambling Machines are also popular in Florida (both legal and illegal machines).

In Florida, 12% more slots players reported playing electronic gaming machines at illegal operating locations in the state (e.g. bar, restaurant, convenience store), then that of the national average for those locations, (independent of legality in other states).

Traditional Sports Betting is more popular in Florida (independent of its legality) than Nationally.

Overall, 24% of Floridians reported betting on a sporting event in 2018. Floridians also report participating in traditional sports betting 3% more frequently than the national average.

The lottery is the most popular form of gambling in Florida, with almost three quarters of survey respondents (74%) reporting a past year lottery purchase. More than one-third of the sample reported spending money at a casino.

Who is More Likely to be Considered “At-Risk” for Developing Gambling Problems?

Young adult gamblers appear to be at higher risk for developing gambling problems. Half of those under age 35 responded “yes” to at least one indicator of risky gambling behavior. Only 10% of gamblers over the age of 65 responded “yes” to at least one indicator of risky gambling behavior.

Sports bettors appear to be at particularly high risk for developing gambling problems. They are 3 or more times as likely to report frequent risky behavior than non-sports bettors. Weekly sports bettors are 5 times more likely to report frequent risky behavior than non-sports bettors.

A large share of Florida’s population misunderstands or stigmatizes problem gambling.

In 2018, **More than half** of those surveyed attribute gambling problems at least in part to moral weakness or lack of willpower, while **fewer than one half** believe it can result from genetics or a medical condition.

In 2021, looking at the NGAGE 2.0 Survey Results we see **the misconceptions and beliefs people have about problem gambling have INCREASED:**

- More than 3 out of 4 (77%) of Floridians surveyed believe that a lack of willpower is the cause of a gambling problem.
- A whopping 81% of Floridians feel that if someone has a gambling disorder, it is their own fault.

When looking at the addiction/disease model - What really ARE the main causes of problem gambling and factors as to why it develops?

- Impulsivity
- Lack of education
- Trauma
- Genetics
- Stress
- Family influence
- Mental health problems
- Exposure/accessibility
- Culture

These were all other options on the survey for respondents to select as to what the main causes of problem gambling were, however Lack of Willpower was the #1 choice selected by survey participants for the response to this question.

On a statewide level, Floridians have become keenly aware of alcohol and substance abuse issues during recent years due to increased attention on programs and messages designed to educate the public and treat addicts or other affected parties. Yet, at the same time, due to a low public profile and the absence of noticeable outward physical symptoms displayed by suffering persons, problem gamblers go largely undetected until the disease is in advanced stages.

As defined by American Psychiatric Association, disordered gambling is a diagnosable and treatable disorder when help is sought. The DSM 5, which is the most widely used diagnostic manual for mental health professionals in North America, outlines 9 criteria that are indicative of problem gambling. If a person exhibits 4 or more of 9 symptoms within the past twelve months they are considered to have a gambling disorder.

Gambling Disorder is now found in the DSM-5 as Part of the “Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders” section to accommodate the reality that many addictive behaviors may not be connected to the intake of a substance at all. At present, gambling is the only “behavioral” addiction included in this “Addictive Disorders” category.

Ideally it is better to get help before a gambling problem actually becomes so severe that it becomes a gambling disorder, which ***is why prevention and awareness efforts are so important.***

The Public Perception of a Gambling Disorder is Getting Worse, Particularly in Florida

In the 2021 NGAGE 2.0 Survey, national survey respondents were asked if someone in their family had a gambling problem, would you advise them not to discuss the problem with anyone outside the family (due to shame, embarrassment, etc.); survey results found that in 2021, twenty-six percent (26%) would not want a family member's gambling problem discussed outside the home, versus 19% of survey respondents who felt this way in 2018. **Almost half (49%) of Floridians** reported in 2021, that if someone in their family had a gambling problem, they would say nothing and/or advise them not to discuss it with anyone outside of the family. This is more than twice the national average! It is quite clear that the public perception of gambling problems is not getting better, but in fact appears to be getting worse.

The results of the National Survey on Gambling Attitudes and Gambling Experiences (NGAGE) revealed that Florida was among the 12 states with the highest levels of gambling reported nationwide. Past year gambling by both males and females exceeded the national average in spite of the lack of legalized professional and collegiate sports wagering. Nevertheless, while professional and collegiate sports wagering were not readily available in the state, 33% of survey participants reported placing bets on traditional sports and 14% indicated wagering on fantasy sports, with a considerable number betting amongst friends, with online sportsbooks, at “brick and mortar” sportsbooks outside the state, and/or with local bookies/bookmakers. Of importance was that 57% of Floridians believed that if Florida was to legalize sports wagering, it would be important to establish dedicated revenues for increased public awareness about problem gambling.

Summary highlights and key findings from the NGAGE 2.0 national survey are provided below:

- The number of people displaying risky gambling behavior increased from 2018 to 2021. The number of adults replying that they experienced at least one of four potentially problematic behaviors multiple times rose from 7% in 2018 to 11% percent in 2021, an increase of approximately eight million people nationally.
- The greatest predictors of risk for problem gambling included the number of gambling activities readily available, agreeing that gambling is a good way to make money, participation in fantasy sports or traditional sports betting, frequently trading investments, age, and gender. Those gambling on 10 or more activities were three times more likely to show signs of problematic behavior than the average gambler and seven times more likely than those gambling on between one and six activities.
- The expansion of legalized sports betting appears initially to have had very little impact on sports wagering behavior or problematic gambling. However, the authors concluded that in many states, legalized sports betting was still very new, and the impacts of widespread legalization may well take more time to become apparent.
- Online wagering grew at a rapid rate nationally. While online wagering was legalized in only a few states (mostly in limited forms), online gambling participation grew from 15% in 2018 to 25% 2021, suggesting that 25 million more people nationally were gambling online in 2021.
- Most forms of gambling showed either minimal change in participation or significant growth. Lotteries, casino attendance, gambling machines, and card games showed little change, while sports betting, fantasy sports betting, online wagering, betting on pari-mutuel racing, roulette, and craps experienced increases in annual participation of 5% or more on a national level.
- Investors who trade frequently are also frequent gamblers with high levels of problematic play. More than two-thirds of those trading weekly or more also reported needing to gamble more to achieve the same levels of excitement and enjoyment. They were also more likely to lie to hide their gambling and felt restless or irritable when trying to quit or cut down on their gambling, which are notable signs associated with disordered gambling.
- A large share of the population continues to misunderstand or stigmatize problem gambling. A majority of adults continue to attribute gambling problems, at least in part, to moral weakness and/or lack of willpower.

PROBLEM/DISORDERED GAMBLING AMONG ADULTS IN FLORIDA

An estimated 1.2% of Florida adults are believed to manifest a gambling disorder (U.S. prevalence rates of disordered gambling; Williams, Volberg & Stevens, 2012). Based on population estimates of persons ages 18 and over in Florida and the average rate found among all U.S. state problem gambling prevalence studies, approximately 214,263 individuals have a significant gambling problem in Florida. There is also substantial evidence suggesting that every disordered gambler impacts 9 other people (e.g., family members, friends, employers). Of further importance is that while disordered gambling prevalence rates have been relatively stable, the population of adults in Florida continues to increase, ultimately resulting in more individuals with gambling and gambling-related problems. The harm to individuals and their families continues to grow.

While gambling provides considerable employment opportunities and much needed tax revenues, it does not come without its social costs. Most adults gamble within their means, respecting both time and money limits. Yet, there is ample evidence to support that an identifiable, yet notable minority, are experiencing their own gambling-related problems, or are suffering from the adverse effects from a family member, loved one, employer or another's person's gambling problem, and need problem gambling specific supports. This report highlights the use and evaluation of the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling's (FCCG) 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine by Florida residents in need of problem gambling help or information, throughout the 2022/2023 Fiscal Year.

FLORIDA'S ONLY 24-HOUR CONFIDENTIAL MULTILINGUAL 888-ADMIT-IT PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE

Annually, the FCCG receives thousands of contacts from gamblers and loved ones seeking help for problems due to excessive problematic gambling. The methods of contact to the Helpline and the types of individuals seeking assistance vary widely. The 888-ADMIT-IT confidential and multilingual Helpline is accessible via telephone, text, live chat, email, or on social media, from persons who are unemployed, experiencing mental health issues, undergoing a divorce or are homeless, facing financial devastation and/or legal consequences resulting from their own or a loved one's gambling problem. Yet, they all share one common theme – they are seeking immediate relief and support. Each person reaching out for help is seeking some type of information and/or guidance to help get their lives back on track, to understand how to cope with presenting impacts, and/or where to obtain professional counseling, self-help supports or other critical services. The Helpline does not directly provide counseling or treatment services to contacts but rather serves as a primary source for information and resource referrals for individuals experiencing gambling-related difficulties. The FCCG's 888-ADMIT-IT confidential and anonymous Helpline responds to contacts from residents throughout Florida, many of whom are in immediate crisis when they place their initial contact. FCCG trained Helpline Specialists routinely respond to these contacts, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year.

888-ADMIT-IT HELPLINE SPECIALISTS

Throughout the past thirty years of operation, the FCCG has hired Helpline and other staff from a variety of different backgrounds, and with varying levels of education and clinical experience, from master's level trained counselors to volunteers and recovering individuals. Telephone counseling services should not be confused with Helpline services provided, since these programs serve entirely different purposes and require different training and protocols.

Helplines are not for counseling callers as this would place an enormous liability on the helpline itself and would also prohibit the ability to provide true, confidential services. Our Helpline para-professionals are paid employees who have been highly trained to handle the problem gambling population only. The most important component of making the helpline effective is the training and protocols that are in place for operation.

Helpline Specialists realize the appropriateness and need to refer to certified professionals for counseling purposes and expert advice. Supportive intervention and the ability to provide viable resources to individuals without offering advice or counseling is a perfectly acceptable and responsible way to operate a Helpline. This practice also ensures that gamblers and loved ones do not become dependent on the Helpline for continued services and will be more apt to take the next step towards recovering, be it seeking help through peer supports, from a treatment provider, attending 12-Step or other self-help meetings, utilizing social service organizations, reaching out for legal assistance, participating in financial credit counseling through a professional institution, enrolling in self-exclusion programs, or taking advantage of many other resources that may be available depending on one's location and specific needs.

FCCG 888-ADMIT-IT HELPLINE SPECIALIST TRAINING

Helpline specialists are professionally trained regarding issues relating to problem and compulsive gambling, including the scope, diversity and severity of difficulties experienced by individuals, families and concerned others. The Helpline is staffed around the clock by these specially trained staff, to give supportive intervention and information to individuals who are adversely affected by a gambling problem at any given moment. All agency personnel are trained to handle help and information calls related to gambling addiction from individuals in crisis.

All of this is done through the completion of specific modules in a formal Helpline Training Manual. The training is hands-on demonstration, as well as overview of the data collection and proper database usage, viewing of problem gambling specific docudramas and videos, 'mock' call scenarios, phone shadowing, and finally handling live calls with management oversight. A Helpline Manual is also provided for future reference. In addition to providing background information about who we are, our role in the state, and available services and programs, we walk participants through the Helpline process, Agency protocol, types and classifications of contacts, and standard operating procedures. The handling of the calls and the dialogue approach we use to have the conversation is the focus of the training, however the background information and database training portions are also integral. The goal of the FCCG's Helpline training program is to ensure Helpline Specialists are comfortable and confident in their ability to provide appropriate supports to individuals in crisis.

