



Problem Gambling Prevention Update

A Department of Justice / Primary Care Partnerships Initiative

In 2008, the Department of Justice (DoJ) funded Primary Care Partnerships (PCPs) around Victoria to facilitate Health Promotion work in the area of Problem Gambling Prevention. Health Promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. (Ottawa Charter, 1986) It recognises that the major factors that impact on people's health lie outside of the health system.

In the North of Melbourne, the three PCPs decided to deliver this initiative in partnership and in November 2008 a Problem Gambling Health Promotion Advisor, Susan Rennie, was employed through the Banyule Nillumbik Primary Care Alliance (BNPCA). The initial focus of Susan's work has been on developing a framework and model for how we might encourage and facilitate health promotion work in this field. This is important because the DoJ-PCP initiative seeks to engage a broad range of agencies in an area which is new to many. Furthermore, whilst there is a long history of work and research in the area of treatment of people with problem gambling behaviours, very little was been done at a community and agency level which has specifically focused on building communities where people are less vulnerable to problem gambling.

Health Promotion theory tells us that we can achieve improvements in health outcomes in several ways including:

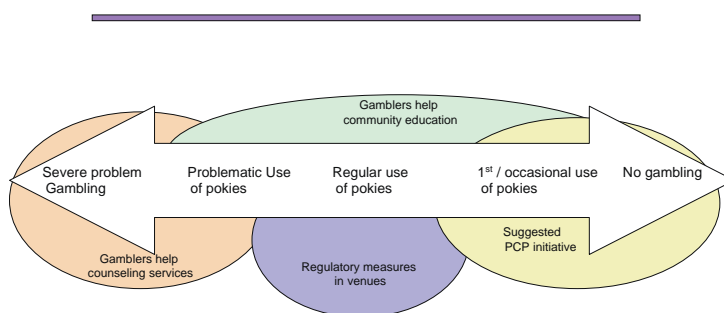
- **Building healthy public policy**
 - **Creating supportive environments**
 - **Strengthening community action**
 - **Developing personal skills and**
 - **Reorienting health services**
- (Ottawa Charter, 1986)

Furthermore, health promotion work is most effective when it works across these areas and involves strong partnerships between different sectors.

The model which we are developing for the PCP Initiative suggests that our work will be most effective if it focuses on people who have had minimal exposure to gambling in the past as Gamblers Help Services and regulatory measures assist people who already have higher levels of exposure to gambling.

We have also identified that we may be most effective if we focus on creating supportive environments and strengthening community action. This focus acknowledges the social, economic and environmental factors which lead people to be more vulnerable to problem gambling.

Points of intervention



The PCP initiative will work closely alongside GHN to compliment and extend the work they already undertake. The diagram above shows how we will work together with PCP's focusing on a preventative population based approach.

Over the coming year the Initiative will develop resources for PCP member agencies and build up ideas and proposals for work that they undertake in this area. The Problem Gambling Health Promotion Advisor will offer agencies on-going support in this area.

If you are interested in knowing more or being involved, please Contact Susan Rennie on 9450 2633 or susan.rennie@bchs.org.au



BNPCA
Promoting Better Access to Health Services



Hume Moreland
Primary Care Partnership

April 2009

Banyule Community Health
GAMBLER'S HELP NORTHERN

21 Alamein Road, West Heidelberg, VIC 3081

Tel: 1300 133 445 Fax: 9459 9241

New Recruitment

Anonymous
Telephone Support for
Gamblers and Families

HOPE
FOR YOU
AND YOURS

Want to talk to
someone who has
been there ?

1300 133 445

GAMBLER'S HELP 1800 150 789

2008 saw the release of research results into the outcomes of the Peer Connection Program, by the Problem Gambling and Treatment Research Unit headed by Professor Alun Jackson.

The results demonstrate that the clients surveyed were extremely satisfied with the support they receive from peers and benefited greatly from their involvement in the Program. Survey results also indicated that the support clients received from peers positively impacted their capacity to manage and control problems in their lives and empowers them to take control of their situation.

Peer volunteers felt that using their skills and abilities in a purposeful way transformed what had previously been a problem in their life, into something positive and useful.

In the wake of positive research results, 2009 begins an exciting new time of growth for the Peer Connection Program. A recruitment drive for new volunteers began in February in the areas of Moonee Valley, Manningham, Hume, Maroondah, Whitehorse, Heidelberg, Diamond Valley, Whittlesea and Preston.

Information nights for community members interested in becoming Peer Connection Volunteers will be held at the West Heidelberg Site at 7pm on 30th of March and 11am on 31st of March. Following the information sessions interviews will be conducted and successful applicants will be offered a place in training designed specifically for the Peer Connection program and provided by Lifeline.

