

Words Matter

A language guide for respectful reporting on gambling

Why is this important?

Existing ways of talking about gambling are stigmatising, blaming and shaming of the individual. This stops people asking for help, even when they need it most. Gambling harms are highly associated with suicidality. If we do not change our language, we risk lives.

8 Principles for respectful reporting:

- 1** Emphasise the person first (e.g., *person harmed by gambling* rather than *addict* or *gambler*). Avoid labelling people based on their experiences with gambling harm.
- 2** When reporting or describing an individuals' story, ask that person how they wish to be addressed or described and respect their choices.
- 3** Be aware of the context of the language you are using - some language is OK when used within a community to claim identity but is stigmatising when used by others e.g. *addict*.
- 4** Focus on why something happened, including the role of the industry and the risk inherent with their products, rather than focusing only on the actions of individuals.
- 5** Avoid language or reporting that sensationalises, stigmatises or victimises people who gamble and who are harmed by gambling.
- 6** Don't minimise the risks associated with gambling products. Acknowledge the scale and scope of risk associated with different types gambling products.
- 7** Recognise that gambling products risk harm to health and are addictive; products are designed to be addictive; gambling disorder is an illness; harms from gambling are wide ranging and go beyond more than money lost.
- 8** Use empowering language. People who have experienced harms from gambling can and do recover (e.g. talk about recovery, networks, communities of help and support, not helplessness and vulnerability).