

Media Release

Gambling Harm Awareness Week: Asian Family Services Takes Action

For Immediate Release

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Auckland

As Gambling Harm Awareness Week approaches (2-8 September 2024), Asian Family Services (AFS) is intensifying efforts to address the disproportionate impact of gambling harm on Asian communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Recent data from Health New Zealand shows that gambling-related harm remains a significant health issue, affecting approximately 186,000 individuals nationwide. Alarming, Asian people in New Zealand are 9.5 times more likely to experience harmful gambling compared to their European/Other counterparts.

Kelly Feng, Chief Executive of Asian Family Services, emphasises the gravity of the situation: "Over the past 26 years, we have supported thousands of Asians adversely affected by gambling harm. The impacts extend beyond the individuals who gamble; they also impact family members and friends, leading to financial losses, mental health challenges, strained family relationships, child neglect, and even family violence."

The 2023 Census shows that Asian populations now represent 17.3% of New Zealand's population, highlighting the urgent need for targeted support. "Asian people migrate to New Zealand seeking a better life, but gambling harm poses a significant threat, especially as Asian populations are leading the growth in Aotearoa," Feng notes.

In response, Asian Family Services is spearheading several initiatives. AFS has collaborated on the 'Online Gambling Position Paper', offering evidence-based recommendations to minimise harm and enhance consumer protection. AFS is also hosting Asian Hauora Days in South Auckland and North Shore, bringing together health service providers to create a supportive space for Asian community wellbeing.

Across Gambling Harm Awareness Week, AFS is conducting health promotion activities, including displays at some TABs, Casinos, and visits to other gambling venues, to raise awareness and offer culturally and linguistically appropriate support.

"Asian communities hold a strong stigma around gambling," Feng adds. "We hope that action in community venues, we can increase awareness of gambling harm and help destigmatise seeking assistance."

Asian Family Services encourages everyone to participate in Gambling Harm Awareness Week activities and to reach out for support through the free Asian helpline on 0800 862 342 (Monday to Friday 9am-8pm) or via their website at www.asianfamilyservices.nz.

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Asian Family Services (AFS) is the leading provider of culturally tailored mental health and addiction services for Asian communities across Aotearoa New Zealand. Established in 1998, we have over 25 years of experience delivering professional, confidential support to people of Asian heritage. Our services include counselling, addiction support, health promotion, community education, and research - all designed to help Asian New Zealanders lead flourishing and fulfilling lives. With offices in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, and a nationwide Asian Helpline, AFS is committed to improving access to culturally appropriate health and wellbeing services for New Zealand's rapidly growing Asian population.

Asian Family Services deliver the free Asian Helpline and other free support services across New Zealand Monday – Friday 9am-8pm – 0800 862 342, to access live chat, SMS, email and other services visit www.asianfamilyservices.nz/get-support/.