

RG

Community

JUNE 2021

RESPONSIBLE
GAMBLING
FORUM

#7

Opening

Address

by Co-Chair Mr Lam
Chee Weng



The Covid-19 situation here remains evolving. As a state-owned operator, Singapore Pools continues to make adjustments to keep customers safe, physically and during play, while maintaining a positive customer experience. We have introduced several safer gambling initiatives, such as "Account Overview" which provides online account holders a convenient dashboard view on their activities such as betting expenditure trend and amount deposited or withdrawals, as well as tailored Safer Play reminders based on their betting behaviour. Combined with the refreshed "Safer Play" website and tools, we hope that customers are aware and reminded to keep their activities within limits.

Singapore Pools is committed to evaluating our Safer Play measures and had a fruitful discussion with the NCPG International Advisory Panel (IAP) members in March.

"It is always a challenge to anticipate what is next, but we believe that sharing of best practices and learning from RG experts help to promote a safer gambling environment for all."

I hope you will find the learning points from the NCPG IAP seminar particularly useful in this issue.

NCPG

Advisory Panel (IAP) Seminar

NCPG's International Advisory Panel (IAP) is chaired by NCPG member Professor David Chan and comprises international members Professor Sally Gainsbury from Australia, Mr Mark Vander Linden from the US, and Mr Paul Smith from Canada. This year's theme was **Charting the Way to Safer Play.**

From 16 to 19 March, the IAP members had discussions with MBS and RWS casinos, and Singapore Pools on their responsible gambling measures. They also met with the NCPG and presented at a 2-day seminar where Minister for Social and Family Development Masagos Zulkifli delivered the opening address. The seminar was attended by over 120 participants from the gambling industry, government agencies and the social service sector.



Learning Points

from IAP Seminar



Dr Sally Gainsbury

Associate Professor at the School of Psychology, Director of Gambling Treatment & Research Clinic and Founder & Leader of the Brain & Mind Centre at The University of Sydney

1 Emerging Trends

Professor Gainsbury presented **emerging trends in virtual reality** and **digital payments**. VR is not new but is starting to reach the mass markets because of its increasing affordability. Some of its risks include being a **highly immersive environment** which **encourages disengagement with reality as players lose track of time in the VR space**. Another risk is that the virtual world is **private (easily hidden)** and **available at all hours**. However, virtual reality can also be used for harm minimisation. VR allows for **personalised, targeted messages on responsible gambling** to the individual player and **offers room for treatment agencies to incorporate VR within their programmes**.

COVID-19 has accelerated the adoption of digital payments to minimise the risk of transmission. However, digital payments are a less transparent payment method and players have **less awareness of how much they are spending** and may end up spending more, as compared to passing over **physical cash**. Digital payment also negates the need to pause, leave a gambling venue and physically obtain cash which provides a break in play. Digital payments must be accompanied by social safeguards to track gambling behaviour and provide opportunities for targeted intervention. For example, Singapore Pools has introduced player profiles and expenditure limits to keep customers informed on how much they are playing and to help them regulate their behaviour. Such harm minimisation efforts have the potential to be expanded to other products which also rely on digital payments, such as gaming machines.

Digital Payments

Risks

- Less salience compared to cash, less aware of how much they are spending, hence spend more
- Physical cash = natural break in play

Opportunities for Harm Minimisation

- Digital payments allow tracking of gambling behaviour and opportunities for targeted intervention

Virtual Reality

Risks

- Highly immersive environment
- Encourages disengagement with reality
- Private (easily hidden)
- Constantly available

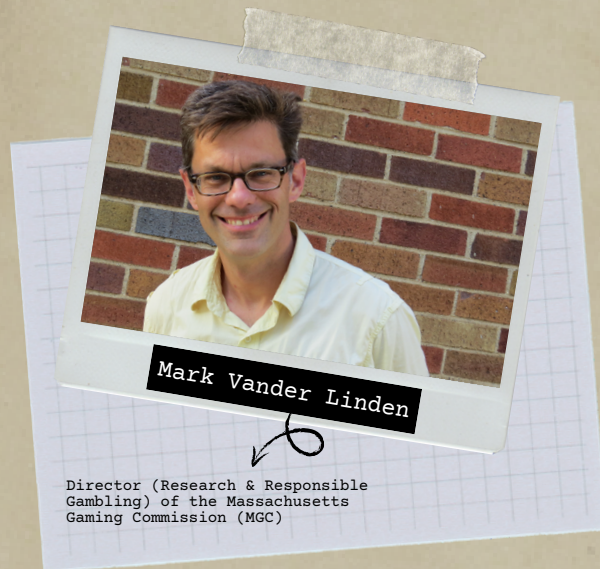
Opportunities for Harm Minimisation

- Personalised, targeted messages
- Treatment for problem gambling may incorporate VR

