

## **What's the Harm? Development of a Practice Guide for Understanding and Responding to Co-Occurring Gambling and Substance Use Harms**

### **Authors:**

Elisabeth Yar<sup>1,2</sup>, Anita Mills<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA), Canberra, Australia, <sup>2</sup>College of Arts and Social Sciences, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

Presenter's email: [elisabeth@atoda.org.au](mailto:elisabeth@atoda.org.au)

**Background:** *What's the Harm? A Guide to Understanding and Responding to Co-Occurring Gambling and Substance Use Harms in Service Settings*, emerged out of a project led by the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA). This project identified an absence of clear guidelines for service providers, in responding to co-occurring gambling and substance use harms.

**Description of Model of Care/Intervention:** ATODA assembled a committee of experts in gambling and substance use, including practitioners, researchers and experts by lived experience, to develop a practice guide that would address the gap in service delivery around the specific needs of service users experiencing co-occurring gambling and substance use harms. The practice guide provides a stepped learning approach to understanding and addressing needs within treatment settings across both the alcohol and other drug (AOD) and gambling support sectors. Each theme within the practice guide provides two recommendations: a *knowledge point* that seeks to build expertise within the workforce, and a *practice point* that offers concrete guidance on how to respond to particular issues within the broader context of co-occurring gambling and substance use harms.

**Effectiveness/Acceptability/Implementation:** Both hardcopy and online versions of the resource, along with a quick guide, have been circulated to services in the ACT that provide AOD treatment or harm reduction and/or gambling support.

**Conclusion and Next Steps:** Underpinning this project was a commitment to bolstering collaboration between sectors to improve service user outcomes. This project has provided an opportunity to institute cross-sectoral training in utilisation of the practice guide.

**Implications for Practice or Policy:** The practice guide provides a unique resource, insofar as it builds capacity across both the AOD and gambling support sectors. For workforces that are increasingly called on to respond to complex, co-occurring needs in their service users, it is an invaluable tool.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

*There are no conflicts of interest to declare in the development of the practice guide or in any of the related work undertaken by ATODA. ATODA gratefully acknowledges funding from the ACT Gambling Harm Prevention and Mitigation Fund.*