Training by Lifeline for prospective volunteers begins on 16th of May 2009 for more information contact Michelle Chrimes on 9450 2082 or 0448 314 217

Sensitive and Respectful Counselling for Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people

Problem gambling counsellors counsel clients with CALD backgrounds who (themselves or their parents) come to Australia from all around the globe with different cultures, languages, values, belief systems, attitudes and experiences. It is important for problem gambling counsellors to be culturally sensitive, respectful and aware in order to facilitate their CALD client's exploration, reflection and identification with his or her own unique issues and collective cultural identification. At the same time it is important to help CALD clients to understand how gambling fits in their life and what needs it satisfies.

Although CALD clients have different needs and issues depending on their age and socioeconomic background, their common problem is a generational gap. Lack of understanding between parents and children is common in many families, but in the CALD immigrant culture it is amplified by the fact that the two generations have grown up in completely different environments (countries). The trans-generational grief and sense of loss caused by previous wars and the experience of migration add to the rift. For these reasons many children of migrants feel misunderstood and unsupported, and have a tendency to 'swap' roles with their parents, 'inheriting their trauma' without being aware of it. Some of them start gambling as a way 'to manage' their problems caused by their grief and loss.

Most of the older CALD clients tend to have migrated to provide their children with a better future. This process of migration has led them to experience much grief and a sense of loss, which they rarely – if ever – address while working persistently towards this 'better future'. They tend to have reached a point in time, where they see their future as one marked by loneliness, a lack of understanding and an inability to improve their communication with close family members. Some of them start gambling as a way to block this reality and escape from their disappointments.

For the younger CALD generations gambling can play different functions in their life. For some it begins as a perceived 'easy way to win money'. For others it turns into a protest against their parents for different conscious or unconscious reasons.



Although generalizations can be made the truth is that each CALD client has their own unique issues. To generalize about the issues brings up the risk of stereotyping all clients from CALD backgrounds. Counselling must provide safety in order to facilitate clients to be able to explore any issues that might deviate from their apparent collective CALD backgrounds. Counsellors might not be able to learn about all CALD communities, but clients themselves are a great source of information on their individual and collective CALD backgrounds. So, counsellors should be sensitive, respectful and ask for clarification if they are not sure.

Problem gambling counselling can help CALD problem gamblers to overcome their ambivalence to change. It can assist them in preventing negative emotions both from the cost of their gambling as well as from a past that is linked to their current gambling problem.

**Violeta Stolevska, Problem Gambling Counsellor
For free and confidential counselling please call
Gambler's Help Northern on 1300 133 445**

“Cracking Da Banking Code”

- with apologies to Dan Brown

Q. What is the Code of Banking Practice?

A. The Code of Banking Practice is a voluntary code of conduct which sets out how banks are expected to behave in terms of good banking practice.

Q. Voluntary you say? Does that mean the banks can pick and choose when they can follow it?

A. No. Banks that have signed on to the code are bound by decisions made by the Financial Services Ombudsman. The Code requires them to have an internal dispute resolution department and to participate in external dispute resolution schemes.

Q. So who has signed on to the banking code?

A. All the banks. A list of financial institutions who have adopted the code can be found here at www.bankers.asn.au/Default.aspx?ArticleID=460. Credit Unions and some financial institutions are not signed on, but they are expected to join in 2010.

Q. How do I get hold of the Code?

A. A copy of the Banking Code can be obtained from your local bank branch or online at www.bankers.asn.au/Default.aspx?ArticleID=446.

Q. Are there any useful bits of the Code?

A. Clause 19 of the code allows the customer to cancel direct debits by



contacting the bank, and WITHOUT the customer having to contact the company being paid.

Clause 25.1 requires a bank to apply care and prudence when assessing a customer's ability to pay back a loan. Clause 25.2 requires a bank to work with you to help you overcome your financial difficulties with any loans you have with them.

Q. I think my bank has breached their obligations to me under the code. What can I do?

A. You can contact the bank's dispute resolution department. Contact details are available at www.fos.org.au/centric/home_page/members/list_of_financial_ombudsman_service_members.jsp

Q. I need assistance in dealing with my bank. What can I do?

A. Our financial counselling team can help. We can be contacted on 9450 2084.

GHN Financial Counselling Desk.

Community Connections in Hume

As part of Gambler's Help Northern Community Connections program initiatives, effective partnerships have been formed in Hume with specific CALD associations and organisations. These partnerships aim to tackle various health issues relating to depression/ anxiety; isolation; gambling and general health and well being with specific CALD communities in Hume. The Victorian Multicultural Gamblers help Program; Dianella Community Health; Hume/Moreland PCP and more recently North West Area Mental Health Services have come together to enhance the capacity of CALD communities to deal with these issues and promote better health and well being.



for recreational activities which included recruitment of community leaders to run weekly walking groups in association with the Heart Foundation; post walk activities to enhance social connectedness; subsidised low cost gym membership; tai chi sessions; aerobics marathon sessions and community driven family fun day outings to the Caribbean Gardens.