2

Massachusetts Gaming Impact Cohort (MAGIC) Study

Mr Mark Vander Linden shared findings from a Massachusetts longitudinal cohort study. This study followed the same group of people over a period of time and found that problem gamblers as a cohort were fairly unstable, with the majority transitioning to At-Risk or Recreational Gambling in the next wave (wave 2). Although a significant percentage of At-Risk Gamblers subsequently become Problem Gamblers (16.4%), **a much more common route was transitioning back to Recreational Gambling. It is therefore important for operators to continue and enhance their RG efforts to keep patrons in the recreational group instead of becoming problem gamblers.** Frontline staff can be proactive to support patrons and prevent player burnout and the risk of problem gambling. A simple gesture of checking in with patrons to take breaks in between play or to go home and rest after a prolonged period of play can minimise patrons risk of becoming problem gamblers.



Director (Research & Responsible Gambling) of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC)

3

Positive Play Scale

Mr Paul Smith and guest speaker/researcher Dr Richard Wood discussed the **Positive Play Scale (PPS)**, an instrument used to measure responsible gambling behaviour.

Dr Richard Wood
Psychologist who specialises in
gambling behaviour, Developer of
the Positive Play Scale



Mr Paul William Smith
Founder, SustainableGAMING

The PPS consists of 14 questions about **two belief elements (personal responsibility and gambling literacy)** and **two behavioural elements (honesty and control, and pre-commitment)**. Positive Play is based on the theory that RG is not just the absence of problem gambling, but the presence of positive gambling beliefs and behaviours, such as considering a budget before gambling, and balancing gambling with other interests. Studies found that players who scored well on the PPS typically scored low on problem gambling indexes. Thus, such positive play measures are important to manage the risks of problem gambling.

01 Benchmark
Measure your players' positive attitudes & behaviours with the PPS

02 Identify
Discover the strengths/weaknesses of your current RG strategy and identify specific player segments to target. Who is scoring high/low?

03 Optimise
Optimise your RG programme (e.g., positively focused player education) to increase positive play

04 Monitor
Use the PPS to measure changes in positive play over time.

4

The Right Message at the Right Time

During the IAP members meetings with gambling operators, there were robust discussions on the **framing of RG messages** and **evaluation of its effectiveness**. For example, personalised RG messages sent to Singapore Pools online account holders could be more effective when sent at the point at which players placed their bets. For the casinos, which are piloting an informed play system, SMS reminders could be improved to make them more personalised and friendly. Gambling behaviour feedback, when communicated in a timely and customised manner, has also shown to be effective in reducing levels of gambling intensity. However, operators can consider various modes of communicating these messages, as some patrons may be more concerned about privacy.

Operators were also reminded to **test and evaluate player's response to RG tools**:

- How often did players respond to the RG tools (click through)?
- Did players follow up (take self-assessment quiz)?

There were also suggestions to **acknowledge/thank players for using RG tools**, such as through a reward system (get points/F&B vouchers).

The tests should consider the **background of the individuals** and be **conducted in real-time** as the frame of mind affects the reactions.

Testing should be done **frequently** as the effectiveness of messages might be eroded over time.

How can you...

help your patrons play responsibly?

1

Normalise In-person Interactions

Gambling venue staff could start casual conversations with patrons, if and where appropriate, on gambling literacy. Such information is useful general knowledge for all patrons and not targeted at problem gamblers.

Here are some possible topics:

To Share With Patrons

Gambling literacy: How games and gambling work

- Responses to myths and misinformation
- Odds and randomness
- How to play specific games

