

In Their  
Own  
Words

*VOICES OF RESPONSIBLE GAMING*



**Philip G. Satre**

Chairman of the Board  
National Center for  
Responsible Gaming

## FOREWORD

I am very pleased to present *In Their Own Words: Voices of Responsible Gaming*. This special publication marks the 10th anniversary of Responsible Gaming Education Week, which is an opportunity for the entire gaming industry to come together with the community to learn about responsible gaming, show support for and shine a spotlight on this very important issue.

Perhaps the most visible faces of our industry are the hundreds of thousands of gaming industry employees across the country. Employees are truly at the heart of any responsible gaming effort because they are on the front lines, interacting with casino guests and ensuring that visitors receive the best casino entertainment experience possible.

Reflecting their vital place at the heart of responsible gaming, employees are also at the heart of this book of essays that you are about to read. To select the 15 employee essays contained in this book, the American Gaming Association sponsored a responsible gaming essay contest for gaming employees across the country. More than 100 employees responded to the call for entries, and the quality and number of responses are proof of the effectiveness of the industry's efforts to educate its employees about responsible gaming.

However, responsible gaming is an issue that affects everyone in the community, whether you are a gaming industry employee, customer, regulator, lawmaker, healthcare professional or citizen, so this book also includes the perspectives of gaming industry executives, regulators, problem gambling clinicians and researchers.

I hope you enjoy this special commemorative publication and that it causes you to think about what you would say when asked "what does responsible gaming mean to you?"

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Satre". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

“What would **you**  
**say** when asked ‘what  
does **responsible**  
**gaming** mean  
to you?’”

– *Philip G. Satre*

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“Just 20 years ago, few observers would have **predicted** the extent of **industry involvement** or the progress that has been made; few industries, scientific **inquiries**, public policy **efforts**, or public health **initiatives** have made as much **progress** in so little time.”

– Howard J. Shaffer, Ph.D., C.A.S.

# message

from the Division on Addictions at Cambridge Health Alliance

## RESPONSIBLE GAMING: WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?

**W**hen I first began to treat and study gambling-related problems during the early 1980s, there was no responsible gaming movement. Then, there was no shared concept of responsible gaming. Now, gambling industry leaders, regulators, public health workers, public policy makers and scientists alike are interested in responsible gaming and all that it entails. Critics are not so sure; some have argued about who should be responsible for gambling-related problems: the industry or the gambler, as if responsibility was a dichotomy. It is not. Gamblers and gambling purveyors, both government and private, know that gambling is risky. Shared risks make responsible gaming everyone's concern.

There has been remarkable growth in gambling and gambling-related research during the latter part of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Science has promulgated most of the gambling-related knowledge during just the last five years or so. Contrary to a pundit's recent claim that we know enough about gambling to fill the Rose Bowl 50 times over, the pile of scientific publications about gambling might only fill one or two Rose Bowl seats. The science of gambling and gambling-related disorders has a long way to go compared to the more mature sciences, but we have increased our knowledge considerably.

For example, here is a sampling of what we now know about the impact of gambling. Despite the explosion of gambling opportunities in America, the rate of pathological gambling has been quite stable during the last 35 years. Gambling-related disorders are more transient and follow a different course than previously



### **Howard J. Shaffer, Ph.D., C.A.S.**

Associate Professor of Psychology in Psychiatry  
Harvard Medical School  
Director, Division on Addictions  
Cambridge Health Alliance

thought. Gambling disorders involve genetic influences, neurobiological reward mechanisms, and some chronic, adverse psychosocial consequences. Proximity to gambling opportunities does influence the rate of gambling problems, but not proportionately; factors other than access contribute more influence. Men and women experience gambling problems more similarly than the conventional wisdom suggests.

As science identifies the distribution and determinants of gambling-related problems among the population and its high-risk segments, public health, gambling industry, public policy and anti-gambling interests need to work together to limit gambling-related harms. Surprisingly, some anti-gambling activists seem the least interested in coming to the table to work for the greater good. This constituency tends to act as if we know everything about gambling, the news about gambling is all bad, all the time, and the gambling industry is callous — perhaps even predatory — toward people with gambling-related problems. Fortunately, these assumptions are baseless.

Beyond the science, the responsible gaming movement encouraged the commercial casino industry to adopt a code of conduct, endorse the use of science to guide the development of industry-related policies, and led to the establishment of the National Center for Responsible Gaming — the most productive organization in the world for funding peer-reviewed scientific research about gambling. Now, lotteries, pari-mutuel and other segments of the gaming industry need to step-up and adopt similar policies. Just 20 years ago, few observers would have predicted the extent of industry involvement or the progress that has been made; few industries, scientific inquiries, public policy efforts or public health initiatives have made as much progress in so little time. There still is much to be done, but the foundation for this work has been established.

We all are responsible for gambling. Pro- and anti-gambling interests are similarly responsible. They need to find common ground — it is there — to come together and advance the greater good for the vast majority who wants to, and can, gamble responsibly; they also must come together to limit the harms that accrue to the minority of players who cannot gamble responsibly.



