

MEDIA RELEASE: FOR EMBARGO TILL MONDAY, 17 AUGUST 2009, 5.30PM

SINGAPORE PROBLEM GAMBLING CONFERENCE 2009
Building Capability in Prevention Measures in Youth Gambling

The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG), together with the National Addictions Management Service (NAMS) and Thye Hua Kwan Moral Society (THKMS), organised the Singapore Problem Gambling Conference 2009 on *Understanding and Addressing Youth Gambling* from 17 to 18 August 2009 at the Orchard Hotel. This year, the focus was on how to undertake measures to prevent youth problem gambling.

The aim was to move NCPG's efforts one level up from raising awareness of problem gambling among youth to carrying out prevention work. There has been no rise in youth problem gambling in Singapore, but NCPG believes it is sensible to target at youths when undertaking prevention work. Topics at the Conference included research on trends in youth gambling, parental attitudes on youth gambling, management of problem gambling in other countries, as well as internet gambling.

The two-day conference featured esteemed local and international experts, such as Dr Jeffrey Derevensky, Professor and Director of Clinical Training in School/Applied Child Psychology and Co-Director of McGill University's Youth Gambling Research & Treatment Clinic and the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors; Dr Rachel Volberg, who is widely-regarded as the most experienced problem gambling epidemiologist in the world; Dr. Gracemary Leung, Hon. Assistant Professor of the Social Science Research Centre, Hon. Clinical Associate for the Centre of Behavioural Health at the University of Hong Kong; and Dr. Thomas Lee, Associate Consultant Psychiatrist and Addiction Specialist from the Addiction Medicine Department at Singapore's Institute of Mental Health (IMH).

Mrs Yu-Foo Yee Shoon, Minister-of-State for Community Development, Youth and Sports, graced the event as Guest-of-Honour. Mrs Yu-Foo invited candid discussion on the subject of problem gambling, and took the opportunity to acknowledge NCPG's progress in its public education and outreach initiatives. Mrs Yu-Foo singled out for special mention Dr Jeffrey

Derevensky's Train-the-Trainers Workshop on 15-16 Aug as part of NCPG's move since 2006 toward capacity- and capability-building in prevention work with regard to youth problem gambling. Mrs Yu-Foo also highlighted SMU's "Play It Right" initiative to reach out to students in NUS, NTU and SMU to raise awareness of problem gambling. (More information on Train-the-Trainers and "Play It Right" can be found in **Annexes A and B**).

Mr Lim Hock San, Chairman of the NCPG, noted that problem gamblers tended to begin gambling at a young age, and stressed the need to learn more about what motivated youth to gamble, along with the prevention measures to deter youth gambling. Mr Lim pointed out that youth gambling had its own complexities, because IT-savvy youths tended to venture beyond "brick-and-mortar" outlets, and were hence more susceptible to online gambling. Mr Lim urged the teachers, counsellors and educators who were well-represented in the audience to work in a concerted and creative manner to deal with youth problem gambling.

The conference also featured a corporate social responsibility segment, chaired by Mr Tan Kian Hoon, Chairman of the NCPG Public Consultation Sub-committee, where representatives and speakers from the Singapore Pools, Singapore Turf Club, Marina Bay Sands and Resorts World Sentosa put up presentations on their responsible gambling initiatives.

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Issued by:
Bates 141 Singapore on behalf of NCPG

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About the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG):

The NCPG was appointed in August 2005 as part of Singapore's national framework to address problem gambling. It is a council comprising 20 members with expertise in public communications, psychiatry and psychology, social work, counselling, legal, rehabilitative as well as religious services. The Council's role is to i) provide advice and feedback to the Ministry



of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) on public education programmes to promote public awareness of problem gambling; ii) decide on funding applications for preventive and rehabilitative programmes; iii) assess and advise the Government on the effectiveness of treatment, counselling and rehabilitative programmes; iv) to decide on the applications for exclusion of persons from casinos.

For more information, please see www.ncpg.org.sg.

ANNEX A

Addressing Youth Problem Gambling – Prevention and Intervention: A Train-the-Trainers Workshop

Date(s): 15 & 16 August 2009 (9am – 5pm)

Venue: Training Room, 289 Tiong Bahru Road #03-00 Central Plaza S(168730)

Trainer: Dr Jeffrey L. Derevensky

The main purpose of this workshop is to train local practitioners who are also trainers, working with youth who will in turn train other other practitioners who are involved in school social work and youth work (individual casework, counselling, group work and public education).

This two-day training is designed to equip practitioners cum trainers with an in-depth understanding of current knowledge of youth gambling, risk and protective factors, ways to assess gambling severity among adolescents, a wide variety of treatment options, ways to work with parents, prevention topics and current issues and concerns.

Outcomes of the Workshop:

At the end of the workshop, the participants would be able to:

- (i) Identify the risk factors and consequences of underage gambling;
- (ii) Identify appropriate gambling screening tools to integrate into their assessment process;
- (iii) Identify and integrate applicable gambling treatment interventions into their current treatment setting, including working with parents;
- (iv) Identify resources for problem gambling issues

Topics of the Workshop:

- Compulsive Gambling
- Preventing Adolescent Gambling Problems
- Treatment Implications for Adolescent Gambling
- Treatment Interventions with Adolescents and Family Members
- Clinical Case Sharing

The participants will be exposed to a wide variety of prevention tools developed at the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors, Canada. Case studies and strategies in working with resistant youth would be discussed. The participants will also be asked to practice some of these techniques with the group.

