

‘What’s the Deal?’

EVALUATION REPORT

Report of the early intervention program
developed by
North Yarra Community Health
involving visual exploration into the meaning
of gambling for young people living in
Collingwood.

THINK OF WHAT YOU'RE **REALLY** GAMBLING WITH

GAMBLER'S HELP™ 1800 156 789

www.problemgambling.vic.gov.au 24 HOURS 7 DAYS Free & Confidential

A community partnership with the Victorian Government

June 2005

Please note that the framed finished artworks can be viewed at the Collingwood centre of North Yarra Community Health, and are available for display at forums, conferences, training sessions and education activities across the state.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART ONE: 'What's the Deal?'	4
Targeted Population.....	4
The Project.....	5
Art as a Modality.....	5
Activities.....	6
Objectives.....	7
PART TWO: Facilitators Evaluation	8
Method of Evaluation.....	8
Reaching the Intended Target Group.....	9
Evaluation of the Activities.....	10
Capacity of the Program to Deliver its Objectives.....	11
Images used for Promotion.....	14
Issues Encountered Throughout the Project.....	16
Recommendations for Future Projects.....	18
Sustainability.....	19
Acknowledgements.....	19
Evaluation Survey 1.....	20
Evaluation Survey 2.....	21
Evaluation Survey 3.....	22
Galactic Circus Evaluation Survey.....	23
Transcribed Comments for Evaluation; surveys 1 & 2.....	24
Transcribed Comments for Evaluation; survey 3.....	25
Transcribed Comments for Evaluation; Galactic Circus.....	26
Transcribed Comments for Evaluation; general comments....	27
References.....	28

PART ONE

'What's the Deal?'

'What's the Deal?' is an early intervention health promotion endeavour which commenced in May 2004 and was launched in June 2005. It is funded by the Victorian Government's Problem Gambling Community Partnership Strategy and facilitated by North Yarra Community Health (NYCH).

NYCH is a multidisciplinary, community-based and managed local service which aims to promote people's physical, social and emotional health and wellbeing and strengthen communities through the facilitation of projects and services that are relevant and responsive to the needs of the community.

The project involved young people between 12-18 years of age and representing diverse cultural backgrounds living on or around the Collingwood Housing Estate and focused on the issues associated with gambling. It aimed at engaging and educating the young people about the broad impacts of problem gambling and some of the risks involved, using art as a medium through which to explore, communicate and express individual youth perceptions of 'what does gambling mean to me?' By better educating young people, the project sought to improve community understanding of problem gambling and prevent problem gambling behaviour before it occurs.

Targeted Population

The impetus for this new and innovative program derived from evidence based community need and the demographic of the young residents living on and around the Collingwood Housing Estate.

It has been documented that the population of young public housing tenants targeted for the project have socio-economic and environmental disadvantages impacting on their health and wellbeing. They often come from single parent families where low income and limited resources are a barrier to participation in activities and boredom, vulnerability and lack of opportunity increase the likelihood of risk taking behaviours.

Many of the recognized key risk factors for problem gambling such as unemployment, separation within the family, cultural issues, interpersonal problems, other dependencies (Jackson 2000, as cited in young People and Problem Gambling Forum Report 2004), and transitional stages of life (Roy Morgan Research, 1997) are also experienced by these young people.

This is coupled with the fact that young Victorians are being raised in an environment where gambling is actively promoted and supported and evidence indicates that problem gambling often begins in adolescence, its prevalence being up to four times higher among teenagers than adults (Griffith's, 1990).

Anecdotal evidence also suggests that many of the young people from the Collingwood Housing Estate report that parents are involved in gambling activity. These adolescents are themselves frequenting gaming arcades for youth and the all night facilities at the Casino where the arcade environment and machines mimic the sounds and lights in the adult gaming environment, the thrill of winning is encouraged, and incentives are offered for prolonged use of machines.

Evidence suggests that the proximity to gaming machines and the presence of young people at a gaming venue has the potential to establish patterns for problem gambling (Productivity Commission Report into Australian Gambling Industries, 1999; as cited in young People and Problem Gambling Forum Report 2004, p.10).

All of the above factors raise the risk for pathways into problem gambling for the young people living on the Collingwood Housing Estate.

The Project

Before the commencement of 'What's the Deal?', posters and flyers advertising the project were created and distributed, local authorities and organizations such as Gambler's Help, Home Ground Tenancy Service, YSAS and the St Vincent De Paul Youth Outreach Team were informed about the project and welfare coordinators at local schools such as Collingwood College and Lionel Hall were contacted regarding referrals. These schools and the Youth Space that the young people frequent were visited in order to talk about the program and recruit participants.

