



Harm Reduction: Gambling,

Funded through
the Gamblers
Rehabilitation Fund



Government of South Australia
Department of Human Services





Acknowledgement:

We would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we meet on and pay respect to Elders past and present and emerging.

Carolyn Hirsh Pokies Addiction



Psychologist / state MP,
Carolyn Hirsh warned of
addictive
nature of poker
machines –
then herself fell under
their powerful spell

<https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/beating-the-odds-how-carolyn-hirsh-overcame-her-pokies-addiction-20151001-gjzbf.html>

Session Objectives

- Overview of gambling and problem gambling
 - The identification of problem gambling
 - Starting the conversation
- Practical ways to support people with problem gambling behaviors
 - Help referral options



Dr Jane Oakes

Dr Jane Oakes is a program facilitator at PsychMed. She has previously held multiple senior positions at national addiction treatment organisations, and has extensive CBT experience, and a PhD.

Mr Patrick Carey

B.Psych(Hons), 4+2 Internship

Provisional Psychologist, Program Coordinator & Facilitator of Relapse Prevention Group (South West) and therapist on the SA Intensive Gambling Help Service both metro & rural. Previous co-facilitator of the Matrix Program..

We are from PsychMed

Largest South Australian Provider of Mental Health Services, with specialist areas of Addiction, Trauma and Suicidality. Provider of EAP and Better Access services.

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Gambling in Australia Some Facts

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Reasons people gamble

- Australian culture
 - enjoyable
- excitement / chance of winning money
 - social
- relieves boredom and stress

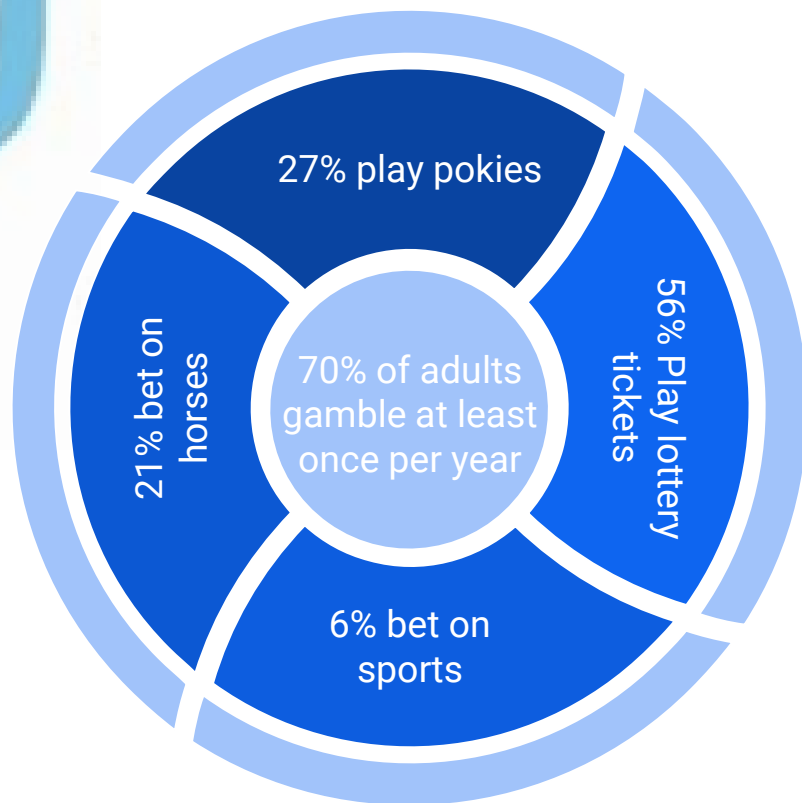
Gambling Behaviours



- Participation: 63.9% & Total \$ = AUD\$23.648B
- Land-based gambling ↓ & interactive gambling ↑
- Approx \$1.1 billion gambled on regulated sites annually
 - **HIGH** risk of harm for EGM & Horse Racing
 - **Moderate** risk of harm for Casino & Online
 - **Low Risk** of Harm for Lotto, Bingo etc.
- EGM is **MOST ADDICTIVE**: illusion of control, variable ratio reward, conditioning, environment.

