
New Problem Gambling Awareness Kit to help Newcomers in Ethno-Cultural Communities

Resource kit designed to help community agencies, ESL Teachers, and Life Skills Instructors working with newcomers

(Toronto) – Tuesday, August 22, 2005 – COSTI Immigrant Services and the Responsible Gambling Council (RGC) have produced a new resource kit for use with recent newcomers to Canada. *New Beginnings: Problem Gambling Awareness Kit for Newcomers in Ethno-Cultural Communities* provides information on problem gambling and offers suggestions on prevention.

An official launch of *New Beginnings: Problem Gambling Awareness for Newcomers in Ethno-Cultural Communities* will take place at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, August 25th at the COSTI Corvetti Education Centre, 760 College Street, Toronto. Representatives from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Responsible Gambling Council, and COSTI will be on hand for the event.

“Gambling can be attractive to newcomers because it can sometimes seem like a solution to their problems” says Mario J. Calla, Executive Director of COSTI. “New Canadians usually experience a long struggle before socially integrating and securing employment. Along with the difficulties of learning a new language, many face underemployment, social isolation, and other obstacles”. The combination of limited English language skills and information, the attractiveness of gambling, and the challenges newcomers face, may increase the risk of developing a gambling problem.

Funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care-Mental Health and Addictions Branch, *New Beginnings: Problem Gambling Awareness for Newcomers in Ethno-Cultural Communities* is a video resource featuring individuals who have experienced problem gambling first hand. The video brings attention to the risk of problem gambling, ways to avoid those risks, realistic expectations of winning and losing, and where to find help. Also included are a Facilitator’s Guide, interactive quiz, and ESL language practice exercises. The kit is available to problem gambling service providers and school boards at no charge, in English and French.

“The resource kit can be used by anyone who works with newcomers. It puts the most up-to-date information in the hands of those who need it most,” says Laurie Bell, Director of Prevention Programs, Responsible Gambling Council. “It has been a pleasure to collaborate with COSTI in the development of this awareness kit.”

The RGC is a non-profit organization that promotes problem gambling prevention through research, awareness programs and information services.

COSTI Immigrant Services is Canada's largest community-based multicultural agency providing employment, educational, and social services to new Canadians and all individuals in need of assistance. Since 1952, COSTI has been helping those in need, providing hope to refugee families, protecting women and children, strengthening families, combating racism and discrimination, and assisting all those who function at a disadvantage in society. With a staff of over 200 people, speaking more than 60 languages, COSTI strives to ensure that all individuals, regardless of language, cultural, or financial barriers, are given the opportunity to use their existing skills, learn new ones, and participate in all aspects of Canadian life. COSTI presently provides support to over 42,000 individuals annually through 14 service locations.

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