

Media Release

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Don't let gambling be a problem

This Responsible Gambling Awareness Week, South Western Sydney Local Health District is urging people concerned about their gambling to get help.

Clinical psychologist, Christopher Mosses, said only a small proportion of people with gambling problems sought help from counselling services like those the District offered.

"Counselling sessions with one of our trained professionals are free and confidential and are available for gamblers and those concerned about a loved one's gambling," he said.

"I'd really like to encourage loved ones and friends who know of a gambling issue to call the Helpline or arrange to speak to someone themselves.

"It's important to know that help is available and is effective. Our services have been developed over many years to offer the support, strategies and knowledge that have helped many lessen the effects of a gambling addiction."

Mr Mosses said while most Australians had gambled at some point, some people were more at risk than others.

"Studies have shown gambling disproportionately affects Australians who have migrated from other countries," he said.

"The combination of low socio-economic areas with a large number of nearby gambling venues is also a concern."

Important signs that you or someone you know might be at risk of a gambling problem include:

- Increasing bet sizes
- Lying to conceal the extent of money or time spent gambling
- Becoming preoccupied with thoughts of gambling

If you wish to gamble, make sure it is responsible by ensuring you know the odds, take breaks, set limits and stick to them and separate gambling from other activities, particularly those involving children.

During Responsible Gambling Awareness Week, the District will host a free screening of *Kaching – Pokie Nation*, a documentary about the harms of slot machine gambling.

It will be screened at the Thomas and Rachel Moore Education Centre, Conference Room 3 from 1.30pm on Tuesday, 24 October followed by a discussion on gambling harms and how to get help. RSVP: 9616 4060.

There will also be an information stand on the main concourse of Liverpool Hospital on Thursday, 26 October.

For help call the Gambling Helpline on 1800 858 858 or contact the District's Gambling Help Service on 9616 4060. For more information visit www.rgaw.com.au.