

THINK!

ABOUT

YOUR

FAMILY

GAMBLING PROBLEMS

IN YOUR FAMILY?

OCCASIONAL GAMBLING
- AT THE TAB, ON LOTTO,
ON THE POKER MACHINES
OR AT THE CASINO - CAN BE
FUN AND ENTERTAINING.

WHEN GAMBLING STOPS
BEING FUN AND STARTS TO
BECOME A PROBLEM, IT CAN
BE HARMFUL NOT ONLY TO
THE GAMBLER, BUT THEIR
PARTNER, FRIENDS, FAMILY
AND WORK COLLEAGUES
AS WELL.

People with gambling problems often feel guilty about the effects their gambling can cause. It is very common for them to try to win back their losses through further gambling, and this makes the problems worse.

Many are unable to think clearly about other things in their life. Their performance at work may drop off and they may withdraw from family life. The guilt and distress they feel can emerge as anger towards the ones closest to them and they often become secretive and dishonest.

READING THE SIGNS

Unlike alcohol and drugs, signs of problem gambling can be difficult to detect. Some of these clues may indicate a problem:

- Time is spent at the gambling venue. Time with family or friends seems less important.
- Moodiness or secretiveness about their gambling and about money matters.
- Financial problems, like falling behind with paying bills or signing up for new credit cards.
- Borrowing money or pawning personal or household items.
- Dipping into savings often, but with nothing to show for it.
- Can't seem to stop gambling.

If these descriptions sound like someone close to you, then it's important that you develop strategies quickly to keep your finances secure and get more help and advice.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

You can get info and help by contacting Gambling Help, a service that assists problem gamblers and their families in NSW.

- There are **free** face-to-face gambling counselling services across NSW. To find one near you call **Gambling Help on 1800 858 858**.
- Gambling Help is a **free** confidential phone service that provides information, advice and referrals. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You won't be charged if you call from a landline – in fact, the number won't even show up on your bill. **Gambling Help – 1800 858 858**.

- If you don't feel like talking to someone yet, there are many self-help resources at www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au. A special section for family and friends outlines some simple actions you can take to protect yourself from the consequences of someone else's gambling.
- There is a brochure for problem gamblers that is available from any gambling venue in NSW.

Gamblers Anonymous runs a special group, GamAnon, where friends and family of problem gamblers meet to offer each other support and encouragement. You can find out details by ringing Gambling Help on 1800 858 858.

Other qualified counsellors, psychologists and psychiatrists in your area may also be able to provide assistance, though they are likely to charge a fee.

MAKE A POSITIVE CHANGE

Remember: The earlier you take action, the better the chances of a positive change to your life. If someone close to you is a problem gambler and you're helping them to continue gambling, you could be making the problem worse in the long run.

“ IT WAS A VERY POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR ME AND I AM SURE THAT FURTHER GOOD THINGS WILL COME FROM IT. ”

If you want to talk to someone who can help with information, counselling and referral, call

GAMBLING HELP

1800 858 858

Gambling Help counsellors are available at any time, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

You don't have to give your name and interpreter services are available.

Or visit the website at
www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au

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