# Chapter five: Huong

## synopsis

Huong's gambling problem is tearing her family apart. What began as an escape from loneliness has turned into a habit she cannot break. In desperation, Huong's mother seeks advice and finds a Vietnamese counselling service. Can Huong overcome her fears and get the help she needs?

## target audience

People of Vietnamese backgrounds
Women

## objectives

- Discuss the nature of problem gambling
- Explore the impact of problem gambling on family members
- Discuss both the barriers and benefits of counselling

centre for culture, ethnicity & health

# discussion questions

## 1. Why do you think Huong might have started to gamble?

Use this question to explore some of the pathways into gambling. These may include:

- escape from loneliness and boredom
- entertainment that does not require English skills
- lack of alternative, accessible and culturally appropriate leisure options
- potential to make money
- a way to 'fit in' with Australian culture

## 2. Why does Huong keep returning to the casino?

This question can prompt discussion on the nature of a gambling problem. Huong feels compelled to go back to the casino, telling herself that she can win back the money she has lost. Her attempts to control or break the cycle are unsuccessful.

Discuss whether it is realistic to expect a problem gambler to simply stop or control their gambling on their own.

## 3. How is Huong getting the money to gamble?

This is an opportunity to discuss issues such as getting into debt, borrowing money from loan sharks, or using money meant for bills or food to gamble.

## 4. What impact does Houng's gambling have on her family?

Explore how problem gambling affects 'significant others'. Huong's gambling has placed additional responsibilities on her mother, and has caused her husband to lose trust in her. Discuss how the family reacts to Huong's problem and whether things were likely to improve without external help.

## 5. Why does Huong refuse to see a counsellor at first?

Use Huong's fears about counselling to discuss some of the common barriers to using a service such as Gambler's Help. These can include language barriers; lack of familiarity with the process of counselling; reluctance to admit to a loss of control; fear that a 'private' problem will be made public; wanting to save face and preserve family reputation.

## 6. How could counselling help Huong and her family?

Use this question to explore the audience's understanding of counselling. Key points to mention include:

- the style and purpose of counselling
- ways to access counselling (telephone, face-to-face and online)
- strategies to control or stop gambling
- couple and family counselling
- group work
- ways to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of clients
- bilingual services and use of interpreters

Also refer to the handout titled *How to explain counselling* on this DVD.

**Further information**
For more information, resources and training contact the **Multicultural Gambler's Help Program.**
+61 3 9342 9700 | enquiries@ceh.org.au | www.ceh.org.au/mghp