Target Participants:



The participants will be selected based on the following prerequisites:

- i) Have at least 3 years experience in youth work, school social work or counselling;
- ii) Experienced trainers or those who have been training as part of their portfolio;

Fees:

Fees, including cost for materials are waived by NCPG.

Contact Person:

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Profile of the Trainer:

Jeffrey L. Derevensky, Ph.D., is a Child Psychologist, Professor and Director of Clinical Training in School/Applied Child Psychology, Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology; Professor, Department of Psychiatry; and Associate Professor, Department of Community Dentistry at McGill University. He is a clinical consultant to numerous hospitals, school boards, government agencies and corporations.

Dr Derevensky has published widely in the fields of child development, developmental psychopathology and education. He is a former Associate Editor of the *Journal of Gambling Studies* and is on the editorial board of numerous journals. Along with Dr. Rina Gupta, he has developed a comprehensive research program investigating many facets of youth gambling, is actively involved in treating youth with severe gambling problems, helps coordinate the prevention initiatives, and is the co-director of the McGill University Youth Gambling Research and Treatment Clinic and the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors.

Dr Derevensky is a member of the National Centre for Gambling Studies, University of Alberta; National Network on Gambling Issues and Research; is an International Associate of the Centre for the Study of the Social Impact of Gambling, University of Plymouth, England; is a member of the Scientific Advisory Board, Institute for Research on Gambling Disorders; is on the advisory board for the Division on Addictions, Harvard Medical School; and a member of the International Advisory Panel for the Ministry of Health and the National Council on Problem Gambling in Singapore.

Dr. Derevensky has been the recipient of numerous research and training grants from the Social Sciences Humanities Research Council of Canada, Loto-Quebec, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in Ontario, Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre, Ministry of Health and Social Sciences, Quebec, and the U.S. governments for his work in the area of youth gambling problems and adolescent high-risk behaviors. Dr. Derevensky was a consultant to the National Research Council (U.S.) in their preparation of their report to the Presidential Impact Gambling

Commission Study, is a representative to the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, and has consulted with the gambling commissions and legislators in many provinces, states and countries including the U.S., Canada, U.K., Norway, Netherlands, South Africa, Brazil, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Australia and Singapore. Dr Derevensky is often called upon to review grant proposals in multiple jurisdictions including the National Institutes for Mental Health, U.S.; Social Science Research Council, Canada; FQRSC, Quebec; Alberta Gambling Research Institute, National Lottery Commission, U.K.; Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation; Social Science Research Council, Hong Kong; GamAid, U.K.; Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services, New York State; National collegiate Athletic Association, U.S.; among others. Along with Dr. Rina Gupta he co-edited a special issue of the *Journal of Gambling Studies* devoted to youth issues and is the co-author of *Gambling Problems in Youth: Theoretical and Applied Perspectives*, published by Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

He has over 120 published refereed journal articles, 42 book chapters and is currently working on a new book aimed at informing school administrators, teachers and parents on youth gambling issues.

His prevention initiatives have been the recipient of numerous international awards. The International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors was the recipient of the U.S. National Council on Problem Gambling Outstanding Program Award and Dr. Derevensky was the recipient of the Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling Award for his “International leadership in addressing youth problem gambling through research, training and advocacy.”

Dr Derevensky and his team continue to provide research and clinical consultations, in-service workshops to educators, treatment providers, social policy developers and legislators. He is considered a leading expert in the field of youth gambling, has written extensively in this area, and along with his research and clinical team they have presented over 500 research, treatment, prevention and social policy papers at national and international conferences. He is frequently called upon to provide keynote addresses and has provided expert testimony for government commissions in many countries. Dr. Derevensky along with Dr. Rina Gupta at McGill University are currently heading ten research projects concerning youth gambling problems while continuing to develop empirically-driven innovative school-based prevention programs and providing workshops for students. Dr. Derevensky and Dr. Gupta’s graduate students continue to win multiple awards for their excellence in research.

ANNEX B

Problem Gambling Youth Cause Champions Programme – “Play It Right”

The Problem Gambling Youth Cause Champions Programme – “Play It Right” is supported by SMU Career Services and NCPG. The first-year programme is co-run by SMU Recreational Gaming Club, Bates 141 Singapore and NCPG. The curriculum entails training 30 to 40 passionate youths on problem gambling and its adverse social impacts. After the training, the Youth Cause Champions will be holding roadshows at National Technological University (NTU), National University of Singapore (NUS) and Singapore Management University (SMU) to create awareness, as well as educate and encourage other youths to support the cause against problem gambling. The “Play It Right” roadshows started on 11 August 2009, and will end on 21 August 2009.

Objective: Recruit youths to help front NCPG’s youth outreach initiatives.

Training: Training workshops on Community Education and Problem Gambling. The curriculum overview includes

1. Know the Difference between social gambling and problem gambling
2. Know the Signs of addiction to gambling
3. Know your Limits – how to understand when enough is enough
4. Know the Helplines – how one can seek help for self or loved ones.

Result: Upon graduation from the training workshops, the Youth Cause Champions will help to promote the above key messages at schools and community events, as well as through online channels.

List of Training Workshops and Roadshows:

1. Training Workshops 30-31 July 2009 and 3-4 August 2009
2. NTU Roadshow 11-12 August 2009
3. NUS Roadshow 13 August 2009
4. SMU Roadshow 19-21 August 2009

APPENDIX: ENGLISH-CHINESE GLOSSARY

National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG)

全国预防嗜赌理事会

Lim Hock San

林福山

Yu-Foo Yee Shoon

符喜泉

Tan Kian Hoon

陈建勋

Integrated Resorts (IRs)

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