



## MY GAMBLING STORY

Broadcast Monday 22 October at 8.30pm

Repeated Friday 15 October at 9am

89.7 PBA FM in Adelaide

### Study Guide

#### Program 3 – How is problem gambling identified?

The Gambling Prevalence Report (2005) estimated that 1.6% of the South Australian adult population have problems with gambling are moderate or high risk problem gamblers. 5000 of the 17000 surveyed were classified as high risk gamblers. The actions of each problem gambler in turn impact on seven (7) others (these may be family, friends, employers or fellow workers). South Australians are currently feeling the impact of the widely accessible opportunities to gamble which are now an everyday part of our lives. Bringing the problem out into the open can be difficult.

The problem may stay hidden, even from the gambler, for months or for years. It is not uncommon to hear from the partner of a gambler that 10, 15, 20 years have gone by, during which time the gambler has been successful in concealing his/her activities from immediate family and friends. Members of the extended family may have been approached for the loan of money, with the gambler asking that the partner not be told. A web of secrecy surrounds much of the activity of the dedicated gambler whose sights are focussed only on the prize – the big win which will solve all problems.

When the truth emerges, often accidentally, the gambler may still try to bluff his/her way out of the situation. Plausible excuses are offered as the reasons for the mortgage payments being behind or the finance company sending someone to repossess the family car. The gambler finds it very difficult to acknowledge that his/her actions have resulted in the family facing eviction or bankruptcy.

One of the impacts of the feminisation of gambling which resulted from the introduction of gaming machines into newly-refurbished hotels was to open up a new avenue of funding with which to finance gambling. A portion of the household finances, even if it consisted only of the housekeeping money, was traditionally entrusted to the woman in a relationship. Access to those funds enabled women to gamble on poker machines, without having to access joint accounts. It was possible to keep the amount of money being lost secret, at least until the cupboards were bare and there was no money for basic necessities.

In households where the cultural background of the male member of the family dictates that he be in charge of the money at all times, the family could find itself in an impossible situation if he became a problem gambler. With no regular check on the state of bank accounts they could be stripped completely. A sad instance of this was a reversal of that very situation. The husband, a migrant from a war-torn country, worked at two jobs in order to provide for his family. He entrusted the handling of money to his wife. She, in turn, left their 12-month old baby with her mother-in-law and gambled on a daily basis at the Casino. The deposit for a home he thought he was accumulating had been lost on the spin of the roulette wheel. The secret came out only when his mother complained about the child-minding – she was in her late 70s and found it difficult to cope with a lively baby.

## Some Discussion Points

- What signs could indicate to hotel staff that a gaming room patron is experiencing a problem as a result of gambling?
- What steps can people in a relationship take to ensure that joint finances are safe?

## For more information:

[www.problemgambling.sa.gov.au](http://www.problemgambling.sa.gov.au)

<http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiry/gambling/docs/finalreport> - Australian Government Productivity Commission (*Australia's Gambling Industries* report)

## Acknowledgements

*My Gambling Story* was produced at PBA FM in Adelaide with assistance from the Office for Problem Gambling, through the Department for Families and Communities. This Study Guide has been prepared by May Shotton, financial and gambling counsellor with thirteen years of experience in the field of problem gambling.



## Gambling Helpline South Australia 1800 060 757

The Gambling Helpline is a free 24-hour counselling, information and referral service to assist people in South Australia with gambling related problems, or those affected by the gambling of others including family members. The Gambling Helpline can be used by anyone who would like to know more about gambling related problems and how to deal with them.

*The Gambling Helpline is funded by the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund.*

## South Australian Gambling Help Services

The Gambling Help Services provide free, confidential counselling and assistance for people who are concerned about their gambling behaviour and the families and friends of problem gamblers. Counselling is provided over the telephone and in person and specific counselling is also available. Languages other than English are spoken at some services and interpreter assistance can be arranged.

## Disclaimer

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