



GAMBLING HELP WA

Living with Problem Gambling

Information for Family and Friends



CENTRE CARE
"People Making Time for People"



Centrecare would like to acknowledge all the family and friends living with problem gambling who have contributed their stories and wisdom.

Thank you to the skilled and experienced staff who also contributed their knowledge and wisdom.

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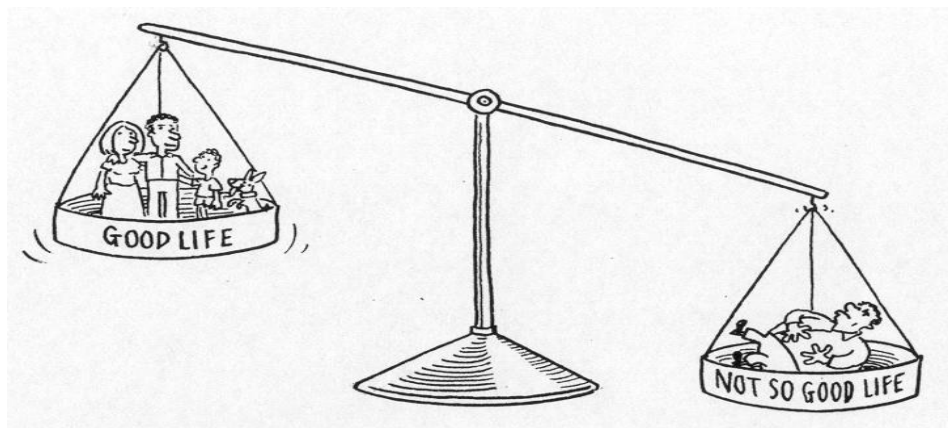


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About Centrecare

With a history dating back to the 1940's, Centrecare is a Catholic not-for-profit, community services organisation with over 300 staff delivering more than 70 quality, professional counselling, support, mediation and training services throughout the Perth metropolitan, Goldfields, Esperance and Southwest regions of Western Australia.

Our mission

To provide people and communities with professional social services that enhance wellbeing and that are inspired by compassion and recognition for human dignity and worth.

"The counsellor has helped my wife and myself to understand the problems we have, other than just gambling. She has helped us develop strategies to improve our relationship"

Our values

Respect - Recognition of the intrinsic worth of all human beings and the importance of sustaining their dignity and valuing their views.

Excellence - A commitment to the continued improvement of our skills and to the highest standards in service delivery.

Celebration - Celebrating the beauty of life, friendship and the resilience and achievements of the human spirit.

Compassion - An open hearted and thoughtful response to the experiences of the people we serve and those we work with.

Acceptance - Welcoming people in all their diversity in a manner that diminishes anxieties, enhances self-worth, communicates goodwill and leads to reconciliation.

Professionalism - Delivering services and treating others in a non-judgemental, caring and highly proficient manner.

Gambling Help W.A.

Gambling Help WA is a free confidential counselling and support service for people experiencing problem gambling, their family and friends. Gambling Help WA offers services to individuals, couples and families. A group workshop is also available.

The counsellors are fully qualified and have specific knowledge of the challenges and complexities associated with problem gambling.



GAMBLING HELP WA

Is this guide for you?

If you are reading this booklet it is likely that you are concerned about the gambling of someone close to you. You may be concerned that gambling is harming your family or the family of someone you care about.

This booklet is designed to help you identify how gambling has impacted on your life and strategies that you can use to help support you and the person you care about.

"My counsellor from day 1 has been wonderful and caring and more help than perhaps she realises. I still cannot accept my problem, but with my counsellor, I realise I don't have to travel this road alone. I thank you all for being here with this service. I for one am so very grateful. Many more tears to come"

Indicators of problem gambling

In this booklet, problem gambling is defined as:

***“When a person’s gambling activity gives rise to harm in the individual, player and/or his or her family, and may extend into the community.*”**

It is hard to know when gambling stops being a form of entertainment or recreational activity and starts to become a problem. This differs for everyone. One person may decide that their gambling is a problem when they start spending too much money on lotto or scratchies. For another person, their gambling may only seem to be a problem when they are spending most of their time at the casino. The following is a list of signs that may indicate that your family member or friend may have a problem with gambling.