A significant number of young people participated in the project. Whilst numbers fluctuated extensively at times, there was an average of 6 participants involved per week and over the period of facilitation, engaged over 40 young people from the housing estate and surrounds.

The group met weekly and the project involved 49 separate art-making sessions, which were held in the Youth Space and began on 31st May 2004. This venue was chosen for its convenience and familiarity to the young people, and its location on the premises of the Collingwood Housing Estate.

The sessions were facilitated by Emma Rose (artist and art therapist), and in the earlier stages co-facilitated by Ben Illsley (casework counsellor for North Yarra Community Health). Art therapist, Yvonne Sherring-Howard was also involved for a series of additional team building sessions, held on an alternative afternoon to the main group.

Art as a Modality

Art was chosen as a tool through which to explore and portray issues associated with gambling, for its inherent universal value as a powerful form of communication that promotes self-expression. Art making provides an avenue to address sensitive issues in a relevant and sustained way.

The art modality was selected for its suitability to the facilitation of group processes, its ability to assist the development of collaboration, negotiation and self-awareness skills, whilst helping to promote a positive atmosphere, establish confidence and rapport, and promote health and wellbeing.

Making art allows adolescents to distance themselves from the potential anxiety in the task of facing delicate issues. Unlike traditional verbal communication, expression through art does not follow a linear pattern and meanings can be layered, simultaneous, and lasting. Creating artworks is also challenging as it often involves 'thinking outside the square' and employs problem-solving abilities whilst being fun. For this reason art making is a viable alternative to the

sometimes more traditional and didactic methods of information processing and dissemination.

Using the young peoples artwork to portray a message has a potentially powerful impact for young and old alike. To see their endeavours displayed in a range of venues is validating and contributes to a sense of self-worth for young people, its display ultimately promoting responsible gambling messages to the broader community.

Activities

The project had the capacity for group and individual art therapy employing creative expression in order to explore and portray individual youth perceptions in relation to gambling, factors that lead to problem gambling, and the broad impact it has on health and wellbeing. Activities comprised of:

- **Introductory team building workshops** aimed at creating group cohesion and familiarity with the use of a variety of art mediums as a mode of expression. At this early stage casual, enjoyable and exploratory art activities such as team drawing and sculpting, group mural and mandala making were offered in order to establish a bond and trust between the participants and facilitators, and to encourage skill building and non self-conscious expression.
- **Group art therapy workshops** aimed at addressing the issues associated with, and personal perceptions of, gambling. These sessions were not aimed at creating finished pieces, but instead focused on the development of personal artworks expressing the ideas and feelings that arose in the process of discussion and creation.

Focus was on skill development and empowerment that comes through art making, in order to assist participants to communicate their thoughts, feelings and impressions of gambling using symbol and metaphor. The young people were encouraged to develop confidence in their visual representation of ideas through the use of paint, pencil, pastel, collage and sculptural materials such as clay and papier mache. They responded through the creation of a personal body of work, which many took with them.

Casual discussion and education about relevant and unbiased gambling information was also presented and incorporated into these sessions to assist informed decision-making. This part of the project also involved a field trip to the youth facility, 'Galactic Circus' that is frequented by many of the young people and is located at Crown Casino. The aim of this excursion was for the participants to observe the environment of gaming venues and the techniques that have been used to create an environment conducive to 'playing on machines to win'.

- **Art workshops aimed at the consolidating of ideas and the creation of finished and public artworks**, either individually or collaboratively, and based around the theme of 'what does gambling mean to me?'. These sessions culminated in the creation of the images that were framed for exhibition, reproduced in the form of posters and postcards and distributed to relevant organizations and all metropolitan secondary schools.

The young people who participated very much owned the project. They created the ideas and made the artworks. They collectively named it 'What's the Deal?' which fits in with the understanding they had of the projects aims and objectives.

Objectives

The key objectives of the program were:

- To provide an avenue for young people to explore issues about what gambling means to them.
- To provide a supportive environment for young people to experience working collaboratively on a project.
- To develop/enhance young people's knowledge and perceptions about gambling and the effects of gambling and problem gambling.
- To raise awareness within the wider community about young people's perceptions of gambling.
- Produce health promotion resources for dissemination to schools and community organizations.

PART TWO

Facilitators Evaluation

The program was on the whole successful with a varying level of engagement by the young people and an overall increased awareness of the issues associated with problem gambling. The artworks that were created for public viewing and dissemination to a wider audience were powerful and provocative.