Upon completion of the FCCG's HelpLine training program, all FCCG employees have the knowledge to:

- ✓ Be helpful, supportive, and compassionate to all individuals contacting the HelpLine;
- ✓ Utilize the Agency's database to collect and record necessary data points from HelpLine contacts;
- ✓ Identify any special services needed based upon individual circumstances
- ✓ Possess in-depth knowledge of the issues faced by both the gambler and loved ones due to a gambling problem
- ✓ Determine appropriate resource referrals based upon unique, individual circumstances (e.g. family member supports, distance counseling, web-blockers, self-exclusion, etc.)
- ✓ Demonstrate an ability to think outside the box when confronted with unusual circumstances (e.g. suicide warning signs, abusive callers, service disruptions, etc.)

THE ROLE OF THE FLORIDA COUNCIL ON COMPULSIVE GAMBLING'S 888-ADMIT-IT HELPLINE

For more than three decades the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling (FCCG) has provided diverse and widespread services to individuals; families; institutions; addiction, treatment and prevention providers; gambling operators; and others who have gambling-related issues or have been negatively impacted by a gambling problem or seeking assistance for suffering persons. These services entail counseling, in person, online and mobile referrals and multiple forms of supports for problem gamblers, family members (in particular, spouses, cohabitants and/or partners), and other concerned persons (e.g., friends, colleagues, parents, children, employers, etc.). The FCCG further provides extensive training and outreach programs for diverse audiences throughout Florida.

Fundamental to the FCCG's operation has been the development and implementation of its 24-hour confidential and multilingual information and crisis Problem Gambling HelpLine service - 888-ADMIT-IT. Through its HelpLine, the FCCG provides information, supportive intervention, treatment and self-help referrals, diverse resources, literature, and a breadth of related supports 24 hours per day, 365 days of the year. The HelpLine offers a multitude of immediate services and ways for individuals to obtain additional help. The HelpLine can be accessed by phone or text, via the widely publicized toll-free telephone HelpLine number (888-ADMIT-IT (236-4848)), by , live chat (gamblinghelp.org), email (fccg@gamblinghelp.org), through the 888-ADMIT-IT mobile app (<https://landing.appypie.com/888-admit-it>) and via social media outlets. These diverse methods assure that regardless of one's comfort level in connecting, individuals can readily access help when needed via their preferred method of communication.

The FCCG, in collaboration with gambling operators, widely advertises the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine in racinos and casinos throughout the state (e.g., via posters, literature, collateral items, notifications on ATMs, in operator advertisements and facility programs, on their websites, on entryway kiosks, and through presentations with facility personnel, per FCCG training). The FCCG's 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine service is promoted on lottery tickets, on billboards in select key locations, on multiple search engines, as well as on social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, Instagram, Reddit, and LinkedIn).

Gambling throughout the state and internationally has become a socially acceptable recreational activity. Yet, there is ample evidence that there are individuals and families who experience harm due to excessive gambling. The FCCG has a primary goal to increase public awareness about problem, compulsive and disordered gambling while advocating for services and supports for individuals in need of assistance. For clarification, while the terms problem and compulsive gambling are more commonly used, the formal diagnosis of disordered gambling is classified as a Substance-Related and Addictive Disorder by the American Psychiatric Association.

The FCCG HelpLine continues to serve as the primary statewide problem gambling resource center. Although the FCCG has provided problem gambling awareness, prevention, education and training services since its inception, the need for ongoing development and implementation of new and diverse supports, made available through the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine, has placed the organization in the forefront as a free and inclusive service to all residents of Florida while also assisting in national efforts to help problem gamblers and their families.

Government, industry, academia, health care and other community-based service organizations and professionals continue to rely upon the FCCG to provide the necessary help and support to individuals and families struggling from the negative impacts and harms associated with excessive/problem/disordered gambling. In addition to operating the HelpLine, the FCCG continues to provide state-of-the art training for mental health treatment providers, professionals and groups interested in reducing gambling-related harms. The 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine continues to serve as a one-stop resource for gamblers, their families, and others adversely affected, where they can obtain the help needed to recover from a gambling disorder, associated impacts, and resume a healthier life.

There is ample evidence from other jurisdictions that there has been an increase in contacts to state gambling helplines across the country with the growth of casinos, racinos and other gambling venues, particularly within states regulating online gambling and sports wagering. As the landscape of gambling continues to evolve in Florida with the potential for gambling expansion and sports wagering, the need for ongoing support for the Helpline and other FCCG programs remains essential. As the statewide advocate on issues related to problem, compulsive and disordered gambling, the FCCG consistently monitors developments in the gambling industry and remains poised to add and/or modify its programs as required and as funding permits.

In light of marketplace changes and conditions, the addition of new gambling operations, the increased availability and accessibility of Internet and mobile gambling, and other technological shifts over the past 30 years, the FCCG's programs have evolved and assumed critical importance. The FCCG not only operates the 888-ADMIT-IT Problem Gambling Helpline but continues to conduct ongoing evaluations of its Helpline service to ensure it is meeting ongoing client needs. The FCCG's services are also important to family members, friends of problem gamblers, and employers. As a single-stop resource center, the FCCG essentially serves as an educational body, assuring necessary research, outreach, public awareness, prevention, education, and training services.

THE FCCG'S 24-HOUR CONFIDENTIAL AND MULTILINGUAL 888-ADMIT-IT HELPLINE OUTCOME EVALUATION SURVEY & REPORT

Each year the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling (FCCG) encourages 888-ADMIT-IT Helpline contacts to provide feedback about the Helpline services received to determine its' efficacy and ways in which it can be enhanced. This annual outcome evaluation is designed to gauge the effectiveness of the FCCG's 24-hour Helpline service in meeting its intended goals and objectives, to determine users' perceptions about their contact with the Helpline Specialist, to identify the use and efficacy of recommended resources offered, and to assess the individual's overall experience and satisfaction with the Helpline services. The annual evaluation continues to serve as an invaluable resource for program development needs, training, and the ongoing improvement of Helpline operations.

This Annual Helpline Outcome Evaluation Survey & Report remains relevant through the provision of fluid survey questions and continues to evolve with questions modified or added annually as deemed necessary, while assuring that comparative analysis with prior year studies remains uncompromised. This flexibility in both survey and outcome measures constitutes the overall evaluation report based upon the FCCG's 2022-2023 fiscal year.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Individuals contact the FCCG's 24-hour 888-ADMIT-IT confidential Helpline for a wide range of reasons. While some are seeking information and insight about problem/disordered gambling, including professional training opportunities, materials or other requests, the primary users of the service are individuals seeking help for themselves (i.e., the gambler him/herself) and/or concerns and interventions/resources for a loved one/family member (e.g., spouse, sibling, partner, child, family member or other loved one). An essential component of this service is to ascertain whether users of the Helpline are amenable to a follow-up contact at a subsequent time, to assess utilization of resources, follow through of recommendations and services received during their contact with the Helpline Specialist, as well as to gauge their overall satisfaction with services provided. The evaluation survey data only reflects input from those volunteering to be contacted and willing to disclose confidential and sensitive information both during their initial contact with the Helpline, and during the follow-up survey. Given the confidential nature of the information provided during the contact, many individuals elect not to participate in the follow-up survey. Others may have relocated, telephone numbers are no longer in service, or are unreachable since the time of the initial Helpline contact. As such, the number of people contacted represents only a small subset of all contacts to the Helpline.

To help ensure the integrity of the research compiled, at no time do Helpline Specialists perform any follow-up evaluations on contacts they originally handled. During the 2022-2023 data collection period, the FCCG initially used dedicated internal workers to collect the data. However, due to staffing constraints, the FCCG engaged the MARS Research Group to help collect the data. As such, the current data represents a compilation of data collected by both FCCG personnel and MARS. For the past three years, the FCCG engaged ReconMR (Reconnaissance Market Research) to collect this data, but the company was unavailable to assist in data collection during the current year.

MARS is a well-established bilingual Customer Research survey research entity, with its office located in Ft. Lauderdale. Their team includes strategists, analysts, and insight professionals. MARS has over 40 years' experience and their clientele represent industry leaders (e.g., *Nestle, AutoNation, Burger King, Seminole Gaming, Coca-Cola, and the Sun Sentinel*) amongst others. It typically assigns between 15 to 20 employees, many of whom are bilingual in English and Spanish to the project. The FCCG's target timeline for administration of the survey process is 60 days, where possible, after the individual's initial contact with the Helpline to allow the caller/contact to seek help from Helpline recommended external resources and/or to review materials forwarded by the organization. This survey was administered in English or Spanish, pending the contact's preference, using MARS, an outbound call center, and all calls were placed from a Florida area code or forwarded to an email address, pending

the person's choice. Moreover, MARS employees and FCCG staff were provided training by Dr. Jeffrey Derevensky (FCCG's Research and Clinical Consultant).

HelpLine contacts consenting to participate in follow-up surveys provide a telephone number and/or an email address and advise of the recommended day of the week and/or preferred time of day to be reached for purposes of completing the survey. This information is then recorded in the FCCG's HelpLine database. Interviewers attempted to reach contacts from 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM weekdays; Saturdays 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM, and Sundays 2:00 PM to 7:00 PM. The first call attempt for each record was made within the requested timeframe (i.e., day of week, morning, afternoon, evening, weekend) or time window specified by the contact (e.g., Wednesday mornings 10 am-noon) during the initial contact to the FCCG HelpLine. Calls were made to both landlines and cell phone numbers. MARS interviewers ensured respondents were in a safe and private place before continuing with the call. If the respondent indicated they were not in a safe/private place, an alternative time for the call was established.

If respondents were busy during the initial call, they were given the option to receive a call back at a more convenient time or to call the Survey Helpdesk at their convenience to complete the phone survey. The MARS Helpdesk number was provided to respondents upon request (during a live call and furnished when leaving a voice mail message and upon making contact via email). The survey Helpdesk was answered in real time by either FCCG or MARS trained interviewers. Interviewers were trained to never disclose the purpose of the initial call or make any reference to the FCCG or mention the survey until the Specialist was confident they were speaking with the target respondent. If the caller requested special or continued assistance with a gambling problem, they were advised to call the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine directly. To ensure the maximum response rate was achieved, individuals were contacted on the preferred day and/or time, when specified, as well as during other periods over the course of days and weeks, up to a total of 8 contact attempts, which may be exceeded when respondents' requests to be contacted again at a later date, none of whom did so during this survey period. In fact, only 4 of the overall contacts necessitated 8 contact attempts for purposes of survey completion.

