



Providing HelpLine Services, Programs, and Supports for Gambling Addiction in the State of Florida

The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc. (FCCG) has a longstanding history in the state, and three decades of experience in the gambling addiction field. The FCCG is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) independent corporation whose primary mission is to increase public awareness about problem and compulsive gambling and to advocate for and provide services and supports to individuals in need of assistance for a gambling problem. The FCCG maintains a neutral stance on the issue of legalized gambling while also seeking to assist citizens in need of problem-gambling-specific supports. As the only statewide organization of its kind in Florida, the FCCG has served under contract with Florida state government for more than three decades.

The FCCG operates the statewide Problem Gambling HelpLine service 888-ADMIT-IT, providing free, confidential, and multilingual problem gambling assistance via telephone call, text message, email, and live chat available on the FCCG's website (gamblinghelp.org) to thousands of contacts each year, from gamblers and their loved ones, to professionals and affected others, such as employers, mental health treatment providers, educators, law enforcement and judicial professionals, probation departments, bankruptcy and financial counseling organizations, gambling industry operators, state government, policymakers, and others. However, although the FCCG is recognized by most through its 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine, this is only one of the many services and programs it provides.

The FCCG partnership with the Florida Lottery from 1988 – 2012 supported problem gambling prevention, education, outreach, and research activities in the state of Florida, including culturally specific initiatives. Lottery Responsible Play Programming was also developed and implemented, increasing public and employee awareness about responsible gaming while at the same time promoting the FCCG HelpLine, and included training programs for gambling industry employees, agents, and equipment manufacturers.

In 1992, and prior to implementation of the responsible gambling programming provided to slot-licensed pari-mutuel gambling facilities in South Florida, the FCCG developed programming and assisted the Seminole Tribe of Florida in devising the State of Florida and the Tribe's first-ever Responsible Gambling & Player Protection Program (RGPPP), as well as a "Train-the-Trainer" component, which has been significantly enhanced over past decades.

In similar fashion, the FCCG has been providing gambling industry operators with responsible gambling program development and implementation services in the establishment and maintenance of responsible play programs. In 2005, the FCCG devised the State of Florida's first-ever training protocol, and Train-the-Trainer manual, for state regulated slot-licensed pari-mutuel facilities located in Broward and Miami-Dade Counties, which is still provided today.

Equally important, in 2008 the FCCG, in partnership with the Florida Certification Board, developed and released Florida's first ever gambling addiction certification program, *Florida's Gambling Addiction Counseling Certification* (CGAC), for licensed mental health treatment providers to provide problem gambling specific treatment services in the state. The CGAC, which is still available today, designates competency in the domains of Addiction Theories; Foundations of Problem and Pathological Gambling; Gambling Counseling Practice and Special Issues in Gambling; and Professional Responsibilities. Applicants must hold an active and in good standing license issued by the State of Florida under chapter 397, Florida Statutes, OR one of the following FCB credentials: MCAP or CAP. The FCCG currently provides the required 60-hour certification training for licensed, mental health professionals (state and nationally approved) and furnishes 16 additional continuing education online modules for mental health and addiction professionals (credentialed by the Florida Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage & Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling and The Florida Certification Board, respectively), psychologists (credentialed by the Florida Board of Psychology).

Programs and services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **888-ADMIT-IT Problem Gambling HelpLine Services:** The FCCG operates a 24/7 confidential and multilingual information and crisis Problem Gambling HelpLine service, 888-ADMIT-IT, (available via text: 321-978-0555; live chat: www.gamblinghelp.org; social media: Facebook/Twitter/YouTube/Pinterest), where problem gambling help and information are provided to those in need, 24 hours per day, 365 days of the year. Available 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine resources are all provided, free of charge to Florida citizens, and include programs, literature, supportive intervention, referrals and resources, as well as a breadth of additional related population specific supports. The FCCG also has extensive print publications, (many available electronically and in audio file format, as well as in multiple languages, including Spanish and Creole), including brochures, toolkits, *A Chance for Change* Recovery Workbooks, and research, and provides specific materials and information.
- **Online Program for Problem Gamblers (OPPG):** For those seeking on-demand options, or who lack insurance, or the ability to pay for in person counseling services, the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine provides problem gamblers with immediate access to interactive problem gambling supports, through the FCCG's *OPPG*. It includes videos, readings, and exercises that cover topics such as understanding perspectives on problem gambling including the neurosciences, strategies to address shame, boredom, and stress, as well as other helpful approaches for reducing problem gambling behavior. The FCCG's *OPPG* also includes a no-cost assessment, with feedback on results provided to participants by a licensed certified mental health treatment professional, as well as a downloadable certificate that is available for program participants upon course completion. This OPPG Certificate can be used for legal professionals, such as court systems or probation officers, as verification to document program completion and compliance with any court ordered or court referred problem gambling treatment supports a legal offender may be required to obtain.
- **Peer Connect Program:** The FCCG's **Peer Connect Program** was established in 2008, and today, continues to be a successful support service for 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine callers choosing their individual path of recovery from a gambling addiction. It provides gamblers and loved ones with the opportunity to speak to someone in recovery in an effort to facilitate an easier transition down the path and into recovery and/or treatment. This program's goal is to motivate individuals to take necessary steps towards stopping gambling and rebuilding their lives, personally, professionally, and financially when necessary, through peer-to-peer supports.
- **Gambling Addiction Certification Training & Continuing Education Programs:** The FCCG currently provides the required 60-hour certification training for licensed, mental health professionals (state and nationally approved) and furnishes 16 additional continuing education online modules for mental health and addiction professionals (credentialed by the Florida Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage & Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling and The Florida Certification Board, respectively), psychologists (credentialed by the Florida Board of Psychology).
- **Responsible Gambling & Player Protection Program for Gambling Operators:** The FCCG's RGPPP assists gambling operators in providing an ongoing responsible gambling organizational philosophy and culture, as well as guest and employee exposure to the FCCG HelpLine and self-exclusion resources through facility signage, including additional print and collateral items featuring the 888-ADMIT-IT number. The FCCG's RGPPP also provides gambling operators with employee training (online and live), arming industry with important knowledge on the following problem gambling related topics, as well as current and identified trends or updates in the problem gambling field:
 - (a) Characteristics and symptoms of compulsive gambling behavior;
 - (b) Identification of vulnerable populations, including women, low-income patrons, the elderly and persons who abuse drugs and alcohol;
 - (c) Techniques to be employed where a compulsive gambling problem is identified or suspected; and,
 - (d) Assistance and referral programs, including specific resources and training on how to discuss compulsive gambling with a patron and give advice concerning access to available services.



