

## **Validation Study of In-Venue Problem Gambling Indicators**

In March 2014 Gambling Research Australia (GRA) released its research paper titled '*Validation Study of In-Venue Problem Gambling Indicators*'. A copy of the study is available from: [http://www.gamblingresearch.org.au/resources/85c394ee-bfcd-48ea-a507-992555401eaa/validation\\_study\\_of\\_invenue\\_problem\\_gambler\\_indicatorsv2.pdf](http://www.gamblingresearch.org.au/resources/85c394ee-bfcd-48ea-a507-992555401eaa/validation_study_of_invenue_problem_gambler_indicatorsv2.pdf).

The study:

1. validated the *Checklist of Visible Indicators* (2007) by Delfabbro, Osborn, Nevile, Skelt and McMillen, which was developed to visually identify people experiencing gambling problems; and
2. transformed the checklist into the *Gambling Behaviour Checklist*, a tool successfully used by gaming staff to monitor and assist customers with gambling problems.

**A copy of the *Gambling Behaviour Checklist* is on page 204 of the linked Report.**

### **Key findings**

- The Checklist of Visible Indicators was validated against a 2013 sample of more than 500 regular EGM players across Australia. Almost every one of the 52 check-listed behaviours was more likely to be reported by problem gamblers.
- The presence of 4-5 indicators successfully identified EGM problem gamblers with a high degree of probability (80%+).
- The 52-item original checklist was transformed into the briefer and quicker to use 32-item *Gambling Behaviour Checklist* (the GBC-EGM-S) for use by gaming machine staff as a result of this study.
- The indicators of observable problem gambling included:
  - asking for credit or loans from other customers or staff;
  - visible deterioration in personal appearance or hygiene;
  - concealing presence at venue from others;
  - rudeness to staff; and
  - friends or relatives contacting the venue looking for the customer.
- The Gambling Behaviour Checklist was shown to assist staff to observe, consolidate information and act on customers exhibiting multiple problem gambling behaviours before the customers asked for help.
- Integration of the checklist into gambling venues would appear to improve staff capacity to identify problem gambling behaviours, and subsequently act to minimise customer harm and enhance customer safety.
- The study provided a valuable evidence base to support the translation of problem gambling theory into staff practice under real working conditions.

## The Gambling Behaviour Checklist

### Instructions for staff

Use the checklist to help you think about **ALL** behaviours you may have seen in this person, now or in the recent past.

There are six different types of signs to look out for, colour coded to indicate riskiness of behaviour.

- **PURPLE = gambling problems highly probable.** These behaviours are uncommon but if you see them it is very likely to be a problem gambler. If you have seen purple flagged behaviours on more than one occasion you should consider organizing for someone to approach this patron.

- **RED = gambling problems probable.** These behaviours are more commonly observed than purple flagged behaviours. They are much more likely to be shown by people experiencing gambling problems and are good predictors of problem gambling.

People displaying any red flag behaviours should be observed over a period of time at a minimum. If you have observed several red indicators or a mix of red and orange indicators over a period of time, this person is likely to be experiencing gambling problems and an approach should be considered.

- **ORANGE = possible gambling problems.** These behaviours are at least twice as likely to be seen in problem gamblers.

Someone displaying several of these behaviours, especially across different areas may be experiencing some problems with their gambling.

- **YELLOW = early warning signs.** These behaviours are at least twice as likely to be seen in higher risk gamblers (compared to low risk gamblers).

Seen by themselves these behaviours may be an early warning sign that gambling is moving out of control.

**GBC-EGM-S: The Gambling Behaviour Checklist for EGM Staff**

<b>Loss of Control</b>		<b>Tick</b>
1	Tries obsessively to win on one machine	
2	Gambles right through normal meal times	
3	Finds it difficult to stop gambling at closing time	
4	Starts gambling when the venue is opening or only stops when venue is closing	
<b>Money Seeking</b>		<b>Tick</b>
5	Gets cash out on 2 or more occasions through ATM or EFTPOS	
6	Avoids cashier and only uses cash facilities	
7	Uses coin machine at least 4 times	
8	Puts large wins back into the machine and keeps playing	
9	Has run out of all money when he/she leaves venue	
10	Leaves venue to find money to continue gambling	
11	Asks to change large notes at venue before gambling	
12	Rummages around in purse or wallet for additional money	
13	Witnessed or heard that a customer was trying to borrow money from other people at venue or asking for credit from venue	
<b>Intensity and Duration</b>		<b>Tick</b>
14	Spends \$300 or more in a session	
15	Often gambles for long periods (3+ hours) without a proper break	
16	Bets \$2.50 or more per spin most of the time	
17	Plays very fast	
18	Gambles on 2 or more machines at once	
19	Gambles intensely without reacting to what's going on around him/her	
20	Gambles most days	
21	Rushes from 1 machine to another	
22	Significant increase in spending pattern	
<b>Irrational and Superstitious Behaviour</b>		<b>Tick</b>
23	Complains to staff about losing, or blames venue or machines for losing	
24	Rituals or superstitious behaviours such as rubbing belly of machine or screen, talking to machine, spitting on machine, use of luck charms	
<b>Emotional Responses</b>		<b>Tick</b>
25	Shows signs of distress after gambling (looks sad/depressed, crying, holding head in hands, nervous/edgy, shaking, sweating)	
26	Gets angry while gambling (kicking, hitting machines, swearing, grunting or groaning, playing roughly/aggressively)	
<b>Social Behaviour</b>		<b>Tick</b>
27	Stays on to gamble when friends leave venue	
28	Is rude or impolite to venue staff	
29	Becomes angry or stands over others if someone takes their favourite machine/spot	
30	Avoids contact or conversation with others	
31	Generally poor hygiene, or, significant decline in personal grooming or appearance over several days (body odors, dirty or unchanged clothes, messy greasy hair)	
32	Conceals presence at venue (doesn't answer mobile phone, takes or makes calls outside venue, asks staff not to let others know they are there, people contact or visit venue looking for person)	