**Bo J. Bernhard, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor  
Departments of Sociology and  
Hotel Management  
Director of Gambling Research  
International Gaming Institute  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

**A**s a fifth-generation Nevadan, I can attest that the gaming industry has come a long way on the responsible gaming front. I remember my great-grandfather, who was alleged to be the oldest dealer on the Las Vegas Strip when he passed away, telling us fascinating tales about the early days of the gaming industry. In particular, I remember him relaying stories about gamblers who were “down on their luck,” and about management’s approach to these situations. According to his proud telling, on occasion, casino employees would chip in together to help pay for a customer’s bus ticket back home to California, Texas or Oklahoma. In retrospect, those were probably the first “responsible gaming policies” enacted by gaming companies. Today, of course, this spirit lives on among many who work “in the trenches” in this industry, and these noble intentions are now formalized in the more scientifically grounded policies that we have come to recognize as best practices.

**AS A FIFTH-GENERATION  
NEVADAN, I CAN ATTEST  
THAT THE GAMING  
INDUSTRY HAS COME  
A LONG WAY ON THE  
RESPONSIBLE GAMING  
FRONT.**





**William S. Boyd**

Chairman and CEO  
Boyd Gaming Corporation



The gaming industry offers an exciting and popular form of entertainment, one enjoyed responsibly by millions of people each year. Ensuring that it remains a fun activity — and helping those who have trouble gambling responsibly — is a goal all of us in this industry share.

Just as with other addictions, awareness of the issues surrounding compulsive and underage gambling is instrumental in helping our guests and employees make educated and responsible decisions regarding gambling.

At the forefront of our efforts is Responsible Gaming Education Week, launched 10 years ago by the American Gaming Association (AGA) and its members. Although we have incorporated responsible gaming practices into our daily operations, Responsible Gaming Education Week is an opportunity to focus additional resources on employee training and public awareness of problem gambling — providing all of us an invaluable refresher on this important topic.

Another fundamental piece in our fight against problem gambling is the National Center for Responsible Gaming (NCRG), formed in conjunction with the AGA in 1996. The NCRG is an independent organization that is dedicated to funding peer-reviewed research regarding gambling disorders. Since its inception, the NCRG has provided more than \$15 million in research grants to more than 20 leading research institutions in the United States and Canada. The research these institutions conduct helps develop effective treatment plans while also developing interactive employee training programs such as the “Executive, Management, and Employee Responsible Gaming Education” or “EMERGE” training.

As we recognize the 10th anniversary of Responsible Gaming Education Week, our industry’s commitment to responsible gaming is as strong as ever. I look forward to continuing our work together and “Keeping it Fun” for our guests.



### **Holly Brown**

Slot Technician  
Ameristar Casino Kansas City  
Kansas City, Missouri

**A**s a slot technician, I sometimes get called to a slot machine because there is a problem. Most guests are not happy and have some form of complaint. I take it as my responsibility to listen first. A lot of people need that ear to vent. Over the years I have learned key words to listen for in case a guest falls into the category of a problem gambler.

I personally know someone who sold all of her boyfriend's possessions to support her gambling habit. With help from my family and hers, we got her on the List of Disassociated Persons and now she is getting help. I used to see her every day I worked, but now I check in with her to make sure her family comes first. I have five younger brothers and sisters, and I'm glad to have the experience of seeing it everyday to let them know how gambling can become a problem for some people.

It is a lot of fun to watch a group come in with friends and seeing the excitement on their faces over what some would consider a small win. I've always viewed gambling as entertainment. Gambling should be fun. During Responsible Gaming Education Week I proudly wear my orange "Keep It Fun" bracelet and love to share what it means to me to anyone who will listen.

**G**aming has evolved since I first began working in the industry in 1994. Casinos developed shopping, spas, bowling alleys, movie theaters and more. This helped to create the “entertainment experience.”

The additional amenities provide customers with more options during a visit to their favorite casino. These changes create an environment where customers can game in a more responsible way. Time spent enjoying a fine meal or movie provides a break from the gambling, yet allows guests to stay at one particular property.

The gaming industry conducts mandatory training on how to recognize when a customer is asking for help. Having the right response when approached by a guest is vital to assisting them to get the help they need.

Working as a cage shift manager, I must be able to recognize a customer asking for assistance. The training provided helps me to identify someone asking for help, as opposed to someone venting past losses. I have spoken with customers who have asked for help, and I have provided them with information on where to get assistance, along with the options available to them.

Trained casino employees who recognize the importance of responsible gaming benefit the customers they serve and bolster a positive image of the industry. The casino industry is in the best position to regulate itself, promote and train employees about responsible gaming. When the fun stops we all lose.



**Philip Cicero**

Cage Shift Manager  
Empress Casino Joliet  
Joliet, Illinois



## Stacy Clark

Slot Attendant  
Ameristar Casino Council Bluffs  
Council Bluffs, Iowa

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hen I turned 21, I walked into a casino with \$50 and my friends walking next to me. I walked out with my friends by my side, talking about the fun we had.

Those who are responsible and know their limits will have more fun and excitement. Responsible gaming means you play when you have the money, not when you need the money. Responsible gaming is an important key in having a great time. You have to determine what is acceptable for your losses before you even walk into a casino.

When I am working, I love to see our guests having a great time. The smile on their faces, knowing that they are having fun makes me have fun. As an employee of the casino industry, it is part of my job to tell if someone has a gambling problem, as well as lead our guests in the right direction to get the help they need. The American Gaming Association has unlimited resources to help our guests, as well as employees, with responsible gaming. Learning about responsible gaming and educating our guests has helped me live my own life in a more responsible way, both at work and at home, which, in turn, makes me a better employee and a better person.

