



Chapter one: Khalif

synopsis

Khalif arrived in Australia as a refugee and now works as a taxi driver. He is introduced to the pokies by other taxi drivers; an 'early big win' convinces him that gambling is a harmless way to win money. Khalif continues to visit the pokies and his escalating losses mean that he is unable to provide for his family.

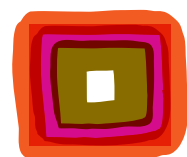
Khalif's cousin persuades him to visit a financial counsellor for assistance in resolving his money problems. The financial counsellor encourages Khalif to seek counselling for problem gambling. At the end of the chapter, Khalif is on the way to controlling his gambling and has rebuilt his relationship with his family.

target audience

People from African or Middle Eastern backgrounds
People from refugee backgrounds
Men of all ages

objectives

- Identify pathways to gambling
- Identify social and settlement issues that can contribute to problem gambling
- Discuss the effects and consequences of problem gambling
- Explore options for seeking help
- Communicate the key benefits of counselling



discussion questions

1. Why do you think that Khalif started to visit the pokies?

Answers can include: being introduced by friends/colleagues; long periods of isolation; easy availability of poker venues; limited recreation options; a way to learn about Australian culture; a way to 'fit in' socially.

2. Why does Khalif keep going back to the pokies?

This question can help you discuss environmental and psychological factors that can make people vulnerable to problem gambling. Khalif is isolated both from his family overseas and from his wife and children; he is under pressure to support his family; his qualifications and experience are not recognised in his employment; he may be living with grief and trauma as a result of his refugee experience.

Khalif also had an 'early big win'. Combined with his lack of knowledge about the pokies, this makes him think that he can make money by gambling.

3. Is gambling a part of Australian culture?

Use this question to explore how people view gambling in Australian life. Participants may ask questions about why gambling is legal in Australia, and you can discuss the idea of informed choice. You can also ask whether any forms of gambling are practised in their culture or their country of origin.

4. What signs are there that Khalif's gambling is becoming a problem?

Your audience may include people who know problem gamblers. You can discuss signs such as missing money, sudden tiredness, anger or depression, secretiveness and lies, unexplained disappearances and so on.

This can lead into a discussion on the impact of one person's gambling on their family and community. Discuss impacts on finances, health, relationships, children and wellbeing.

5. What does Khalif believe about gambling? Do you think these beliefs are realistic?

This question allows you to explore various beliefs about gambling. For example, Khalif believes that he can win enough to support his family, and holds on to that belief even when he has run out of money.

This can lead to a discussion on the odds of winning on the pokies or other forms of gambling. You can demonstrate that gambling is not a way to supplement income.

6. What could you do if you thought someone in your family had a gambling problem?

Many CALD communities operate within a tight family and community framework; people prefer to mediate and resolve problems within the family before turning to outside sources for help. They are much more likely to contact Gambler's Help if it is recommended by someone they trust.

Talk about ways to raise and discuss the problem in a tactful and non-judgemental way. Offer practical steps for people to protect themselves and their income.

This is a good time to mention that Gambler's Help provides support to family members – explain the 24-hour helpline and the various services provided.

7. What does the term 'counselling' mean to you?

Use this question to explore various understandings of the term 'counselling' – remember that it may have negative connotations in some cultures. Ask how people are used to resolving their issues and draw parallels between this approach and the counselling process. Discuss Khalif's concerns – fear of deportation and public exposure – and explain the confidentiality of the service.

8. Do you think that Khalif's problems are over now?

Khalif has not stopped gambling yet; each day is still a struggle for him. Explain the process of managing a gambling problem, including lapses and setbacks.

Khalif and his wife are now talking about the gambling problem and she is taking an active role in managing their money. Use this to explain the importance of ongoing support from family and friends. You can also discuss strategies for controlling gambling – restricting access to cash, changing patterns of behaviour, etc.

The settlement pressures that affected Khalif are also still present and will continue to affect his life. You can also use this question to explore ways for families and communities to increase their resilience.



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