



**AUT GAMBLING & ADDICTIONS
RESEARCH CENTRE**

Minimising gambling harms: The NZ public health approach and implications at a local level

Assoc. Prof. Maria Bellringer, PhD

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AUT Gambling & Addictions Research Centre is part of
the AUT Public Health and Mental Health Research
Institute.



Harms from gambling

Gambling harms

Financial

Relationship

Mental
health

Physical
health

Cultural

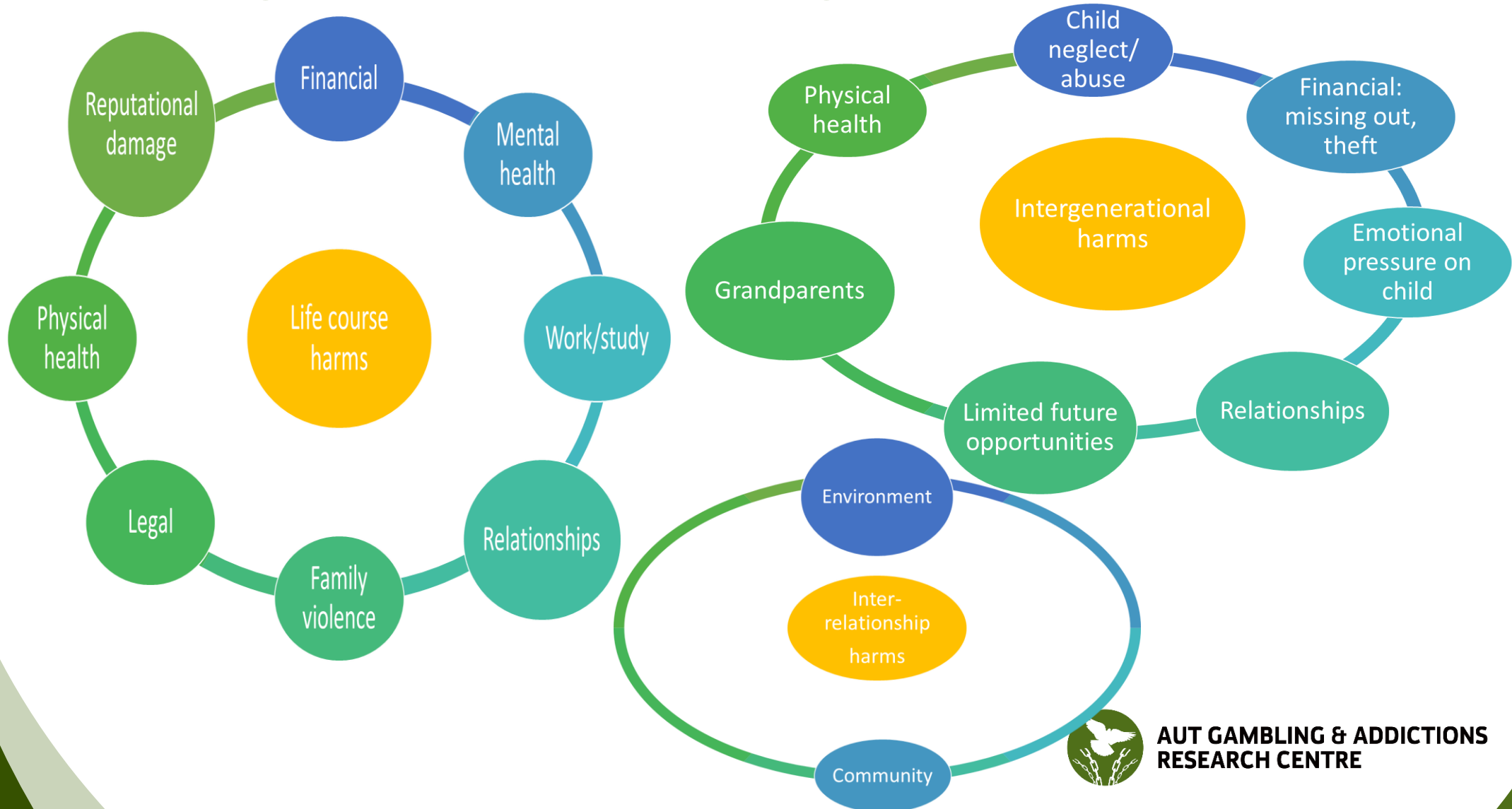
Education
or work

Crime



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Long-term and intergenerational



NZ legislation - Gambling Act 2003

- Control the growth of gambling (e.g. casino licencing)
- Prevent and minimise the harm caused by gambling, including problem gambling (e.g. age restrictions, ATM placement, advertising standards, pop-up message/player information displays)
- Authorise some gambling and prohibit the rest
- Facilitate responsible gambling (i.e. host responsibility)
- Ensure the integrity and fairness of games
- Limit opportunities for crime or dishonesty associated with gambling (e.g. money laundering)
- Ensure that money from gambling benefits the community
- Facilitate community involvement in decisions about the provision of gambling – **This occurs at local as well as at government level**



Local government

- The Gambling Act 2003 allows community input into decisions about gambling in their local area.
- Local councils manage the impacts and limit the opportunities for gambling in their communities.
- Class 4 (electronic gaming machines) and TAB (betting shop) venue policy every 3 years
 - Takes into account social impact of gambling in the area
 - Specifies where venues may be established



Sinking lid policy

- When a Class 4 venue closes, the council does not issue any other licence to replace that venue.
- Aims to reduce gambling harms from EGMs, the most cited problematic activity by those seeking help
- Reality – not making much difference yet, probably because there is a surplus of machines and the sinking lid process is very slow
- Some local authorities have a cap or no restrictions



What is important at a local level?

- Accessible and widely promoted professional services for gamblers and affected others including population-specific services for the most vulnerable in the area
 - Awareness and referrals amongst health and social services
 - Awareness of unique needs of women, and of young people
 - Ethnic-specific services delivered in culturally appropriate way
- Health promotion and awareness
 - Education at schools about potential harms from gambling
 - Shift stigma of having disordered gambling (move from focus on small % of at-risk people to wide ranging impacts of gambling harms to whole communities)
 - Remove normalisation of gambling (e.g. ban sponsorship especially of sports)
- Independent research and evaluation



Why is it important at a local level?

- Population make-up in area - disproportionate percentages of most at-risk communities
- Gambling availability in local area and placement of venues (disproportionately in poorer areas)
- Availability of professional treatment services
- Local awareness of gambling harms and how everyone can be affected, not just people who gamble



Learning points

- Gambling industry minimises the issue focusing on the small percentage of problem gamblers and avoiding mention of gambling harms
- Industry host responsibility is unlikely to be maximal
- Push back from sectors that think gambling isn't an issue (compared with other health issues)
 - But gambling harms co-exist with most of the health issues
- Treatment services alone will only help a minority – need a public health approach, education, and research to inform policies and practice – can learn from other jurisdictions



Measuring success

- Difficult as public health approaches take a long time to fully take effect
- Can measure utilisation of treatment services over time
- Prevalence of risky gambling in local area
- Reduction in gambling availability (demand reduction)
- Local awareness of gambling harms and services
- Reduction in visibility of gambling organisations (e.g. reduce sponsorship of football clubs, sporting/high profile events)



Thank you



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