(Dowling et al., 2015; Roy Morgan Research [2012](#))

Gambling Habits in South Australia



Australian Prevalence

- **Problem gambling** 0.4%
- **Moderate-risk** 1.9%
- **Low-risk gambling** 3.0%

Rowe, C., White, M., Long, C., Roche, A., Orr, K. (2015) Dowling et al., (2015)



Online Gambling

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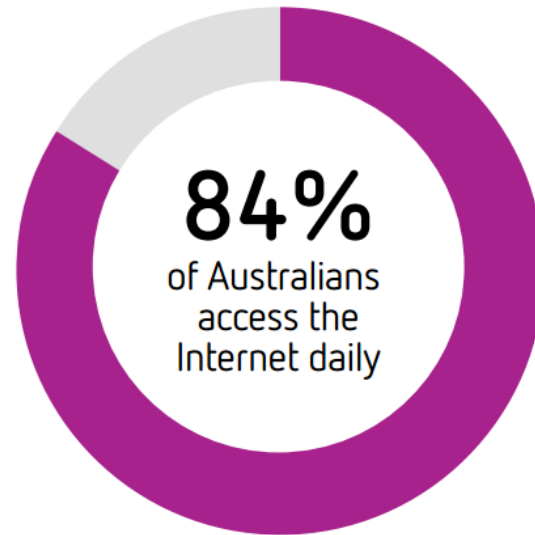


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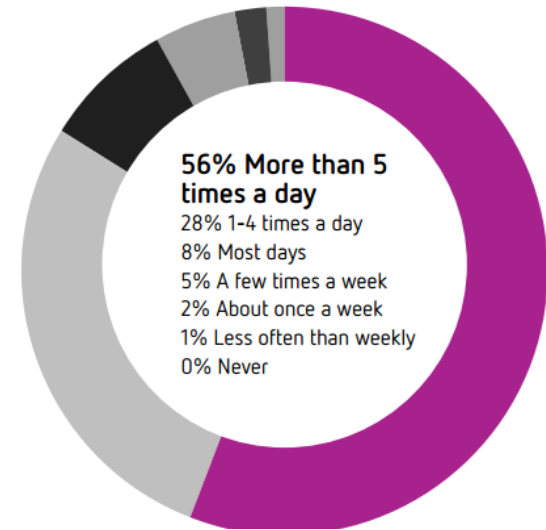


Australian's Online 2017

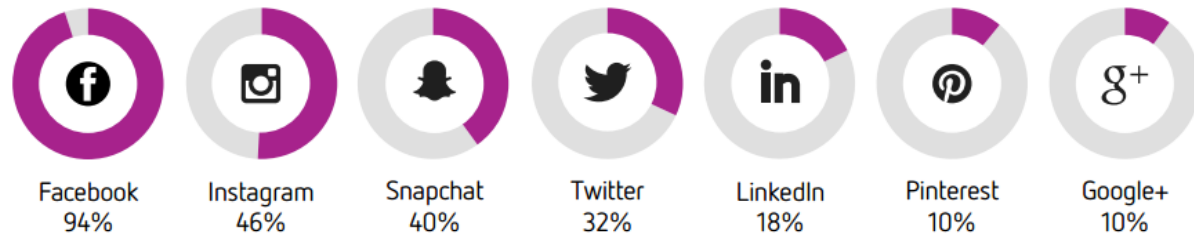
Proportion that access the Internet daily



Frequency of Internet use



Social networking sites used this year



(Sensis Social Media Report 2017)

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Australian's Online

99% households with children under 15 used mobile / smart phone to access internet

2016–17, 87% of people were internet users

People aged 15 to 17 years were the highest proportion of internet users (98%)

(ABS 2018)

Changing face of Online and Interactive Gamblers

Twice as likely to be moderate risk or low risk gamblers

Three quarters of problem / moderate risk gamblers had not considered seeking help

More likely than other gamblers to prefer an online help service

(Hing et al 2014)



Changing face of Online and Interactive Gamblers

Male (88%), aged between 18 and 49 (75%), and working full-time (70%)

Forty-one per cent of all regular sports bettors—234,000 adults—experienced one or more gambling problems in 2015.

In a typical month, 46 cents in every dollar spent by regular sports bettors came from a person with moderate to severe gambling problems

Armstrong, A. R., & Carroll, M. (2017). *Sports betting in Australia*. Melbourne: Australian Gambling Research Centre, Australian Institute of Family Studies

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 **PsychMed**

Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD)

(King D & D King 2018)

IGD contributes to mental health problems in people of all ages and cultural backgrounds

Negative Consequences include mood changes (including irritability and anger), disturbed sleep patterns, depression, anxiety and suicide risk, physical and general health concerns, social issues and disruption to school, work and general productivity"

Best available evidence suggests, overall, that the prevalence of IGD is 1% and is more common amongst young males"

"Many Health Professionals are aware of IGD, but are unsure of what to do."



