

Professional Skills Improvement in the Prevention and Treatment of Gambling-Related Harm

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Why is skills improvement so important?

- The prevention and treatment of gambling-related harm are relatively new fields and require systematic improvement in professional skills
- Increased awareness of gambling problems > growing demand for services > need for upskilling
- Gamblers and their families and friends across the country need support
- In response, the National Institute for Health and Welfare ("THL") has started to produce online training courses and a national delivery platform

Professional skills improvement – what does it mean in THL?

1. Identifying competency gaps

2. Training production > online courses

3. Online courses available across Finland, run jointly by regional training providers and THL

4. Training and support for trainers

5. Course feedback, statistical information and further development

6. Offering support to local authorities in competence-building and service development

Competency gaps

- The findings of the national social and healthcare staff skills survey (Raiski 2011) suggest that know-how needs exist in all areas of problem gambling prevention and treatment
- In the sub-areas of expertise, the greatest needs were identified in:
 - knowledge of services for problem gamblers and their families and friends
 - mini-interventions
 - self-help programmes
 - preventative work in client-facing work
 - assessment of problem gambling
 - psychological treatments and
 - inter-professional approaches

The online courses

1. Prevention and treatment of problem gambling, 6 credits
2. Problems on internet use, gambling and gaming – implications for students, 2 credits
3. Prevention of harms related to gambling and gaming, 2 credits
4. Problem gambling and the mental health work, 2 credits
5. Problem gambling and the occupational health, 2 credits

- Courses are produced through multi-disciplinary work (content production, online editing, translation, marketing, training delivery, evaluation, etc.; evaluation and comments also from gaming operators)
- Co-ordinated by an educational manager

Course delivery

- Suitable for continuing and staff training purposes as well as degree studies
- Courses are run by educational establishments (i.e. vocational colleges, universities of applied sciences, universities) jointly with THL
- **THL responsibilities** are learning materials and exercises and their continued development, marketing to educational establishments, contracts, course fee subsidies, user management, technical maintenance and support, feedback and statistical information
- **Course organiser responsibilities** are marketing, tutoring and facilities and course certificates
- Up to now courses are delivered by 17 different educational establishments



“Prevention and treatment of problem gambling -online course” in focus Aims and target group (1)

The aim is to develop broad-based basic competencies for client-facing work addressing problem gambling.

The course is targeted at all client-facing staff dealing with problem gambling, including

- social welfare and healthcare staff
- youth workers
- student services staff
- debt and financial advisors
- teachers and students within these specialisms
- also useful in the training of gaming operators' staff, where relevant

Content and structure of the course (2)

- Students will make use of text and video resources, learning assignments (online discussions, essays, individual assignments and group tasks) and face-to-face teaching sessions
- Module 1: Gambling and society, 2 credits
- Module 2: Origin, identification, assessment and prevention of problem gambling, 2 credits
- Module 3: Treatment and rehabilitation of problem gambling, 2 credits
- Moodle platform, single modules available, one module equates to approx. 6 weeks
- In Finnish and Swedish

Facts on participants of the course (3)

- To date the course has been attended by approx. 400 participants
- The majority of participants has taken the course as part of their continuing education, largest proportion of them has been from:
 - Social services (including substance abuse work)
 - Southern Finland
 - Public sector
- Largest proportion of degree students has studied in:
 - Universities of applied sciences
 - Social and healthcare studies
 - Optional professional studies

The feedback (4)

- Participants invited to provide anonymous feedback on each module
- The feedback has been very positive
- "Standard of course materials" (4.2/5) and "Usefulness in everyday practice" (4.1/5) rated particularly highly
- Feedback on face-to-face teaching sessions has been more variable
- Skills evaluation carried out at start and end

Feedback from an A-clinic social therapist (2013)

“I thought this course worked brilliantly online. For me personally, the most tangible benefit was the substantial written materials that were provided as part of the course. I printed all of it off and placed it in a folder so that I can return to it later as more questions arise in the course of my day-to-day work.

I also found the exercises extremely useful. Although they were brief, they got me thinking about issues relating to problem gambling and, most importantly, my own ways of working and their effectiveness in terms of our objectives, i.e. overcoming addiction.”

Thank you for listening

Further information:

www.thl.fi/pelihaitat/koulutus

Online sign-in: <https://moodle.mmg.fi/thl>

(Prevention and treatment of problem gambling,
Demos in Finnish and Swedish, guest log-in)

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