

# Increasing the Odds for Safety and Respect

A prevention project focused on  
the co-occurrence of family  
violence and problem gambling





# Project Objectives

To increase awareness about the link between family violence and problem gambling with service providers and within the community.

To strengthen:

- The relationships between the family violence and problem gambling sectors
- Risk assessment mechanisms
- Referral pathways and service delivery





# The Link Between Family Violence and Problem Gambling

- Female problematic gamblers who are being or have been abused in the past
- Women gambling as a way of escaping or coping with situations of family abuse or even using gambling venues as a 'refuge' from danger
- Women being abused by partners with a gambling problem
- A woman being abused by a gambling partner may sometimes be a problem gambler herself
- Child abuse and/or neglect by a problem gambling parent (or both of them)
- Elder abuse by adult problem-gambling offspring

(Borrell and Boulet, 2007)



# Findings of the Increasing the Odds for Safety and Respect Consultations

## Commonalties:

- Shame and stigma, blame for situation
- Isolation / loneliness
- Mental / physical health issues
- Lack of self esteem
- Trauma e.g. refugee experience, abuse
- Alcohol and illicit substance abuse
- Lack of community awareness of the issue
- First point of contact with services is usually triggered by a crisis
- Financial hardship and/or financial abuse
- Homelessness and poverty



# Findings of the Increasing the Odds for Safety and Respect Consultations

- Family violence and problem gambling sectors have different philosophies and practices
- Different intake and assessment tools
- Referral processes
- Cross-sector collaboration



# Findings of the Increasing the Odds for Safety and Respect Consultations

- Working with male perpetrators of violence
- Complex cases
- Working with refugee or immigrant clients
- Working with Aboriginal clients



# The Work of the Increasing the Odds for Safety and Respect Project

- Training for financial counsellors on family violence
- Training for Gambler's Help staff on working with men who use violence
- Awareness raising
- Provision of gambling information to family violence service staff by Gambler's Help staff
- Fact sheet on problem gambling and family violence
- Advocating for inclusion of family violence and problem gambling items in assessment tools
- Submission to the Royal Commission



# Recommendations

- Greater integration between the problem gambling and family violence sectors
- Professional development of service providers
- Legislation to make poker machines safer in Victoria
- Problem gambling to be included as a risk factor in the Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and family violence to be included in problem gambling assessment tools.
- Problem gambling to be included as a contributing factor in the prevention of violence against women frameworks





## Future Work

- Gendered research on the complexities of the link between family violence and problem gambling
- Research that considers the link between problem gambling and other contributing factors to family violence
- Women's use of venues as 'safe spaces' and the impact on their health, safety and well-being

# Contact Details

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