Method of Evaluation

In order to measure the numbers of young people attending the group, the facilitators took on the role of regularly recording names and numbers of participants. Additionally, a series of four separate questionnaires were formulated through which to gauge the young people's knowledge and perceptions of gambling and changes thereof, at various stages in the program (see attachments, p. 19-22). It was hoped that the young people would fill them out manually at designated times in order to measure change in awareness. For a range of reasons this process was problematic and there was continuing resistance to this activity.

For reasons described later in the evaluation, the group was a variable rather than fixed one, participants came and went, and group dynamics altered continually. Participants rarely attended consistently enough to build up an increment in knowledge that could be quantified and accurately measured, and voluntary participation meant that the young people tended to partake in the parts of the program that suited them only (namely art making and meal sharing). This meant that flexibility had to be adopted in relation to this process and a less formal method of measuring the effectiveness of the program had to be adopted and undertaken in an ongoing and collaborative way, rather than in specifically nominated sessions pre or post project.

Instead the program was evaluated through observation and participants were verbally surveyed through open questions that featured in the questionnaires. Even this created a challenge. For example, out of the six young people who attended the Galactic Circus field trip, only two consented to verbally answering the prepared evaluation questions.

However, some participants were willing to give feedback through casual and impromptu discussion (often at meal times) regarding their enjoyment of the program, their perceptions and understanding of the issues associated with gambling, and what it has meant for them being involved in the group. These comments were later transcribed by the facilitators (see attachments, p...).

It was noted that participants were much more willing to create imagery surrounding the topic of gambling than talk about it. From an art therapist's point of view the images created (for exhibition and not for exhibition) spoke louder than words and as image making was ordained to be the key medium for expression and communication in this project, the strength and content of the images, and the artists description of them, formed an important part of the evaluative process.

Reaching the Intended Target Group

The project was on the whole successful in reaching the intended target group, which were young people between the ages of 12-18 years living on the Collingwood Housing Estate. Most of the participants that were involved in the program were current attendees at the Youth Space and were linked into the project through this facility.

In the first four months of facilitation attendance was approximately 80% male Anglo with some Koori involvement. This changed later in the project to engage an increased proportion of females (approximately 50%) and significant African and Asian attendance. Although numbers fluctuated extensively at times (on a number of occasions we had no participants and on others we had up to 12), there was an average of 6 participants involved per week and over the period of the project facilitation, engaged over 40 young people from the housing estate and surrounds.

It was initially envisaged that participants would be referred or commit to the project on a regular basis. Liaison with teachers and welfare coordinators of local schools, and other relevant organizations was conducted to raise awareness of the program and in the hope that referrals would be made. Apart from a referral of four young people from Lionel Hall (who attended for four sessions and clearly stated that they weren't there to broach the topic of gambling), no referrals were made. Follow up of this matter indicated that gambling is an issue that is not easy to detect or widely seen as a problem for which young people currently seek help. Instead it tends to be hidden within a plethora of other symptoms.

This led to the changing of the facilitation times (after four months) to coincide with Youth Space opening hours in order to recruit the young people whilst they attended the space. Therefore the facilitators' expectations about the way in which the group would operate changed, the participation became more flexible in that it was open instead of closed group, entirely voluntary, and participants came and went as they pleased throughout the sessions. The group was transient which perhaps reflected an aspect of the participant's lives and surroundings, and seemed to suit them well.

As a facilitator I was able to observe that discussion about gambling especially with relation to personal experience was unlikely to happen in the open group that it became. Issues of confidentiality and peer pressure became an issue that may have limited this process. With regards to exploration of the topic of gambling, it was through the artwork that we were able to more substantially communicate with the young people and they proved be more willing to communicate back.

Evaluation of the Activities

Activities offered throughout the program differed in aim as they did in effectiveness in terms of communicating with their intended target audiences.

Introductory workshops aimed at team building and familiarity; Whilst these sessions were valuable and enjoyed by the participants, the transitory nature of the group meant that these sessions weren't experienced by a significant percentage of the young people. These workshops were largely run at the start of the project when the group had fewer participants. However some introductory team building exercises were reintroduced later in the project as new participants became involved, the facilitator encouraging participants to experiment with new mediums on a continual basis.

Group art therapy workshops exploring issues visually; This part of the project was very successful and comprised of the bulk of the project. Fluctuating numbers didn't have a negative impact here as the young people mostly concentrated on their own expressions and the sessions were just as effective whether there were two or ten people involved. Art mediums used were of a high quality and this was reflected in the young peoples work. Pride in their work meant that much of it was taken with them after the session.

Often the themes that arose during these sessions did not relate directly to gambling, they were nevertheless relevant to the young persons life and contributed greatly to the ability for them to develop confidence in self-expression, self-esteem, positive peer bonding, and trust in the expertise of the facilitators which assisted later activities aimed at creating the final pieces.