Gambling and other issues

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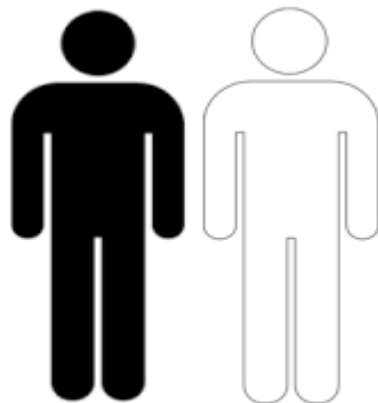
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One in Two

One in two mental health patients who gamble experience gambling **related harm**

27 % mental health patients experience harm

8 % mental health patients have problem gambling

Manning, V., Dowling, N. A., Lee, S., Rodda, S., Garfield, J. B. B., Volberg, R., ... & Lubman, D. I. (2017)

Gambling & AOD issues

Four times more likely to have problems with alcohol

30-46% report drug use disorders

More than 25% of people experience both alcohol use disorders and severe mental health disorders

1. Thomas, S. A., & Jackson, A. C. (2008).

2. Townshend, P., Dowling, N., Rodda, S., & Legge, B. (2014).

Gambling & AOD issues



- exacerbate gambling problems
- increase amount prepared to bet
- more disinhibited & have less cognitive control
 - less likely to stop once started gambling
- ability to evaluate costs / benefits /understand games rules compromised
 - AOD – escape distress gambling losses

Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy. (2010)
French, M. T., Maclean, J. C., & Ettner, S. L. (2008)



Alcohol and Drug issues

exacerbate gambling problems:

- increase amount prepared to bet
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Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy. (2010)
French, M. T., Maclean, J. C., & Ettner, S. L. (2008)



Gambling and Suicide

Higher levels depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and dissociation (Delfabbro, 2007)

Suicidal ideation and suicide attempts among individuals with pathological gambling 20% to 40% (Kausch, 2003 Blaszczynski & Farrell, 1998; DeCaria et al., 1996)

Suicidal thoughts 48-79% in clients with problem gambling and co-morbidity - suicide attempts 12-20 % (Rugle, 2000)

Family violence and gambling-related harm

Family violence three times more likely to occur in families where gambling is a problem

(Dowling, Ewin, Youssef, Thomas & Jackson In preparation)



Harms divided into 7 dimensions:

1. financial harm
2. relationship disruption, conflict or breakdown
3. emotional or psychological distress
4. decrements to health
5. cultural harm
6. reduced performance at work or study
7. criminal activity

Browne, M, Langham, E, Rawat, V, Greer, N, Li, E, Rose, J, Rockloff, M, Donaldson, P, Thorne, H, Goodwin, B, Bryden, G & Best, T (2016)



Help Seeking

Gambling problems more publicly
stigmatised than
alcohol abuse, obesity, schizophrenia, but
not drug abuse

Relapse worsens self stigma and shame



Identifying Risky Gambling

Who is at risk?

- Young males (18-35 years old)
- Men 2-3 times higher than women.
 - Individuals in financial debt
 - Low Income
- Mental Health Issues (including alcohol and drugs).
 - Indigenous
- Individuals with Poor Physical Health
 - Separated / Divorced



Identifying Risky Gambling

What are the Signs?

- Regularly short of money /borrowing money
 - Being secretive about finances
- Withdrawn, worried, agitated or upset for no apparent reason
 - Performance at work/ home/study affected
 - Spending more time gambling
- Being secretive about unexplained absences
 - Often being late for commitments
- Taking an unusual amount of time for simple tasks

Starting the conversation

Its ok there is no perfect way to start a conversation!

Asking open ended questions requiring a response is a good start.

For example?

How are you going?

What's been happening lately?

You don't seem quite yourself lately, is something bothering you?

You seem upset or worried, what's going on?

Can I help you?

Listening

- Acknowledge their struggle and how hard life is for them
 - Listen and be open minded
 - Some times people just need to talk
 - Be patient - let them take their time
- You don't need to tell them what to do

The Conversation ..



"I've got the time to talk"

"Can you tell me more about what's going on?"

"It sounds like you're dealing with a lot at the moment"

"I'm really sorry to hear you're feeling like this right now"

"I know where you can access free confidential help and talk to
someone"

Some people may not be ready to talk



- Maintain eye contact and seem relaxed so they feel more comfortable
- It can take some people a while to open-up and chat

Wait for them to raise the problem

If they are experiencing harms or have identified a person close to them experiencing harms give them a card.

<https://www.thinkmentalhealthwa.com.au/supporting-others-mental-health/how-to-help/how-to-start-the-conversation/>

Gambling Question



Have you ever gambled more than you can afford?



Thankyou!

Thank you for all who have attended today

We look forward to future correspondence with all of you! Do not hesitate to get in contact with us.

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