



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	245/08
2. Advertiser	GATS Counselling
3. Product	Professional Services
4. Type of advertisement	Print
5. Nature of complaint	Health and safety – section 2.6
6. Date of determination	Wednesday, 9 July 2008
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A print advertisement featuring both text and photographic images.

The top third of the page is pink. On the left is a black & white photograph of girl aged 6-8. She is leaning her head in her hands and looks sad. Text on this section reads: GATS Counselling & Treatment Services 08 8342 4599 (7 days).

A red banner appears below the pink section. Text reads: Australia's Cutting Edge WHOLISTIC Treatment Program for ADDICTION & Codependency.

The central strip in the advertisement features six photographs of people. The first is holding playing cards, the second shows a topless man injecting a hypodermic needle into his arm, the third and fourth show a before and after shot of a woman, the fifth shows a man with his head in his hands, and the final image is of a young woman with cigarettes.

The bottom half of the advertisement is broken into three sections.

A large purple section with text: Specialists in the treatment of ALL Addictions. Gambling. Drugs & Alcohol. Sex. Anorexia. Bulimia. Compulsive Eating. Workaholism. Internet & Gaming. Love Addiction. Codependency.

A red banner below includes text: Also treating ... depression, anxiety, trauma, relationship and family breakdown, spiritual "bankruptcy".

The final pink banner at the bottom includes: For more info phone: 08 8342 4599 (7 days), P.O. Box 6411, Halifax Street, South Australia

W: www.gatscounselling.com E: gatsservices@bigpond.com

THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

Ad has a series of photographs depicting drug use and gambling. One image shows a man standing with his shirt off, tattoos exposed, belt around his upper harm held tight in his mouth with an insulin style syringe held against the inside of his elbow. Images like these ought not be seen in publish advertisement as it normalises IV (intra-venous) drug use. Although I believe it beneficial that clean needle programs exist in South Australia and that IV drug use can be carried out in a controlled and safe manner I don't see the benefit of allowing children and adolescents access to such images in public press as it only engenders curiosity.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

My response is very simple I guess in the fact that this complainant has taken his view about my add as somehow promoting needle drug abuse or triggering some negative response.

This is totally incorrect as this add purely highlights the realities of drug addiction which is what

we treat.

This is really no different to TV adds portraying negative impacts of drinking or binge drinking, so I don't particularly see much difference.....Needle use is just a reality of some drug addiction.

GATS also operates out of an ABSTINENCE based philosophy which is even much different to many government funded approaches.....where in some cases I believe Governments are enabling addictive disorders via clean needle programs and methadone programs.

In summary all I am doing in the add is highlighting the REALITY of Addiction....and certainly in no way glorifying it just as similar adds around the country and world.

I also am changing my ad in this particular mag soon anyway.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board ("Board") considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the "Code").

The Board noted the complainants concerns and reviewed the advertisement under Section 2.6 of the Code which deals with prevailing community standards on health and safety.

The Board viewed the print advertisement and noted that it contained six images each of which portrayed a different person and counselling scenario.

The Board further noted the image of the man using intravenous drugs was contextually justified as the product/service being advertised was a counselling service.

The Board considered that the image was not attractive nor did it suggest that illicit drug taking would enhance people's lives.

The Board further considered that the image was an appropriate one to illustrate the service offered by the advertiser and therefore did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.