Verbal presentation and discussion of gambling information; This aspect of the project involved open discussion about gambling and the young peoples awareness of it. Facilitators aimed at obtaining the participants views on the difference between gambling as a form of harmless entertainment and when it becomes a serious problem, particularly if it has a negative impact on a person's life and the their families.

Discussion was held in an impromptu and informal manner. Perceptions were elucidated through questions such as What is gambling? Why do you think people gamble? What makes a person's gambling a problem? What might be some of the feelings that a problem gambler might feel? and questions related to the effects that problem gambling has on others. Statistics were introduced that were felt to be interesting and easily interpreted by the young people.

This aspect of the project was indeed difficult as verbal discussion of this topic was met with reactions that ranged from disinterest to wariness and resistance. Any discussion was usually limited. At one point a spokesperson from Gambler's Help was scheduled to run a group discussion at which point participants voted that they would not attend this session claiming that they wanted to do art instead.

It is acknowledged that the limited experience that the facilitators had with the sensitive issue of gambling may have been an impediment to this process initially. However this problem was dispelled to a significant degree through work supervision sessions, contact with and support from Gambler's Help, acquisition of the 'g-pack', and attendance at the Young People and Problem Gambling Forum held in August 2004. Through discussion with other authorities it was also recognized that the difficulties experienced in raising the topic of gambling with adolescents is not unique to this particular project, but has been experienced by others.

Despite the difficulty in creating momentum in terms of verbal conversation about gambling, this part of the program had some obvious impact, which was demonstrated through visual translation into the artwork.

Workshops aimed at creation of finished and public artworks; These workshops were engaging and usually contained a real feel of group collaboration as the young people worked both individually and together on the larger finished artworks. Sometimes this took place at earlier stages of the program, particularly if it was recognized that a regular participant was soon leaving. This gave them the opportunity to create a finished artwork with the potential to be displayed and disseminated to a wider audience.

A selection of four of these finished pieces (presented on p. 14) were framed and translated into the postcards and posters and launched on 16th June 2005. The artworks that were reproduced, displayed and distributed are but a small selection of the artwork made. They were chosen for their group effort, impact, and clarity in terms of the meaning/message that they communicate.

Galactic Circus field trip; Galactic Circus is a venue that is popular with the young people who live on the Collingwood Housing Estate. It is located at Crown Casino and mimics the environment of the adult gaming facilities situated in close proximity. Participants were encouraged to observe stimulus such as lighting, images and sounds that are featured in the setting, and identify the feelings that they evoke. The experience of this field trip was enjoyed by the young people and contributed to the creation of some of the final pieces that were later published.

Individual art therapy sessions and referrals; It was proposed that some young people involved in the project would require more intensive individual support. There was capacity for an art therapist to undertake individual sessions with young people and it was acknowledged that referral options for ongoing support/counselling to Gambler's Help and youth support workers could also be utilised.

Whilst this did not happen in relation to the topic of gambling, other issues arose and were expressed in the artwork that were a part of the young peoples life experiences. Youth support worker, Katy Porter provided additional support to the young people, which she does on an ongoing basis. The young people demonstrated reluctance to approach anyone other than Katy with whom they had related to through the Youth Space and were familiar.

Capacity of the Program to Deliver its Objectives

'What's the Deal?' achieved some significant objectives through the program;

- ***To provide an avenue for young people to explore issues about what gambling means to them.***

Not all participants raised the topic of what gambling means for them, yet the project provided the opportunity to express other life experiences and perceptions and to bond with other group members whilst learning to master art mediums, get involved in a safe and positive risk taking activity, and create artworks that contributed significantly to their self-esteem.

Art making is a great way to explore issues and for those that did explore the issue of gambling, this medium was a relevant and appropriate way of doing so.

Those that were reluctant to verbalize were provided an avenue to express perceptions through the artwork.

- ***To provide a supportive environment for young people to experience working collaboratively on a project.***

The group modality touches the needs of the adolescent and this was created in the environment of the Youth Space. Their involvement in 'What's the Deal?' catered for these needs and provided a departure from the boredom that is known to lead to risk taking behaviours. Art making involves risk taking on a safe level, which is why it is so effective with adolescents, and the collaborative artworks provided the young people with the opportunity to develop negotiation skills around a shared outcome.