DATA COLLECTION

Protocols, data entry procedures, and reporting requirements were developed by the FCCG's Program Consultant, Integrity 1st. Dr. Jeffrey Derevensky, an independent researcher with more than 35 years of expertise in problem/disordered gambling and survey methodology, served as the primary consultant to the project and was responsible for data analyses. The move from FCCG data collection to MARS for data collection was made to increase participation rates. Individuals who provided consent to participate in the evaluation follow-up in their initial HelpLine contact were given the option of receiving the survey via telephone or a web-based survey

After training and protocols were established, FCCG staff and MARS staff began data collection. Data collection began in October 2022 (MARS data collection began in April, 2023) and ended in June 2023. The FCCG approved monthly contact lists which eliminated individuals who made multiple contacts to the HelpLine during the past month and/or year. This was done to assure that repeated HelpLine users were only to be questioned about their "first" contact to the HelpLine. The survey was typically completed via telephone (land-based or cell), in either English or Spanish, taking an average of 9 minutes, however an online/web-based option was also available. Respondents were given the option to complete the survey online when they refused to complete the survey by phone or when they explicitly requested this option. In these situations, the Interviewer emailed a personalized secured survey link with restrictive access to complete the survey online. If the respondent did not want to provide an email address or did not have an email address to access the online survey, interviewers established a callback for a later time. Overall, FCCG collected 55 responses whereas MARS collected 91 responses, with the vast majority being collected via telephone interviews. Fifty-six (56) participants (38%) were given a gift card (\$10) as an incentive to complete the survey.

888-ADMIT-IT Annual HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Report: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023**SURVEY RESPONSES BY CONTACT METHOD & RELATIONSHIP TO GAMBLER**

A total of 146 surveys were completed during the 2022/2023 data collection period (137 by phone and 9 by email). Of the 146 completed surveys, 101 (69%) were responded to by the gambler, and 45 (31%) were completed by a loved one or a concerned person who made the initial HelpLine contact (**Table 1**). This data represents a slight decrease in gambler participation since last fiscal year (72% in 2021/2022), and a slight increase in participation by loved ones (28% in 2021/2022).

Table 1			
Respondent Relationship to Gambler by Survey Type			
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey			
Respondent Relationship to Gambler	Phone	Email	Total Survey Completions
Gambler	95	6	101
Loved One	42	3	45
Totals	137	9	146

Table 2 summarizes the relationship to the gambler for all survey participants. As can be seen, amongst the loved ones, the largest number of contacts were from spouses/cohabitants of the gambler(10%), the parent of the gambler (10%), the child of the gambler (4%), the in-laws of the gambler (2%) and the sibling of the gambler(2%). Overall, 60% of loved one survey respondents contacting the HelpLine were a family member, and 33% were from spouses/cohabitants of the gambler. It is important to note that the total numbers of loved ones was small (N=45).

Table 2		
Survey Respondents Relationship to the Gambler		
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey		
Survey Respondents Relationship to the Gambler	N=146	Percent = 100%
Aunt/Uncle of the Gambler	1	1%
Child of the Gambler	6	4%
Church/Faith-Based Organization	0	0%
Cousin of the Gambler	0	0%
Coworker/Employer of the Gambler	0	0%
Friend of the Gambler	2	1%
GA/Gam-Anon Member	0	0%
Gambler	101	69%
Grandchild of the Gambler	0	0%
In-laws of the Gambler	3	2%
Law Enforcement/Legal/Judicial Professional	1	1%
Mental Health Treatment Provider/Medical Professional	0	0%
Niece/Nephew of the Gambler	0	0%
Other Family Member of the Gambler	0	0%
Parent of the Gambler	14	10%
Sibling of the Gambler	3	2%
Spouse/Cohabitant/Significant Other of the Gambler	15	10%
Totals	146	100%

SURVEY RESPONDENTS DEMOGRAPHICS***Survey Completions by Respondents County and Geographic Region***

The residence of individuals having *completed* surveys (N=146) were distributed across 33 counties throughout the state (**Table 3**), with most residing in Southeast Florida (42%); Central Florida (19%), West Coast Florida (14%); Southwestern Florida (8%); Northeastern Florida (7%); East Coast Florida (5%); and Northwestern Florida (4%) (**Table 4**) (see pages 17 & 18).

Table 3					
Survey Completions by Respondents County of Origin					
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey					
County	# of Contacts (N=146)	% of Total	County	# of Contacts (N=146)	% of Total
Alachua	0	0%	Lee	3	2%
Baker	0	0%	Leon	2	1%
Bay	1	1%	Levy	0	0%
Bradford	0	0%	Liberty	0	0%
Brevard	0	0%	Madison	0	0%
Broward	21	14%	Manatee	2	1%
Calhoun	0	0%	Marion	3	2%
Charlotte	0	0%	Martin	1	1%
Citrus	1	1%	Miami-Dade	28	19%
Clay	1	1%	Monroe	0	0%
Collier	3	2%	Nassau	0	0%
Columbia	1	1%	Okaloosa	3	2%
Desoto	0	0%	Okeechobee	1	1%
Dixie	0	0%	Orange	7	5%
Duval	6	4%	Osceola	2	1%
Escambia	0	0%	Palm Beach	12	8%
Flagler	1	1%	Pasco	5	3%
Franklin	0	0%	Pinellas	6	4%
Gadsden	0	0%	Polk	5	3%
Gilchrist	0	0%	Putnam	0	0%
Glades	0	0%	Santa Rosa	0	0%
Gulf	0	0%	Sarasota	4	3%
Hamilton	0	0%	Seminole	4	3%
Hardee	0	0%	St Johns	1	1%
Hendry	0	0%	St Lucie	4	3%
Hernando	1	1%	Sumter	1	1%
Highlands	1	1%	Suwannee	0	0%
Hillsborough	6	4%	Taylor	0	0%
Holmes	0	0%	Union	0	0%
Indian River	1	1%	Volusia	2	1%
Jackson	0	0%	Wakulla	0	0%
Jefferson	0	0%	Walton	0	0%
Lafayette	0	0%	Washington	0	0%
Lake	6	4%	N =	146	100%

Table 4		
Survey Completions by Respondents Geographic Region		
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey		
Florida Regions	N=146	Percent = 100%
Northwest Florida	6	4%
Northeast Florida	10	7%
Central Florida	28	19%
West Coast Florida	21	14%
East Coast Florida	8	5%
Southwest Florida	12	8%
Southeast Florida	61	42%
Totals	146	100%

REGIONS

Northwest: Bay, Calhoun, Dixie, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Gulf, Hamilton, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Suwannee, Taylor, Wakulla, Walton, Washington

Northeast: Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, St. John's, Union

Central: Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Polk, Seminole, Sumter

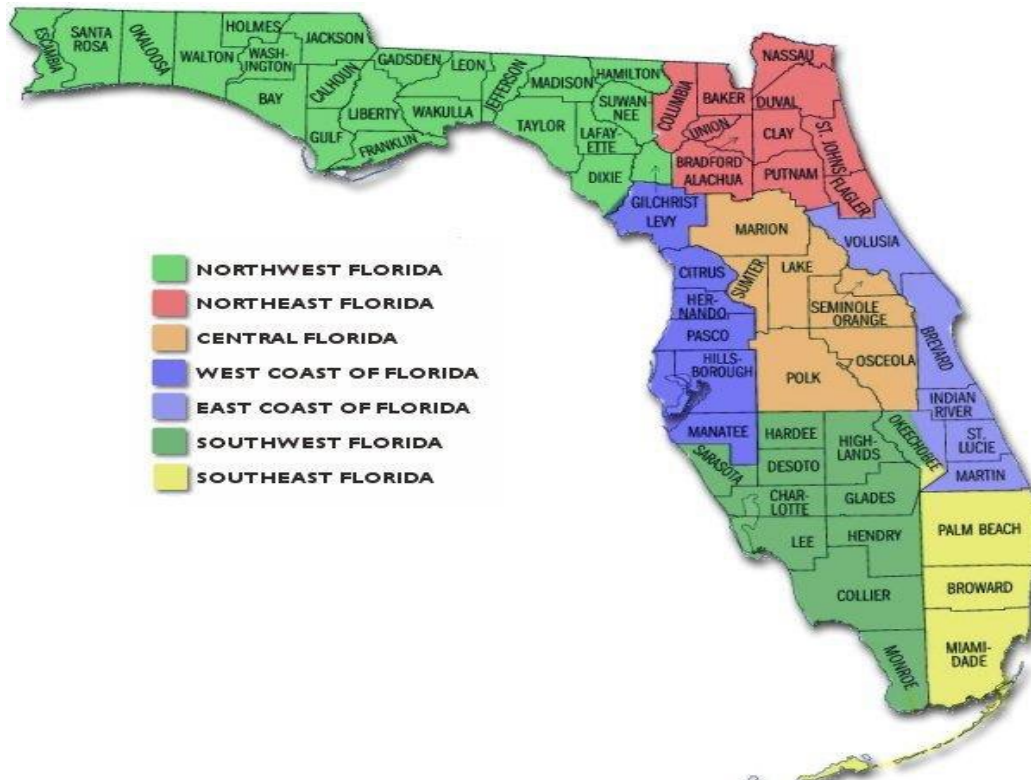
West Coast: Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Levy, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas

East Coast: Brevard, Indian River, Martin, St. Lucie, Volusia

Southwest: Charlotte, Collier, Desoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Monroe, Okeechobee, Sarasota

Southeast: Broward, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach

FLORIDA MAP BY COUNTY



Survey Respondents by Gender and Relationship to Gambler

When looking at the gender of all gamblers, loved ones and concerned others who participated in this year's evaluation survey, 44% of total respondents were female and 56% of total respondents were male. While there was a significantly higher percentage of male gambler respondents (68%) than female gambler respondents (32%) this year, quite the opposite was true amongst loved one/concerned other respondents, with females accounting for 71% of this group, and males representing less than one-third (only 29%) of all 2022/2023 non-gambler survey respondents (**Table 5**).

Table 5			
Survey Respondents by Gender & Relationship to Gambler			
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey			
Respondents Relationship to Gambler	Male	Female	N=146
Gambler	69	32	101
Loved One/Concerned Other	13	32	45
Totals	82	64	146

Survey Respondents by Age

The age ranges of respondents for the current year revealed that 17% were ages 30 or younger; 36% were ages 31-49; 26% were ages 50-60; and 22% were over the age 60 (**Table 6**). When reviewing findings based upon these age categories, percentages appear relatively consistent with data from 2021-2022, with exceptions among older adults ages 50-60, which increased by 5%, and among respondents ages 31-49, which rose by 4% (20% and 32% respectively in 2021-2022).

Table 6		
Survey Respondents by Age		
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey		
Age Range	N=143	Percent
Under 18	0	0%
18-20	4	3%
21-25	6	4%
26-30	15	10%
31-40	33	23%
41-49	18	13%
50-54	18	13%
55-60	18	13%
61-64	6	4%
65-70	17	12%
71-74	4	3%
75 and Up	4	3%
Totals:	143	100%

*Note: 2 Respondents did not identify the Loved One's age and 1 Loved One Respondent refused to identify their age.

Language of Survey Respondents

Overall, 96% of survey respondents completed the survey in English, while 6 individuals (4%) preferred completing the survey in Spanish.

EVALUATION RESULTS OF FCCG'S 888-ADMIT-IT HELPLINE – RECOLLECTION OF HELPLINE CONTACT***Respondents Recollection of HelpLine Contact***

As consistently reported in the past and nearly identical to last year's findings, the overwhelming majority of survey respondents (80%) reported their recollection of their initial contact with the HelpLine as either "Very Good" or "Good", 14% reported a fair recollection, while 5% reported a poor recollection.

