

TALKING ABOUT GAMBLING

Considerations for Engaging Businesses



Context

This resource contains a series of tips for community workers interested to engage businesses in conversations about gambling. Businesses are great settings for prevention initiatives to address gambling harm early. These tips derive from lessons learnt by Whittlesea Community Connections in implementing a gambling harm prevention project with businesses in the City of Whittlesea.

Considerations

1. **Businesses have competing priorities and preventing harm from gambling is generally considered 'low priority'.**

Businesses are not mandated or resourced to prevent harm from gambling in the workplace. Gambling is not widely seen as a 'workplace issue' similar to tobacco, alcohol or mental health – requiring strategies to prevent and reduce harm amongst staff. In supporting businesses to prevent harm from gambling, be mindful that businesses have competing priorities and that the amount of time they can allocate to this work will vary depending on dips and peaks in their core practice.

2. **Deal with employers not employees.**

When engaging businesses, make sure you are speaking to a person in leadership, with decision making authority. This could be a Chief Executive Officer, HR representative or Department Manager. It is important not to deal with individual staff members without obtaining commitment from leadership first. If you are unsure of whom within a business you should be speaking to, ask their reception to advise you.

3. Help businesses to understand that gambling is an issue that could affect their workplace.

Businesses generally recognise that gambling is causing harm to many Victorians, however it is not well understood that it could potentially impact upon their own workplace. It is important to communicate the prevalence of gambling harm i.e. affecting 1 in 10 Victorians. It is also important to also convey that individuals are unlikely to admit to experiencing harm from gambling, due to shame and stigma.

4. Showcase businesses that have been proactive in preventing gambling harm in the workplace.

When approaching businesses to encourage involvement in gambling harm prevention, it can be useful to highlight the work of other businesses that have been proactive in this space. This can reinforce the message that gambling is a workplace issue and also provide examples of what gambling harm prevention in a workplace actually looks like.

5. Be aware of the differences engaging small, medium and large sized businesses.

Understand the perspectives, needs and challenges for businesses:

- Small businesses are typically resource poor and are often interested in engaging in gambling harm prevention activities that require minimal time investment (i.e. avoiding gambling venues for workplace outings, displaying awareness raising posters around their business etc.).
- Medium sized businesses can more likely engage in gambling harm prevention but will require significant guidance as to how to do it (e.g. providing sample gambling harm newsletter articles, infographics and template workplace policies).
- Large sized businesses can more likely engage in gambling harm prevention, as greater pressure is placed on them to demonstrate corporate social responsibility. They require less guidance to implement strategies such as developing a workplace gambling policy, as they have more experience doing this type of work.

6. Ensure businesses feel supported to do this work.

It is ideal if you can provide a consistent staff member to support businesses. If businesses feel unsupported in doing this work, momentum is likely to drop as will their engagement. You might also consider connecting businesses doing similar work to prevent gambling harm, as they will be able to share challenges, swap solutions and offer support.

7. Support businesses to define what they consider 'responsible practice' in relation to gambling and the workplace.

When supporting businesses to prevent gambling harm, an effective strategy is to help them facilitate conversations with management about what they consider 'responsible practice' in relation to gambling and their workplace. This could involve discussing their views on whether they think it appropriate to have footy tipping competitions for staff or outings to gambling venues for workplace Christmas parties. It is important to define what 'stance' their business wants to take to role model ethical practice and prevent gambling harm within their workplace.

For more information

For more information about the tips contained within this resource contact Whittlesea Community Connections on 9401 6666 or admin@whittleseacc.org.au.