**RESPONSIBLE GAMING MEANS YOU PLAY  
WHEN YOU HAVE THE MONEY, NOT WHEN  
YOU NEED THE MONEY.**

# RESPONSIBLE GAMING IS ABOUT ALL OF US. WE ALL HAVE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY.



## **Monique Finley**

Table Games Dealer  
Horseshoe Bossier City Hotel and Casino  
Bossier City, Louisiana



... didn't fully understand the importance of responsible gaming until a few years ago. Before work one day, a co-worker and good friend of mine told me he lost \$1,200 at one of the other casinos. I looked confused, but I heard him clearly. It had never dawned on me that casino employees might have problems with gambling. I assumed that having seen the ups and downs and feeling the rush from eight hours on the floor would convince anyone to moderate their play, leading them to bring with them only what they can afford to lose. I assumed wrong.

Years ago, I listened to my friend. Listening was all I could do. I didn't know what advice to give, or even who I could talk to. I worried that talking to someone else about my friend's gambling problem would cause a rift between us. Today, when I observe someone with a gaming problem, I know there are resources readily available. I feel that it is my responsibility to notify a supervisor or one of the Responsible Gaming Ambassadors (RGA).

I'm in a unique position to see players at their best and their worst. I know that life is circumstantial. These days when the circumstances point to a problem, I'll take the time to talk to one of the RGAs. It's better safe than sorry.

Responsible gaming is about all of us. We all have to take responsibility.





## International Game Technology

Corporate Headquarters – Reno, Nevada



The year 2007 marks the 10th anniversary of both the AGA's RGEW, as well as the creation of IGT's own formal Responsible Gaming Program. Over the past 10 years, we have gained a better understanding of the importance of responsible gaming practices and what "corporate social responsibility" really entails. As a technology provider to the gaming industry, our approach to responsible gaming differs only slightly from that of the gaming operator, but the objective in the end is the same. We believe that objective must always be to provide the appropriate help for those individuals who are unable to participate in gaming in a responsible manner.

Our experience over the past 10 years has taught us that education remains the key in this area. It is also the key for achieving the goals we have set for ourselves as a company. Those goals include: designing the world's most successful gaming machines while striving to educate the public on how to enjoy our product in a responsible manner; providing up-to-date information on the subject to our employees, our customers, and to public policy makers so that they might have a better understanding of the issue of responsible gaming; and finally, openly and honestly communicating with the treatment and research communities in an effort to find common solutions to gaming-related disorders.

At the heart of each of these goals is education, and it has been through education that we at IGT have come to better understand the essence of this issue as well. This information has come to us from not only research and treatment professionals, but also from the real "experts" on this issue — recovering problem gamblers. Ultimately, it is their experience that may provide us with the greatest insight in our quest for the most effective means to educate people on the importance of responsible gaming.



**Linda M. Kassekert**

Chairwoman  
New Jersey Casino Control Commission

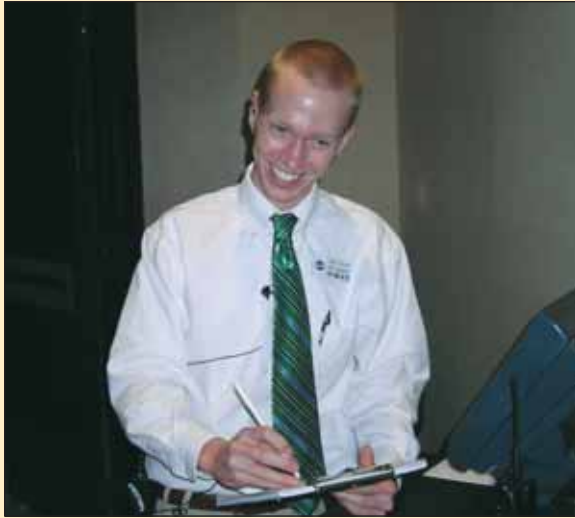
awareness about problem gambling and the resources that are available to help problem gamblers and their families. We also encourage our licensees to train their employees to help identify customers who might have a gambling problem.

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hen New Jersey adopted the Casino Control Act in 1977, the legislature required that all on-site advertising had to include a warning that read “Bet with your head, not over it,” much like those on tobacco products. The legislature knew that gambling was a problem for some people and it wanted to get a message out to them to urge them to play responsibly. That provision remains in effect today and is one prong in New Jersey’s efforts to help people who cannot control their gambling.

Anyone who has ever seen how destructive a gambling addiction can be knows why responsible gaming and education programs are so vital. For a small minority of people, gambling isn’t a form of entertainment or recreation, it’s an addiction, a sickness that takes control over their lives and destroys them. People regularly come to the Casino Control Commission and Division of Gaming offices asking to be placed on our self-exclusion list. Often, we hear stories of shattered families and squandered fortunes. As regulators and as human beings, we want to make sure problem gamblers get the help they need to deal with their addiction.

To that end, we work together with the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey to increase public awareness about problem gambling and the resources that are available to help problem gamblers and their families. We also encourage our licensees to train their employees to help identify customers who might have a gambling problem.