Table 7		
HelpLine Contact Recollection		
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey		
Respondents Recollection of HelpLine Contact	N=146	Percent
Very Good	69	47%
Good	48	33%
Fair	21	14%
Poor	8	5%
Totals:	146	100%

EVALUATION RESULTS OF FCCG'S 888-ADMIT-IT HELPLINE – HELPFULNESS OF THE FCCG HELPLINE SPECIALIST***Efficacy of the FCCG HelpLine Specialist***

Similar to prior evaluations, respondents provided important feedback regarding the effectiveness of the services provided by the FCCG HelpLine Specialist with whom they originally spoke. More specifically, survey participants were asked about the Specialist's level of skill and helpfulness as it pertained to their interaction at the time of the initial contact. Information was collected concerning the following:

- The FCCG HelpLine Specialist's knowledge of issues related to problem gambling
- The FCCG HelpLine Specialist's understanding of the reason for the contact
- The level of caring, sensitivity and support provided by the FCCG HelpLine Specialist during the contact
- If the respondent would speak to the HelpLine Specialist again

Overall, feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 98% of respondents reporting the HelpLine Specialist was knowledgeable or very knowledgeable about problem gambling issues. Ninety-six percent (96%) of respondents advised the Specialist understood the reason for their contact to the HelpLine. Almost all of survey respondents (99%) recalled the FCCG HelpLine Specialist as caring, sensitive, and supportive of their needs, and 94% of respondents reported that they would be willing to speak with the FCCG HelpLine Specialist again.

All respondents provided information in these four areas based upon their initial HelpLine contact (see **Table 8**) revealing a very positive reflection of the efficacy of FCCG HelpLine Specialist services provided.

Table 8				
Efficacy of the FCCG HelpLine Specialist				
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey				
HelpLine Specialist Efficacy: Was the FCCG HelpLine Specialist...	YES	NO	N=146	Percent Effective
Knowledgeable About Gambling Issues?	143	3	146	98%
Understanding of the Reason for Your HelpLine Contact?	140	6	146	96%
Caring, Sensitive and Supportive?	145	1	146	99%
Someone You Would Speak to Again?	137	9	146	94%

As noted above, respondents identified the FCCG HelpLine Specialist as being “Very Knowledgeable” and “Very Caring”. This further highlights the FCCG’s level of attentiveness, care and training of its HelpLine staff. The organization places great emphasis on its training of HelpLine Specialists, which appears to be reflected in discussions with HelpLine contacts. A skill that is stressed in FCCG HelpLine Specialist training is the importance of being able to “connect” and “bond” with a contact, so the person feels heard, safe and confident in sharing highly personal and sensitive information. With a general approval rating of 97%, it is clear the Helpline Specialists are doing an excellent job in responding to the needs of individuals. To demonstrate how the HelpLine generally, and HelpLine Specialists in particular, can impact upon a person’s life, the following is feedback, verbatim, provided by survey respondents:

- *The most helpful things to me about the HelpLine: they were caring and understanding; the information given to me from the HelpLine when I called; to learn that I was not alone, and that gambling is an addiction that is very hard to defeat without the proper counseling and aid from professionals in that field. I felt so powerless and distraught for so long before I contacted the HelpLine - not a day went by that I didn't think of ending it all by taking my own life. I'm now still recovering and slowly repairing my financial situation, but I enjoy life with my loved ones a lot more than before, even when money is not enough to pay my bills as I used to. I am grateful for my family that have understood the seriousness of this illness and have stood by me and supported me in every way possible. Losing their trust was my biggest fear, but they have stepped forward. They have really shown me their love and their concern about helping me deal with this illness and making sure that I'm not feeling down anymore. They are also making sure that I am not gambling anymore. They all have access to my bank account now and have helped me create a budget to catch up on paying my bills. They also spend more time with me now to avoid me having too much idle time where I would then turn to gambling to kill that time. I have also picked up coaching sports and working extra hours, not only to make more money which I need, but also to stay busy and decrease the amount of idle time daily. When I'm busy, I don't think about gambling. It's when I have too much idle time that my mind plays me to gambling.*
- *The Specialist may have saved my life that first night.*
- *I want to say thank you for changing my life. It's hard to admit that you have a problem on top of a mental health disorder as well. There should be more advertising about this that's more so readily available, because the first thing you see is to gamble. Not to address it.*
- *The person I was talking to made it a little easier because she understood what I was feeling. There are a lot of resources that were very helpful, and it felt good to know I could use them if I needed to.*
- *The individual who answered the phone was great and felt like she knew all my life. The best thing in my life to happen. The initial communication was great.*
- *The first person who I spoke to. He seemed like an expert. Everything he said was very knowledgeable and made me feel comfortable. I wanted to make contact with him again and I was able to. I feel like God helped me find him.*
- *They listened and understood it was a problem, and they were not judgmental, they were empathetic; I felt comfortable.*
- *Just having someone to talk to and being able to vent and letting go to a stranger. Very useful and helped quite a bit.*
- *The person I spoke with stayed on the phone with us for quite a while and was extremely helpful.*
- *Just talking to someone about it and admitting it.*
- *It felt like the person really understood and cared and listened to me. He made me feel like I am not the only one and it was very encouraging.*
- *The HelpLine gave me relief and clarity on my situation.*
- *Realizing I wasn't alone and I shouldn't feel ashamed about it and spoke with family and friends. It helped to open up about my situation.*
- *What I found the most helpful was the fact that the HelpLine was available at any time for someone to call.*

- *The ability to remain anonymous and provide the help designated to the specific person in need.*
- *Having somebody listen and guide me. Having someone reassure me that I was doing the right thing.*
- *Having different programs available was helpful. Not having to wait to talk to someone was helpful too.*
- *Inspiring me to make the changes I needed to make.*
- *Just knowing that there was help available when I felt like there was nothing at all.*
- *Just knowing that I can call and get the help and support I needed. Now I have absolutely no urge to gamble at all.*
- *Having somebody to listen, who knew how to empathize, validate my experience, and reassure me that I wasn't alone. Providing a variety of resources like meetings, financial planning guidance, and podcasts. Connecting to the peer support specialist who was so knowledgeable and easy to speak to. All of these.*

EVALUATION RESULTS OF FCCG'S 888-ADMIT-IT HELPLINE-HELPLESSNESS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS PROVIDED

Efficacy of the Recommendations Provided – FCCG HelpLine Program's & Resource Referrals

As is generally the case, survey respondents are furnished with information about the specific recommendations and/or resources that were provided to them during their initial contact with the HelpLine. Special attempts are made to determine whether the recommendations provided were followed and their helpfulness. Overall, all survey respondents (100%) were provided specific recommendations and/or resources from the Specialist during their initial HelpLine contact. **Table 9** illustrates those resources recommended. Given many contacts receive multiple recommendations, the total percentages exceed 100%. The average number of recommendations per contact was 5.4 (a slight decrease from 2021-2022 of 5.9 recommendations).

Table 9		
Recommendations & Resources Provided During HelpLine Contact		
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey		
Recommendations & Resources Provided	N	Percent
FCCG Literature/Materials (Brochures/Bookmarks/Newsletters/"A Chance for Change" Recovery Workbooks)	125	86%
FCCG Online Program for Problem Gamblers (OPPG)	40	27%
FCCG Peer Connect Program	46	32%
FCCG Website/Mobile App & Social Media Sites	68	47%
Counseling Services/Professional Treatment	97	66%
Self-Help Support Group Services		
Gamblers Anonymous	103	71%
Gam-Anon	36	25%
Celebrate Recovery	13	9%
Other Alternative Support Groups	27	18%
Self-Exclusion Programs		
Land Based Gambling Facilities	41	28%
Access to Cash	14	10%
Internet/Video/Social Game Controls & Webblockers/Ad Blocking/Stock/Cryptocurrency Trading	38	26%
Financial Resources	97	66%
Legal Resources	3	2%
Hotlines/Crisis Lines & Social Services/Emergency Assistance	23	16%
Population Specific Resources	14	10%

Overall, 99% of survey respondents reported that they followed through on one or more of the recommendations provided. Resources and recommendations that were reported as most frequently used included Counseling Services/Professional Treatment referrals (51%); self-help support group referrals to Gamblers Anonymous meetings (48%); FCCG Literature/Materials containing the FCCG's *A Chance for Change* Recovery Workbooks (46%); financial resources (32%); FCCG's Peer Connect Program (19%) and FCCG's Online Program for Problem Gamblers (19%) (**Table 10**).

Table 10		
Recommendations & Resources Utilized by Survey Respondents		
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey		
Recommendations & Resources Utilized	N	Percent
FCCG Literature/Materials (Brochures/Bookmarks/Newsletters/" <i>A Chance for Change</i> " Recovery Workbooks)	66	46%
FCCG Online Program for Problem Gamblers (OPPG)	27	19%
FCCG Peer Connect Program	28	19%
FCCG Website/Mobile App & Social Media Sites	35	24%
Counseling Services/Professional Treatment	74	51%
Self-Help Support Group Services		
Gamblers Anonymous	70	48%
Gam-Anon	27	19%
Celebrate Recovery	7	5%
Other Alternative Support Groups	13	9%
Self-Exclusion Programs		
Land Based Gambling Facilities	25	17%
Access to Cash	8	6%
Internet/Video/Social Game Controls & Webblockers/Ad Blocking/Stock/Cryptocurrency Trading	25	17%
Financial Resources	47	32%
Legal Resources	2	1%
Hotlines/Crisis Lines & Social Services/Emergency Assistance	14	10%
Population Specific Resources	8	6%

As outlined by survey respondents who utilized the resources provided by the FCCG during their HelpLine contact, in many instances these resources provided gave individuals the much-needed hope that help really is available as well as comfort in knowing that they are not alone. The following are comments verbatim from survey respondents as to the overall helpfulness of the resources provided:

- I think the most helpful thing was just the peace of mind knowing that this was a resource I could use. I didn't know about this service before. I used the chat version, and they provided a lot of helpful resources I have saved in case I need them in the future. Just knowing there's someone out there I can talk to in the future if I ever need it is relieving.*
- The material and resources I were emailed were the most helpful because it gave me knowledge and insight to a world I was not familiar with. The phone representative also made me feel comfortable and were not judgmental so that I could continue to reach out when needed.*
- The resources and programs they directed me to. There was information available that I didn't know existed.*
- The resources and ability of the person to get me to the right information to help my friend.*
- I was provided with resources to have transparent conversations with the gambler.*
- I think the resources provided via email like bookmarks and flyers were the best for me to look over and read to let me know what my options were and how I could get help.*

EVALUATION RESULTS OF FCCG'S 888-ADMIT-IT HELPLINE – EFFECTIVENESS OF FCCG HELPLINE RESOURCES

The following FCCG programs, resources, referrals, and supports, all commonly provided during HelpLine contact and also reported as recommendations followed or used by this year's respondents, were evaluated as to their perceived efficacy by survey participants:

Survey Respondent Feedback on HelpLine Resources – Literature/Materials – A Chance for Change Recovery Workbooks

- FCCG's A Chance for Change Self-Help Recovery Workbooks**

The FCCG produces and distributes, as part of its HelpLine Literature/Materials Packets, a series of self-help recovery workbooks titled, *A Chance for Change*. The FCCG's *A Chance for Change* workbooks outline a comprehensive self-help program for gamblers, loved ones and older adult gamblers. Each seven-part series was developed to help individuals experiencing gambling-related difficulties to eliminate self-defeating negative behaviors, to help the individual think clearly about his/her gambling, and to make better gambling-related choices to lead a healthier lifestyle. Topics covered include, but are not limited to, managing finances, legal-related issues, relapse prevention, rebuilding one's life, and maintaining the course of recovery. These workbooks were developed to be utilized independently or in conjunction with support groups, professional counseling/treatment services, or as part of a law enforcement restitution program. The FCCG also produces and distributes *A Chance for Change* workbook for younger adults, comprised of one book.

