GAMESENSE IN FOCUS: INSIGHTS FROM AN EVALUATION IN MASSACHUSETTS CASINOS

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OTTAWA, CANADA
At issue: Persistence
HOW TO GAMBLE Responsibly
GameSense is a comprehensive responsible gaming strategy.

GameSense Advisors work at a GameSense Info Center located at casinos. GameSense Advisors receive extensive training in the areas of responsible gaming techniques, problem gaming behavior and local resources for help.
**GameSense MA Logic Model (simplified)**

**Impact**
- Improved health and well-being of players

**Effect**
- Creation of a socially responsible approach to gambling

**Outcomes**
- Promote positive play
- Reduce gambling-related harm
- RG enabled workforce

**Outputs**
- Increased knowledge and engagement with GS
- Increased RG knowledge and engagement with casino (VSE) and community (treatment) resources
- Referrals
Survey of "regular" Patrons

Recruitment: 1109 patrons who
1) visited one of the three Massachusetts casinos at least three times in the last three months and
2) Spent at least $100.
Player: What should they exhibit?

Measured outcomes:

- Awareness of GameSense
- Knowledgeable about the purpose of GameSense
- Engaged with and perceptions of GameSense
Awareness of GameSense

- 73.1% Aware of GS
- 26.9% Not aware of GS
Target audience of GameSense

- All Players: 54%
- Problem Gamblers: 72%
### Purpose of GameSense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived purpose</th>
<th>Proportion who responded “Yes”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helps educate players about responsible gambling</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides responsible gaming tools</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers support for gambling-related problems</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps educate players about gambling-related myths</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s a lounge where players can get away from the floor</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Engagement with GameSense

- Yes: 82%
- No: 18%

Legend:
- Yes
- No
### Reasons for *not* engaging with GameSense

Three groups emerged:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-assured (n=124):</th>
<th>Invitation responsive (n=248):</th>
<th>Self-assured non-believers (n=132):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• “I already know how games work”</td>
<td>• “No one asked me to check GameSense out”</td>
<td>• “I don’t think GameSense Advisors would be able to teach me anything”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “I already know about gambling-related myths”</td>
<td></td>
<td>• “I don’t think GameSense Advisors help players”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Reasons for engaging with GameSense

## Two groups emerged:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information seekers (n=124):</th>
<th>Curiosity and swag inspired (n=67):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“To learn about gambling-related myths”</td>
<td>“I stumbled on a GameSense information Center”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“To learn about voluntary self-exclusion”</td>
<td>“To get swag (e.g., a lanyard)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“To learn about support for problem gambling”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcome of Interacting with GSAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due to my experience(s) with a GameSense Advisor:</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
<th>% agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel more informed about how to gamble responsibly.</td>
<td>4.83 (1.51)</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would encourage others to speak with a GameSense Advisor.</td>
<td>4.94 (1.38)</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means are on a 7-point scale where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree". Percent agreement was based on responds of 5 or higher on the scale.
Take home messages

1. High level of awareness about GameSense, but room for improvement

2. Only half of participants believed GameSense was for everyone, which may be undermining engagement.

3. Those who engage reap benefits (and refer)
Recommendations

1. Segmented messaging about GameSense and RG.

2. Normalize the use of GameSense.
Survey of Patrons who interacted with GSAs about RG

Recruitment: 303 patrons who visited one of the three Massachusetts casinos and had a meaningful interaction with a GameSense Advisor
An **Exchange Interaction** is a two-way communication with a GSA about responsible gaming or problem gaming.

A **Demonstration Interaction** involves a longer communication from a GSA about how a game, responsible gaming tool, or concept works.
Target audience of GameSense

82%
## Purpose of GameSense

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Reasons for engaging with GameSense

Three groups emerged:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All information seekers (n=108):</th>
<th>RG Curious (n=102):</th>
<th>Externally inspired (n=83):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • To learn about: gambling-related myths, voluntary self-exclusion, and support for problem gambling  | • To learn about: RG, gambling-related myths, voluntary self-exclusion, and support for problem gambling | • “GSA initiated a conversation with me”  
• “To get swag” |
| • To get swag | | |
Did you feel more informed?

