

knowledge snapshot



What relevance does culture have to responsible gambling practices?

What this article is about

Responsible gambling programs and policies exist around the world. They aim to reduce harms from gambling. A key principle of responsible gambling is that people can make informed choice about their participation in gambling. Responsible gambling practices do this by educating people about gambling and gambling products and encouraging them to gamble within their limits.

Responsible gambling practices do not really consider the varying ideas, customs, and social behaviours that different cultural groups have around gambling and gambling problems. For instance, past research found that Indigenous people in Australia defined gambling problems in terms of difficulties with family and community, not time and money spent gambling. If responsible gambling information is not accessible or not relevant to the ways that people from diverse cultures experience and understand gambling, then people who belong to these groups cannot make informed choice.

Cultural competency is the ability to effectively deliver programs, services, and policies that meet the cultural needs of people. The current article discusses how cultural competency can help responsible gambling practices to minimize harm from gambling in a society. The author situates the discussion in the context of Australia.

What was done?

First, the author provided an overview of the impacts of gambling on culturally diverse communities in Australia. Then, the author analyzed responsible gambling codes of practice and codes of conduct in Australia. This was done to highlight the extent that

Why is this article important?

This article highlights significant gaps in current responsible gambling practices to engage with people from diverse cultures. It presents potential ways cultural competency can complement responsible gambling practices. It emphasizes that cultural competency must begin at a systemic level. That is, there must be policies, procedures, monitoring mechanisms and resources devoted to cultural competency. Without a culturally competent 'system', the ability of people from culturally diverse backgrounds to make informed choice about their gambling is greatly reduced. As well, programs may not be able to meet the needs of diverse communities and effectively minimize harms from gambling.

responsible gambling practices have engaged with cultural diversity. Finally, the author identified potential ways of developing responsible gambling practices that are culturally competent.

What you need to know

Since 1999, over 40 responsible gambling codes of practice and programs have been introduced in Australia to prevent gambling harm. These responsible gambling practices do not clearly engage with cultural diversity. The most common way used to engage with diverse cultures is to translate information into different languages. However, if gambling education material (even if it is translated) does not reflect culturally diverse populations' ways of thinking about gambling, it will not be relevant.

Cultural competency strategies exist in Australia in the areas of health and education. They have been used to address health inequalities in minority groups. They suggest that culturally competent practices need to have policies, procedures, monitoring mechanisms, and resource capacity. Thus, cultural competency must begin at a systemic level. Some examples of what culturally competent responsible gambling practices include:

- 1) Acknowledgement that culturally diverse people may experience and understand gambling and gambling harms in different ways.
- 2) Acknowledgement that culturally diverse people may define 'problem gambling' differently.
- 3) Gambling providers, governments, and service providers work together to provide culturally relevant information and resources.
- 4) Support for early intervention and prevention strategies that target culturally diverse communities.
- 5) Gambling venue staff are trained on cultural awareness as part of their basic responsible gambling service training.
- 6) Culturally diverse people have the right to receive best-practice standards of gambling help services that are culturally appropriate.
- 7) Gambling help services for culturally diverse people are based on consultation and evidence.
- 8) Responsible gambling practices are evaluated on their engagement with and impacts on culturally diverse people.

Who is it intended for?

The article is intended for policy-makers and governments. It highlights the need to develop a set of standards for culturally competent responsible gambling practice. The article is also intended for gambling providers and service providers. They should apply culturally competent responsible gambling practices in their work.

About the researchers

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Keywords

Responsible gambling, cultural competency, gambling policy, indigenous gambling, culture, diversity

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Gambling Research Exchange Ontario (GREO) has partnered with the Knowledge Mobilization Unit at York University to produce Research Snapshots. GREO is an independent knowledge translation and exchange organization that aims to eliminate harm from gambling. Our goal is to support evidence-informed decision making in responsible gambling policies, standards and practices. The work we do is intended for researchers, policy makers, gambling regulators and operators, and treatment and prevention service providers.

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