Among those respondents reporting receiving and reviewing the workbooks at the time of the follow-up survey (**Table 11**), the majority (92%) advised they found the workbooks helpful. Only 8% of respondents, who stated they both received and reviewed the workbooks, indicated they were not very helpful. A large number (47%) reported not having yet reviewed the workbooks as of the time of the evaluation or did not yet know if they were helpful. It is plausible that more individuals will review the literature in the future to help maintain gains in their recovery and reductions in gambling.

Table 11		
Effectiveness of FCCG HelpLine Resources		
Literature/Materials (Brochures/Bookmarks/Newsletters/A Chance for Change Recovery Workbooks)		
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey		
A Chance for Change Recovery Workbooks Helpfulness	N=66	Percent Effective
Very Helpful	26	39%
Helpful	21	32%
Somewhat Helpful	14	21%
Not Very Helpful	5	8%
Totals	66	100%

Survey Respondent Feedback on HelpLine Resources – Online Program for Problem Gamblers (OPPG)

- FCCG's Online Program for Problem Gamblers (OPPG)**

A relatively new program implemented by the FCCG, the Online Program for Problem Gamblers (OPPG) was developed to help gamblers who are seeking on-demand options, or who lack insurance or the financial resources to pay for personal counseling, with immediate access to interactive problem gambling supports. The FCCG's OPPG includes elements of both traditional telehealth treatment supports, as well as self-guided change lessons and activities. It further includes a no-cost assessment, with feedback on participant results, provided by a licensed mental health professional. The program can reach gamblers in underserved areas, address scheduling challenges that often occur in traditional face-to-face counseling services and reduces stigmatization common among problem gamblers seeking help.

Among gambler only survey respondents who reported that they had participated in or completed the FCCG's OPPG at the time of the follow-up survey (**Table 12**), the majority (93%) advised they found the program helpful.

Table 12		
Effectiveness of FCCG HelpLine Resources		
FCCG's Online Program for Problem Gamblers (OPPG)		
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey		
OPPG Helpfulness	N=27	Percent Effective
Very Helpful	8	30%
Helpful	10	37%
Somewhat Helpful	7	26%
Not Very Helpful	2	7%
Totals	27	100%

As outlined by survey respondents who participated in the OPPG, it was meaningful because it provided much needed insight. The following comments were provided by different OPPG participant respondents, explaining what they felt was most helpful about the program:

- The online course was great. It was better than speaking with someone.*
- It made me realize that I wasn't alone and that there are other people that are going through the same thing. I also knew I needed to get family and friends involved.*
- It didn't talk down to me and the interview where the person said their brain was hijacked, I felt that. Living with the feeling for gambling and getting over it.*
- I wasn't being fully honest with myself when completing the program. But I do like that I can look back at the program when I want to.*
- First, to grasp the understanding that I am not alone. My favorite modules were the initial one (hearing the people's stories in the video made a huge impact on me) and toward the end was one that dealt with urges to gamble and how to handle them.*
- It helped me to realize that gambling is an addiction.*
- Having something to read and do was helpful.*
- It helped me realize I have a problem.*
- It outlines what gambling addiction is and asks you questions about yourself. Similar to a life coach.*
- Two aspects, one was the information regarding the brain and the stimulus. Two was the meditation aspect of it.*
- It helped confirm what I already knew.*
- It helped me find ways to cope.*

Survey Respondent Feedback on HelpLine Resources – Peer Connect Program

• FCCG's Peer Connect Program

The FCCG's Peer Connect program is designed to provide inspiration and insight to the HelpLine contact by allowing them to share personal experiences with individuals who previously experienced gambling problems. Discussions with former problem gamblers have been shown to help provide insight into the process of recovery. It provides a "safe-to- share" environment where Peers can share how they managed to overcome their gambling problem while recognizing that individuals often take their own path toward recovery. The Peer helps guide the HelpLine contact to a path for help that best suits the individual's needs, while providing insights into an effective recovery model, as well as concrete evidence that gambling problems can be overcome. Although the number of HelpLine contacts represented in this survey who participated in this program was relatively small, all but 1 respondent (97%) found it helpful (64% very helpful; 29% helpful; 4% somewhat helpful) (**Table 13**). This well-established program remains extremely valuable and effective for individuals who avail themselves of the services offered.

Table 13		
Effectiveness of FCCG HelpLine Resources FCCG's Peer Connect Program		
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey		
Peer Connect Program Helpfulness	N=28	Percent Effective
Very Helpful	18	64%
Helpful	8	29%
Somewhat Helpful	1	4%
Not Very Helpful	1	4%
Totals	28	100%

Following are some of the comments made by survey respondents when describing what they felt was most helpful about the Peer Connect Program:

- *Talking to the Peer Connect Specialist for a few days and he was a really big help. I was close to being suicidal, and after calling I feel like a new man. Listening to the podcasts and talking in the chats has been amazing. I wouldn't be here without you guys. My wife is so much happier as well. Thank you so much.*
- *Speaking to an individual who is a recovering gambling addict and his experience with what was most helpful for him to stop.*
- *The resources were so great and helpful, and I got a chance to speak with a guy about everything and he opened my eyes and led me to a huge support system. It was very nice.*
- *The compassion and having someone to talk things through. The contact I had, the person I spoke with was very good and got me through some very dark days.*
- *The best thing was when I was contacted by someone who has been through gambling recovery before.*
- *It helped my husband to realize that gambling really is a problem, and I am not just being upset for no reason. The girl was nice to talk to, but Larry really helped us a lot. Things got a lot better after speaking with Larry.*
- *It was comforting to know that his gambling addiction was an illness and that it was something that can be treated.*

Survey Respondent Feedback on HelpLine Resources – Counseling/Treatment Services Referrals

- Counseling/Treatment Services Referrals**

Guidance and support by a trained counselor or therapist with expertise in gambling problems can be particularly helpful. The FCCG maintains a list of trained counselors who are certified to treat gambling disorder in the state. These professionals can aid in sorting out options and strategies when trying to cope with situations or difficulties that may arise. Professional treatment differs from self-help programs in that it allows the gambler the opportunity to share very personal information in a one-on-one dialogue with a trained and certified professional. Such treatment also provides an option of participating in individual, couple, or group counseling sessions. While there is a cost for professional treatment, some insurance companies provide coverage or at least partial coverage. The FCCG frequently refers Florida residents to certified gambling addiction counselors who can furnish gamblers and loved ones with treatment supports based upon an ability to pay.

Among the 74 survey respondents who reported engaged in therapy or counseling, 87% found it helpful (35% very helpful; 30% helpful; and 22% somewhat helpful), with 10 people indicating it was not very helpful at all (**Table 14**). The FCCG takes note of respondent feedback and adjusts its HelpLine referral lists accordingly where necessary.

Table 14		
Effectiveness of FCCG HelpLine Resources		
Counseling Services/Professional Treatment Referrals		
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey		
Counseling Services/Professional Treatment Referrals Helpfulness	N=74	Percent Effective
Very Helpful	26	35%
Helpful	22	30%
Somewhat Helpful	16	22%
Not Very Helpful	10	14%
Totals	74	100%

Survey Respondent Feedback on HelpLine Resources – Self-Help Support Group Referrals

- Self-Help Support Group Referrals**

Self-help support group programs comprise one of the primary referrals most often furnished to HelpLine contacts. The use of self-help support groups for individuals with addictive behaviors has a longstanding positive history. Originating with Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Gamblers Anonymous (GA) and the accompanying Gam-Anon (for spouses/partners/significant others, family members and other concerned persons) continues to increase in participation, in Florida and nationwide. Self-help is a critical part of the recovery process. Self-help programs can assist individuals with tools for recovery by providing support, direction, motivation, resources, and a sense that individuals are not dealing with the gambling problem alone. An aspect of many self-help programs is sponsorship. Sponsors can provide additional information, encouragement, fellowship, and guidance to newcomers on a voluntary basis. They may also provide assistance and offer suggestions on a case-by-case basis. Other self-help groups address individuals with mental health, substance abuse, excessive gaming, and financial concerns such as overextended debts.

As can be seen in **Table 15**, the large majority of survey respondents who reported utilizing FCCG provided self-help support group meeting referrals following their HelpLine contact (85%) found participation was helpful (44% very helpful; 25% helpful; 17% somewhat helpful), with only 15% (17 individuals) indicating it was not very helpful. Survey respondents who reported attending Gamblers Anonymous or Gam-Anon, found them to be the most helpful overall (52% for Gamblers Anonymous and 20% for Gam-Anon).

Table 15		
Effectiveness of FCCG HelpLine Resources		
Self-Help Support Group Referrals		
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey		
Self-Help Support Group Referrals Helpfulness	N=117	Percent Effective
Gamblers Anonymous		
Very Helpful	32	27%
Helpful	18	15%
Somewhat Helpful	11	9%
Not Very Helpful	9	8%
Gam-Anon		
Very Helpful	15	13%
Helpful	5	4%
Somewhat Helpful	3	3%
Not Very Helpful	4	3%
Celebrate Recovery		
Very Helpful	1	1%
Helpful	3	3%
Somewhat Helpful	2	2%
Not Very Helpful	1	1%
Other Alternative Support Groups		
Very Helpful	3	3%
Helpful	4	3%
Somewhat Helpful	3	3%
Not Very Helpful	3	3%
Totals	117	100%

It should be noted that some Self-Help support groups have maintained their meetings virtually post COVID-19.

In response to a survey question inquiring whether there was anything respondents felt was most helpful about the HelpLine, the following reflects just some of the verbatim comments addressing self-help support group programs:

- *Having information for live GA meetings available to me was most helpful.*
- *There were meetings rapidly available and a sponsor and I think they offered to have someone call. And a lot of the other resources were helpful too.*
- *Someone suggested going to an in person meeting rather than online. I fell in love with the people in that group.*
- *Giving information about online zoom GA meetings.*
- *Pretty much the GA meeting and having somewhere to go and see people face to face.*
- *Attending the GA program was very helpful. There were people that understood me and what I was going through.*
- *Getting the meeting information closest to me.*
- *They connected me to Gam-Anon. Also liked that they assisted with loved ones.*
- *Gam-Anon helped shaped my relationship with my gambler and his family.*
- *The resources they provided allowed me to find the weekly meetings that I attend.*

Survey Respondent Feedback on HelpLine Resources – Self-Exclusion Programs

• Self-Exclusion Programs

Self-Exclusion is a protective measure that allows people to voluntarily ban themselves from accessing gambling opportunities or financial means, such as cash, to gamble. The main purpose of **Self-Exclusion** is to assist at-risk players, or players with problems, regain control of their gambling behavior by supporting their efforts to abstain from at least one specific form of gambling for a particular amount of time. Overall, the structure of Self-Exclusion Programs has evolved from an ‘enforcement model’ into an ‘individual assistance model’ whereby the emphasis is now on helping those who self-exclude to address their problems and achieve their goals (Responsible Gambling Council, 2008).

