

## GAMBLING: HELP AND REFERRAL ANNUAL REPORT 2008-2009

In the fall of 1993, at the time the Québec government established the first casino, a wide range of measures for the protection of gamblers were put into place, including **Gambling: help and referral**, implemented because of the need to make people aware that gambling is, for some, not a game anymore. The helpline soon became the reference when one was looking for help for gambling-related problems. The service, provided by the Information and Referral Centre of Greater Montréal, has been financed by Loto-Québec from 1993 to 2001, and since April 2001, by the *ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec*.

**Gambling: help and referral** offers information, listening and support on compulsive gambling, as well as referral to all available help in the field. The helpline is available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, throughout Québec. The personnel responds to several types of demands and needs: relevant reflections on the caller's gambling habits; support and empathy in moments of great distress, and stabilization of callers before their referral to resources specialized in crisis situations. The anonymous and confidential nature of the communications allows people to talk about their difficulties without being afraid to be identified. In fact, suffering, shame, despair, anxiety and insecurity are often part of the caller's burden.

An Advisory Committee was set up in 2006-2007 to make recommendations to the Centre regarding **Gambling: help and referral's** mandate as requested by the *ministère de la Santé et des services sociaux du Québec*. This Advisory Committee held two meetings this year, notably on the impact of promotional campaigns and on the evaluation of different aspects of our service.

Between November 15<sup>th</sup>, 1993 and March 31<sup>st</sup> 2009, more than 135 000 people turned to **Gambling: help and referral** for help or information. 697 Anglophone people used the helpline this year.

Since January 2006, help is available online (in French only for now) on the website of **Gambling: Help and Referral**, at [www.jeu-aiderreference.qc.ca](http://www.jeu-aiderreference.qc.ca). The website has received 60 359 visits, 750 587 hits, and 133 683 pages were reviewed in 2008-2009.

Of the 9786 calls in 2008-2009, 69% of the callers were worried about their gambling habits (25% were women and 44% were men). Among the other calls, 8.5% came from peers of a gambler (brother, sister, or friend); 6% from spouses; 3.5% from parents; and 13% from field workers. Adults accounted for 96% of the calls, 3% were elderly people and 1% of the calls were from teenagers and children.

Requests can be divided in the following categories:

- ◆ Requests for listening and support from gamblers themselves, their spouses, their peers and parents amount to 11% of calls;
- ◆ Requests for general information amount to 37% of calls;

- ◆ Requests for therapy, counselling, self-support groups, or other related requests as budgeting, family violence, substance abuse or suicide amount to 52% of calls.

We wish to underline that 53% of calls were directly handled by the staff of **Gambling: help and referral** and did not need a referral.

Among the types of games mentioned most often by callers were video-lotteries (71% of the mentions), the slot machines at the casinos (6%), the lotteries (4%), crap games 2% and poker (2%).

As for the geographic origin of the calls, 52% originate from Greater Montréal, 12% from *Montérégie*, 7% from Québec area, 3% from *Outaouais*, and 26% from the other regions of Québec.

According to its mandate of referring to the appropriate service, the helpline has directed 33 people with complaints against organizations or establishments to the appropriate authorities. Our service was the object of 2 complaints in 2008-2009 which have been dealt with following our current protocol.

Since the field of intervention for gambling is in constant evolution, it requires a training program which responds promptly to the specific needs of the personnel. This year, we have allowed our team to follow the training program of the Centre Dollard-Cormier, *Les Jeudis CDC*. Three of our counselors have attended a training day on harm reduction, motivational interview and youth in addiction situation. Finally, Mrs. Marie-Anne Sergerie, clinician psychologist, gave us training on addiction problems related to use of Internet.

Concerning public relations activities, **Gambling: help and referral** participated in 47 activities, 15 of which were television or radio broadcasts. In total, **Gambling: help and referral** was the subject of 182 mentions in publications or media.