Money

- ☐ Spending more money than is intended.
- ☐ Spending more money than is affordable.
- ☐ Borrowing money to gamble or to pay gambling debts.
- ☐ Using credit to gamble.
- ☐ Selling household goods for money.
- ☐ Obtaining money in illegal or unethical ways.
- ☐ Spending household money needed for living expenses.
- ☐ Chasing losses, trying to win back gambling losses.

Time

- ☐ Spending more time than is intended on gambling activities.
- ☐ Finding time to fit gambling into the daily routine.
- ☐ Absenteeism from work.
- ☐ Spending less time with family and friends to gamble

Secrecy

- ☐ Hiding evidence of gambling.
- ☐ Lying about time or money spent on gambling.
- ☐ Hiding financial information (e.g. bank statements).



Loss of Control

- ❑ Finding it difficult not to gamble at every opportunity.
- ❑ Finding it difficult to stop gambling.
- ❑ Gambling to escape boredom, problems or difficult feelings.

Thoughts

- ❑ Seeing gambling as a solution to financial difficulties.
- ❑ Illusions about being able to control the outcome of gambling activities.
- ❑ Superstitions related to luck or winning.

In almost all situations the person gambling does not gamble with the intention of harming others. However, if the gambling seems to be a priority for the person, this may jeopardise their well-being and those around them.

