The WAGER, Vol 4(21) – In-Service Training: An evaluation

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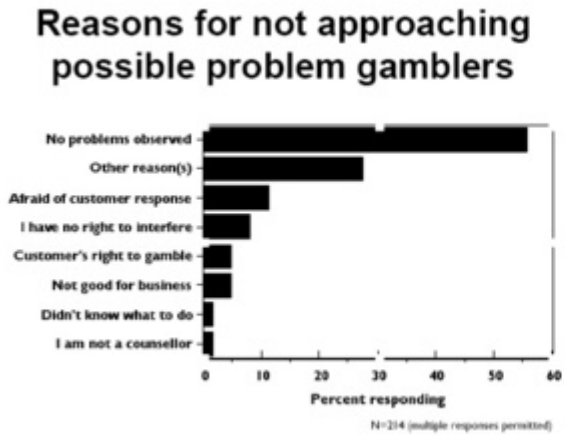
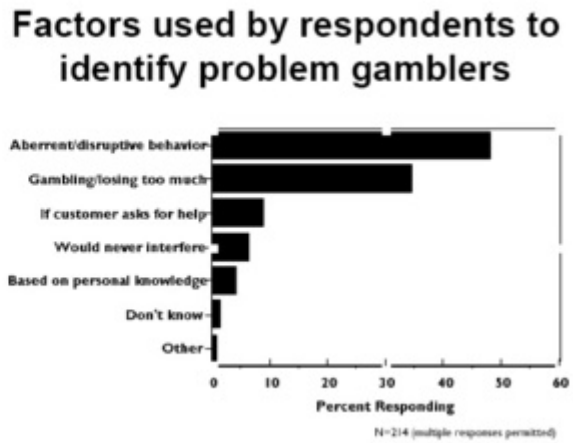
In February, the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba released the results of a three-month evaluation of a problem gambling awareness project. The Manitoba Problem Gambling Assistance Program, based on a similar endeavor in Saskatchewan, was designed as in-service training for owners and employees of establishments offering video lottery terminals (VLTs). The aims of the program included helping employees to a) Understand the development of pathological gambling; b) Identify the key signs of pathological gambling; c) Identify on-site behaviors that indicate gamblers who may be experiencing problems related to their gambling; d) Become familiar with regulations, guidelines, and practices which support appropriate assistance to gamblers in difficulty; e) Practice customer-sensitive and site-appropriate assistance strategies that could be utilized with gamblers who are experiencing difficulties. Although the evaluation was completed while the program was still in its pilot phase, the results provide insight into the challenges of providing on-site help and interventions for problem gamblers. Overall, empiricial evidence shows that participants found the program to be helpful and useful. But most interesting and generalizable are the responses provided to questions concerning the logistics of intervention. Elucidating obstacles and barriers to intervention will likely help future programs tailor their curricula to the day-to-day realities faced by gaming industry employees. Furthermore, the evaluation provides insight into the schema with which employees identify potential problem gamblers. The graphs below illustrate the responses provided for these two particularly important questions. One finding in

particular merits notice. Disruptive
behavior was the factor most commonly used to distinguish problem gamblers. But is there evidence that
problem gamblers are disruptive? The matter of public perception of problem gamblers is a research area worth
pursuing.





Source: Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. (1999, February). A participant evaluation of the Manitoba Problem Gambling Assistance Program. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Author.

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