### Participation in special events :

- *Colloque «Travail et santé mentale : créer des espaces d'humanité» de l'Association canadienne pour la santé mentale*, May 2008;
- *Colloque annuel «Être dysfonctionnel ou en organisation, réflexions sur un changement de paradigme» Le Passage, Centre d'aide aux proches*, May 2008 ;
- *Journées professionnelles annuelles, Centre jeunesse de Montréal*, May 2008;
- « *Poker-Jeu par Internet : questions de santé, de société et de culture* », ACFAS, May 2008
- Annual Conference, Nova Scotia's Responsible Gambling, October 2008 ;
- XXXVI<sup>e</sup> *Colloque annuel « Les multiples facettes de la dépendance », Association des Intervenants en toxicomanie du Québec*, October 2008 ;
- *Congrès pancanadien sur le thème Suicide et Dépendances, Association québécoise de prévention du suicide*, October 2008 ;
- *Rencontre des partenaires, Centre Dollard-Cormier*, November 2008 ;
- *Conférence « La cyberpsychologie au service de la prévention du jeu pathologique »*, November 2008 ;

- International conference organized by *Fondation Mise sur Toi*, on "The integration of Mental Health to primary care", University Institute in mental health, Douglas Hospital, November 2008 ;
- Conference « *Les Multiples facettes du Jeu* », Laval University, December 2008.
- 8th Annual Conference, Alberta Conference on Gambling Research, March 2009.

#### With its booth :

- Week of the Bar of Montréal, April 2008;
- *Centre d'Écoute et de Référence Halte-Ami : Semaine de prévention en santé mentale*, April 2008;
- 21<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the *Déléguées et Délégués sociaux FTQ*, October 2008;
- *Société québécoise de la Schizophrénie*, October 2008 ;
- *Semaine de sensibilisation au jeu responsable, Fondation Mise sur Toi*, September 2008.
- *Ordre des Infirmières et Infirmiers du Québec*, November 2008;
- *Hôpital Louis-H. Lafontaine*, February 2008
- Week of the Bar of Montréal, March 2009;
- *Centre d'Écoute et de Référence Halte-Ami : Semaine de prévention en santé mentale*, March 2009.

#### Publicity:

- Advertising insert *4<sup>e</sup> Journées Bi-annuelles de santé mentale*, May 2008;
- Advertising insert, Conference of *l'Ordre des Infirmières et Infirmiers du Québec*, November 2008;
- Magazine *L'Intervenant*, 2008-2009, (4 issues);
- Article on our Telecounselling Pilot Project published in *L'Intervenant*, October 2008;
- Advertising in the Directory of Community Services of Greater Montréal 2008-2009;
- Directories and Yellow Pages;
- More than twenty Agendas of different groups and weeklies.

#### Promotional campaigns:

- Public Service Announcement Broadcastings, October to June 2008;
- Our French TV message was aired on News International France chain 24, September 2008;
- *Alstom Télécité Inc.*, in the Montréal metro, fall of 2008;
- *MétoMédiaPlus* with advertising in buses of four targeted regions (*Lanaudière, Chaudière-Appalaches, Laurentides, Montérégie*), fall of 2008;
- CBS *Affichage* with advertising on bus shelters and billboards in the largest cities of the Province, fall of 2008;
- Awareness Campaign of the *ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux* for Native Youth, November 2008 to March 2009.

We have also welcomed Dr. Keun Ho Jo, Professor at the Eul-Ji University, Republic of Korea, in a study mission for the National Gaming Control Commission of Korea, in May 2008.

During the fall of 2008 and the winter of 2009, the *Fondation Mise sur toi* and the *ministère de la Santé et des services sociaux* have launched major multimedia campaigns to promote awareness of excessive gambling and advertise our service. We are grateful for these initiatives.

#### Electronic referral:

The *ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux* has given the Centre financial support to set up an electronic referral service since January 2006.

The web site offers general information and online help. As a first step, the user has to choose between asking for help or asking for information. This service is available not only to gamblers, but also to their spouses and other members of their families, their peers and to field workers.

We received 176 requests in 2008-2009. 33% of users are women and 35% are men, 16% are spouses, 7% are parents and 5% are peers. 4.5% of users are teenagers and 3% are elderly.