## Colby Kenyon

Valet Supervisor  
Harrah's North Kansas City Hotel & Casino  
North Kansas City, Missouri



The casino industry's singular passion for the promotion of responsible gaming is a testament to its genuine commitment to providing safe entertainment to its customers. From fatty foods to video games, with everything pleasurable there exists an inherent danger in the absence of moderation. Amid the march of capitalism, a few noble companies within the casino industry have opened their eyes to the bigger picture and have taken decisive action to ensure the well-being of their customers, not out of compulsion but compassion. The willing participation of casinos in responsible gaming initiatives is a paradigm of compassionate capitalism; it is the realization that a firm should be responsible not only to its board of directors, but society as a whole.

Weeks ago, I asked a customer how he was doing as he left the casino. He turned to me with a smile and said, "I lost a little money, but I had a great time." That is the embodiment of safe gaming; the guest is entertained, the casino makes a profit and there is a mutual benefit. The ultimate goal of all responsible gaming initiatives is simple; to ensure that, just like this particular gentleman, our guests always leave the casino with a smile on their face. When guests see that behind the juggernaut corporate machine, there are people who put consideration for our fellow man and woman before our desire for monetary gain, then you will see a level of customer loyalty which has never been witnessed before.





## J. Terrence Lanni

Chairman and CEO  
MGM MIRAGE



he pledge made by the U.S. commercial casino industry to place greater emphasis on issues surrounding problem gambling has been one of the most important steps our industry has taken in recent years. Not only are gaming companies providing funds to study and treat gambling disorders, our industry's commitment to responsible gaming is stronger and more visible than ever throughout our resorts.

MGM MIRAGE was one of the first major casino companies to commit to the AGA's "Code of Conduct for Responsible Gaming" some four years ago, as our industry joined forces in unprecedented fashion to promote greater understanding of this important issue. The AGA's highly visible orange wristbands symbolizing our support of responsible gaming have considerably heightened awareness among our employees, their families and our guests.

Across our company and throughout the industry, one would be hard-pressed to find a casino-resort cashier window that isn't stocked with guides to responsible gaming, or a casino ATM that doesn't post the Problem Gambling Helpline phone number. We also provide the AGA's more universal "Understanding the Odds" brochure, which is designed to assist each and every player who passes through our doors.

While we can't always determine if a particular player's gambling is causing negative consequences in his or her life, our staff is well-trained and equipped to recognize the warning signs of problem gambling, and to gently intervene when appropriate. In addition, our security staff has the best technology and resources to immediately remove any underage person from the casino.

While both scientific research and anecdotal experience shows that the vast majority of our guests enjoy their gambling experience responsibly, I think every guest appreciates knowing that our company promotes responsible gaming and that we make every effort to have information and help readily available in a time of need, in places where a problem gambler is most likely to find it.

Problem gambling is a society-wide issue. It takes all sectors of society to be made aware of its signs and symptoms and understand how best to help someone with such a problem. The gaming industry has taken its responsibility seriously and welcomes the opportunity to work with others — scientists, treatment providers, friends and family, and problem gamblers themselves — to make sure that anyone who chooses to gamble does so responsibly.



### **Gary Loveman**

Chairman, CEO and President  
Harrah's Entertainment, Inc.

**M**ore than 50 million Americans sample the casino entertainment experience each year. Whether it's enjoying great meals at our restaurants, seeing performances by world-class entertainers in our showrooms, or joining friends for an evening of blackjack, there is fun for the taking at our casinos. That's what our business is all about.

Harrah's position on responsible gaming is clear. We want everyone who gambles at our casinos to be there for the right reason — to simply have fun. We don't want people who don't gamble responsibly to play at our casinos, or at any casinos. Period.

Promoting responsible gaming is part of our heritage and culture at Harrah's. It's part of who we are. It's why we created the first national toll-free helpline for people with gambling problems. And it's the foundation of our Code of Commitment, which spells out the principles that govern how we do business, and the standards against which we want

to be judged. Harrah's long-standing and continuing commitment to responsible gaming is something in which we take great pride.

Encouraging casino customers to gamble responsibly is part of delivering great customer service. And it is a smart business decision. When we promote responsible gaming, we help create a climate in which our business and careers can grow and thrive. However, promoting responsible gaming is much more than a smart business decision. For each of us as individuals and collectively as America's casino industry, promoting responsible gaming is simply the right thing to do.

**ENCOURAGING CASINO CUSTOMERS TO  
GAMBLE RESPONSIBLY IS PART OF  
DELIVERING GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE.**



### **Pamela Lowery**

Human Resources File Clerk  
Caesars Palace Las Vegas Hotel & Casino  
Las Vegas, Nevada

I am so happy that responsible gaming education exists. It is wonderful that the gaming industry participates in such a helpful idea. I first heard about responsible gaming during my new hire orientation at Caesars Palace. I had no idea that the casinos had a system in place for helping people with gambling problems. The training I received helped me to recognize some of the signs of gambling problems in someone I know: gambling out of depression; wanting to stop but not being able to; thinking that, "If I hit the jackpot all my problems will be over," genuinely believing that, "I deserve to win because of all I've been through in my life, therefore if I just keep gambling, I will hit it big;" gambling away the bill money; and having to borrow money to pay the mortgage.

The pamphlets that are available about responsible gaming are so colorful and easy to read. I picked up a few and brought them to someone who I felt could benefit from them. That person came to the realization that they have a gambling problem and is now trying to "keep it fun." We still have to give comfort and support, but it is a little easier now, thanks to responsible gaming education.

