

# Encouraging a Conversation about Responsible Gaming...

By Bob Ambrose

In my role as instructor and former VP of Casino Operations, I have the “Responsible Gambling conversation” every semester with students. Last semester I asked Josh Ercole, to also have the conversation. He is Chief Operating Officer of the Council on Compulsive Gambling of PA, Inc. [www.pacouncil.com](http://www.pacouncil.com) Since March is the month, I thought we would have the chat.



**Where is the Council’s (CCGP) stance regarding gambling and legislation for expansion of legalized gambling?**  
“We take a neutral stance on whether gambling should or should not be legalized and/or expanded. We fully appreciate that

the majority of the population are able to engage in gambling activities responsibly. Our focus is on doing everything possible to make sure that services and resources are in place for those who are not able to control themselves,” said Ercole

Mr. Ercole said that his organization is fortunate in Pennsylvania to have wonderful partnerships with the existing casino industry, the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board and the Pennsylvania Lottery.

“We all work very closely to make sure that needs are met, and that services are in place for those seeking assistance. Our goal is to blanket the state with trained clinicians who can offer help, so that no matter where our Helpline Call Center receives a call from, they will be able to put that caller in touch with help that is nearby,” said Ercole.

The gaming industry recognizes the need for appropriate treatment and people like Josh Ercole continue to have the conversation. <http://www.ncpgambling.org/programs-resources/>.

## **What happens during Problem Gaming Month in Pennsylvania as well as other jurisdictions?**

“During this month, several events take place throughout Pennsylvania and the United States focusing on raising awareness of the issue, highlighting resources that are available for those folks and also their friends/family members, who are suffering from problem gambling related issues,” said Ercole.

Casino companies have done a remarkable job with programs to educate their employees on this issue and create awareness for the general public. Representatives like Josh Ercole and members of the national program work with the gaming companies to keep the conversation going.

## **Who do you work with in Pennsylvania?**

“My position allows me the unique opportunity to work with treatment providers throughout Pennsylvania, legislators, the gaming industry and the recovery community,” said Ercole.

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