



Chapter two: Wei

synopsis

Wei is a student from China whose parents have saved money to send him to Melbourne for an education. He feels pressure to succeed academically, but is lonely and bored.

At the casino he is reminded of happier times playing poker with friends and this becomes his only form of recreation. His grades soon begin to slip, he starts lying to his family in China and he borrows money from other students and loan sharks. Alone and afraid, Wei calls Gambler's Help after seeing a flyer at his university. With the support of a Mandarin-speaking counsellor, he gains the confidence to join a Chinese club at his university and makes new friends.

target audience

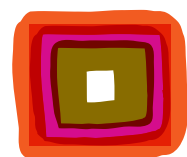
International students

People of Chinese backgrounds, including Hong Kong and Singapore

Young people of all cultural backgrounds

objectives

- Identify pathways to gambling for international students
- Identify the connection between isolation and issues such as problem gambling
- Identify the differences between recreational and problem gambling
- Explore options for seeking help
- Identify alternative social and recreational opportunities



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discussion questions

1. When does the casino become a problem for Wei?

Many students play games such as poker among themselves, either for money or for fun. They may also receive incentives when they visit gaming venues.

You can use this question to discuss the differences between recreational and problem gambling. Talk about strategies for responsible gambling, such as setting time and money limits, leaving bank or credit cards at home, and not chasing losses.

2. What does Wei believe about gambling?

Wei feels that his luck is about to change, even when he continues to lose. You can ask the group whether they believe it is possible to have a 'winning streak' or to change the odds of winning. This is also an opportunity to share some figures on the odds of winning in different forms of gambling.

3. What might have prevented his gambling from becoming a problem?

Use this question to explore issues that most international students would have in common: transition to student life in Australia, initial loneliness, increased personal freedom, lack of family support, money problems, academic pressures, pressure to 'fit in' and culture shock.

Wei's resilience is increased when he joins a Chinese club at his university and makes new friends. You can talk about the importance of a supportive social network.

Tip: Consider co-presenting this session with an international student association or support group. They can talk about the services that they offer to students.

4. What is the financial impact of Wei's gambling?

Discuss issues such as getting into debt, spending family money and susceptibility to loan sharks. You can also discuss the practical benefits of financial counselling.

5. What would you do if you thought a friend of yours had a gambling problem?

Ask people whether they would confront their friend and what they might say if they did. Use this to discuss practical ways to support problem gamblers. Talk about how Gambler's Help can assist and the different ways to access the service.

6. 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 point out similarities between this approach and the counselling process.

Discuss some of the concerns that Wei might have had before calling Gambler's Help. Remember to talk about the privacy and confidentiality of the service.

7. Do you think that Wei's problems are over now?

Wei is still in debt to loan sharks and needs to improve his grades and regain his family's trust. You can discuss some of the long-term consequences of problem gambling and the process of recovery.

Talk about the key things that can help: understanding how gambling 'fits' into people's lives; exploring underlying needs and issues; increasing personal awareness and resilience; finding a catalyst for change; social support; recreational activities; and improved financial management skills.



Further information

For more information, resources and training contact the **Multicultural Gambler's Help Program**.
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