



**Banyule
Community
Health**

Gambler's Help Tuesdays with Nexus

Lachlan McKenzie – Health Promotion Worker
Kelly Preece – Financial Counsellor

Who we are:



Gambler's Help Northern (part of Banyule Community Health – funded by Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation)

Team consists of:

- Therapeutic Counsellors
- Financial Counsellors
- Venue Support Workers
- Lived experience programs
- Community Engagement program (Health Promotion Worker's)



Gambling harm

A recognised disorder which involves repeated problematic gambling behaviour that causes significant problems or distress

American Psychiatric Association(2019)

- Population wide 3% experience gambling harm or are at risk
- Six are affected by the person's gambling
- Minority seek counselling – around 10%
 - Why do so few people seek help?

Why do so few people seek treatment?



- Stigma (public stigma, perceived stigma)
- Shame
- Gambler's Fallacy



Gambling in Victoria



- In 2015-16 the social and economic cost of problem gambling to the community in Victoria was estimated at over \$7 billion:
 - \$1.3 billion on financial costs – bankruptcy / cost of unpaid debts
 - \$1.5 billion on family and relationship costs – depression, emotional and psychological costs
 - \$2.1 billion relationships and family – divorce and separation, domestic violence, suicide
 - \$1 billion crime
 - \$500 million in lost productivity
 - \$1 billion – costs the Victorian government – VRGF, research, MH sector – homelessness services etc



COVID-19 and gambling



A University of Sydney study found:

- Of those experiencing gambling harm pre-COVID – 60% had a decrease in harm and 21% stayed the same

“Since COVID-19 I have ceased gambling. My life has improved immensely. I have more money. I have more time with family.”

(Gainsbury, 2020)



The concern....



Pokies are heavily concentrated in areas of disadvantage

- These populations are likely to be heavily affected by the social and economic consequences of the pandemic
- Stressed populations use gambling to self medicate

This creates long term problems for short term relief including:

- Financial difficulties
- Extreme stress and anxiety
- Exacerbation of existing conditions and circumstances
- Increased risk of suicide and relationship breakdown



Pokies in Victoria – Hume vs Booroondara



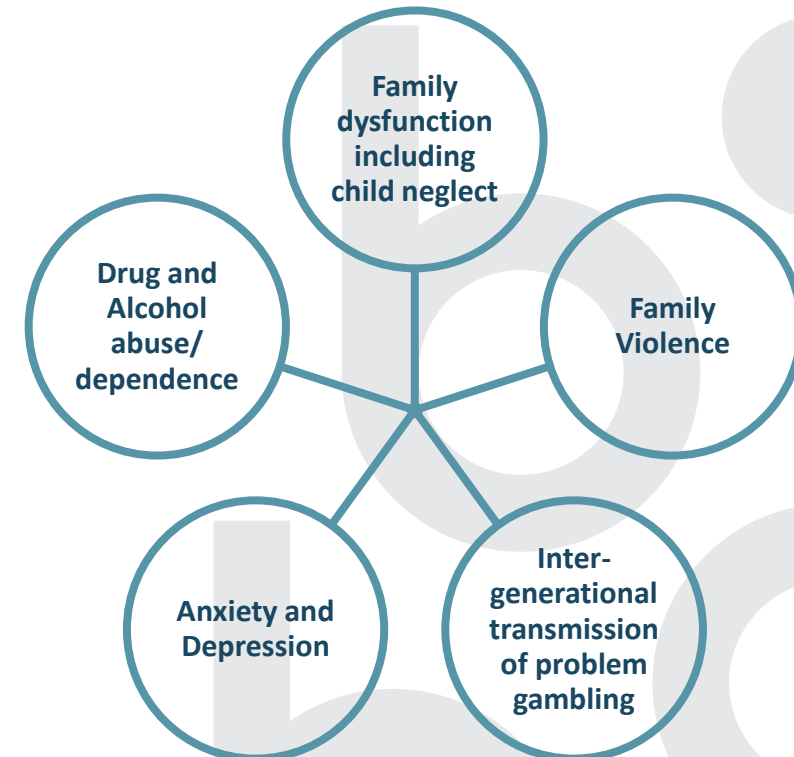
| | Hume | Booroondara |
|---|---------------|--------------|
| Ranking by socio-economic disadvantage 2016 | 13 | 78 |
| Number of pokie venues | 14 | 4 |
| Pokies per 1000 adults | 4.8 | 1.1 |
| Spent on pokies a day 2018-19 | \$306,016 | \$56,030 |
| Spend per year | \$111,695,894 | \$20,450,974 |



