Addressing gambling in Indigenous communities: Embracing community, diversity and wellbeing

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*The views expressed in this presentation are those of the presenters, and may not reflect those of the Australian Institute of Family Studies or the Australian Government.*
Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and pay respect to Elders past and present.
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Introduction

• Gambling is an activity that impacts on Indigenous families and communities around Australia in diverse and complex ways.

• There is a significant lack of coordinated research, service delivery and policy focus in this area around Australia.

Highlight:

• The diversity of Indigenous people’s gambling practices

• The diversity of contexts in which Indigenous people live around Australia
Indigenous Gambling Research

- Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2012-13: Found 8% of Indigenous people reported gambling as a family stressor.

- Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (2012) Wave 3 reported 26% of primary carer respondents reported that either they or a close family member had a gambling problem. LSIC also found that irrespective of remoteness, Indigenous people were unlikely to engage with gambling help services.

- Other research suggests that Aboriginal people experience problems at two to five times the rate of the general population across all states and territories (Stevens and Young 2009).

- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2002:


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<th>Remote¹</th>
<th>Non-remote¹</th>
<th>Total¹</th>
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¹ NATSISS estimates sourced from ABS (data cubes), except for ACT/Tasmania which was came from the 2002 NATSISS Confidentialised Unit Recode File (CURF) accessed via the ABS RADL.
Health Promotion Framework:


The five principles for action of the Ottawa Charter are:

- Build Healthy Public Policy
- Create supportive environments
- Strengthen community action
- Help people develop skills
- Reorientate health services
BUILDING HEALTHY PUBLIC POLICY
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Co-authors: Professor Nerilee Hing, Ashley Gordon, Associate Professor Jeremy Buultjens, Dr Alex Russell, Centre for Gambling Education and Research, Southern Cross University
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Central tenet of building healthy public policy: people’s health & wellbeing

- Health, underpinning foundation for public policy development,
- Identifying impacts, risks & barriers,
- Resource allocation.
Why building healthy public policy is important for Aboriginal people with gambling issues.

- One size does not fit all,
- Implications of the impact of high intensity gambling,
- Limited research to support building healthy public policy.
Risks associated with gambling by Aboriginal people

- Risk & risk factors,
- Who faces gambling risks?
- High risk gambling behaviour,
- Risk factors associated with gambling.
Identifying protective aspects of gambling by Aboriginal people

- Protection & protective factors associated with gambling,
- Cultural factors & their importance,
- Individual and social group controls
Conclusion

• Family networks, cultural values and social relationships appear to have enduring power in helping to spread awareness, managing to assist in preventing various harms while protecting some gamblers from gambling risks.

• This is an important, appropriate and valuable resource to harness, to contribute to building and resourcing healthy public policy for Aboriginal people who gamble.
Developing personal skills
Creating supportive environments

Author: Dr Marisa Fogarty

Acknowledge the support of:
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Developing personal skills

Defining health:

Health is not just the physical well-being of the individual, but the social, emotional, and cultural well-being of the whole community. This is a whole-of-life view and it also includes the cyclical concept of life–death–life (NAHS Working Party 1989:x).
Holistic development of skills

- Strengths based approach
- Incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and understandings
- Identifying different skill sets

Individual
Family
Community
A strengths approach to develop skills

• Shift overall focus away from the ‘deficit’ or the ‘problem’ or ‘pathology’ of an individual in relation to gambling

Recognition:
• Every individual, family, group and community has strengths, and the focus is on these strengths rather than pathology
• The community is a rich source of resources
• Interventions are based on self-determination
• Collaboration is central and essential, and
• A belief that all people have the inherent capacity to learn, grow and change.
Indigenous understandings of gambling

- The ethical underpinning of the application of a health promotion framework.
- Ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the Northern Territory
  
  – Different ways and different forms of gambling
  – Understandings of gambling can be different
  – Understandings and use of money can be different

What does developing skills look like?