Self-Exclusion Programs are offered by **Land based Gambling Operators** such as casinos, cardrooms, racetracks, jai-alias, and other pari-mutuel operators, by **Online Gambling Operators** such as Fan Duel or Draft Kings, and also by **Financial Service Providers** such as **Everi Cares** and **Automated Systems America (ASAI)**, that provide access to cash for gambling operators through networks of ATM's, cash access kiosks, booth, credit, and other financial access services. Additionally, **True Link Financial** provides access to cash restrictions through a customizable and reloadable VISA debit card that can be obtained and customized to work where you need it to and to block where you don't, helping to provide restricted access to funds and limit gambling related losses.

In the last few years, and especially during the coronavirus pandemic, **Online Trading**, including **Cryptocurrency** and **Stock Trading**, has grown significantly (Nefedova et al., 2020). Previous research has identified that excessive trading can be a gambling disorder. Problem gamblers experience a greater risk when exposed to different forms of online trading and problem gamblers often engage in many different forms of trading. Restriction of access to these forms of trading (Cryptocurrency and Stock trading) is provided by the blocking capabilities offered by **Gamban** through its **Stock Market Gambling Exclusion Program**.

Self-Exclusion Programs are provided as an important resource through the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine as a tool to help people control their gambling behavior and restrict access to money, gambling venues, and gambling platforms, if gambling has become problematic. To date, while 23 state governments have implemented statewide self-exclusion programs, which has long been advocated by the FCCG, such program options in Florida are only legally required by the 8 pari-mutuel operators with slot machines, located in Miami/Dade and Broward Counties (commonly referred to as racinos or casinos) and policies and practices vary widely. In addition, while the Seminole Tribe of Florida and some other gambling establishments in the state offer self-exclusion options, this is not the case across the board, it is not a statewide program, and is generally non-existent with many illegal online gambling operations.

- ✓ **Self-Exclusion Programs offered by Land Based & Online Gambling Operators** allow an individual to self-ban from gambling at a physical location or on an online website for a pre-determined and agreed upon period of time. The Self-Exclusion Program can be very beneficial to problem gamblers in preventing relapse, as enticements such as free play, mailers, emails, texts and other forms of communication between the gambling operator and gambler, which often serve as precipitating events for problem gamblers continuing to return to gamble, cease. Length of exclusion periods, as well as processes and procedures vary by operator and location, so it is important to first determine what options are available, based upon where and how a person is gambling. Among the 25 survey respondents who reported enrolling in a land-based self-exclusion program following HelpLine contact, 92% found it helpful (40% found it very helpful, 36% found it helpful, 16% found it somewhat helpful and 8% (N=2) found it not very helpful) (**Table 16**).
- ✓ **Self-Exclusion Access to Cash Programs offered by Financial Service Providers** furnishes individuals with the opportunity to help protect the assets and benefits that may be at risk due to a gambling problem by enabling individuals to block access to cash across networks of ATM's, cash access kiosks, booth, credit, and other financial access services, as well as providing options for customizable pre-paid debit cards to provide restricted access to funds and limit gambling related losses. Among survey participants, those who availed themselves of self-exclusion access to cash, 63% (N=5) found it helpful (**Table 16**).
- ✓ **Self-Exclusion Programs for Online Computer/Mobile Gambling or Gaming/Video Gaming or Gambling and Social Gaming or Gambling include Web Blocking, & Ad Blocking Software, Settings & Controls** which provide protective measures that can be used to block access to or impose restrictions on online gambling sites, as well as set limits or controls for online gambling and gaming sites, in addition to associated internet advertising appearing on these sites. Within this category, amongst those survey respondents that followed through on the recommendation, 96% found it helpful (**Table 16**).

- ✓ **Self-Exclusion Programs offered for Stock Market Gambling** provides individuals with the opportunity to mitigate harms experienced from trading activities through a cross-platform blocking application that restricts access to trading platform sites that are comparable to gambling and meet defined criteria.

Table 16		
Effectiveness of FCCG Helpline Resources Self-Exclusion Programs		
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - Helpline Outcome Evaluation Survey		
Self-Exclusion Programs - Land Based Gambling Facilities	N=25	Percent Effective
Very Helpful	10	40%
Helpful	9	36%
Somewhat Helpful	4	16%
Not Very Helpful	2	8%
Access to Cash Exclusion Programs	N=8	Percent Effective
Very Helpful	4	50%
Helpful	1	13%
Somewhat Helpful	0	0%
Not Very Helpful	3	38%
Internet/Video/Social Game Controls & Webblockers/Ad Blocking/Stock/Cryptocurrency Trading Exclusion Programs	N=25	Percent Effective
Very Helpful	12	48%
Helpful	9	36%
Somewhat Helpful	3	12%
Not Very Helpful	1	4%

Used in conjunction with other treatment and support options, **Self-Exclusion Programs** can be a powerful resource that helps those who can no longer control the urge to gamble on their own, and a vital resource for problem gamblers seeking assistance in abstaining from gambling and limiting losses.

The following are some of the verbatim comments provided by respondents who reported that self-exclusion programs were the most helpful:

- *The exclusion land-based gambling facilities was very helpful.*
- *The GGG application was the most important thing as it stopped me from making online gambling websites appear. Web blocking technology, I wish I knew sooner about.*
- *Knowing about the blocking sites and a referral to a personal therapist.*
- *The way they treated me. They helped me a lot for that program where they ban you from the casino.*

EVALUATION RESULTS OF FCCG'S 888-ADMIT-IT HELPLINE – GAMBLER'S CURRENT GAMBLING BEHAVIOR***Gambler's Current Gambling Behavior – As Reported by All Survey Respondents***

Respondents were asked about the current gambling habits of the gambler since contacting the HelpLine (after a minimum two-month interval between the initial contact to the HelpLine and completion of the survey) (**Table 17**). Overall, 78% of contacts reported the gambler's gambling had decreased, with 39% reporting that the gambler is not gambling at all following contact with the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine. Additionally, 24% of survey respondents reported significant reductions in the gambling behavior of the gambler, and an additional 15% reported a small decrease in the gambler's gambling.

These changes may have been the result of their contact with a HelpLine Specialist, who provided insight about a gambling addiction, as well as hope that contacts could recover if they reduce or stop gambling and adhere to the recommendations provided. It's important to note that while 3% revealed an increase in gambling, these individuals often failed to follow through on the recommendations provided during their contact with the HelpLine Specialist (**Table 19**). Again, it is important to note that the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine does not provide direct treatment or counseling services for problem gamblers, their families or to others, but rather is a one-stop resource where individuals, both gamblers and their families and loved ones can acquire help and information on problem gambling. The HelpLine serves as a repository of information as to where to get help, furnishes population specific programs (e.g., OPGG, Peer Connect), provides recommendations and referrals for resources, and distributes pertinent materials (e.g., self-help recovery workbooks).

As a cautionary note, it is important to understand that while many people often mistakenly measure a compulsive gambler's "success" and/or the program worthiness of the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine by equating it with whether the person stopped gambling, cognitive and behavioral improvements can occur in the lives of gamblers, and their loved ones, prior to abstinence being attained. Abstinence can often be a process. For example, it is not uncommon for many disordered gamblers to think that if they just switch their preferred form of gambling to another venue, and/or bet less, then they can continue to engage in gambling activities. While this is typically not the case, it enables these gamblers to reach these realizations on their own. Similarly, by implementing small changes, there are various aspects that can be positively impacted in a gambler's life, whether abstinence is realized or not. Though there are countless examples, to demonstrate just a few, a gambler may no longer be experiencing suicidal thoughts, may be spending less time or money gambling, may be performing better on the job, may be showing up to family functions or being less defensive with loved ones, etc. So, it is not unusual for gamblers and loved ones to report improvements in their lives unrelated to abstinence.

Table 17		
Current Gambling Behavior Since Contacting the HelpLine		
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey		
Current Gambling Behavior	N = 146	Percent %
Not Gambling at All	57	39%
Significantly Reduced Gambling	35	24%
Small Reduction in Gambling	22	15%
No Change in Gambling Behavior	23	16%
Small Increase in Gambling	3	2%
Significantly Worse Gambling Since Calling	2	1%
Don't Know	4	3%
Totals	146	100%

Gambler's Current Gambling Behavior – Comparison Between Gambler Respondents & Loved One Respondents

When comparing current gambling behaviors as reported by respondents by category (e.g., gambler vs. loved one/concerned other survey respondents), (**Table 18**), overall, a higher percentage of gamblers (84%) reported a reduction in their gambling behaviors post-HelpLine contact than did loved one/concerned other survey respondents (66%). If one examines *only* the gamblers' responses (N=101), 42% indicated they were no longer gambling; 30% reported a significant reduction in gambling; 12% indicated a small reduction; and 15% reported no change in their gambling, with 1% indicating a small increase in gambling and 1% reporting a significantly worse problem. The discrepancy between current gambling behaviors as reported by gamblers versus loved one's survey respondents, may be that gamblers are more aware of their actual current gambling behaviors. Loved ones may also have a higher expectation for the gambler as to what constitutes success in recovery. However, caution is needed in interpreting these results as gamblers often tend to overestimate their success and all results are from self-reports. (**Table 18**).

Table 18						
Current Gambling Behavior Since Contacting the HelpLine - By Respondent Type (ALL Respondents)						
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey						
Current Gambling Behavior - by Respondent Type (ALL SURVEY RESPONDENTS)	Gambler (N=101)	Percent %	Loved One/Other (N=45)	Percent %	N=146	Percent %
Not Gambling at All	42	42%	15	33%	57	39%
Significantly Reduced Gambling	30	30%	5	11%	35	24%
Small Reduction in Gambling	12	12%	10	22%	22	15%
No Change in Gambling Behavior	15	15%	8	18%	23	16%
Small Increase in Gambling	1	1%	2	4%	3	2%
Significantly Worse Gambling Since Calling	1	1%	1	2%	2	1%
Don't Know	0	0%	4	9%	4	3%
Totals					146	100%

Gambler's Current Gambling Behavior – as a Function of Following HelpLine Recommendations Provided- All Survey Respondents

In addition to any positive gains from speaking with the HelpLine Specialist, of great importance are the recommendations provided and more importantly whether the contacts follow through on these recommendations. While caution is necessary in interpreting the results in **Table 19**, as only one (1) survey respondent reported not following through on any of the recommendations provided, these results further suggest that when recommendations are implemented, the resulting benefits are significant. The recommendations provided by the HelpLine Specialist, given their extensive expertise and experience, have proven to be valuable. Individuals who reported following through on the recommendations provided by the HelpLine Specialist showed greater improvement, attesting to the importance and efficacy of HelpLine recommendations, although speaking with the Specialist also appeared to have a positive impact. As can be seen in **Table 19**, more than three-quarters (77%) of survey respondents who reported following at least one of the recommendations provided during the initial HelpLine contact stated that the gambler had reduced their gambling behaviors. More than one-third (39%) of respondents who reported following at least one recommendation provided by the FCCG HelpLine Specialist reported that the gambler had completely stopped gambling since the initial 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine Contact. Nevertheless, while there are multiple factors impacting gambling behaviors, contacting the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine may have reduced overall gambling even when recommendations are not implemented.

