

CASE STUDY

Preventing Gambling Harm at Whittlesea Community Connections



Context

Whittlesea Community Connections (WCC) is a not-for-profit, community organisation that delivers essential services in the City of Whittlesea. Between 2016-17, WCC received funding from the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation to support businesses in the City of Whittlesea to de-normalise gambling in the workplace and put protective measures in place to protect staff from harm. WCC believed it was important to implement this work within their own organisation, so they could develop useful strategies that could be adopted in their work with other organisations.

Overview

Below is a summary of the activities implemented at WCC to prevent harm from gambling. Activities have been categorised based of their degree of difficulty to implement:

'Easy'



WCC shared information about gambling with staff.

WCC arranged for a gambling harm education session to be delivered to all staff. This session provided staff with an understanding of what gambling is, how gambling can lead to harm, how prevalent harm from gambling is and what is being done to prevent harm in Victoria. This education session was very useful in generating conversations about gambling between staff at WCC.

WCC added information about Gambler's Help services to their HR resources.

WCC added contact information and a description of Gambler's Help services to their HR resources. This was identified as a need, should a situation arise where a staff member or client was experiencing harm from gambling and needed support. Gambler's Help contact information was then shared across the organisation, enabling staff to make contact independently and confidentially if they should so choose.

WCC made a commitment to not visit gambling venues for workplace outings.

WCC became a supporter of 'Workplace Outings Free From Gambling Related Harm' an awareness raising campaign that involved City of Whittlesea businesses making a commitment to avoid gambling venues for their workplace outings (i.e. team meetings, Christmas parties, social club outings etc.). WCC recognised that this was a simple way they could reduce staff exposure to gambling products and advertising.

'Moderate'



WCC removed the monetary entry fee and prize pool from their workplace footy tipping competition.

WCC believed their workplace footy tipping competition provided a good opportunity for staff to socialise, but they wanted the focus of the competition to be more about fun as appose to gambling. So WCC removed the monetary entry fee and prize pool from the competition, making it free for anyone to participate.

WCC provided financial literacy training to case workers.

WCC provides generalist casework support to City of Whittlesea residents that are experiencing hardship and may need help linking into services and support. WCC arranged financial literacy training to be delivered to casework staff. The training provided staff with the skills needed to advise others on ways to make more informed financial choices. Topics covered included 'budgeting, dealing with debt, loans, credit cards and planning for the future'.

WCC provided Gamblers Help training to all staff and Emergency Relief volunteers.

WCC arranged for a guest speaker from Gambler's Help North & North Western to talk to all staff about:

- *What are the warning signs that a person may be experiencing issues with gambling?*
- *How do you approach talking to someone about their gambling?*
- *How do you link people into Gambler's Help support?*

This training provided staff with a more in-depth understanding of not only what gambling is, but how you could respond to a possible issue with gambling in the workplace. Staff discussion following the training was also highly robust and provided the opportunity for knowledge exchange. It prompted the development of a resource for all WCC staff containing considerations when talking about gambling.

'Intense'



WCC developed an organisational position statement on gambling.

As a community organisation working to improve social conditions for City of Whittlesea residents, WCC felt it important to develop a position statement on gambling. This position statement explained the negative impacts that gambling was having in the City of Whittlesea and provided a rationale as to why WCC decided to take a stance on this issue by role-modelling responsible practice within their own workplace.

WCC developed a workplace gambling policy.

WCC developed a workplace gambling policy to provide clarity to staff and volunteers in regards what behaviours WCC viewed as 'acceptable' and 'not acceptable' in relation to gambling and the workplace. WCC managers and board members were consulted in the development of the policy, ensuring increased awareness and buy-in when the policy was endorsed.

WCC made a commitment to not accept donations from gambling venues.

Seeking grant opportunities to fund community programs is a key part of WCC's core practice, given their not-for-profit nature. WCC made a decision to not approach gambling venues for financial support, as funding from these settings would derive from community gambling losses. Additionally, WCC viewed accepting donations from gambling venues as indirect support of the Victorian Gambling Industry, which was considered unethical.

For more information

For more information about WCC's efforts to raise awareness about and prevent harm from gambling in the workplace call 9401 6666 or email admin@whittleseacc.org.au.