**I HAD NO IDEA THAT THE CASINOS HAD A SYSTEM IN PLACE FOR HELPING PEOPLE WITH GAMBLING PROBLEMS.**



### **Rosa Lugo**

Training Specialist  
Harrah's Rincon Casino & Resort  
San Diego, California



There seems to be a misconception when it comes to casinos and responsible gaming. There are people who don't think these two words go together, and I was once one of them. Before I began working for the casino industry, I never really believed the "Know when to stop before you start" campaign.

It was the second day of my new hire orientation when the trainer began to talk about responsible gaming. As I sat there in awe, the trainer talked and showed video clips of examples of what to listen for, when to get help, why we get help and our role in responsible gaming.

I learned that knowing, understanding and delivering responsible gaming courses wasn't only a nice thing to do, but it was also the right thing to do for our corporation. Not gambling responsibly can potentially harm players and the lives of those around them and cause our employees concern as they build relationships with their customers. It was important that we exclude people from our property, only because we care about them and their welfare. I learned that although we are in the casino industry, we want our customers to be here for the right reasons.

As a new training specialist, I'm excited to continue to learn and educate our new employees, our customers and our communities about the impact of responsible gaming.



### **Eileen M. Luna-Firebaugh**

Associate Professor  
American Indian Studies Program  
The University of Arizona

benefits. The factors cited above, coupled with the high number of adolescents on most reservations (exceeding 50 percent in many places) create a situation where problem gaming behaviors could easily occur. Thus, there is widespread attention to programs that address responsible gaming.

In many areas, like Arizona, North Dakota and Connecticut, Indian tribes are the primary funding source for such programs. For example, in 2006 the Arizona gaming tribes contributed more than \$1.6 million to the Arizona Office of Problem Gambling. This amounted to more than half of the Office's \$2.2 million annual budget. In addition, many tribal governments run their own problem gambling programs for tribal members and employees. Attention to this issue is essential if gambling is to serve the good in Indian Country.

In 2005, 224 tribal governments operated 420 casinos throughout the United States, providing more than 400,000 jobs and more than \$10.5 billion in wages. However, only 23 tribes have been highly successful, accounting for more than 56 percent of total Indian gambling revenues.

In spite of gambling, Indian Country remains one of the last pockets of massive unemployment, burgeoning crime and alcoholism rates, and overwhelming poverty left in the United States. To use unemployment as an example, a 2000 Associated Press study found that unemployment exceeded 80 percent on many reservations, with the average rate at 54 percent (as compared with a national rate of less than 6 percent). For the highly successful gambling tribes, unemployment dropped from 34.5 percent in 1991 to 27.7 percent in 1997.

American Indian tribal governments are concerned about the possible adverse impact of gambling in Indian Country. For some, the potential harm to tribal members from the proximity of gaming enterprises outweighs the potential

# THE GAMING INDUSTRY IS WELL ADVISED TO PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE GAMING, AND I COMMEND THEM FOR IT.

**"f**or most normal folks, drinking means conviviality, companionship and colorful imagination. It means release from care, boredom and worry. It is joyous intimacy with friends and a feeling that life is good. But not so with us in those last days of heavy drinking. The old pleasures were gone. They were but memories. Never could we recapture the great moments of the past. There was an insistent yearning to enjoy life as we once did and a heartbreaking obsession that some new miracle of control would enable us to do it. There was always one more attempt and one more failure."

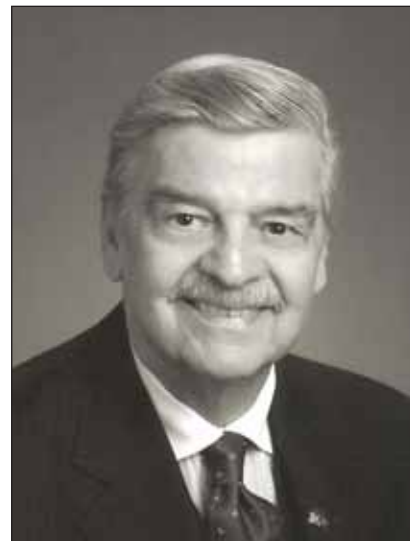
Change the word "drinking" to "gambling" in this important passage from the book Alcoholics Anonymous, the text for the original 12-step program, and you have a perfect description both of responsible gaming and problem gambling.

Indeed, responsible gaming IS "joyous intimacy with friends and a feeling that life is good." It is a recreational and responsible use of disposable funds. Problem, pathological or compulsive gambling, on the other hand, is quite accurately described in the statement that "the old pleasures were gone...never could we recapture the great moments of the past."

Although a significant majority of people view and engage in gambling as entertainment, for those affected by problem gambling and for their families, the impact can be substantial. The gaming industry is well advised to promote responsible gaming, and I commend them for it.

If you think you might be a problem gambler, you might want to ask yourself a couple questions: Have I ever lied to anyone important about my gambling? Have I ever felt the need to risk more and more? If the answer to either of these questions is "yes," it might be a good idea to talk to a trained problem gambling counselor.

Remember always to gamble responsibly and keep in mind that "if it causes a problem, it IS a problem," and "if you NEED to win, you need to stop."



