

UCAN Newsletter

UNLIMITED CHOICES OF ACTIVITIES NOW



AUGUST 2019



 PRIMARY CARE
CONNECT
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PROJECT



The Newsletter

REVAMP



#UCAN PROJECT

Welcome to the new Gamblers Help Newsletter! We have revamped the structure of our UCAN newsletter and are very excited to bring you the first new issue.

Moving forward the newsletter will be issued quarterly, to make sure we are creating engaging material in a more deliberate delivery format, and it will have content created from each of our Gambling Help team members including the UCAN Project, Community Engagement, Financial Counselling, Therapeutic Counselling, and Venue Support.

This will be a fantastic opportunity for us to provide more in-depth information around our roles and the services we each provide, as well as updates on activities we are running, and to raise awareness of larger projects occurring, as well as case studies and links to education opportunities.

This newsletter is free to share with all members of the community, as we seek to raise awareness of gambling harm and services across the Moira, Mitchell, Murrindindi, Strathbogie and Greater Shepparton Shires, and if you have any feedback or would like further information please contact Sam at Primary Care Connect on 03 5823 3200.

UCAN Project

We have been incredibly busy planning the next year of our UCAN Project, and we already have some brilliant opportunities lined up.

The 7th-11th of October is 'Gambling Harm Awareness Week' and we have created a Visual Art Installation that we will be bringing to our shires for a day each during the week. We have picked highly visible spaces in Yarrawonga, Euroa, Seymour, Yea, and Shepparton, and are very excited to engage with members of the community. The theme of the week is **'Talk. Share. Support'** which perfectly aligns with our aim to combat the stigma around gambling harm.

We have again partnered with the Activities In The Park Program across the Greater Shepparton Shire and will be delivering a number of free activities available to the community. During the second week of the upcoming school holidays we will be running 'Chalk Drawing Sessions' in a number of towns, where community members are invited to join us to create chalk drawings in a public space (including footpaths and basketball courts). We have also partnered with the Shepparton Library to create a monthly 'Midweek Movie Afternoon' which will invite people to join us for a cup of tea or coffee and enjoy a showing of a classic movie from the 50's or 60's. Finally we will again be running our scavenger hunt activities and these will occur in April next year. More information will be provided for these events as we get closer to the dates.

We also will soon be running another round of community consultations, however this year we will be trying to move slightly away from simply having a survey to be completed and would like to create something larger for the community to be a part of. The details of this are still to be finalised, but we will shortly be reaching out to organisations and community groups to assist in moving forward with this plan.

We also are revamping our UCAN Facebook Page and encourage everyone to watch this space as we finish planning the new structure. Moving forward we will be using the Facebook Page as a central platform to promote low-cost 'alternative activities' that are already available across our shires to raise awareness of options readily available to community members, and to further reduce barriers and promote social inclusion.

Finally, we also have had a few funding opportunities available recently, including for 'Gambling Harm Awareness Week' and 'Libraries After Dark', and we greatly appreciate those who have shown interest in applying for these. As always if you require any assistance with funding opportunities, we are more than happy to assist. So, keep an eye out for us in the near future as we start to release and reveal our new opportunities, and we will be in contact shortly to work with as many groups across our shires as possible!

Community Engagement

What a great start to the new financial year. Not only have we been re-funded for the next 3 years, we have great plans afoot to deal with the issues surrounding gambling harm. Our focus is centred around Promotion - Prevention - Education - Client support.

A big driver in what we do is getting constant feedback and information from the communities we work in, because who could know their community better than the community themselves! We understand that for a program, event or education session to be successful then it must have meaning and/or relevance to the individual community.

We have kicked off the financial year by contacting each of our shires (Strathbogie, Mitchell, Murrindindi, Moira and Greater Shepparton), to see how we can best support their communities and help raise awareness about gambling harm. These meetings have been very positive, and a continued example of partnerships being a great way to share resources, work towards a common goal and to collaborate on ideas and opportunities.

One of the many areas that we work in is education, and we have been very busy delivering education sessions across a wide variety of settings:

- Schools
- Sporting clubs
- Community groups
- Health professionals
- Service providers
- Community organizations
- Events
- Education institutions

The feedback from these sessions continues to be extremely positive, and at each session we find that there is already an initial awareness around the issues of gambling promotion and advertising. However, it isn't until we start talking about the cold hard statistics of gambling harm that participants start to realise that we can no longer keep our head in the sand about gambling in our communities.

We need to start talking about the issues, sharing the struggle with others and seeking support where needed.

Case Study

General Practitioner Information Session

One of the education sessions we deliver is a 'General Practitioner (GP) information session', which is available to all medical clinics and health centres, and is flexible in time and content to deliver, and completely free to the organisation.

From past 'GP education sessions' that we have delivered, this is what we have discovered;

Prior to the sessions, at least 50% of doctors had never assessed for gambling harm and the other 50% were sometimes, if rarely, assessing for gambling harm (that is for both the gambler and affected others), and 100% did not have a gambling harm assessment tool to use in their consults if needed. This is a concern as we know that clients who are experiencing gambling harm will often present to their GP with symptoms associated with the gambling harm, such as stress, difficulty sleeping, anxiety, financial concerns, relationship issues, or depression, just to name a few.

After having an information session, this is what some of the GP's had to say;

I will be more inquisitive about patient presentation. I am going to ask about gambling in all my mental health care plans. I am going to make sure I have the conversation about gambling more often. I will start assessing more for gambling addiction in my patients.

A helpful hint: We recommend asking a simple question; "How are you affected by gambling?" This will pick up information from both the gambler and the affected others. If there are no issues, they will simply answer 'I am not affected by gambling'.

