

Problem gambling and collaborative mental health care

Jon is a 42 year old accountant, with a wife and two young children aged two and four. From a young age, Jon always enjoyed a flutter on the horses and the occasional spin on the pokies. In the last twelve months, Jon has been under considerable stress from his job, and he has found solace in spending time down at the local pub on a Friday night with some mates. When Jon is with his mates, they always place group bets, and when the group makes a loss, Jon spends time on the pokies trying to win the money back. He has often borrowed money from his mates whilst chasing a loss.

Lately Jon has felt quite low because work is becoming more stressful, as his manager pressures him to perform at a faster pace. Jon feels guilty that he is accessing money from the family's mortgage account and feels that he can't talk to his wife. As well as gambling more frequently, Jon has also been drinking more. He has been returning home later than normal, and often drunk. Jon has also been lying about working late, and has actually been going to the pub to play the pokies before he goes home.

Jon's wife Melissa has never minded him spending time with his friends, but she is concerned about his drinking. One day Melissa received a mortgage bank statement and noticed something was amiss. Melissa went to the bank because she thought the bank had made a mistake. Melissa was informed that over the last 6 months Jon made a number of redraws on their account (she became aware that he must have been forging her signature). When Jon returned from work that night she confronted him. He disclosed a financial problem, friends he has borrowed money from, but didn't disclose the gambling problem. He promised to pay it all back but she knows that there is something wrong and is worried about his health. Knowing that it is a serious issue, Melissa insisted he go to see their family doctor and threatened to leave if he didn't. Jon has never lied or forged her signature over anything before and she feels betrayed.

Jon is not keen to go to the doctor because he feels concerned that his wife will find out the truth, but he doesn't want to lose his family so he makes an appointment with his GP.