- Demonstration Interaction: 63%
- Exchange Interaction: 78%
**Outcome of Interacting with GSAs**

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<th>Due to my experience(s) with a GameSense Advisor:</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
<th>% agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel more informed about how to gamble responsibly.</td>
<td>5.35 (1.81)</td>
<td>74.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would encourage others to speak with a GameSense Advisor.</td>
<td>5.64 (1.70)</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means are on a 7-point scale where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree". Percent agreement was based on responses of 5 or higher on the scale.
Take home messages

1. Patrons benefit from interacting with GSAs.
2. Patrons have diverse motivations for engaging with GameSense.
Recommendations

1. Tailored Engagement Strategies

2. Incentivize referrals to GS

3. Increase the GSIC footprint to create a dedicated, GameSense branded, “Play Break”
**GameSense MA Logic Model (simplified)**

**Impact**
- Improved health and well-being of players

**Effect**
- Creation of a socially responsible approach to gambling

**Outcomes**
- Promote positive play
  - Increased knowledge and engagement with GS
  - RG attitudes and behavior
- Reduce gambling-related harm
  - Increased knowledge and engagement with casino (VSE) and community (treatment) resources
- RG enabled workforce
  - Increased RG knowledge and engagement with GS
  - Referrals

**Outputs**
Player-Facing Casino Staff:

RG programming and impact on players
Staff: What should they exhibit?

Measured outcomes:

- Awareness of GameSense
- Knowledge about the purpose of GameSense
- Engagement with GameSense
- Referral of patrons to GameSense
Survey of front-line casino employees

Recruitment: 288 front-line employees from one of the three Massachusetts casinos
Awareness of GameSense

- 96.1% Aware of GS
- 3.6% Not aware of GS
Target audience of GameSense

- All Players: 67%
- Problem Gamblers: 84%
## Purpose of GameSense

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<td>Offers support for gambling-related problems</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps educate players about gambling-related myths</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s a lounge where players can get away from the floor</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Have you interacted with GameSense (GSA or visited a GSIC)?

- Visited a GSIC: 58.9%
- Did not visit a GSIC: 32.5%
- No response: 9%
### Reasons for engaging with GameSense

#### Three groups emerged:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehensive interests (n=57):</th>
<th>RG/DG interests (n=50):</th>
<th>Focus interests (n=53):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • To learn about: gambling-related myths, voluntary self-exclusion, and support for problem gambling  
• To get swag | • To learn about: gambling-related myths, voluntary self-exclusion, and support for problem gambling | • One or two of the reasons noted (i.e., RG or DG or Swag) |
Reasons for engaging with GameSense

Two groups emerged:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RG proficiency beliefs (n=53):</th>
<th>Tempered RG proficiency beliefs: (n=67):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• “I already know about gambling-related myths”</td>
<td>• Same as Group 2 but less endorsement of items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “I already know how games work”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “I already know about PlayMyWay”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Referrals by those who interacted with a GSA

- 64.2% have referred a patron to GSA
- 35.8% have not referred a patron to GSA
Referrals by those who interacted with a GSA at a GameSense Information Center

- Have referred a patron to GSA: 70.9%
- Have not referred a patron to a GSA: 29.1%
Take home messages

• Player-facing employees exhibit high awareness of GameSense
• Interactions with GSAs prove valuable
• Referral of patrons to GSAs shows strong correlation with GSIC visits, emphasizing their interconnectedness.
• Comprehensive training is important that encourages employee-customer interactions.
Recommendations

1. Comprehensive Player-facing Employee Training about responsible gambling and GameSense (that is separate from new employee training)

2. Emphasize Value of Employee Interactions with GameSense Advisors (incentivize visits)

3. Refresher “Booster” Training
A way forward for GameSense: Successes and Challenges

1. Benchmark: ✓

2. Amplify successes

3. Address challenges (and don’t be afraid to take risks)

4. Evidence-based decision making: Arms-length research to validate efforts
THE CARLETON UNIVERSITY TEAM

Dr. Chris Davis

Dr. Nassim Tabri

Gray Gaudette

Dr. Nima Orazani
THANK YOU

GameSense Advisors
GameSense Managers

MACGH

MGM Springfield
Plainridge Park Casino
Encore Boston Harbor

Mark Vander Linden
Bonnie Andrews
Long Banh

MGC
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