The environment of the Collingwood Housing Estate is a challenging one. At all times facilitators worked at providing an environment that was supportive, welcoming and safe. In the early stages of the project, due to a series of unwelcomed adult visitors and intrusions on the group, a more secure venue was sourced. A hall situated nearby was found, however the young people claimed that they would be less likely to attend an external venue as it wasn't the Youth Space which was their exclusive space, visits to which had become routine. This meant that the setting in which the project was conducted was not always ideal, yet reflected the environment of the Collingwood Housing Estate, an environment that the young people were familiar with and seemingly oblivious to.

- ***To develop/enhance young people's knowledge and perceptions about gambling and the effects of gambling and problem gambling.***

Whilst the young people's knowledge and perceptions about gambling were enhanced through the project, incremental development was difficult to measure as the group dynamics kept changing. It was noted that participants who left the program and returned at a latter date demonstrated greater awareness of gambling issues, verified mostly through their artwork. It seemed that a period in which to incubate their experience assisted this process. Success with this objective has certainly been demonstrated in the body of artwork that was created and the powerful messages that they portray, which will continue to have an impact on those that come into contact with them in the future.

- ***To raise awareness within the wider community about young people's perceptions of gambling.***

This has been achieved through the dissemination of information regarding the project, which includes postcards and posters of selected images to all metropolitan secondary schools and relevant organizations. These products aim to promote the project and inform people of all ages and cultures about how the issue of problem gambling is perceived by young people, create awareness that it is an issue, and consequently, where they can receive help with the issue if it affects them.

Whilst language can create barriers to understanding, artworks are often able to transcend this. Images have an impact. We think in images. Based on the saying, 'a picture is worth a thousand words', meanings in an artwork can be multi-layered and processed simultaneously rather than in a linear fashion. They are memorable, universal and able to be appreciated by all.

The impressive framed artworks are currently displayed at Collingwood centre of NYCH, which is attended on a daily basis by a large cross-section of the local

community. Naturally, participants will talk about the program to peers and family, thereby generating awareness in ways that are sustained and cannot be measured.

- ***Produce Health Promotion resources for dissemination to schools and community organizations.***

The project has not only reached the participants but has extended to young people throughout metropolitan Melbourne through the distribution of 1000 printed posters and 50,000 postcards of the artworks to 341 secondary schools. Two poster designs and three postcard designs were chosen from the body of artworks to be made into these resources (refer to p.14). They were also be distributed to youth specific and generalist organizations in the municipality, accompanied by a letter of introduction from North Yarra Community Health and flyers publicizing the services of Gambler's Help.

The framed artworks exhibited at Collingwood centre are available for display in a range of venues across the City of Yarra. They are also available for use by North Yarra Community Health and Gambler's Help at forums, conferences, training sessions and education activities across the state.

Images used for Promotion

Framed for exhibition and featured on the posters and postcards



Original artwork: 'What's for Dinner?' Acrylic on wood.
A group collaboration by Korbor, Arba and Adelphus Zarwue, Noi Kolang
and Damien Honeysett

In this image a young family awaits the outcome as a father with a gambling problem rolls the dice. Will they be having dinner tonight?

Framed for exhibition and featured on the posters and postcards



Original artwork: 'The Machine' Acrylic on wood.
by Liam Park

This image depicts the artist's perception of a poker machine.

Framed for exhibition and featured on a postcard



Original artwork: 'Overload' Acrylic on canvas board.
by Tolga Kurtoglu

This image depicts the artist's perception of the sensory effects created by the lights and the sounds in the gaming environment.

Framed for exhibition and featuring in invitations



Original artwork: 'Untitled' Acrylic on wood.
A group collaboration by Sharika, Coombra and Noi

This image was created as a result of discussion about gambling statistics and is layered to represent the multi-faceted effects it has on people.

Issues Encountered Throughout the Project

A number of significant issues were encountered during the course of the program;

Stigmatising aspect of problem gambling;

Verbal discussion was encouraged as part of the project in order to assist the elucidation and clarification of ideas for the young people's imagery, as a way for facilitators to evaluate the program, and as a part of the educative process. As previously described, discussion about the issue of gambling was difficult to facilitate and the young people were reluctant to verbalize their perceptions, often becoming defensive or ambivalent when it was brought up.

Some proposed reasons for this difficulty are:

- The program was voluntary and the group was run directly after school. Therefore participants didn't necessarily want to talk about gambling in their leisure time and after a day of largely 'left-brain' activity. Also, the young people involved in the program were not participating through referral, or known involvement in gambling activity, and this may have affected commitment to the topic.
- Gambling was generally seen as an 'uncool' and unappealing subject (this is one of the reasons why expression through art alleviated this problem to a degree as the young people could engage with the topic through a non-verbal, fun and somewhat distancing medium).
- The group was open instead of closed therefore confidentiality was restricted and may have prevented reference to personal experience.
- As a normal trait of adolescent behaviour, peer group pressure was a feature and certain young people influenced others in the group. Unfortunately it was the most influential participants who tended to demonstrate the ambivalence that others mimicked.
- It is not easy to raise gambling questions. As the facilitators didn't specialize in gambling issues, it was hard to know how to respond especially in the face defensiveness. This was an issue that particularly affected the earlier part of the program.

