

# Touchpoint

June 29, 2010

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## Youth Perspective: Gambling as Rite of Passage

*The Nova Scotia Gaming Foundation is pleased to announce Devon Paige Williams as our Project Assistant. Devon is in her third year of studies in the BSc. Health Promotion program at Dalhousie University and is very passionate about the issues surrounding addictions and problem gambling, especially among youth. As part of the NSGF's continued commitment to providing a voice for youth regarding problem gambling, this week's Touchpoint features Devon Williams with a youth perspective:*

"While researching for this position, I was dismayed, but not surprised to learn that young adults ages 19 to 24 are at highest risk for developing gambling problems in Nova Scotia. Being a 19-year-old myself, I have witnessed firsthand the allure and dangers of gambling. In today's society, when you turn 19, there is an immense panic and pressure to experience – as quickly and as frequently as possible – all of the "rites of passage" that go along with reaching legal age. Within one day, the "adult world" opens its doors to us: we are able to experience the downtown scene, buy alcohol, and gamble in all venues.

Gambling is viewed as glamorous and exciting and offers a completely different atmosphere than going to see a movie on a Friday night.

But, for youth like me who were never exposed to formal education regarding problem gambling, the activity can be very dangerous. The excitement of being exposed to new situations and stimulation may encourage risky behavior and subsequently, addictions may

develop. Gambling is viewed as a social event, especially among my age group, and is so widely accepted that the potential risks are not considered or even questioned.



*Celebrations at a Las Vegas-themed prom.*

The extent to which gambling is culturally accepted also impacts youth before they reach the age of majority. To illustrate, when I was in high school and a member of the prom committee, a Monte-Carlo themed prom was a popular nomination. Though we ultimately opted to go with a classic Hollywood-style evening, casino-themed proms are quite common. Schools that do have casino-themed proms encourage gambling – even before most of the students are legally allowed to gamble! High schools would never permit drinking or drugs at prom, so why do they encourage gambling as

a risk-free activity? In my opinion, many schools are not only failing to provide adequate gambling-related education, but by condoning casino-themed proms, they are also promoting it!

Gambling at a young age is so extensively accepted, no wonder young adult Nova Scotians aged 19 to 24 are at the highest risk for developing problem gambling behaviors later in life."

Until next time,  
Jen Wheatley



## NSGF Informal Online Poll

Will you respond to the Nova Scotia government's call for input on the new Responsible Gaming Strategy? [...take the poll](#)

## News Articles & Announcements

40 gambling-related news articles and announcements were added to the online Resource Library since May 15, 2010.

### **Nova Scotia Responsible Gaming Strategy (2011 - 2016)**

*June 28, 2010*

### **Radio Podcast: Gambling as a Public Health Issue**

*From CBC Radio Information Morning on Thursday, June 24, 2010*

### **Video: Treatment is Good, Prevention is Better**

*From Global TV on Thursday, June 24, 2010*

### **The Real Impact of Gambling**

*From the Winnipeg Free Press on June 20, 2010*

### **Video: High Stakes - Are We Doing Enough for Problem Gamblers?**

*From CTV on June 16, 2010*

### **NSGF Professional Development Grants Now Available!**

*June 15, 2010*

### **Radio Podcasts: No Betting and Two Hot Topics**

*From CBC Radio Information Morning on June 3 & 4, 2010*

[...more News Articles & Announcements](#)

## Research Articles & Reports

This database can be searched by date or location of publication (i.e. Nova Scotia, Canada, or International).

### **Global Discourse on Gambling: The Importance of a Public Health Approach**

This report explains a public health response to gambling harm and includes definitions, an overview of the various discourses, and explains the value and challenges of a public health approach...

### **A Question of Balance: Prioritizing Public Health Responses to Harm from Gambling**

To provide an overview of the nature of a public health approach to gambling, this study examines harm minimization, health promotion, and the political determinants for change...

[...more Research Articles and Reports](#)

## Upcoming Events

### **Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse**

July 28 - 30, 2010

### **A Ray of Hope Retreat - New Beginnings for Women in Recovery**

September 10 - 12, 2010

[...more Upcoming Events](#)

## New Links

### **A New Responsible Gaming Strategy for Nova Scotia**

The official website of Nova Scotia's Responsible Gaming Strategy contains *A Better Balance: Nova Scotia's First Gaming Strategy*, terms of reference, and information on how to provide input on the new strategy.

[...more Links](#)