



## Are You Concerned About Someone's Gambling?



### General Signs of a Potential Gambling Problem

Each person's experience is different, but here are some general signs of a potential gambling problem. The more boxes you tick, the greater the chance of a problem.

Do you, or someone you know, ever...

- Lie about how much time or money is spent gambling?
- Borrow money or sell things to get money to gamble?
- Skip work, family functions or other obligations to gamble?
- Gamble to escape boredom or problems at home or work?
- Gamble in order to win back losses?
- Need to gamble with larger amounts of money, or for a longer period of time, to get that same feeling of excitement?
- Argue with your spouse, partner or family about money and gambling?
- Hide bills, 'past due notices', winnings or losses from your partner or family member?
- Feel that a 'big win' will solve all of your problems?
- Bet until the last dollar is gone?
- Neglect to sleep or eat properly so you have more time to gamble?

If you are a spouse, family member or friend of a person with a gambling problem, it is natural to want to help. But be prepared—they may not be ready, or willing, to admit that there is a problem. While the gambling may be negatively affecting you and your family, you can't force someone to stop.

Here's what you can do:

### Before you raise the issue...

- 1) **Get informed:** Understand the problem first. Research problem gambling on websites like [www.responsiblegambling.org](http://www.responsiblegambling.org).
- 2) **Be prepared:** If there is a chance of violent or abusive behaviour, exercise caution. Get a support system in place—family, friends, clergy or counsellor.
- 3) **Choose the right moment:** If the person is expressing remorse about gambling, or has just finished a gambling episode, this may be a good time to talk.



### Raising your concerns...

- 4) **Use an "I" point of view:** Express feelings with "I feel" or "I think". The listener will feel less defensive and an argument will be less likely.
- 5) **Remain calm:** Keep a cool head when talking about the person's gambling and other hot button issues like family finances.
- 6) **Negotiate and set firm boundaries:** Make clear your expectations about future gambling, managing finances and responsibilities.

### After the conversation...

- 7) **Support positive changes:** Recognize and acknowledge positive steps and give praise for successes.
- 8) **Get help for yourself:** A counsellor or a self-help group can help you to communicate effectively, reduce your guilt and raise your self-esteem.
- 9) **Remember that change takes time:** It may take several tries before the person successfully changes their gambling behaviour.

## Tips for Spouses or Partners

### Do...

- ✓ Recognize that gambling is only one aspect of your partner's life
- ✓ Acknowledge your partner's good qualities
- ✓ Stay calm when discussing gambling and its consequences with your partner
- ✓ Tell your partner that you are seeking help for yourself
- ✓ Acknowledge the problem to children using age-appropriate language and detail
- ✓ Negotiate and put into place controls on the management of family finances. If your partner is unwilling to cooperate, make arrangements to protect your own finances. For more information, see the RGRC's list of credit counselling agencies in your area or visit the "Help with Problem Gambling – Money Management" section at [www.responsiblegambling.org](http://www.responsiblegambling.org)

### Don't...

- X Lecture, accuse or preach
- X Threaten or give ultimatums unless you plan to follow through
- X Gamble with your partner
- X Exclude the individual from family activities
- X Lend money to, or bail out, the gambler

If you are concerned about your gambling, or the gambling of someone you care about, call:

**ONTARIO PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE**  
**1-888-230-3505**

Toll-free, confidential, anonymous, and open 24 hours.

For more information about safer gambling, or to find out more about local resources for help with gambling-related problems, please visit:

[www.responsiblegambling.org](http://www.responsiblegambling.org)

### Responsible Gaming Resource Centre

The Responsible Gaming Resource Centre (RGRC), located on-site at OLG gaming venues across Ontario, provides patrons with information on safer gambling practices as well as assistance and local referrals for help with gambling-related problems. Operated by the Responsible Gambling Council, the centres are independent and all information provided to the RGRC is strictly confidential.

### Responsible Gambling Council

The Responsible Gambling Council (RGC) is an independent, non-profit organization committed to problem gambling prevention. RGC designs and delivers highly effective awareness programs. Through the RGC Centre for the Advancement of Best Practices, the Council also promotes the identification and adoption of best practices in problem gambling prevention.

[www.responsiblegambling.org](http://www.responsiblegambling.org)