According to the Young People and problem Gambling Forum Report, 2004, there is a lack of recognition of gambling as a problem. Youth gambling is not often discussed in the youth sector and although young people are statistically over-represented amongst problem gamblers, they don't often seek help. Several Gamblers Help services have indicated that currently young people are not a significant proportion of their client group (p. 28).

In this report, Alun Jackson states that young people don't seek help with their gambling problem because they tend not to seek help in general (p. 16). The report also lists possible reasons for this as "shame and stigma, fear they will be denied help and held responsible for the effects of their gambling, or because problem gambling can be hidden and support services don't raise the issue" (p. 3).

Added to this, gambling is grouped with a range of other issues and is seldom the presenting problem with young people. Other issues are commonly seen as more immediately critical such as breakdown in family relationships, aggressive behaviour and financial hardship (p. 10). All of the above-mentioned issues featured in the work of the young people throughout the program.

Heather Secomb further points out that young people are being desensitised to the possibility of gambling being an issue through media representation of gambling, advertising that presents gambling as a fun and social activity, easy access to internet gambling sites, the type of instant gratification and mounting bills that come from uninhibited mobile phone use that is a part of youth culture, and the normalization of gambling in family frequented venues (p. 10).

On one occasion in the program, when asked if a participant knew of what gambling was and any forms of gambling, a 13 year old participant replied that she didn't, yet went on to draw a picture of the gaming environment with striking accuracy. In a later session her younger brother was able to portray an electronic gaming machine in significant detail that belied his self proclaimed naivety about gambling.

Group dynamics;

Whilst the sessions usually ran smoothly, group dynamics were on occasion problematic. It was sometimes difficult for outsiders to come to the group as the feeling of ownership over the space created territorial issues. In one instance, these dynamics were reversed. For a series of sessions a group of four young people referred from Lionel Hall and reported to have significant behavioural issues, banded together and seemed to somewhat intimidate other group members, who refrained from attending for that period.

At times challenging behaviours influenced the feel of a session. Age was a repeated issue. A number of young people who wanted to participate were below the age rate specified for the project. A decision had to be made regarding their involvement. In fitting in with the submission specifications and the rules of the Youth Space it was decided that they could not attend. On one occasion this resulted in a group of underage young people entering the space, throwing equipment and refusing to leave at closing time. It took skilful strategies to successfully negotiate the situation.

Another aspect that affected group dynamics was the irregular commitment of participants, which resulted in fluctuating numbers. The young people would decide on the day if it suited them to attend, a trait that reflected their age and circumstance. Therefore participants would simply not turn up and return after weeks and sometimes months of absences, affecting group cohesion.

Ownership of the program;

Initially the program had a tighter structure and many of the activities were directed by the facilitators. It soon became obvious that a less structured approach was much more effective with this client group and it was preferable to fit in with the way the Youth Space was run, which they were familiar with. At one time it was decided to limit the food provided as it was found that some of the young people came in merely for the food and promptly left. This was a mistake as no one attended until it was reintroduced.

As a facilitator I found that I had to be sensitive to the issue of creating reasonable boundaries in the interest of all, whilst being flexible at the same time and ensuring the participants owned the project. Allowing the young people the freedom to decide on their activities enabled better self-expression in artworks, more equal relationships with facilitators and catered for the individual, making the program more personally relevant.

Also, enabling the young people to come and go as they pleased suited the varying attention spans of these young people. Their ownership of the program was empowering and affirming for them, assisting the learning that comes from making personal decisions.

Safety;

There was an occasion in which a participant was verbally threatened by an adult who entered the space, which brought up the safety issue. Also, on a number of occasions, substance affected adults entered the space, interrupting the program. Inquiry into an alternative space from which to run the project was met with opposition and so it was decided to remain at the Youth Space, at a changed time to coincide with youth space opening times, when more backup support was available.

Developing trust;

As a facilitator and newcomer to the established Youth Space I found that it took considerable time to develop a trusting relationship with many of the young people. These young people, often having experienced difficulties in relationships and other life experiences on and off the estate, and with authorities in general, were initially wary of the facilitators. This was coupled with the topic of gambling with which they were generally defensive. A period of time was required in which to 'size us up'. The project was extended as it took a good six months to develop the kind of trust necessary to generate the level of involvement we were anticipating.