Table 19						
Current Gambling Behaviors as a Function of Following HelpLine Recommendations - ALL Respondents						
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey						
Current Gambling Behavior - by # of Recommendations Followed (ALL SURVEY RESPONDENTS)	ALL SURVEY RESPONDENTS					
	Followed ALL Recommendations		Followed SOME Recommendations		Did Not Follow ANY Recommendations	
	N=45	Percent %	N=100	Percent %	N=1	Percent %
Not Gambling at All	22	15%	35	24%	0	0%
Significantly Reduced Gambling	10	7%	24	16%	1	1%
Small Reduction in Gambling	7	5%	15	10%	0	0%
No Change in Gambling Behavior	4	3%	19	13%	0	0%
Small Increase in Gambling	0	0%	3	2%	0	0%
Significantly Worse Gambling Since Calling	1	1%	1	1%	0	0%
Don't Know	1	1%	3	2%	0	0%
Totals	45	31%	100	68%	1	1%

Gambler's Current Gambling Behavior – as a Function of Following HelpLine Recommendations Provided- Gambler Respondents Who Followed Recommendations Only

If one examines *only* the gamblers' responses who reported following at least one or some of the recommendations provided during their HelpLine contact (*N=100), eighty-three percent (83%) reported a reduction in their gambling behaviors. Additionally, of those gamblers reporting that they followed through on ALL recommendations and resources provided by the FCCG HelpLine Specialist, ninety-seven percent (97%) reported a reduction in their gambling behaviors post-HelpLine contact. Only 2% of gamblers adhering to recommendations provided reported an increase in their gambling at the time of the survey. (Table 20).

Table 20						
Current Gambling Behaviors as a Function of Following HelpLine Recommendations - Gambler Respondents Only						
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey						
Current Gambling Behavior of Gamblers - Post-HelpLine Contact (GAMBLER ONLY RESPONDENTS)	GAMBLER ONLY RESPONDENTS					
	Followed ALL Recommendations		Followed SOME Recommendations		TOTAL Gambler Respondents that Followed Recommendations	
	N=29	Percent %	N=71	Percent %	N=100	Percent %
Not Gambling at All	16	55%	26	37%	42	42%
Significantly Reduced Gambling	8	28%	21	30%	29	29%
Small Reduction in Gambling	4	14%	8	11%	12	12%
No Change in Gambling Behavior	1	3%	14	20%	15	15%
Small Increase in Gambling	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Significantly Worse Gambling Since Calling	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Don't Know	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Totals	29	100%	71	100%	100	100%
*1 Gambler Respondent reported not following Any of the Recommendations Provided during HelpLine Contact.						

Gambler's Current Gambling Behavior – as a Function of Amount of Effort Invested in Recovery - Gambler Respondents Who Followed Recommendations Only

As to be expected, gambler survey respondents who reported putting forth more effort into their recovery since contacting the HelpLine stated that they had more success in reducing their gambling behaviors than those survey respondents who put forth less effort (Table 21). Eighty-two percent (82%) of gambler respondents who stated that they put forth at least *some* effort into their recovery, post-HelpLine contact, reported a reduction in their gambling at the time of the survey. More than half (53%) of gambler respondents reporting no change or reduction at all in their gambling since contacting the HelpLine, reported that they had put forth from mild, to little or no effort at all, in their problem gambling recovery at the time of the survey.

Table 21				
Current Gambling Behaviors as a Function of Effort Invested in Recovery - Gambler Respondents Only				
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey				
Current Gambling Behavior of Gamblers - by Effort Invested in Recovery (GAMBLER ONLY RESPONDENTS)	GAMBLER ONLY RESPONDENTS			
	Reduction in Gambling Behavior		No Reduction in Gambling Behavior	
	N=84	Percent %	N=17	Percent %
Significant effort	44	52%	3	18%
Moderate effort	25	30%	5	29%
Mild effort	13	15%	7	41%
Little to no effort	2	2%	2	12%
Totals	84	100%	17	100%

EVALUATION RESULTS OF FCCG'S 888-ADMIT-IT HELPLINE – HOW ARE YOU CURRENTLY FEELING?**How Are You Currently Feeling Post-HelpLine Contact? – As Reported by All Survey Respondents**

The majority of survey respondents (74%) reported that they were currently feeling better since contacting the HelpLine (39% reported feeling significantly better, 19% reported feeling moderately better, and 16% reported feeling mildly better about themselves at the time of the survey). (**Table 22**). When looking at the gambler versus loved one/concerned other respondents, 79% of gamblers and 65% of loved ones reported currently feeling better at the time of the survey than they did at the time of the initial HelpLine contact. Overall, respondents who reported following through on the recommendations provided by the HelpLine felt better about themselves at the time of the survey (39% reported significantly better; 19% reported moderately better and 16% felt mildly better).

Table 22						
How are You Currently Feeling? By Respondent Type						
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey						
How are You Currently Feeling - by Respondent Type	Gambler (N=101)	Percent %	Loved One/Other (N=45)	Percent %	Total N=146	Percent %
Significantly better	45	45%	12	27%	57	39%
Moderately better	18	18%	10	22%	28	19%
Mildly better	16	16%	7	16%	23	16%
The same	8	8%	8	18%	16	11%
Mildly worse	4	4%	1	2%	5	3%
Moderately worse	5	5%	5	11%	10	7%
Significantly worse	5	5%	2	4%	7	5%
Totals	101	100%	45	100%	146	100%

EVALUATION RESULTS OF FCCG'S 888-ADMIT-IT HELPLINE – HAVE RELATIONSHIPS IMPROVED?**Have the Gambler's Relationships Changed, Post-HelpLine Contact? – As Reported by Survey Respondents with RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS as the Primary Reason for HelpLine Contact**

When looking at historical data and HelpLine trends relationship problems have been the top most frequently cited reason for contacting the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine for decades. This data remains true for this report, with almost half of respondents surveyed during this evaluation, 45%, stating that at time of their initial HelpLine contact, relationship problems was the primary reason they were seeking help for a gambling problem (their own or someone else's). Overall, the majority of survey respondents (all types) who originally sought help through the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine due to relationship/familial problems, reported significant improvements in these relationships at the time of the survey (69%), post-HelpLine contact (**Table 23**). When looking at survey data from responses received by the gambler separately from loved ones, there are significant differences between gamblers and loved ones with respect to the reported improvement of relationships since original HelpLine contact. While a larger percentage of gambler respondents (83%), compared with loved one/concerned other respondents (57%), reported improvements in the gambler's relationships with family members or significant others at the time of the survey, this is common when there is a gambling problem in the home, and often gamblers are completely unaware of the extent that their gambling problem is negatively impacting others closest to them.

Table 23						
Have the Gambler's Relationships with Family Members/Significant Others Changed?						
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey						
Have the Gambler's Relationships with Family Members/Significant Others Changed? (Respondents with Relationship Problems as Primary Reason for HelpLine Contact)	Gambler (N=30)	Percent %	Loved One/Other (N=35)	Percent %	Total N=65	Percent %
Significantly better	11	37%	6	17%	17	26%
Moderately better	7	23%	7	20%	14	22%
Mildly better	7	23%	7	20%	14	22%
The same	4	13%	8	23%	12	18%
Mildly worse	0	0%	3	9%	3	5%
Moderately worse	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
Significantly worse	1	3%	3	9%	4	6%
Totals	30	100%	35	100%	65	100%

EVALUATION RESULTS OF FCCG'S 888-ADMIT-IT HELPLINE – HAVE FINANCIAL SITUATIONS IMPROVED?***Has the Gambler's Financial Situation Changed, Post-HelpLine Contact? – As Reported by Survey Respondents with FINANCIAL PROBLEMS as the Primary Reason for HelpLine Contact***

When asked what prompted the initial contact to the HelpLine, financial-related issues typically fall within the top 3 most predominately cited reasons for seeking help through the FCCG's 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine. Financial problems due to gambling often reported by HelpLine contacts include issues such as recent substantial losses, difficulty paying bills, overextended debts, and overspending. When looking at this year's survey respondents, 41% of the total (including gamblers, loved ones and concerned others) cited gambling-related financial difficulties as the precipitating reason for contacting the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine. Overall, the majority of survey respondents whose primary reason for seeking help was due to financial problems (N=60), reported improvement in their financial situation (63%) at the time of the survey, post-HelpLine contact (**Table 24**).

Table 24		
Has the Gambler's Financial Situation Changed?		
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey		
Has the Gambler's Financial Situation Changed? (Respondents with Financial Difficulties as Primary Reason for HelpLine Contact)	Total N=60	Percent %
Significantly better	17	28%
Moderately better	11	18%
Mildly better	10	17%
The same	13	22%
Mildly worse	3	5%
Moderately worse	2	3%
Significantly worse	4	7%
Totals	60	100%

EVALUATION RESULTS OF FCCG'S 888-ADMIT-IT HELPLINE – WOULD YOU USE THE HELPLINE AGAIN?***Would You Use the HelpLine Again or Recommend it to Someone Else?***

When questioned as to whether respondents would use the HelpLine again or recommend the service to someone else, 96% overwhelmingly reported that they would (**Table 25**) and 90% further noted they were more confident about their course of action following the contact.

Table 25						
Would You Use HelpLine Again or Recommend it to Someone Else?						
2022-2023 Fiscal Year - HelpLine Outcome Evaluation Survey						
Would You Use HelpLine Again or Recommend it to Someone Else?	Gambler (N=101)	Percent %	Loved One/Other (N=45)	Percent %	Total N=146	Percent %
Yes	98	97%	42	93%	140	96%
No	3	3%	3	7%	6	4%
Totals	101	100%	45	100%	146	100%

EVALUATION RESULTS OF FCCG'S 888-ADMIT-IT HELPLINE – WHAT WAS THE MOST HELPFUL?

What Was Most Helpful About Your HelpLine Contact?

All survey participants were asked to identify if there was anything they found to be the most helpful about their contact with the HelpLine. Overall, the responses were overwhelmingly positive, and confirm the efficacy of the services provided through the HelpLine as well as the level of skill, knowledge, dedication, and commitment of FCCG HelpLine Specialists. While many of the comments appear in various sections of this report, the following represent some additional verbatim responses shared by respondents. (Additional comments can be found in Appendix A.)

- *Probably the person I was talking to made it a little easier because she understood what I was feeling. There are a lot of resources, which were very helpful and felt good to know I could use if needed.*
- *Speaking to someone mostly. Talking to someone who has dealt with many cases and knows how to help.*
- *They were understanding and compassionate.*
- *Being able to talk to someone who understands.*
- *Having someone there to listen.*
- *The information regarding the things that I can do. Checking out from the casino and the therapist information I was given.*
- *That it was there and the person I spoke to was empathetic.*
- *I think the most helpful thing was just the peace of mind knowing that this was a resource I could use. I didn't know about this service before. I used the chat version, and they provided a lot of helpful resources I saved in case I need them in the future. Just knowing there's someone out there I can talk to in the future if I ever need it is relieving.*
- *Having the HelpLine available to call.*
- *Being kind and aware.*
- *The guy I spoke with was great and he had a lot of experience with gambling issues. Speaking with someone who has been through it is a lot better.*
- *Having someone there to talk to helped so much.*
- *The HelpLine gave me relief and clarity on my situation.*
- *Having someone to vent to and open up to. Also getting resources and info.*
- *They were very resourceful and gave me a lot of options.*
- *Realizing I wasn't alone and I shouldn't feel ashamed about it and speaking with family and friends. It helped to open up about my situation.*
- *What I found the most helpful was the fact that the HelpLine was available at any time for someone to call.*
- *The resources and programs they directed me to. Information that I didn't know existed.*
- *That somebody picked up and was there for me.*
- *The material and resources I was emailed were the most helpful because it gave me knowledge and insight to a world I was not familiar with. The phone representative also made me feel comfortable and we're not judgmental so that I could continue to reach out when needed.*
- *Just having someone to talk to and being able to vent and letting go to a stranger. Very useful and helped quite a bit.*

- *The Specialist's kindness and consideration.*
- *How quick and efficient it was.*
- *The compassion of the Specialist. Not judgmental and being able to self-exclude access to cash.*
- *People were so nice and understanding.*
- *Having someone to talk to without being judged.*

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APPENDIX A
Additional responses to “What was most helpful about the HelpLine?”