Gambling harm is a complex issue

Which rarely occurs as an isolated problem

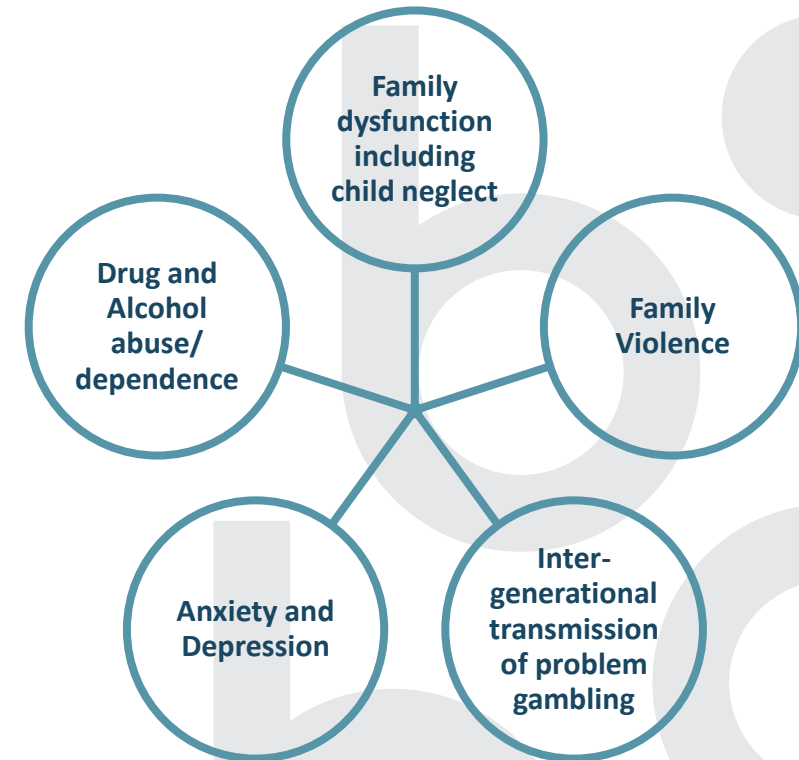
- Rates of high-risk gambling in AOD and MH populations are x 8 higher than in general adult populations
- A sample of high-risk gamblers in treatment found 35% had an alcohol disorder and 27% drug use disorder in their life
- Around half of high-risk gamblers experience anxiety or depression
- A quarter contemplated suicide in past 12 months
- Research has found over half of clinicians in MH and AOD sector “rarely” or “never” screened for Gambling Harm



How Gambler's Help can assist organizations:



- Clinical education sessions
- Community education sessions
- Financial literacy workshops
- Referrals and secondary consults with clients (further discussed later in this session)
- Assist with implementing gambling harm screening questions during intake processes



How Gambler's Help can assist with clients



Therapeutic Counsellors:

- Conduct assessments with goal setting
- Crisis management
- Therapeutic interventions
- One off sessions or longer term
- Assist with joint counselling or provide secondary consultation



How Gambler's Help can assist with clients



Financial Counselling

- Provide information to help the client make decisions to resolve their financial problems
- Provide information on protecting assets from gambling behaviours
- Help family members (and gamblers themselves) to protect their income from gambling behaviours
- Act as a circuit breaker between creditors and the client (breathing space)

Debts

- Protecting client from harassment
- Reviewing contracts
- Negotiation of payment plans

Money Management

- Access to money to ensure bills and rent are paid



Exploring possible gambling harm issues with clients



- **Sensitive area** - associated with shame, guilt and denial.
- Important to normalise problem gambling as an issue.
- **Circular questions** – raising the question without specifically mentioning gambling
 - *“Are there any particular issues for you that might be contributing to the way you feel/your financial concerns?”*
- **Direct questions**
 - Introduce the topic in a non-confronting, non-personalized way
 - *“Are you impacted by any gambling related issues?”*
 - Introducing the topic of gambling whilst screening for issues such as drug and alcohol use.
 - *“Do you play pokies or bet when you are out drinking?”*



How Gambler's Help can assist with clients – Lived Experience



Peer Connection

- Peer support program
- Phone calls by volunteers
- Adjunct to other services or can be used as standalone

Getting Even

- 8 week education and peer support program
- Facilitated by two staff members with lived experience of gambling harm

Not A Dollar More podcast series –

- Created by BCHS volunteer
- Includes inspiring stories and academic experts



How to refer to Gambler's Help



Phone – 1300 133 445

Email - ghnintake@bchs.org.au

**Website - <https://gamblershelp.com.au/> or
<https://bchs.org.au/services/gambling-support/>**



Questions?