**Reece Middleton**

Executive Director  
Louisiana Association  
on Compulsive Gambling





## Tracey Miller

Security Officer/EMT  
Ameristar Casino Kansas City  
Kansas City, Missouri

guest, we may have just assisted with sending their child to college. What a great feeling that is — to know you may have just made a difference to someone who did not know that help was just around the corner.

Knowing the importance of responsible gaming can be the tool for success for guests and team members of the gaming industry. From restricting mailings to being placed on the disassociated list, there are many avenues a guest can take.

Know your avenues, be familiar with the signs of problem gambling and most importantly, feel good about knowing YOU can make a difference.

Responsible gaming is important to me for several reasons. The Webster definition of responsible is “having the capacity to make moral decisions.” The definition of gaming is “an amusement or pastime.” The ability to make moral decisions while passing time IS responsible gaming.

Kenny Rogers said it best — “You got to know when to hold ‘em, know when to fold ‘em, know when to walk away, know when to run.”

To know your limits as a responsible gambler is the key for success. There are many programs to help patrons with responsible gaming. 1-888-BETS OFF is the first step for many problem gamblers. With support from trained professionals, assistance is a phone call away.

Responsible gaming to me is so much more. It is a college education, a new home, maybe even a new car. More importantly, it is good judgment. The hardest part for a problem gambler is admitting there is a problem. That is where everyone in the gaming industry comes in. Many times, we, the front line team members, are approached by guests wanting more information. By knowing where to direct that



### **Wes Milligan**

Employee Services & Communications Manager  
Pinnacle Entertainment, Inc.  
Las Vegas, Nevada

**AS SOON AS SOMEONE GOES BEYOND THEIR MEANS, WE HAVE FAILED THAT GUEST IN PROVIDING THE BEST ENTERTAINMENT POSSIBLE.**

**B**efore I became an employee in the gaming industry, I was under the impression that casinos wanted nothing more than to strip guests of every cent they had as soon as they walked through the door. I could not have been more wrong.

Now that I'm on the other side, I understand that in order for casinos to be successful, we must embrace responsible gaming. Loyal guests come back to casinos that provide great entertainment, extraordinary customer service and the most important thing of all: caring. Guests don't return when they have suddenly lost everything, service is poor and no one seems to care about them.

As soon as someone goes beyond their means, we have failed that guest in providing the best entertainment possible. You have to care about their well-being so your guests can return, rather than pushing them away because they have gone beyond their limits. In a way, we are offering responsible entertainment just as much as we are providing responsible gaming.

So if perception is reality, then we must continue to promote responsible gaming...and then some. We have the responsibility to entertain our guests and make sure their service is the highest it can be, today and tomorrow, and for however long our casinos are open. No one smiles when they have gone beyond their means, and when they don't smile, their guest experience at your casino is ruined. Don't let this happen to your casino: promote responsible gaming. Promote responsible entertainment.





**Michael Nelson**

Income Control Auditor  
Harrah's Joliet Hotel & Casino  
Joliet, Illinois

**A**s an income control auditor, I work behind the scenes and only occasionally get a taste of the action on the casino floor. But as an area resident and homeowner, I take pride in being a part of an organization that is a leader in the local community. Harrah's reputation of impeccable integrity makes being a part of the team very gratifying.

According to the 2000 census, Joliet ranked 10th among the fastest growing cities in the U.S. Harrah's Joliet has had a great impact on this growth by providing jobs and an entertainment destination that attracts many visitors from the Chicago area as well as around the country.

Promoting responsible gaming among our guests

helps ensure a healthy relationship with our community. To do our part in continuing this growth, we must maintain a fun, positive atmosphere for our guests in order to keep Harrah's Joliet among the most desirable attractions in the Chicagoland area.

Allowing irresponsible behavior among our customers does nothing to achieve this goal. It serves to deteriorate the strength of the community around us. Addictive behavior and financial hardship damages our public image and the economic viability of our fine city. Therefore, it is our duty to identify those customers who participate in an unhealthy patronage and offer help.

When everyone works together to ensure that our customers act responsibly, not only do the employees and shareholders of Harrah's benefit, but the residents, businesses and local governments share in our good fortune.



## **Richard "Todd" Owen**

Employee/Labor Relations Counselor  
Caesars Palace Las Vegas Hotel & Casino  
Las Vegas, Nevada

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hen I think about responsible gaming, I look at it in terms of customer service, which is a main priority of the gaming industry. The health and future of gaming is dependent on customer service; we want our guests to return. Statistically, 96 percent of unhappy customers never complain, but 91 percent of them will not visit again. Therefore, it is imperative that we foster an environment where our customers are number ONE, or more importantly, are made to feel as part of our family.

As part of our family, it is our obligation to ensure our customers' welfare while they are in our home. A major part of that obligation is within the concept of responsible gaming. I do not believe that any of us would want to sit idly by while a family member was engaged in behaviors that were destructive to them. It is in this belief that responsible gaming becomes so important.

By educating ourselves about responsible gaming, we can then educate our customers, our friends and our families. As members of the gaming industry, we can use this education to recognize and assist those who may need help. With this education, we can help in fostering an environment where our customers know they are number ONE, and more importantly, believe they are part of our family. I cannot think of a better way to ensure the future of the gaming industry.