- *Probably the person I was talking to made it a little easier because she understood what I was feeling. There are a lot of resources, that were very helpful and felt good to know I could use it if I need.*
- *Getting the meeting information that was closest to me.*
- *Speaking to someone mostly. Talking to someone who has dealt with many cases and knows how to help.*
- *They were understanding and compassionate.*
- *I think the resources provided via email like bookmarks and flyers were the best for me to look over and read to let me know what my options were and how I could get help.*
- *Having someone to talk to.*
- *Being able to talk to someone who understands.*
- *The resources they provided allowed me to find the weekly classes that I attend.*
- *Pretty much the GA meeting and having somewhere to go and see people face to face.*
- *Positive experience.*
- *Having someone there to listen.*
- *Listened and understood as a problem, not judgmental, empathetic, felt comfortable because she related to her and others having the same issue, pointed out that casinos make an effort to play on addiction.*
- *The information regarding the things that I can do. Checking out from the casino and the therapist information i was given.*
- *What can I say, I mean, I would say it's the overall program, overall information, that they got you the groups and gave you all the information together.*
- *That it was there and that the person I spoke to was empathetic.*
- *I think the most helpful thing was just the peace of mind knowing that this was a resource I could use - I didn't know about this service before. I used the chat version, and they provided a lot of helpful resources I have saved in case I need them in the future. Just knowing there's someone out there I can talk to in the future if I ever need it is relieving.*
- *Having someone to open up to.*
- *Having the HelpLine available to call.*
- *Having GA meetings available helped the most.*
- *Being kind and aware.*
- *The resources and the person that answered the phone helped the most.*
- *Hola, me escucharon y me explicaron como ayudar a mi novio en la adiccion al casino ludopatia, necesitamos mas lugares y personas como este gracias. English translation: Hello, they listened to me and explained to me how to help my boyfriend in his addiction to casino gambling, we need more places and people like this, thank you.*
- *The guy I spoke with was great and he had a lot of experience with gambling issues. Speaking with someone who has been through it is a lot better.*
- *This led me to some good websites and online meetings.*

- *The information provided.*
- *Knowing that the addiction is an illness.*
- *Having someone there to talk to helped so much.*
- *The HelpLine gave me relief and clarity on my situation.*
- *Having someone to vent to and open up to. Also getting resources and info.*
- *They were very resourceful and gave me a lot of options.*
- *The resources had a lot of information on it.*
- *Realizing I wasn't alone and I shouldn't feel ashamed about it and speaking with family and friends. It helped to open up about my situation.*
- *The most helpful to me about the HelpLine was the caring, understanding and information given to me from the HelpLine counselor when I called. To learn that I was not alone and that gambling is an addiction that is very hard to defeat without the proper counseling and aid from professionals in that field. I felt so powerless and distraught for so long before I contacted the HelpLine. Not a day went by that I didn't think of ending it all by taking my own life. I'm now still recovering and slowly repairing my financial situation, but I enjoy life with my loved ones a lot more than before, even when money is not enough to pay my bills. I am grateful for my family that they have understood the seriousness of this illness and have stood by me and supported me in every way possible. Losing their trust was my biggest fear, but they have stepped forward and really shown me their love and their concern about helping me deal with this illness and making sure that I'm not feeling down anymore; but also making sure that I am not gambling anymore. They all have access to my bank account now and have helped me create a budget to catch up on paying my bills. They also spend more time with me now to avoid me having too much idle time where I would then turn to gambling to kill that time. I have also picked up coaching sports and working extra hours, not only to make more money which I need, but also to stay busy and decrease the amount of idle time daily. When I'm busy, I don't think about gambling. It's when I have too much idle time that my mind plays with me to gamble.*
- *To speak with someone with experience on gambling.*
- *What I found the most helpful was the fact that the HelpLine was available at any time for someone to call.*
- *Attending the GA Program was very helpful. There were people there that understood me and what I was going through.*
- *The resources.*
- *Gave direction and support.*
- *The resources and programs they directed me to. Information that I didn't know existed.*
- *The resources and ability of the person to get me to the right person to help my friend.*
- *The ability to remain anonymous and provide the help designated to the specific person in need.*
- *The individual who answered the phone was great and felt like she knew all my life. The best thing in my life to happen. The initial communication was great.*
- *The best thing when I contacted was speaking to someone who had been through gambling issues before.*
- *That somebody picked up and was there for me.*
- *The material and resources I was emailed were the most helpful because it gave me knowledge and insight to a world I was not familiar with. The phone representative also made me feel comfortable and were not judgmental so that I could continue to reach out when needed.*

- *The first person who I spoke to. He seemed like an expert. Everything he said was very knowledgeable and made me feel comfortable. I wanted to make contact with him again and I was able to contact him again. I feel like God helped me find him.*
- *Able to point me in the right direction.*
- *The guy had a similar problem and explained some things in order to help.*
- *Just needed to talk to someone. Be heard and they did a good job.*
- *I called seeking help but they only gave me resources.*
- *The Helpline had a lot of options for resources.*
- *The info provided, where to go for rehab.*
- *Speaking to an individual who is a recovering gambling addict and his experience with what was most helpful for him to stop.*
- *The info was great but I just didn't follow through with it for my own good.*
- *The fact that it's there.*
- *Bueno que te quieren sacar de algo que es erroneo y destructivo, ser beneficiario. English translation: Good that they want to get you out of something that is wrong and destructive, to be beneficial.*
- *First time they got the information I could tell they care and they are trying to help.*
- *They connected me to Gam-Anon. Also liked that they assisted with loved ones.*
- *There was just people that I can reach out to.*
- *The online course was great. Better than speaking with someone.*
- *Just having someone to talk to and being able to vent and letting go to a stranger. Very useful and helped quite a bit.*
- *The Specialist's kindness and consideration.*
- *Helped by talking and sharing his experiences.*
- *How quick and efficient it was.*
- *By giving me resources.*
- *The person I spoke with stayed on the phone with me for quite a while and was extremely helpful.*
- *Gam-Anon helped shape my relationship with my gambler and his family.*
- *The compassion of the Specialist. Not judgmental and being able to self-exclude access to cash.*
- *The fact that there is help, and that we were not the only ones going through it.*
- *Information, phone number and address for professionals to contact.*
- *It was comforting to know that his gambling addiction was an illness and that it was something that can be treated.*
- *Telling me where to go to talk to a group.*
- *Knowing about the blocking sites and a referral to a personal therapist.*

- *It was an informed source on the problem.*
- *Getting resources sent to my email.*
- *Provided resources to have transparent conversations with the gambler.*
- *Supportive.*
- *They were very helpful and gave me good advice and information.*
- *Several online classes and meetings at the church group.*
- *He gave me good advice.*
- *Talking to the contact for a few days. He was a really big help. I feel that being close to suicidal, and after calling I feel like a new man. Listening to the podcasts and talking in the chats has been amazing. I wouldn't be here without you guys. My wife is so much happier as well. Thank you so much.*
- *The contact was very informative and helpful. I got resources and was able to start counseling within two days.*
- *The resources were so great and helpful, and I got a chance to speak with a guy about everything and he opened my eyes and led me to a huge support system. It was very nice.*
- *The person was very kind.*
- *There were meetings rapidly available and a sponsor and I think they offered to have someone call. And a lot of other resources.*
- *Having information to live (GA) meetings available to me.*
- *Finding out who I can contact in my area.*
- *Talking to someone.*
- *Just to get me to quit.*
- *The local meetings is what I found very helpful.*
- *Someone suggested going to an in person meeting rather than online. I fell in love with the people in that group.*
- *That I had someone that understood the problem and the person had support and validation.*
- *People were so nice and understanding.*
- *Being able to call and have someone listen to me. It made me feel heard and understood.*
- *That they understood my situation.*
- *The resources provided were very helpful.*
- *Just talking to someone about it and admitting it.*
- *The resources provided and the one contact person.*
- *It felt like the person really understood and cared and listened to me. He made me feel like I am not the only one and it was very encouraging.*
- *Having somebody listen and guide me. Having someone reassure me I was doing the right thing.*

- *Giving information about online zoom GA meetings.*
- *They were friendly and had numbers available for the meetings.*
- *Having different programs available was helpful. Not having to wait to talk to someone was helpful too.*
- *Inspiring me to make the changes I needed to make.*
- *Talking to them. The counseling was very good.*
- *It helped my husband to realize that gambling really is a problem and I am not just being upset for no reason. The girl was nice to talk to but Larry really helped us a lot. Things got a lot better after speaking with Larry.*
- *The person I spoke to was caring, empathetic and gave me all resources necessary!*
- *The resources provided.*
- *The exclusion to land-based gambling facilities.*
- *The GGG application was the most important thing as it stopped me from making online gambling websites appear. Web blocking technology, I wish I knew sooner about.*
- *Just knowing that there was help available when I felt like there was nothing at all.*
- *Have someone to talk to right away and providing resources like GA so quickly.*
- *The way they treated me. They helped me a lot for that program where they ban you from the casino.*
- *Knowing that the HelpLine is available to people because if her boyfriend didn't have the problem she would've never known about it in the first place. The variety of resources that were available was also very helpful.*
- *The person-to-person communication.*
- *The information.*
- *Just knowing that I can call and get the help and support I needed. Now I have absolutely no urge to gamble at all.*
- *It helped as a way to self-reflect.*
- *Showed me to the resources I needed.*
- *The compassion and having someone to talk through. The contact I had, the person I spoke with was very good and got me through some very dark days.*
- *En el momento que llame estaba muy alterada me dijeron que tenia que ir al doctor Y me recomendaron un doctor y me dieron muchos recursos. English translation: At the time I called, I was very upset. They told me I had to go to the doctor. And they recommended a doctor and gave me many resources.*
- *All of the resources at hand helped. Most especially was the link to GA, the online program, and the link to Quit gamble.com.*
- *The amount of resources and tools provided.*
- *The Information that you provided.*
- *Having a gambler call me and talk to me was very helpful.*

- *Having somebody to listen who knew how to empathize, validate my experience, and reassure me that I wasn't alone. Providing a variety of resources like meetings, financial planning guidance, and podcasts. Connecting to the peer support specialist who was so knowledgeable and easy to speak to. All of these things helped me see a way forward and I so appreciate both of the folks I spoke to.*
- *Having someone to talk to without being judged.*
- *Just having a conversation with someone.*
- *Having someone to talk to.*
- *Having someone to speak to without judgment.*
- *The amount of resources and led me in the right direction.*
- *What was most helpful was the fact that I had to call the HelpLine myself and felt embarrassed about it.*
- *Ways on doing other things with your family.*
- *It was very positive, I didn't feel judged and felt the person was very compassionate, which made me feel good.*