Recommendations for Future Projects

Based on the findings of this project it is suggested that for future projects;

- The participants would ideally be sourced or referred to the project according to a willingness to commit to exploration of the topic of gambling.
- Numbers of participants could be raised through a wider catchment area rather than limited to the Collingwood Housing Estate alone.
- A program working specifically with youth who are known to have, or be affected by another's gambling problem (who are referred and ready to explore their personal experiences) would allow a more closed and secure group to be established, promoting greater depth of exploration of the topic. Individual art therapy, as a part of the counselling process for young people could then effectively be utilized.
- All of those involved in working with disadvantaged youth, many of whom have significant behavioural difficulties and who are all experiencing a degree of turmoil in their lives, have the relevant experience in relating to this client group.
- Generalist service providers and workers who do not specialize in gambling issues should receive appropriate support and training prior to commencement of any project involving the issue of gambling.
- Facilitators receive adequate and ongoing supervision.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the project occurs on a number of levels;

- This project, through its connection to art making as a powerful and transforming form of communication and self-expression, has provided the young people with the opportunity to develop a range of skills and experience an effective tool for future use, that is able to reduce the impact of the social determinants of ill health, reduce risk taking behaviour, and build resilience (since the project finished many of the young people have taken up art-making of their own accord during Youth Space time).
- The young people have benefited in the short and long term by having had the opportunity to explore issues, test their knowledge and assumptions, and increase their understanding around gambling in a supportive environment, which they share with others. They have also developed an awareness of support systems available.
- The young people have also benefited from the self-esteem that comes with involvement in the creation and exhibition of their artworks, strengthened bonds through collaboration on a shared outcome, and the knowledge of their contribution to raising awareness in the wider community.
- The published resources have not only reached young people participating in the project but extend to other young people throughout metropolitan Melbourne and provide information and support options. They raise awareness to estate residents and others about young people's perceptions of gambling and its impact on them.
- The posters and postcards are a resource that can be used by youth specific and generalist organizations in the municipality.
- The finished artworks provide an opportunity for the wider community to reflect on the impact of gambling on young people, and can be used for ongoing training needs, conferences and seminars.

Acknowledgements

North Yarra Community Health would like to thank the Victorian Government's Problem Gambling Community Partnership Strategy for their funding. The facilitators would also like to warmly thank and congratulate all of the young people who have participated in the program. It is hoped that they will approach the decision to gamble in a more informed way.

'WHAT'S THE DEAL?'

1. List three different activities that are recreational.

.....
.....
.....

2. List three activities that you think are gambling.

.....
.....
.....

3. Think of the word '**gamble**' and list the first 3 words that come to you.

.....
.....
.....

4. What makes gambling different from other recreational activities?

.....
.....
.....

5. Why do you think people gamble?

.....
.....
.....

'WHAT'S THE DEAL?'

1. What is a problem gambler?

.....
.....
.....

2. What makes their gambling a problem?

.....
.....
.....

3. What might be some of the feelings that a problem gambler might feel?

.....
.....
.....

4. Who else might be affected by problem gambling?

.....
.....
.....

5. List some of the effects problem gambling might have on others.

.....
.....
.....

'WHAT'S THE DEAL?'

Circle the answer that you think is correct

Which is more likely to happen?

- a) winning the lottery *or*
- b) being struck by lightening

- a) dying from heart disease *or*
- b) pulling an ace from a deck of cards

On average, each problem gambler affects;

- a) one person
- b) four people
- c) seven people
- d) twenty five people.

What percentage of people who play the pokies have a gambling problem?

- a) 100%
- b) 27%
- c) 11%
- d) 2%

People who are most likely to develop problem gambling are from which age group?

- a) all age groups
- b) 12-18 years
- c) 18-30 years
- d) 30-60 years
- e) 60 years and over

How much money could a problem gambler expect to lose each year?

- a) \$100
- b) \$1000
- c) \$8000
- d) \$12000

survey 3

'WHAT'S THE DEAL?'

Visit to Galactic Circus

1. Notice the general lighting in the room. Is it bright or dimmed?

.....
.....

2. What types of images are on the games?

.....
.....
.....

3. What type of colours are used on the games?

.....
.....

4. Listen to the sounds that come from the game machines. Try to describe them.

.....
.....

5. How does the environment make you feel?

.....
.....

6. What is the best thing about Galactic Circus?

.....
.....
.....

Transcribed Comments for Evaluation

From surveys 1 and 2

Think of the word 'gamble' and list the first 3 words that come to you.