**BY EDUCATING OURSELVES ABOUT RESPONSIBLE GAMING, WE CAN THEN EDUCATE OUR CUSTOMERS, OUR FRIENDS AND OUR FAMILIES.**



### **Esther Sanchez**

Payroll Specialist  
Harrah's New Orleans Casino & Hotel  
New Orleans, Louisiana



Everyone needs a place to go to laugh, relax and unwind. For our customers, Harrah's New Orleans Casino is the place to come for a good meal and some lively entertainment; to laugh, play and take chances on making a dream come true by winning a fortune! Unfortunately, for some of our customers the dream becomes a nightmare of survival. When the dream becomes an obsession, when the hope becomes despair, when the fun is gone, then often the responsible become irresponsible. Lives change, families suffer, customers become desperate.

It is important to me that I work for a casino that has a code of ethics. Harrah's cares about employees, customers and the community — not just making money. Harrah's reaches out with education and concern. For some customers, having a responsible gaming ambassador to talk with them can put gaming in perspective and make it fun again. Other customers need options that won't entice out-of-control gaming. All Harrah's employees learn about responsible gaming. Employees are the first to see signs that gaming has become a problem. Employees often hear that a stranger, friend or family member lost their rent or grocery money or can't pay their bills because they just knew a jackpot would hit on the next spin or toss of the dice. Employees need to be prepared to reach out to family, friends and members of the community with compassion and information. Learning about responsible gaming can help keep slot machines and gaming tables entertaining and stress-free for all.



**Kathleen M. Scanlan**

Executive Director  
Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling

From the time of the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling's founding in 1983 by Tom Cummings, a person who had experienced gambling problems and had struggled to find ways to get help, the Council has had the philosophy of advocating for responsible gambling policies. The Council believed then, as it does now, that it is the responsibility of a state that endorses, promotes or sponsors gambling to take into account that some people will develop problems related to that gambling and to make available prevention, intervention and treatment for gambling problems.

In Massachusetts, we have found, through a survey completed recently, that 78 percent of people in Massachusetts hold the same belief, that as long as a state sponsors gambling, it has the responsibility to fund problem gambling programs. Our public officials have also understood this need for responsible public policy related to gambling, and since 1987 have funded problem gambling services. Without these responsible gambling policies, I believe that a significant percentage of the people who need it might not have received help to overcome their gambling problems.

While in Massachusetts we focus mainly on state-sponsored gambling, if casinos were available in the state, we would encourage private enterprises or Native American Tribes that operate gambling to seek and form partnerships with providers of problem gambling services to create responsible gambling programs.

**AS LONG AS A STATE SPONSORS GAMBLING,  
IT HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO FUND  
PROBLEM GAMBLING PROGRAMS.**



## Jennifer Sharp

Employee Relations Manager  
Par-A-Dice Hotel & Casino  
East Peoria, Illinois

remember when gaming came to central Illinois,  
and the casino opened its doors for the first time on

November 20, 1991. This was big news for our community, and people from all over began to experience a “little piece of Las Vegas.” Both customers and employees felt the excitement of casinos with the bright lights, clanking coins and a 1920s Flappers Era theme. Along with the glamour and glitz came the reality that an opportunity for abuse could occur if one did not understand and recognize problem gambling.

I believe that one can seek refuge from life’s problems in whatever they consider to be fun. For some, this could be the buzz of alcohol, frenzied shopping, over or undereating, and even excess gambling. Arguments have been made by many to eliminate the physical source of one’s addiction. This negative reaction comes from fear and ignorance. If you cannot identify the behaviors that are at the root of a person’s problem, they cannot begin to truly heal.

Education leads to understanding. Understanding empowers one to recognize key indicators of compulsive gambling. Empowerment becomes an opportunity to change a life. I consider Boyd Gaming my company, and being a stakeholder, I feel a responsibility to my fellow team members, guests and community to recognize the symptoms of problem gambling. Sharing all the facets of responsible gaming for our new team members in orientation is one of the responsibilities in my current position. I take pride in explaining the history of my company and how Boyd Gaming helped to bring education and resources to employees and communities. Boyd Gaming is aggressive and proactive in its responsible gaming campaign, and I am extremely proud to be a part of the Boyd Gaming initiative for responsible gaming.



**Sharon Smith**

Surveillance Officer  
Harrah's North Kansas City Hotel & Casino  
North Kansas City, Missouri



he importance of responsible gaming cannot be over-emphasized in today's climate of expanding gaming venues. As more and more government entities look to gaming taxes to help carry the load of providing public services, we have an ever increasing need to make sure safeguards are in place for those that might have a tendency to abuse gambling opportunities. Harrah's Entertainment, Inc. is a leader not only in the gaming industry, but also in the campaign for public awareness and problem gambling rehabilitation programs.

As a 10-year employee of Harrah's Casino, I have witnessed a long-term commitment by the gaming industry to the community and especially to responsible gaming programs. This commitment is carried out on a daily basis through intensive employee education, extensive advertising, a toll-free help line, on-site responsible gaming committees and most importantly — employees that care.

Knowing the importance Harrah's places on responsible gaming and utilizing the resources made available to me empowers me to be a strong advocate for responsible gaming. Problem gambling is taken very seriously by the casino industry. I am proud to be part of the effort to "keep it fun."