Final note: To reduce the stigma surrounding gambling harm let's **TALK, SHARE, SUPPORT!**

Clients who are experiencing gambling harm will often present to their GP with symptoms associated with the gambling harm, such as:

**Stress | Not Sleeping | Anxiety | Financial Concerns
| Relationship Issues | Depression**

Financial Counsellor



Not many people have heard about Financial Counsellors (FC) unless they have needed to see one of us about their financial problems. So, here is a bit of a summary of our role.

Financial Counsellors provide options to people in financial difficulty. Working in community organizations, our services are free, independent and confidential.

An FC provides information, advocacy and advice on an extensive range of issues including an inability to pay household bills, loans, credit cards, mortgages, rent, rates, fines, taxation and child support.

The goal is to ultimately help the client make their own decisions and to help them get back on top of their financial situation. So, while an FC does provide options, they do not tell a client what to do as the ultimate decision rests with the client.

The client chooses which option to take and the FC supports the client in this option.

In some situations, a client may attend to any follow up work themselves but in many cases the FC will carry out advocacy work on behalf of the client. e.g. Letters to creditors requesting payment arrangements, temporary moratoriums on repayments or debt waivers. FC's also check whether you are entitled to any concessions/entitlements and provide information on where to obtain food vouchers and other types of assistance. We can help you seek legal assistance and refer you to therapeutic counselling services if required.

One of the tools we use is a fortnightly Income & Expenditure Statement (Budget). This is used to determine if the client is meeting fortnightly commitments from income received. It is also often used in letters to creditors for payment arrangements. It is also a good tool to use to see where your funds are going and where you may be able to cut back on expenses.

Finally, FC's may assess whether a debt is legally owed and whether there are any unfair terms in a contract. A debt may be statute barred if there has been no contact with a creditor or payments made on that debt for over 6 years. Where this is the case, then the fact that the debt is statute barred may be offered as a defence should the debt be pursued in court by a creditor.

Important to note is that an FC is not a financial planner or accountant, a provider of emergency relief and material aid, a finance broker, legal advisor, therapeutic counsellor, and a business advisor.

GAMBLING HARM

FACTS



A total \$2.699 billion was lost in Victoria at the pokies between 1, July 2018 and 30, June 2019!

This is an increase of around \$3.4 million or 0.13% from pokies losses in 2017 - 2018.

[Victoria Responsible Gambling Foundation]

Therapeutic Counsellor

Gambler's Help is a free service, providing counselling for people who are experiencing difficulties as a result of their gambling and for those who are affected by someone else's gambling. Counselling is offered face-to-face and over the phone.

Gambling harm takes many forms such as regretting the amount of time or money spent on gambling, lying about where you have been or what you have been doing, not having enough money for everyday life expenses or other harms related to gambling. Notably, gambling harm can occur long before a person hits "rock bottom" and therapeutic counselling can support you at all stages of harm, not just at the severe end of harm.

More specifically, Gambler's Help provides support, education, information, referrals and therapeutic counselling to support people to address their gambling issues. Particularly, Gambler's Help offers therapeutic counselling services to assist with understanding your gambling behaviour, identifying triggers, managing urges but also identifying the underpinnings of the gambling harm and support you along your journey. Gambler's Help can also assist with self-exclusion support. Self-exclusion is a voluntary process where someone bans themselves from gaming venues or online gambling for a period of time.

Gambler's Help Therapeutic Counselling aims to be as accessible to anyone who needs support, therefore Gambler's Help is primarily located in Shepparton but also outreaches to Wallan, Broadford, Seymour, Yarrawonga, Cobram and Mooroopna.

If you think that gambling may be affecting you, whether this be directly or you are affected by someone else's gambling, therapeutic counselling can support you. Our aim is to assist you through your personal goals. We understand what you're going through and can help you find ways to advise, assist and support you for as long as you need. Use to see where your funds are going and where you may be able to cut back on expenses.



Venue Support



In my travels to various “Pokies Venues” in our region I have been having great discussions with venue managers and staff surrounding some of the challenges they face when working within the gaming industry. A strong theme that I have been noticing is that venue staff genuinely care about their customers. The customers can often become like family to the staff and the staff can become like family to the customers. I find this to be a strength for hospitality venues as they become very knowledgeable about the lives and circumstances of the patrons they interact with on a regular basis. Because a venue manager knows, for example, which elderly couple from a nearby small town comes in for lunch on which day each week, they are in a special position to be able to notice changes in a customer’s behaviour, life or routine. A customer could be going through several difficulties, for example the death of a beloved pet or something as threatening as needing a place to hide from family violence.

From my point of view, I see these caring and knowledgeable staff members as being in a unique and important position of being able to point their customers in the direction of help when they are most in need. The trust that a venue patron can develop for venue staff who provide good customer care can become an avenue for staff to provide information about real live help services that can change a customer’s life.

This is heartening.

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YOU CAN REFER OR ACCESS OUR GAMBLERS HELP SERVICES TODAY.

All you have to do is call us today and let us help you achieve your goals.

At Primary Care Connect we offer many services. Here are just some of the main programs that our Gamblers Help Team can assist you or your loved one with today:

- THERAPEUTIC COUNSELLING
- FINANCIAL COUNSELLING
- SCHOOL PROGRAMS
- SPORTING CLUB PROGRAMS
- COMMUNITY EDUCATION
- UCAN PROJECT
- VENUE SUPPORT
- EVENTS

For more information , please contact us on the below details:

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E: intake@primarycareconnect.com.au

W: www.primarycareconnect.com.au



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