- Exciting, fun, nervous
- Chance, winning, fun
- Luck, punt, win
- Risk, luck, chance
- Fun, dangerous, evil
- Devil, addiction, pot luck
- Friends, racing, scratchie tickets
- Dollars, lottery, powerball
- Poker machine, high roller, rich
- Crown, cards, black jack
- Winning, good luck, fortune

What makes gambling different from other recreational activities?

- It takes a risk but I suppose other sports do
- It uses money
- You go to a casino
- You can win money and pay for other things
- It is all about money
- I don't know x4
- With gambling you can get addicted
- They're the same really
- No difference x 4

Why do you think people gamble?

- For fun
- Because they are bored x2
- To get rich x6
- To win money
- You can do it with friends
- Because they are generally sad
- It's exciting
- To pay the bills

What makes their gambling a problem?

- When they cant pay the bills
- If they skip their job
- When they spend more time at the pokies than they do at home.
- When the police come a knockin
- When they have run out of money
- When they start to feel worried

What might be some of the feelings that a problem gambler might feel?

- Embarrassed
- Excited because they could win
- Worried about money
- Confused and depressed
- Scared
- Helpless
- Who cares?
- Poor

List some of the effects problem gambling might have on others.

- Sad x 3
- Helpless
- Angry
- Hungry
- Its their business
- I don't know
- Pretty bad and sometimes scared.
- They might feel neglected and definitely worried, especially if they are the kids.

From survey 3

Which is more likely to happen?

- c) winning the lottery *or*.....x22
- d) being struck by lightening.....x1

- c) dying from heart disease *or*.....x9
- d) pulling an ace from a deck of cards.....x14

On average, each problem gambler affects;

- e) one person.....x2
- f) four people.....x0
- g) seven people.....x9
- h) twenty five people.....x11

What percentage of people who play the pokies have a gambling problem?

- e) 100%..... x9
- f) 27%..... x2
- g) 11%.....x0
- h) 2%.....x6

People who are most likely to develop problem gambling are from which age group?

- a) all age groups.....x3
- b) 12-18 years.....x1
- c) 18-30 years.....x12
- d) 30-60 years.....x8
- e) 60 years and over.....x4

How much money could a problem gambler expect to lose each year?

- a) \$100.....x2
- b) \$1000.....x10
- c) \$8000.....x5
- d) \$12000.....x6

Visit to Galactic Circus

1. Notice the general lighting in the room. Is it bright or dimmed?

- Dim
- It makes the games brighter and easier to see

2. What types of images are on the games?

- Asian dancing girl
- Alien space themes and party pictures
- Fast cars

3. What type of colours are used on the games?

- Bright
- Sparkly

4. Listen to the sounds that come from the game machines. Try to describe them.

- Loud and exciting
- Similar to 'bing, bing, bing'

5. How does the environment make you feel?

- Dizzy
- Excited by the lights and noise
- You get lost
- You cant tell if its daytime or not

6. What is the best thing about Galactic Circus?

- Lots of games
- The prizes
- The chance of winning

General program questions

What do you like about the program?

- Being able to use the paint to make pictures that you can hang on the wall at home.
- The clay
- Galactic circus
- You can choose to come and go which suits us because we have other things to do and might not feel like it.
- I made an ashtray that looks like a pokie machine
- The art materials, especially magenta paint
- I get to eat pizza
- The food x 3.
- Being able to relax and make pictures without worrying what it looks like
- Making things together.
- I made some cool paintings.
- I get to show my, and my cousins' art in posters and that makes me famous.
- Emma helps me to paint well
- Making pictures x 2

What do you dislike about the program?

-shouldn't be allowed to hog the c.d. player.
- Talking about gambling stuff all the time. Like give us a break!
- Gambling is chatty.
- Not being allowed to use the pool tables or the computer.
- I think it isn't fair that 11 year olds can't come in.
- When people come in and grab the pizza and run off.
- Nothing
- There are not enough easels when a lot of people are here

Comments regarding involvement in the group

- I don't think people that don't come to the Youth Space should be allowed to come in here as if they own the place.
- Get rid ofandthen all will be just fine.
- I liked the group picture that we all made. It looks cool.
- Its good because it gives us something to do
- We would be bored otherwise.
- I like to make my own things and don't like the group art because you cant take it home.
- "Pass it on" was fun because everyone added to every ones drawing
- There should be more people
- There are too many people and they sometimes muck around too much

References

Gambler's Help Youth Action group and Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (2004). *Young people and problem gambling forum report*.

Roy Morgan Research (1997). *Older People and Gambling*. Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority, Melbourne.

Griffith's, M.D. (1990). Teenage Gambling: A pilot study. *Psychological Reports*, 68: 946