



PRAIRIE RIDGE

PREVENTION SERVICES

Contents:

- Responsible Gaming Education Week
- Odds of...
- Denial
- Question and Answer
- Upcoming Events

"CLEAN MIND; CLEAN BODY; CLEAN SPIRIT; DRUG FREE"

Newsletter

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Responsible Gaming Education Week

August 1-5, 2011 is the 14th annual *Responsible Gaming Education Week*, a week sponsored by the National Center for Responsible Gaming (NCRG) and the American Gaming Association (AGA). This year's theme, "Know the odds" builds off last year's successful effort to take the "mystery out of the slot machine" by focusing its efforts on educating casino employees and patrons about the odds of all games available in a casino.

For most people, gambling is a form of recreation or entertainment. While 80 percent of Americans have participated in some form of gambling within the past year, 88 percent of Iowans have done the same. Casino gambling has also become more socially acceptable, as 80 percent of Americans find gambling acceptable. Gambling is not necessarily a negative activity, but exercising moderation and control are the keys to keeping it a safe and fun, low risk behavior.

Despite the common perception that problem gambling is a victimless addiction, for every problem gambler 8-10 other people are negatively affected. Problem gambling means participation in any form of gambling activity that creates a negative consequence to the gambler or to the gambler's family, place of employment, or community. Problem gambling is a treatable addiction. Undoubtedly gambling, like other addictions, depends on a mixture

of brain chemistry, environment and socialization. Anyone who chooses to gamble can develop gambling problems.

The "Know the Odds" theme and activities will help to remind employees and patrons that the house always has the advantage. Understanding the odds of casino games is a key component of responsible gaming. Helping gaming employees learn more about the odds of the games is a crucial part of helping them educate casino patrons about what it means to keep it fun.

Some players bring their superstitions and false beliefs to the casino. While it might be fun to imagine that rubbing a rabbit's foot improves a player's chances of hitting a jackpot, the reality is that this "magical thinking" has no impact whatsoever on the outcome of a casino game. Cheating aside, there's nothing a player can do, no ritual or lucky charm, to influence the outcome of any casino game. Superstitions can't determine whether a player wins or loses because every casino game -whether it's blackjack, craps or slots – is based on chance.

For more information you can visit the AGA website at www.americangaming.org or if you know someone that may need help call 1-800-BETS-OFF or Prairie Ridge at 1-866-429-2391. Available services include assessments, screening and evaluations and counseling services.

Odds of...

Next person you meet being born on the same date as you:
1 in 25,000

On duty fireman's meal will be interrupted: 3 in 5

Your TV will catch fire sometime this year: 1 in 7,500

You will win the Powerball: 1 in 80 million

You will go to Disney World this year: 1 in 10

Struck by lightning: 1 in 260,000

Hitting a deer while driving in Iowa: 1 in 157

Being killed in a car crash: 1 in 18,585

Winning 1 million in the lottery: 1 in 13 million

Having 4 children of all the same gender: 1 in 16



Responsible Gaming Education Week August 1-5, 2011

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Addiction is a complex disease that impacts many families in America. Often, people who struggle with addiction report feeling overwhelmed or uncontrollable when it comes to alcohol, tobacco, drugs- even gambling, despite the face of negative consequences. The general population may not understand this self-destructive behavior. Why continue doing something that's hurting you? Why is it so hard to stop? The answer lies in the brain. Repeated use alters the brain, causing long-lasting changes to the way it functions. These brain changes interfere with the ability to think clearly, exercise good judgment, and control behavior. These changes are also responsible in large part, for the cravings and compulsion to use that make addiction so powerful. One of the most dangerous effects of addiction is denial.

Denial is a defense mechanism used to shield and protect against something perceived as threatening. By denying the existence of a problem, a person doesn't have to deal with it or assume any responsibility for it. This is subconscious, much different from lying where a person is aware of their actions, but doesn't admit to it. Minimizing and rationalizing addiction can also be used as defense mechanisms. A person may minimize the amount of time they spend gambling by saying "I don't gamble that often" when in reality; they are gambling 3 or 4 times a week. Another person may say "I only had two beers" when the two beers were actually 40 oz servings.

When in denial, a person genuinely does not realize they are demonstrating these types of defense mechanisms. In fact, 95 percent of the people who have a diagnosable substance or gambling disorder are unlikely to seek treatment, largely because they are in denial of the problem. Rationalizing is a form of making excuses or justifying why something happened. A common example is the person who says, "I drink because I'm under a lot of stress at work", or "Everybody does it, what's the big deal?"

Another component that reinforces denial is enabling. Enabling is an action taken by a concerned person that either stops or softens the effects of the negative consequences. The behavior is viewed as helping the family member or friend, even though in reality, enabling perpetuates the disease. The enabling can make it difficult to connect the problems to the addiction, which can make the cost of denial extremely high. In fact, 65 percent of pathological gamblers commit crimes to support their gambling habit; this can include the loss of important relationships, jobs, financial security, and overall physical and mental health.

There is no magical bullet cure for substance use and gambling addictions. Psychological, cognitive, behavioral, and relaxation therapy either singly or in combination are offered to deal with this disorder. It is essential that the person concerned acknowledges the progressive illness and shows a strong desire to stop the behavior, rather than continue to enable. Discussing the issue with a loved one can be difficult if they become defensive and deny they have a problem with alcohol, other drugs, or gambling, however information, education, and support can be powerful tools.

This upcoming September celebrates Recovery month which highlights the benefits of treatment and recovery for not only the individual, but for their family, friends, workplace, and society as a whole. By educating the public that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover from these conditions, people can learn all of those components can demonstrate that denial can be eliminated.

Questions & Answers:

Question: *What casino game has the best odds?*

Answer: *According to the AGA's House Advantage brochure, the average house advantage in blackjack is between 0.5 percent and 3.0 percent. This means that, on average over time, for every \$100 bet, a player can expect to lose between 50 cents and \$3.00 on blackjack.*

Question: *If I bet more, should I expect to win more?*

Answer: *No. Because the odds always favor the house, the more you wager the more you should expect to lose. This also holds true when it comes to the length of time played or the number of wagers played – the longer or faster you play a casino game, the more you should expect to lose.*

Question: *Can a player's skill improve their odds of winning?*

Answer: *The chances of winning are maximized when games involving an element of skill – such as blackjack or video poker – are played at the highest level. However, with few exceptions, it's important to remember that the house continues to have the statistical advantage in every play of every game, even against a skillful player*

Upcoming Events

September 24th, 2011 Youth Diversion Program at Prairie Ridge, Mason City. *The program will be from 8:30-5:30 p.m. Saturday.*

For more information please contact the Prairie Ridge Mason City Office 1-866-429-2391.

September 24th & 26, 2011 Adolescent Prime for Life at Prairie Ridge, Mason City. *The program will be from 8:30-5:30 p.m. Saturday & Monday 4:00-8:00 p.m.*

For more information please contact the Prairie Ridge, Mason City Office 641-424-2391.