Not only has the community engaged and taken on a leadership role in organising these initiatives but they have also taken on the role of advocating to the Hume City Council for improved facilities in walking routes including, safe walking paths, seating and shelter. The community recently met with Hume City Council Mayor, Cr Jack Ogilvie, to present these issues.

For more information contact Emel Akcay on 9450 2081

Community consultations highlighted the need for alternative recreational opportunities in the area and education sessions addressing specific health issues. The community identified the need

Portfolio Services Developments

A new partnership between Banyule Community Health Service and Austin Health aims to assist people with gambling problems who have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of military service. Department of Justice funding of Banyule Community Health Service for 3 years is enabling a project worker with expertise in problem gambling counselling to work at Austin Health's Veterans' Psychiatry Unit on a part-time basis. A steering group, whose members include the Problem Gambling Treatment and Research Centre, oversees the project. By the project's end in June 2011, Veterans' Psychiatry Unit counsellors will be assisting their clients who have gambling problems more independently of Gamblers' Help.

The Austin Health Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Report of 2004 identified a strong need for intervention with problem gambling because of its significance in the war veteran community. Although Australian data is limited, studies of veterans being treated for PTSD in USA estimate that up to 25% of people in treatment have gambling problems. Similar to alcohol, problem gambling entrenches the PTSD in that the veteran with PTSD who uses gambling as a way of coping seeks to avoid PTSD symptoms such as intrusive images and thoughts. While avoidance seems to be a part of the human condition, the traumatic effects of war and peace-keeping duties on military personnel seem to heighten the potential for veterans to cope in unhelpful ways.

The project is funded within the context of a service agreement for problem gambling services from 1 July 2008 for three years. The agreement introduced a portfolio services program to Gamblers' Help services. The term portfolio services describes the range of activities at local level to provide specialist problem gambling services in identified external service systems where co-presenting problem gambling issues are likely to be present. Mental health is identified as one of three priority service portfolios. In the project described here, PTSD and problem gambling are the identified co-presenting issues.

For more information contact Peter Critchley Portfolio Services Worker on 9450 2085

International Women's Day 2009



On the 8 March every year, thousands of events are held throughout the world to inspire women and to celebrate the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future.

In recognition of this important occasion, the Women of West Heidelberg held their annual International Women's Day celebration on Saturday 7 March at the Centre Ivanhoe.

The Women of West Heidelberg which is a group of local women, began to meet regularly following on from the success on this event in 2007. This group provides a safe and inclusive environment where women of all ages and backgrounds can come together on equal terms to celebrate women and the contribution they make to their community.

120 women attended the luncheon and heard from many guest speakers including Jenny Mikakos MP and local women generously shared their stories and spoke about what it is like to live and work in Heidelberg West. Women were also entertained by the dynamic duo "Signoras" and musician Marceau Camille. Each attendee received a small gift of appreciation in the form of a pocket diary inscribed with the statement 'Proud Women of West Heidelberg'.

The 2009 event could not have gone ahead without the support from: Banyule City Council, Banyule Community Health, Heidelberg West Neighbourhood Renewal, Gambler's Help Northern, Jenny Macklin MP, Jenny Mikakos MP, Craig Langdon MP and Cr Anthony Carbines.

This event and the work of the women is a true recognition of the diverse and important roles women play in the community.

Gambler's Help Northern services spread across the North:

Gambler's Help Northern provides problem gambling counselling and financial counselling

for individuals, couples, families and friends affected by gambling.

Services offered in:

Coburg, West Heidelberg, Broadmeadows, Epping, Sunbury, Northcote, Eltham, Craigieburn and Greensborough.

To refer a client or make an appointment contact

1300 133 445

FREE PROBLEM GAMBLING INFORMATION

- brochures / cards/ posters
- language specific material
- self help information
- speaking engagements
- provider education training and professional development

Contact Community Education Team:

Emel Akcay 9450 2081

Kate Little 9450 2080

RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING AWARENESS WEEK Starts 25th May 2009

COMING SOON GETTING EVEN

A Group to help people stop or control their GAMBLING

If your gambling is causing difficulties for you OR those close to you, and YOU want to change...this group may help

Getting Even will cover the following topics over 10 weeks

- building on your motivation to change
- understanding why you keep on gambling
- making positive changes stick
- how to feel better about yourself

GROUP STARTING JULY 2009

10 weeks each Thursday
6.30pm to 8.30pm

venue:

Darebin Community Health Service
42 Separation Street, NORTHCOTE

bookings & information:

Gamblers Help Northern Intake
1300 133 445



Follow these tips before you gamble

- Set a limit and don't exceed it
- Take just your allocated amount of money
- Gamble for the fun of it, not the money or the win
- Don't let gambling take over your life

RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING AWARENESS WEEK
gambler's help 1800 858 858 www.responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au

Responsible Gambling Awareness Week is a partnership between bakers, local government, the gambling industry and Victorian Government.

A Victorian Government Initiative



gambler's **help** northern
1300 133 445



www.bchs.org.au