



Gambling – “Secret No More”

Learnings From The Project So Far

Speaker

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Introduction

- ▶ PRONIA - What we do & Who we service
- ▶ Project background



Project Overview

- ▶ Aim
- ▶ Collaborations & Partnerships
- ▶ Focus on the City of Monash and the City of Whittlesea



Planning & Developing the Project

- ▶ Previous knowledge and experience
- ▶ Project activities
- ▶ Target group



Project Forums

- ▶ Discussion panel
- ▶ Forum content
- ▶ Community participation
- ▶ Engaging the audience



Forum Impact



Forum Impact



Challenges

- ▶ Locations
- ▶ Community involvement
- ▶ Cultural nuances



Where to from here?

- ▶ More information sessions
- ▶ Alternative community recreational activities
- ▶ Ongoing longer term assistance
- ▶ More research



Gambling – Secret No More Therapeutic Perspective

Gambler's Help Eastern
EACH



Καλησπερα



Victorian
Responsible
Gambling
Foundation



City of
Whittlesea



CITY OF
MONASH



Gambler's
Help

each

 **PRONIA**

For a stronger community

Speaker

Sophia ALEXANDRA

Therapeutic Counsellor
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What we will cover today?

- ▶ Culture of gambling and mixed messages
- ▶ Who presents for help at GH?
- ▶ The therapeutic counselling journey and experience
- ▶ Partnership with PRONIA



Playing card games or backgammon with family and friends has been part of the Greek culture for centuries.

It can be an enjoyable pass-time for Greeks over generations, and the way some men bond.



Greek family tradition of luck & gambling

On the home-front, vasilopita is baked by the matriarch in most Greek household on new year's eve. A coin, traditionally gold is inserted in the dough before baking. The family comes together at midnight to bring in the new year. Vasilopita is cut in slices and allocated to 'the house', head of the house, the guests, and progressively to the youngest. The coin determines who is going to be lucky that year, supper is served and a night of card games, food, music and dancing follows. Families are encouraged to join in and play cards; the winner gifts the children with money for the year ahead. This is a social and joyous celebration.



Social gambling



Culture of gambling – fate in the hands of the Gods

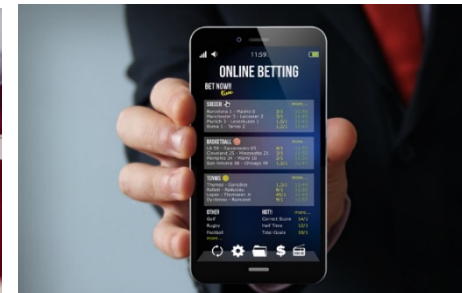
Gambling has been part of the Greek culture for centuries, dating back to the Greek Archaic period, as this urn painting depicts. Winning is associated with being successful or powerful and was the domain of men ... but not any longer.

Painting on Urn: Heroes Achilles and Ajax playing a board game,
About 525-520 B.C.



Gambling as a business

Gambling as a business is another story altogether. The venues/devices are impersonal, pseudo-social and further alienate people from their tribe, their real life.



Who presents to Gamblers Help services?

- ▶ In the Greek community, the client can be the gambler, family member, friend or extended family ie koumbaro [best-man] xadelfo [cousin] or a professional support person ie doctor, social worker
- ▶ When the gambler hurts, the family and community hurts.



Greek male gamblers

- ▶ Males are less likely to present for counselling unless there are substantial financial losses or a threat of exposure to the family or community or threat of separation.
- ▶ The age of the male determines what type[s] of gambling he engages in i.e. younger Greek males are more likely to play table games at the Casino or Poker games in small private groups with large amounts of money, sports betting, online gambling and occasionally the stock market.
- ▶ The numbers are very low on younger Greek males seeking help, however, once engaged in counselling, they are likely to tell their friends about the benefits of counselling.
- ▶ Older males, are more likely to gamble on horses and EGMs. They are very private, ashamed and embarrassed about being “caught out”.



Greek female gamblers

- ▶ Greek female gamblers are more likely to be older women with a single form of gambling, on EGMs with very few who play table games or any form of sports betting.
- ▶ There is an increasing number of younger females using devices to play gateway games such as Candy Crush, who would not identify as gamblers.
- ▶ The risks, minus the financial losses can be the same.



The therapeutic counselling journey begins with

1. Education through partnerships such as PRONIA, local government, festivals, community leaders, clubs, radio, newspaper, bi-lingual workers in community health settings, private practitioners well known and respected in the community, financial and legal services, and any opportunity which fosters safety in starting the conversation about harm from gambling.



The therapeutic counselling journey

2. Central phone number with interpreter options for information, assessment and referral.
3. Online and other resources in-language
4. On the ground bi-lingual workers when the person is ready
5. Secondary consultations as required
6. Referrals may be offered for complex issues ie housing, family violence
7. Reassurance of confidentiality is critical



The therapeutic experience is

- **Culturally sensitive** – where possible a Greek speaking counsellor or interpreter can be made available, after discussion with the client
- **Family inclusive** approach
- **Client driven** outcomes
- **Opportunity** to bring support person to the sessions
- **Restores** hope and optimism for a better future



My experience at the Forums with PRONIA and the Greek community

- From the onset of this project, PRONIA involvement and leadership has been invaluable. Their professional and personal commitment was critical to achieving the outcomes to date and we look forward to continuing this work into the future.
- The integrity and respect for PRONIA was evident as we came into contact with other professionals, community leaders, local government, Greek media and many participants in the City of Monash and Whittlesea. The planning process and speakers who were on the panel at the Forums, were carefully selected to provide valuable information to these communities about starting a safe, non-judgemental conversation at home, and being educated on the potential harms of gambling.



- The informal nature of the delivery in a community setting where people socialise, learn and share was very important. The audience felt safe to ask questions and approach people on the panel after the presentations.
- PRONIA knowledge, internal and external resources to bring this project together has been admirable.
- Despite the change in presentation style, there substantial amount of material translated by PRONIA staff, and they offered wonderful support for our client to learn to read her story in Greek [born in Germany to Greek parents with no formal Greek education].
- Special mention must go to Zacharena, Dimitra and all their paid and volunteer staff who made the Forums possible and of course to the VRGF for their support. This is partnership.



City of
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Thank you

Questions?

