



**NEW HORIZONS**  
IN RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING

## Session: GameSense Advisors Program: A Retrospective

### Follow Up Q&A

**Q: Any thoughts on what might be the next wave of change? What would we hope might be different in 10-15 years?**

**Tamara:** The GameSense Advisor Program has matured over the last 10 years, and we are continually looking to enhance the quality of our player support services. One focus for the future is to better utilize data to customize messaging and conversations with our players. For example, our virtual GSAs that support players through phone and online live chat on PlayNow.com are now able to record, share and review their conversations, which may help guide training or help other GSAs in the support of the same player or similar situations. Through greater integration of player data into our services, we will be able to help guide areas for improvement, especially as we work towards proactively responding to players who display signs of problematic play and need immediate help.

**Q: A lot of work has been done to support the casino floor, any strategies for the online casino?**

**Tamara:** The pandemic and the transition to an increasingly virtual world has reinforced our understanding that we need to meet our players where they're at. Our GameSense Advisors, who previously provided in-person information and support to players in casinos, became accessible by phone and online live chat on our online gambling site, PlayNow.com, during early 2020 after our casinos temporarily closed.

BCLC is the first jurisdiction in North America, and one of just a few worldwide, to offer access to dedicated player-health specialists in real time and we have made this enhancement permanent to our players in British Columbia. Going forward we will continue to support PlayNow players through phone and online live chat. We will also work on greater integration of player data in our services that will allow us to proactively respond to players who display high-risk indicators of problematic play.

**Q: What research or evaluation has been done so far to support the business case for the value of GameSense Info Centres?**

**Tamara:** The GameSense Advisors (GSA) and the GameSense Info Centers (GSIC) are a large part of the GameSense program and provides an important service for not just players, but also for gambling staff and the community. The GameSense Advisor program, formerly known as the GSIC program, provides services centered on three broad objectives: Education, Support & Referral, and Program Embeddedness and Awareness.

In about 2015, evaluations, including a third-party review of the GSA program, determined that GSA services and the GSIC retail spaces are important offerings that provide the necessary support to players and casino staff. Since the GSA program expansion in April 2018, we have enhanced the program evaluation to include a yearly GSA tracking study that consists of both customer and venue staff surveys. In addition to tracking customer interactions and educational activities, the tracking study captures both customers and gambling facility staff feedback and continues to help inform that we are achieving the program's objectives and more importantly that we are leveraging the insights from the data when making program decisions.

This type of feedback helps us better understand the impact we are making. For example, in 2020, 82% of players stated that they felt more equipped to make informed decisions about their gambling after having interacted with a GSA. 78% of players stated that they feel more comfortable accessing problem gambling support having interacted with a GSA. Furthermore, we can measure the impact we are making with our program embeddedness on a service provider/operator's level. In 2020, gambling staff were satisfied with the player health training they received and felt more confident in their own ability to respond to players in distress. In fact, 96% of staff responded to players in distress by alerting someone at the facility. Of that total, 36% of staff responded directly to the player. These are the types of insights that help us understand whether we are making progress and impact.

The GSA tracking study was paused during the closure of casinos during the pandemic but will resume to include the evaluation of GSA phone and online live chat services as well.

**Q: What's the next step in measuring the impact of the GSAs marvellous work?**

**Tamara:** The GSA Program provides services centered on three broad objectives: Education, Support & Referral, and Program Embeddedness and Awareness. As part of its program evaluation, we will continue to track customer interactions in gambling facilities, on phone and live chat. But in addition to the feedback from the surveys in our tracking study, we are working to improve our ability to measure success in how we influence healthy play and reduce harms associated with gambling. This approach will transition away from inputs and outputs to an assessment of outcomes. What does this mean? We will strive to identify short to long term outcomes that capture attainable and measurable healthy gambling for players and our business as well as to provide clear measures of success to stakeholders. This new approach aligns with our new strategic framework, and the GSAs play a critical role in supporting this new approach.

**Q: With the evolving gambling landscape, what kind of tools would be helpful for GameSense Advisors to continue supporting player health? (e.g., budgeting tools, lower risk gambling guidelines)**

**Tamara:** The GameSense program's greatest asset is the GSAs, who are highly skilled and motivated individuals committed to supporting players to have fun with their gambling.

Arguably their greatest tool is their ability to connect with players with compassion and empathy. As such, we are continually investing in ongoing professional development and training to make sure they feel equipped and capable to support our players and gambling facility staff through a variety of situations and needs.

In addition to tools such as financial literacy and training, we will use customer data to help inform and enhance our conversations with players, providing them the appropriate support and help they need.