- Education and awareness
  - In particular, developing resources for community health and education services, community organisations and institutions to educate and develop skills in understanding and addressing gambling issues.
- Developing guidelines for ‘best practice’ in service delivery to address gambling and the impacts on Indigenous families and communities in culturally appropriate ways.
- Developing resources within communities, for communities, to address gambling issues (i.e. community guidelines for ‘safe’ gambling)
- Having a multi-level, multi-service approach working simultaneously at individual, family, community levels.
Create supportive environments

• Creating safe, supportive, appropriate gambling help services – this looks very different in different states around Australia (what constitutes ‘best practice’ in Australia?)

• Cultural competency of services
Multiple domains within an environment

- Looking at a community, town, or city as a ‘whole’ environment with multiple resources available to address gambling (for example, the schools, health clinics, early childhood centres, women's centres, police services, child protection services, councils, local business).
- A significant amount of expertise and resources already exist – so it's about engaging and educating those people outside of gambling services in the broader ‘community environment’.
- Counselling services, gambling help-lines, financial counselling, parenting programs, youth diversionary programs, school programs, community councils and boards, family, presented to people as an accessible package – creates supportive environments
- Then, self-sustaining supportive environments addressing gambling issues are born.
Reorientation of health services

Artwork by Gary Lee
Where we work
Action research

Planning
- identifying
- informing
- organising

Acting
- trialling
- collecting
- questioning

Observing
- analysing
- reporting
- sharing

Reflecting
- evaluating
- implementing
- revisiting
Kolb’s Reflective Teaching

Experience
actions past / present

Planning
making plans in order to
take (further) action

Observation
documenting
what happened

Reflection
making sense, investigating,
theorising
Reorient services

• This may mean change for services, change for workers and changes for people.
• Change is a process.
Strengthen community action

Presentation by Ashley Gordon
Understanding Aboriginal People Today

- Land and Spirituality
- Kinship Structures
- History and its impacts on people today
- Aboriginal culture of Today

It is important to understand that Aboriginal people do not have or come from an individualistic world view but instead see ourselves belonging too and identifying with a **collective body**
What do Aboriginal people do if they want to address the problem?

- Deal with it themselves
- Seek help from family, friend or cousin
- Seek treatment

Many Aboriginal people are generally hesitant about therapy because talking is not seen as an answer to most problems.
Influencing Factors

Western Society

Family

Community

SELF

Culture
Walking in Two Worlds

Aboriginal
- Culture & Identity
- Community
- Self
- Family
- Culture

Non-Aboriginal
- Western World
- Relationships
- Gambling
- Education
- Work
- Alcohol and drugs
- Family
Why are we NOT addressing gambling in Aboriginal communities

• There are others issues that Aboriginal people and governments are facing and need attention- i.e. alcohol, drugs, homelessness or home ownership, physical health, mental health, cultural identity, grief and loss etc.
• Lack of strategies to address the issue
• Gambling is seen as an individual problem NOT a community issue
• Aboriginal people and communities are NOT yet recognising that gambling is a problem, if its not discussed or acknowledged it does not become a priority to address
Effective Gambling Help Services

• Work together with communities and local services, especially those that are Aboriginal.
• Find local people, Aboriginal leaders, even other service providers to help.
• Effective education and awareness programs.
• Governments allowing flexible service delivery for gambling help services.
• Inviting premises and location.
• Quality marketing material and image promotion.
As Counsellors

• Values – Respect, trust, honesty, “authentic approach”
• Holistic program, cannot just focus on gambling!
• Be prepared to build relationships
• Willingness to change, adapt and to be flexible
• Listen and Learn - share
• Go to the community – be visible
• The ability to implement a variety of therapies that would be most effective for Aboriginal people
Strengthening community action and empowering communities – How?

Services
- Awareness
- Education
- Engagement
- Collaboration
- Planning
- Implementation
- Cultural Appreciation

Community
- Acknowledgment
- Recognition
- Ownership
- Engagement
- Collaboration
- Planning
- Action

- Stronger communities
- Empowered communities
Questions?

Join the Conversation

Continue the conversation started here today, ask further questions and access related resources via the following link: