

3

The effects of gambling harm, support services and legislation that target young people

February 2024

Copyright © 2022 Office of Responsible Gambling, Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade, NSW Government.
Free for use in Australian schools.

Activity introduction

Quick summary

Students investigate how gambling can affect a person's life and why there is a stigma associated with help-seeking. Students will investigate and evaluate social actions, including support services, that can help people experiencing gambling harms.

Learning intentions

- To investigate how gambling harm can affect a person's life
- To understand why seeking help is essential to overcome gambling harm
- To explore social actions, including support services, for people experiencing gambling harm

21st-century skills

Critical thinking
Ethical behaviour
Problem finding
Problem solving
Personal and social skills
Teamwork

Syllabus outcomes

- **H2** analyses and explains the health status of Australians in terms of current trends and groups most at risk
- **H6** demonstrates a range of personal health skills that enables them to promote and maintain health
- **H14** argues the benefits of health-promoting actions and choices that promote social justice
- **H15** critically analyses key issues affecting the health of Australians and proposes ways of working towards better health for all
- **H16** devises methods of gathering, interpreting and communicating information about health and physical activity concepts

General capabilities

Personal and social capability
Ethical understanding
Information and communication technology (ICT) capability

Relevant parts of Year 12 achievement standards

9.3 HSC Option 1: The Health of Young People

This module should occupy approximately 20% of total course time.

Module Description

This option module is concerned with the health needs of young people. In this module, students examine the nature of young people's lives and the developmental factors that significantly influence their health. They consider the health status of young people and examine a number of related health issues. Students discover that there is much that can be done to support the health of young people and they critically analyse the level of support currently available. Students are encouraged to develop a positive view of the future and a preparedness to contribute towards that future.

In this module, students investigate the following critical questions:

- What is good health for young people?
- To what extent do Australia's young people enjoy good health?
- What skills and actions enable young people to attain better health?

Topic

The effects of gambling harm, support services and legislation that target young people

Unit of work

Stage 6 Major health issue – Gambling

Time required

120 minutes

Level of teacher scaffolding

Medium

Resources required

- Appendix A: News article 1
- Appendix B: News article 2
- Appendix C: Student worksheet
- Individual devices with internet access

Keywords

Social action, support services, gambling harm.

Teacher worksheet

Learning intentions

Students will:

- investigate how gambling harm can affect a person's life.
- understand why seeking help is essential to overcome gambling harm.
- explore social actions, including support services, for people experiencing gambling harm.

Success criteria

Students can:

- articulate why young people are most at risk of gambling harm.
- communicate the effects of gambling harm.
- identify ways young people can seek help for gambling harm, and the benefits they acquire.

Teacher content information

Gambling can be a high-risk activity and is a priority concern for young people. Therefore, before conducting the lesson on gambling, it is recommended that teachers and parents read the Facilitator pack. The pack provides teachers and parents with essential information about gambling harm amongst young people and clarifies the nature of gambling-related behaviours and how to approach sensitive topics.

Teaching sequence

40 minutes - Part A: The effects of gambling harm

30 minutes - Part B: Investigating support services

35 minutes - Part C: A new support service

5 minutes - Reflection

Part A:

The effects of gambling harm

Work through this resource material in the following sequence:

Step 1

As a class, read through the article in Appendix A about Brendan Fevola and explain how he was affected by gambling.

Step 2

Discuss how Brendan Fevola was impacted by gambling

- financially
- emotionally
- socially

As you work through this task, students will notice how quickly gambling can escalate and the distorted sense of reality some people who gamble encounter.

Step 3

Come up with a class definition for 'gambling harm'.

For example: Gambling harm is any adverse consequence of gambling participation that affects the health or well-being of an individual, family unit, community, or population.

Step 4

Now read the article in Appendix B.

Step 5

Discuss how Brendan Fevola turned his life around and what urged him to take the first step (these questions are also available on the Appendix C – Student worksheet).

- **How does Brendan Fevola frame gambling in this article?** In a negative light as it took over his life, he filed for bankruptcy in 2013. He also lost more than \$300,000 during a three-day binge on the horses.
- **Discuss how the 'addiction' affected Brendan Fevola's life and his family life?** In the article he stated, "the "worst thing" about his addiction was losing didn't really affect him, but he understands now just how damaging his behaviour was for his family. He and Alex are now back together, but the 36-year-old says losing his family's savings, not just his own winnings, was what hurt his wife the most and forced her to leave him.
- **What do you think urged Brendan Fevola to turn his life around?** The impact it was having on his home and sporting life, he had lost huge amounts of money, the trust of his wife and children (who had left him)
- **Why is it important to seek professional help for gambling and other the addiction/addictions?** Because you can recover from it, save money, relationships, and reputation. But by addressing it, he hopes to come out the other end a better person.

Part A: The effects of gambling harm

Write down the steps Brendan took to:

- **identify the problem:** He finally admitted that he has a significant gambling addiction and is seeking professional help in a bid to “knock it on the head”.
- **seek help:** He spoke to other players and seek some help from them, he spoke to Lions coach Michael Voss about his problem, and he hoped to speak with former Melbourne star, David Schwarz, a recovered gambling addict who has helped Fevola deal with his problem. Schwarz lost huge sums as a result of his gambling problem.
- **manage his life:** By admitting he had a problem and needed help was the critical step needed to manage his life and hopefully get it back on track.

Part B:

Investigating support services

Step 1

Split students up into groups of 3 to 4 students per group and present each group with a service dedicated to supporting young people through difficult times in their lives and information about a service specific to gambling harm (also available on Appendix C – Student worksheet).

Young people have less experience in life, social and neural development is still taking place, and therefore early treatment for gambling harms is shown to significantly help in recovery.

[GambleAware, NSW, Australia – Free support and information](#)

[Gambling Treatment Program – St Vincent’s Hospital Sydney \(svhs.org.au\)](#)

[Gambling Help Online – Free gambling support in Australia](#)

[Problem gambling \(lifeline.org.au\)](#)

[Gambling treatment clinic – Brain and Mind Centre \(sydney.edu.au\)](#)

[Meetings | Gamblers Anonymous Australia \(gaaustralia.org.au\)](#)

Students have 15 minutes to investigate one of these resources.

Step 2

Watch: Young people and their thoughts on gambling.

youtube.com/playlist?list=PLlxOaF8FyB0pzywUoJDLWlln5cEKy4k

Step 3

Discuss:

- What do you notice about the services and language on the GambleAware supporting young people page?
- Is there anything specific about gambling harm you would like to raise/change or add?
- Do you believe that gambling harm should be a top priority for all counsellors and psychologists? Why/Why not?
- Gambling harm is considered a new priority for the government, why is it important to have specific organisations/services to address gambling harm among young people?

Part C:

A new support service

Step 1

Students pretend they are the CEOs of a new service that hopes to address the lack of support available to young people experiencing gambling harm. They will discuss and present their service to a public panel (of their class) and convince them why it is vital to create a new support service dedicated to protecting young people from gambling harm.

In a 3-4 minute presentation, each group will present:

As the newly appointed founders;

- Discuss how you aim to improve the service to help and protect more young people from gambling harm.

- How young people can access their support and services.
- Discuss their services and if/why they are unique to young people.
- Discuss the social action that takes place for people experiencing gambling harm.

Reflection

Ask students to:

- Reflect on the specific service they investigated (Part B) and discuss with a student from another group three things they believe made this service accessible and comforting.

Teacher reflection

Take this opportunity to reflect on your own teaching:

What did you learn about your teaching today?

What worked well?

What didn't work so well?

What would you share?

Where to next?

How are you going to get there?

Student worksheet

Task 1

Read Appendix A – Gambling is harming my life: Fevola, and answer the following questions:

1. Discuss how Brendan Fevola was impacted by gambling.
 - financially
 - emotionally
 - socially
2. What is your definition of ‘gambling harm’?

Task 2

Read the article in Appendix B – Brendan Fevola’s life hasn’t always gone to plan and answer the following questions:

1. How does Brendan Fevola frame gambling in this article?
2. Discuss how the ‘addiction’ affected Brendan Fevola’s life and his family life?
3. What do you think urged Brendan Fevola to turn his life around?
4. Why is it important to seek professional help for gambling and other the addiction/addictions?
5. Write down the steps Brendan took to:
 - identify the problem:
 - seek help:
 - manage his life:

Task 3

Investigate a service dedicated to supporting young people through difficult times in their lives from the list below:

[GambleAware, NSW, Australia – Free support and information](#)

[Gambling treatment program – St Vincent’s Hospital Sydney \(svhs.org.au\)](#)

[Gambling help online – Free gambling support in Australia](#)

[Problem gambling \(lifeline.org.au\)](#)

[Gambling treatment clinic – Brain and Mind Centre \(sydney.edu.au\)](#)

[Meetings | Gamblers Anonymous Australia \(gaaustralia.org.au\)](#)

Task 4

Watch: [Young people and their thoughts on gambling](#) and answer the following questions:

1. What do you notice about the services and language on the GambleAware supporting young people page?
2. Is there anything specific about gambling harm you would like to raise/change or add?
3. Do you believe that gambling harm should be a top priority for all counsellors and psychologists? Why/Why not?
4. Gambling harm is considered a new priority for the government, why is it important to have specific organisations/services to address gambling harm among young people?

Task 5

Pretend you are the CEOs of a new service that hopes to address the lack of support available to young people experiencing gambling harm. You will discuss and present their service to a public panel (your class) and convince them why it is vital to create a new support service dedicated to protecting young people from gambling harm.

In this 3-4 minute presentation, you must:

- Discuss how you aim to improve the service to help and protect more young people from gambling harm.
- How young people can access their support and services.
- Discuss their services and if/why they are unique to young people.
- Discuss the social action that takes place for people experiencing gambling harm.

Appendix A: Article – Gambling is harming my life: Fevola

Source: theage.com.au/sport/afl/gambling-is-harming-my-life-fevola-20100415-shug.html

Brendan Fevola has admitted he has a significant gambling addiction and is seeking professional help in a bid to “knock it on the head”.

The trouble-prone Brisbane Lions and former Carlton spearhead last night confirmed speculation about his gambling problem but is adamant he did not bet on football. “I absolutely have not had a bet on footy,” he said.

“I have a gambling issue and I want to knock it on the head,” Fevola told *The Footy Show* last night. “There’s obviously plenty of speculation and I want to get on the front foot.

“It’s been going on for a few years. You don’t think you have a problem, and it’s a bit of fun, and then it catches up to you. When you have a punt, you have ups and downs and it does affect you. It hasn’t affected my footy.

“But by addressing it, I hope I come out the other end a better person.”

The Footy Show reported that Fevola, who plays poker and bets on horses, owed at least three bookmakers a six-figure total and that the Brisbane Lions were planning to go public about his problem next week. It said he had been seeing a psychologist about his problem for 10 weeks.

“By admitting it, this is the first step,” Fevola said.

“This has got nothing to do with anyone else other than myself, but I will speak to other players and seek some help from them – that’s the right thing to do, isn’t it?”

Fevola said he spoke to Lions coach Michael Voss about his problem in January and he hoped to speak with former Melbourne star, David Schwarz, a recovered gambling addict who has helped Fevola deal with his problem. Schwarz lost huge sums as a result of his gambling problem.

By Jake Niall, April 16, 2010

Appendix B: Article – Brendan Fevola’s life hasn’t always gone to plan

Source: foxsports.com.au/afl/brendan-fevola-reflects-on-his-gambling-addiction/news-story/11a769bf0c2c90e1471becc0cbd8e484

The former AFL star has been plagued by off-field embarrassments and relationship woes since rising to fame as a gun full forward.

He was traded by Carlton at the end of 2009 following numerous indiscretions away from the field, culminating in his drunken performance at that year’s Brownlow Medal ceremony.

He lasted just one season at Brisbane before the Lions sacked him following another year of drama that included a nude photo controversy involving Lara Bingle and an arrest.

Fevola’s gambling addiction has also been well publicised. Despite earning a swag of money in his playing days through lucrative contracts and endorsement deals, he filed for bankruptcy in 2013. He also lost more than \$300,000 during a three-day binge on the horses.

Speaking on Fox FM’s *Fifi, Dave, Fev and Byron* on Wednesday, the footy superstar opened up on just what it’s like living with a gambling addiction, starting by describing the time he squandered a massive win in just a few days.

“I was in Queensland and it was a Wednesday afternoon and I had a bookie so I had \$2000 credit in my account and I was having a really good day,” Fevola said.

“By 3am the next morning I was betting at Hong Kong, not knowing anything about the horses, just having a little bit of fun.

“I ended that morning \$363,000 in front, told (his wife) Alex. She said, ‘This is amazing, can you get it out?’

“So I rang the bookie the next day to try and get it out but when you’ve got a bookie you can’t get it out until the Monday. So Sunday night I was 20 (thousand) down. So I lost \$360,000 in three days. That’s my biggest loss.”

Fevola says the “worst thing” about his addiction was losing didn’t really affect him, but he understands now just how damaging his behaviour was for his family. He and Alex are now back together, but the 36-year-old says losing his family’s savings, not just his own winnings, was what hurt his wife the most and forced her to leave him.

“I did (lose a lot of our savings) and hence why Alex left the first time when we were in Brisbane. She went back because of the gambling. Now she looks after a lot of the accounts which is good,” Fevola said.

“I said to myself then I didn’t lose that (\$300,000) because I’d already won it, so it’s so weird. But you did, you lost it.

“The worst thing is it didn’t actually affect me too much but if affects your family and that’s the bottom line, Alex and the kids.

“It’s an addictive thing, it’s a really bad addiction to have and it obviously cripples a lot of people’s lives.”

Appendix B: Article – Brendan Fevola’s life hasn’t always gone to plan

Fevola would bet through accounts rather than deal with cash, which he says made it difficult to accept his losses were real.

“When it’s in your account you don’t actually have the money in your hand so you’re just ringing up and saying numbers. You don’t even realise and then when it’s all gone you’re like, ‘Geez,’” Fevola said.

“You don’t think you have a problem when you’re doing it because you’re caught up in that bubble but now you think, ‘Aww geez what an absolute idiot’ because it’s just for a cheap thrill.”

Fevola says he doesn’t gamble much these days, but knows once you start, it’s a slippery slope. He knew his motivations for punting but wasn’t able to quit when he was behind, giving an insight into the psyche of gamblers who are addicted to the thrill of winning.

“If you bet \$10 and win \$100, you’re going to bet \$100. So the more money you have, the more you bet, which is weird,” he said.

“For a gambler’s mentality it’s the chase, it’s the thrill of actually winning. And I used to bet on horses and it was that quick minute and you’d get the rush but then when you win you get excited and you want to bet more. But eventually you’re going to lose.”

By James Matthew, May 18, 2017