As for the geographic origin of the requests, we note a bigger representation of requests originating from *Bas-St-Laurent, Capitale Nationale, Mauricie, Abitibi, Chaudière-Appalaches, Laurentians and Montérégie* if we compare this data with the calls we get at **Gambling : help and referral**. The requests for information and services are otherwise appreciably the same.

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Day after day since 1993, the Information and Referral Centre of Greater Montréal takes up the challenge : to manage a 24/7 service on compulsive gambling which responds to the needs of people having a problem with compulsive gambling as well as their relatives. The Centre insures that it functions within strict financial parameters. An updated data bank, as extensive and reliable as possible, keeps up with the development of public and private resources for people having problems with compulsive gambling. For eight years now, free services are available for gamblers and their peers. The personnel at **Gambling: help and referral** makes sure that they are well known throughout the Province.

For almost sixteen years, we have pursued this objective: to offer a reliable and quality service of information, referral and support to the Québec population in that field. We will continue to do all we can to justify the trust of the public and of our sponsors who have supported us since 1993.

**GAMBLING: HELP AND REFERRAL  
STATISTICAL REPORT 2008-2009**

**SOURCE OF ENQUIRIES**

Associations	55
Colleges, Schools, Universities	139
Communications Media	65
Industry, Commerce	404
Labor & Union	3
Parapublic services	110
CLSC	66
Private agencies	266
Professional persons	137
Individuals:	
Men	4 303
Women	2 446
Parents	344
Peers	828
Spouses	565
Public services	54
Religious organizations	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9 786</b>

**TYPE OF CONTACT**

Telephone calls	9 610
Email	176
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9 786</b>

**AGE CATEGORIES**

Adults	9 391
Children	18
Senior citizens	251
Teens	126
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9 786</b>

**GEOGRAPHIC REGION**

Region 01, Bas-Saint-Laurent	152
Region 02, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean	267
Region 03, Capitale Nationale	654
Region 04, Mauricie et Centre du Québec	295
Region 05, Estrie	283
Region 06, Montréal	5 088

Region 07, Outaouais	296
Region 08, Abitibi-Témiscamingue	86
Region 09, Côte-Nord	48
Region 10, Nord-du-Québec	17
Region 11, Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine	51
Region 12, Chaudière-Appalaches	215
Region 13, Laval	311
Region 14, Lanaudière	378
Region 15, Laurentides	364
Region 16, Montérégie	1 173
Other regions	108

**TOTAL 9 786**

**TYPE OF GAMBLING**

Video Lottery Terminal (VLT)	2 910
Bingo	33
Cards	91
Casino:	
Crap Games	77
Slot machines	259
Table Games (Black Jack, Roulette, Baccarat)	89
Poker	86
Cyberdependency	
Internet (chat, shopping, stock, etc.)	66
Online Gaming	123
Electronic Games	92
Horse races	5
Lottery	159
Pool betting on sports	34
Others	48
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4 072</b>

**TYPE OF ENQUIRIES**

Counselling	60
Listening and support	1 918
Support group:	
Gamblers	1 261
Parents	158
Spouses and Peers	661
General Information:	
Codependency	105
Gamblers' Profile	517
Gambling	523

Gambling: Help and Referral	4 931
Prevention	106
Self-Exclusion	84
In-patient Treatment:	
Parapublic services	86
Private services	317
Out-patient treatment:	
Parapublic services	3 166
Private services	593
Telecounselling	7
Relapse	36
Social Reintegration	4
Related requests:	
Budget counselling	171
Drug addiction	295
Legal services	31
Mental Health	78
Other requests	1 584
Shelters	46
Suicide	163
Violence	83
Complaints against services	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17 017</b>

### TYPE OF REFERRALS

Directed to appropriate resource	8 022
Referral calls by our staff	9
Service rendered without Referrals	8 965
Services required insufficient	16
Services required unavailable	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17 017</b>

### FOLLOW-UP CALLS

Additional communications with Clients	16
for research and update	203
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>219</b>

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

Information sessions	6
Meetings and seminars	26
Radio, TV	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47</b>

#### Gambling: Help and Referral

(514) 527-0140  
1 800 461 0140  
1 866 SOS JEUX

Fax: (514) 527-9712

Help online:  
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