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## Understanding Gambling: Mechanisms and Predictors: Alberta Gambling Research Institute's 15th Annual Conference

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Presentation

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# DISCUSSION OF IDEAS FOR DESIGNING EVIDENCE-INFORMED ANTI STIGMA INTERVENTIONS

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# INTRODUCTION

- PG is highly stigmatised which has numerous damaging effects.
- Stigma is a social construction – so should be amenable to change.
- Our task today is to identify and discuss ways that the public stigma associated with PG can be reduced – preferably informed by evidence.
- Facilitator introductions and their work on PG stigma
- Workshop format:
  - We'll pose several issues and questions for discussion
  - Relying on you to contribute!

# WHAT IS STIGMA AND HOW IS IT CREATED?

Stigma is a **social process** which occurs when individuals are **devalued or discredited** in a particular **social context** because of a **perceived negative attribute** which **disqualifies them from full social acceptance**.

(Goffman, 1963; Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998)

## Process of stigma creation:

- Labelling
- Stereotyping
- Separating/social distancing
- Emotional reactions (pity, anger, fear)
- Devaluation (attitudes) and discrimination (behaviour)

# STIGMA REDUCTION STRATEGIES USED IN OTHER FIELDS

- Change the language and labels
- Challenge and change the stereotypes
- Educate the public
- Use high profile champions
- Be careful with media representation/images
- Increase community contact
- Support those with gambling problems
- Be a role model
- Others?

Let's discuss how these might be applied in problem gambling.

# ISSUE 1: CHANGE THE LANGUAGE AND LABELLING

- Is labelling someone a “problem gambler” damaging? Why?
- Are there less damaging terms? What are they?
- How can we promote alternative terminology?

# ISSUE 2: CHALLENGE AND CHANGE THE STEREOTYPES

People with gambling problems tend to be stereotyped as impulsive, irresponsible, greedy, irrational, anti-social, untrustworthy, unproductive, foolish.

- Is there some truth in these stereotypes? If so, why is stereotyping unjustified?

Given the low prevalence of PG, stereotypes are likely to socially constructed from transmitted cultural beliefs, rather than cognitively derived from direct interactions.

- What implications does this have for stigma reduction efforts?
- How can stereotyping be reduced?

# ISSUE 3: PUBLIC EDUCATION

- What are some stigmatising myths about PG?
- How might we dispel these myths?
- What messages should be conveyed instead?
- To whom? And how?
- Would using high profile champions be useful?

# ISSUE 4: BE CAREFUL WITH MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS

- Do our social marketing materials need changing?
- And materials from help services?
- How should we depict people with gambling problems so that social marketing and help service messages resonate?

# ISSUE 5: INCREASE COMMUNITY CONTACT WITH PROBLEM GAMBLING

- Brainstorm some ways that community contact with people with gambling problems could be increased.
- What settings might this occur in? What groups could be targeted?

# ISSUE 6: SUPPORT THOSE WITH GAMBLING PROBLEMS

Research indicates that the public tends to desire substantial social distance from people with gambling problems.

And that they tend to feel pity/sympathy, but also some anger/annoyance and fear/apprehension.

And apply devaluing attitudes and discriminatory behaviours.

- Are these responses justified?
- Is a pity/sympathy response helpful or not?
- What should we do to provide more helpful support?

# ISSUE 7: BE A ROLE MODEL

- In your professional role, what can you do to help reduce PG stigma?
- Any other issues you would like to raise?