- **Financial Programming and Supports:** The burden of financial problems can be overwhelming for many individuals who contact the HelpLine. The FCCG's ***A Chance for Change Recovery Workbook Series*** for gamblers, loved ones, and older adult gamblers features one book within each of the 7-book series (Workbook #4) that addresses financial matters. In addition, the FCCG's financial budgeting assistance program (**FCCG Budget Toolkit**) is available that provides financial guidance for problem gamblers and loved ones. The FCCG's **Financial Budget Toolkit** provides financial guidance through assistance in the development of a budget and payment plan as well as accountability for problem gamblers through peer supports.
- **Legal Assistance Resources and Supports – for Problem Gamblers & Loved Ones:** Whether criminal in nature (embezzlement, theft, fraud, etc.) or civil (divorce, foreclosure, etc.), the FCCG provides expert assistance and resources for individuals experiencing any type of legal consequences due to a gambling problem, completely free of charge. The FCCG's ***A Chance for Change Recovery Workbook Series*** for gamblers, loved ones, and older adult gamblers features one book within each of the 7-book series (Workbook #5) that addresses legal issues and can be used independently or under guidance with a treatment professional, while attending counseling and self-help support groups. Finally, the FCCG's **OPPG**, which is an 8-week on-demand problem gambling self-help support program, includes a no-cost problem gambling assessment provided by a licensed gambling addiction certified mental health treatment professional, as well as a downloadable Certificate available upon program completion, which can be used for legal professionals, such as court systems or probation officers, as verification to document program completion and compliance with any court ordered or court referred problem gambling treatment supports a legal offender may be required to obtain.
- **Legal Programming and Supports – for Legal, Criminal Justice, & Court Professionals:** Similarly, for **Legal, Criminal Justice & Court Professionals (Legal Service Providers)**, the FCCG's ***A Chance for Change Gambling Addiction and Crime Workbook***, which is comprised of one workbook, enables legal, criminal justice and judicial authorities to identify and secure viable alternatives to incarceration alone and provide the opportunity for rehabilitation to persons committing crimes as the result of a gambling addiction. This program provides free supports throughout every phase of the criminal justice process for law enforcement, legal and judicial professionals, probation officers, and state and federal prison authorities. The FCCG also offers an **Online Problem Gambling Continuing Education Unit (CEU) Module** for Treatment Professionals in Legal and Criminal Justice Settings, ***“Gambling Disorder: Assessment, Awareness & Application in the Criminal Justice System”*** providing participants with 1.5 CEU's. This online training course about the link between gambling addiction and crime is geared towards treatment professionals in legal environments (e.g. jails, courts, etc.) and provides education and tools to use in assessing, diagnosing, and referring clients in the legal system that may exhibit signs of a gambling disorder or be experiencing legal difficulties as a result of their gambling.
- **Population Specific Programs – for College Students, Military Members, Veterans, and their Families, Seniors, Adolescents/Teens and their Parents, and for Service Providers for each of these populations:** The FCCG's Population Specific Programs, Resources, Literature, and Materials are designed specifically for specific identified populations who may be at-risk or already experiencing gambling-related problems, as well as for the professionals who serve these populations, so that they are equipped to properly respond to individuals with gambling problems (or their loved ones) who may present for services. FCCG Population Specific Programs and Resources are developed to provide education and awareness about gambling addiction and its affects among specific segments of the population, along with offering population specific resources for help.

This information is not to be viewed as a comprehensive list of programs and services provided, but aims to give a broader understanding of the purpose and work of the 888-ADMIT-IT Problem Gambling HelpLine on behalf of citizens of the State of Florida.