**I HAVE WITNESSED A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT BY THE GAMING INDUSTRY TO THE COMMUNITY AND ESPECIALLY TO RESPONSIBLE GAMING PROGRAMS.**





### **Teresa Tiarks**

Risk Manager  
Par-A-Dice Hotel & Casino  
East Peoria, Illinois

**A**s we know, gaming is fun and controlled for most guests. However, there are a select few who take gambling too far and let it control and ruin their lives. We, as gaming industry employees, have a responsibility to educate ourselves on how to recognize problem gambling and how to handle a problem gambler.

Being educated is important so that we can provide support for someone with a problem without alienating them. We are dealing with a person whose ego is being threatened by their own addictive personality, and he or she must be handled very delicately. There are proverbial lines that cannot be crossed for fear the reaction will be the opposite reaction of what we are trying to accomplish. So, until the person is ready to recognize and admit they have a problem, we cannot treat them as though there is a problem. At this point, it would be good to become their friend so they feel they can turn to you when they are ready.

Once someone asks for help, they will need understanding, and without education, there is no understanding. When the problem gambler admits to having a problem, they are most likely already at a very low point in their life and need a helping hand. They need a place to turn to that will make them feel that there is hope and they are not alone.


We, as gaming industry employees, should be able to recognize a problem gambler and be prepared to help the individual through the steps it will take to get them back on the right track — whether that step is talking to them and making them feel as though they have come to the right place or escorting them to someone who can help them. The only way this can be accomplished is by educating ourselves to all situations and knowing where to turn for the answers.

**ONCE SOMEONE ASKS FOR HELP, THEY WILL NEED UNDERSTANDING, AND WITHOUT EDUCATION, THERE IS NO UNDERSTANDING.**



**Ken Winters, Ph.D.**

Professor  
Department of Psychiatry  
University of Minnesota

 have been around enough casinos and other gambling venues (and yes, ALL in the name of research) to see the good, the bad and the ugly of responsible gambling.

The good is that most adults appear to gamble in a responsible manner. They approach gambling with the same financial expectations as other recreational options. When my wife and I go to a casino, we probably spend (well, lose) as much money as we would spend for a fancy dinner and a movie. I have a friend who spends three days in Vegas every year. He usually leaves behind about \$250, which is about what it would cost him if he played golf for three days.

The bad is seeing someone not handling gambling well. Some people should not go to casinos, or they should limit their betting to an occasional lottery ticket. There is the angry gambler who is trying too hard to get rich by gambling. Sometimes, I encounter them next to me at the blackjack table, as they glare at me for taking a card when protocol would suggest not to, as if that card were destined for them. And then there are those that are chasing losses and in denial about having a true clinical problem with gambling.

The ugly (or at least, the not so pretty) is that the gaming industry, like any other consumer-oriented industry, markets its product well. Much of that marketing, like most consumer marketing, is based on the facts that humans tend to have selective memory, can easily lose track of time, and can be persuaded to purchase a product or engage in an activity that we may not really need over the long haul. For a majority, the massaging of our faults is not a big problem, but for some this is not the case.

However, gambling is here to stay, so I favor teaching people to be responsible with the opportunities.





The NCRG and AGA would like to thank all of those gaming industry employees who submitted essays during our responsible gaming essay contest. Without their creativity and commitment to responsible gaming, this book would not have been possible.

Kevin Acre	Jeffrey Ellis	Mark Kucharczuk	David Pond
Derek Adams	Cindy Elwell	Hope Loehr	Christy Rose
Becky Adams	Mary Lou Finch	Pamela Lowery	Mike Ross
Dave Babbe	Monique Finley	Rosa Lugo	Esther Sanchez
Candice Baker	Doris Fisher	Louis Madrigal	Michael Schaffner
Janet Banks	Lutannueal Flowers	Vicki Madsen	Marianne Shannon
Ginni Bauer	Cindy Fowler	Rocio Manriquez	Jennifer Sharp
Kristen Bentson	Chad Friend, Captain	Julie Marlin	Tammie Shellberg
Joanne Bradley	Kyle Gaines	Jan Marovich	Diana Smith
Mary Branaugh	Mariann Remy	Keisha McGee	Sharon Smith
Holly Brown	Germany	Lana Meche	Lou Ann Sodano
Philip Cicero	Michael Graczyk	Jennifer Melora	Lynn Spooner
Irena Ciesielski	Joel Gregorio	Marilyn Miles	Peggy Standlee
Stacy Clark	Diana Hall	Tracey Miller	Jane Stimmel
Lola Clements	Litrease Holley	Wes Milligan	Teresa Tiarks
Corrina Costello	Edward Hunt	Todd Monari	Melinda Trenary
Crystal Crane	Michael Inforzato	Valerie Moore	Matthew Valentine
Velma Cunningham	Garry Ivey	Donna Kaye Moore	Carrie Vaughn
Roy Daproza	Shelton James	James Moore	Therese Vavra
Erin Dixon	Sara Jameson	Sarah Moreno Abrego	Darci Von Feldt
Debra Doulgeropoulos	Amy Jeffries	Austin Muchemore	Linda Washington
Jessica Dowdell	Diane Kennedy	Michael Nelson	Jeremy Wiedel
Patti Downing	Gerald Kent	Richard "Todd" Owen	Celeste Wilson
Chris Downs	Colby Kenyon	Lisa Pieper	
Nichole Dube	Steven King	Melissa Pieters	



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