Responsible gambling habits

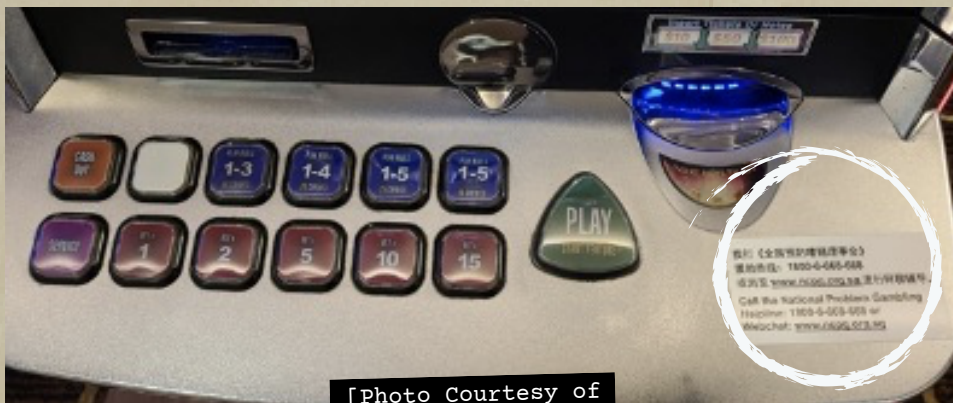
- Having realistic expectations of winning
- Set budgets for time and money
- Take breaks

RG Ambassadors in casinos are **key to promoting RG tools** such as the informed play system, as they can **offer information and recommendations on an individual level**. Casinos may consider increasing RG interactions with all patrons as part of customer service so that RG Ambassadors are no longer associated with stepping in only when there is a problem.

2

Provide RG Information to Patrons

Display RG information in your venue for patrons to read at their own time. Feel free to contact the RGF secretariat for RG collaterals to display in your venues.



[Photo Courtesy of NTUC Club]



RGF Brochure (Eng)



RGF Brochure (Chi)

3

If your patron is having a gambling problem, refer them to our help agencies

Patrons may be facing other stressors during this time, so frontline staff should continue to offer information on available help services to patrons, or work with agencies to refer patrons directly.

Available Resources

- NCPG Helpline: 1800-6-668-668 | Webchat: ncpg.org.sg.
- The Resilienz Clinic | Telephone: 63977300 | resilienz.com.sg.

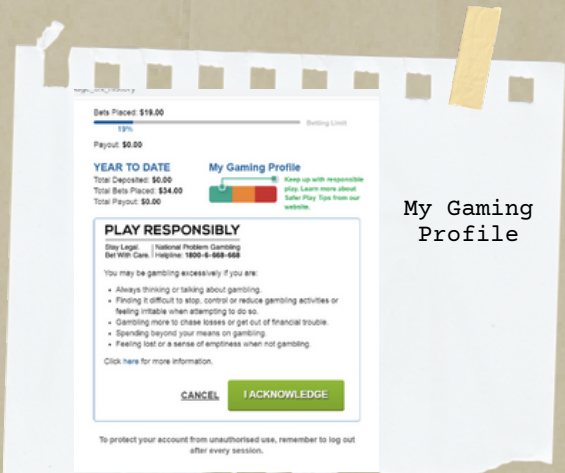
All services are free of charge

Did you know?

Singapore Pools has piloted a tool that analyses account holders' betting activities and provide them feedback on their individual betting profiles based on their transactions.

Launched on 22 Dec 2020, each player's gaming profile is updated on the first of every month to indicate if there is any change in his or her betting behaviour towards riskier profiles. Players can also keep track of their activities by easily checking how much they have spent and deposited, as well as their monthly pre-committed expenditure limit utilised.

Links to responsible gambling tools are also now just a click away. With these tools, Singapore Pools customers can be mindful of and practice safer play habits.



My Gaming Profile

Community Representatives

Dr Patrick Liew (Co-Chairman)	Patron, Kebun Baru Grassroots Organisations
Mr Andrew Tay	Chairman, Lakeside Family Services
Mr Billy Lee	Executive Director & Founder, Blessed Grace Social Services Ltd
Ms Jolene Ong	Founder, Arise2care Community Services Ltd
Mr Steven Lam	Vice Chairman, Punggol Central Citizens' Consultative Committee
Bishop Terry Kee	Vice-President, National Council of Churches of Singapore
Ms Tham Yuen Han	Executive Director, WE CARE Community Services
Dr Lee Kae Meng Thomas	Medical Director and Consultant Psychiatrist, The Resilienz Clinic

Industry Representatives

Mr Lam Chee Weng (Co-Chairman)	Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Pools
Ms Agnes Eu	Chief Executive, Home Team NS
Mr Charlie Ng	Chief Executive, Civil Service Club
Ms Jolene Ong	Founder, Arise2care Community Services Ltd
Mr Donald Tan	Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Business Strategies), SAFRA
Mr George Tanasijevich	Managing Director, Marina Bay Sands
Mr Lim Eng Lee	Chief Executive Officer, NTUC Club

NCPG Representative

Dr Cecilia Chu	Clinical Psychologist, Raffles Counselling Centre
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