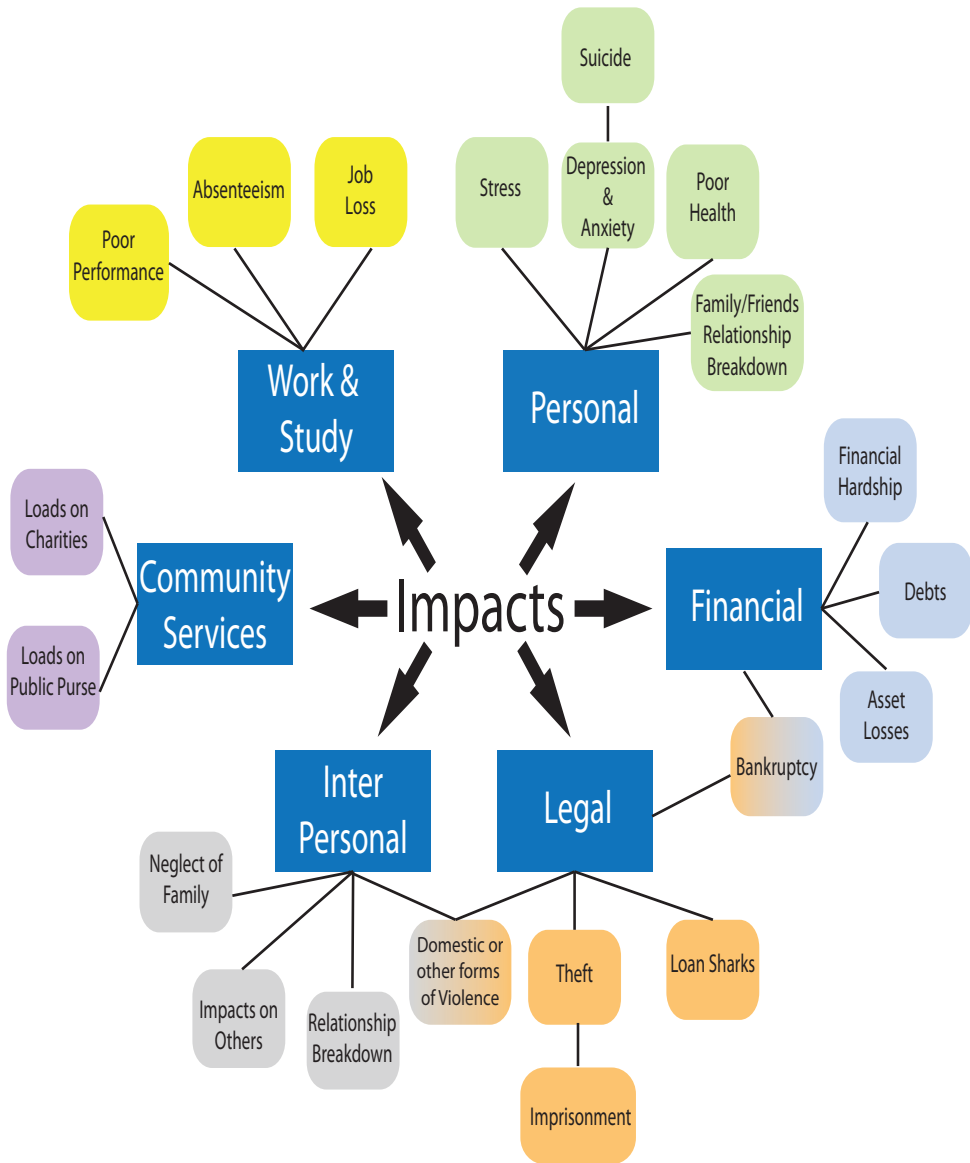
What you may notice

- ❑ The person talking about gambling wins. (often the wins are shared and celebrated while losses remain hidden).
- ❑ Unexplained missing money from the house or from bank accounts.
- ❑ Final notice reminders for accounts that were assumed paid.
- ❑ Mood swings.
- ❑ Outbursts of anger.
- ❑ Household goods missing.
- ❑ Unexplained absences from home or work.
- ❑ Neglect of children and partner.
- ❑ Withdrawal and isolation from family and leisure activities.
- ❑ Secretiveness about time or money.
- ❑ Household financial pressure.

"The sessions have been extremely helpful and certainly assisted me greatly in dealing with my current situation. Thank you"

Impacts of problem gambling

Problem gambling not only affects the person gambling, but also their family, friends and the wider community. The consequences of problem gambling are far-reaching and can impact on many areas as indicated in the diagram below.



Impact on partners

Partners regularly talk about the issue of how to live with someone who is experiencing problem gambling.

Problem gambling is often associated with intense levels of shame, which can be enough to prevent the person from being honest about their problem or seek support.

Problem gambling can be experienced as very hurtful and can take time to work through. There is no one “right” way to do this, there are many ways.

You may be feeling confused about the future of your relationship. It may be helpful to share your concerns and speak to trusted family and friends. Professional counselling in a confidential setting is also an option.

If you feel surprised on discovering the extent of your partner’s gambling, you may:

- ☐ have difficulty staying or falling asleep;
- ☐ experience irritability and outbursts of anger;
- ☐ be hyper-vigilant;
- ☐ have difficulty concentrating;
- ☐ frequently ask the whereabouts of the person;
- ☐ lose your trust with your partner; and/or
- ☐ feel guilty - “why didn’t I know”?

You may choose to:

- ☐ take control of your finances;
- ☐ limit the amount of cash available to your partner;
- ☐ refuse to keep their gambling a secret;
- ☐ seek support from friends and family; and/or
- ☐ seek support from a professional counsellor.

“I have learnt more self awareness of my situation and feel confident it [gambling] won’t happen again”

The person gambling may need to:

- ☐ acknowledge the harm caused by their gambling;
- ☐ take personal responsibility for the harm;
- ☐ apologise for the harm;
- ☐ make a commitment not to harm their partner through gambling activities;

- ❑ be willing to discuss financial management strategies(e.g. bankruptcy);
- ❑ tell family and friends and ask for support;
- ❑ seek support from a professional counsellor; and/or
- ❑ seek advice and create a financial plan with a financial counsellor.

Impact on children

Parents can go to great lengths to protect their children from the harm associated with problematic gambling.

Children are affected directly and indirectly and often don't say in words what they feel or how their experiences are affecting them.

"There are things in life you know you can't live without, this is one of them"

Gambling Help WA Counselling Service can be a comfortable way for children to make sense of their world by exploring their thoughts, feelings and relationships. This service can also provide you with strategies when supporting your child.

Impact on parents

Parents are often concerned about their children's problem gambling. It is important for parents to communicate with each other to provide consistent and helpful support.

You may choose to:

- ❑ discuss the impact that the gambling is having on you as a family;
- ❑ express your desire to work together in reducing the harm of gambling;
- ❑ explain that you will not keep their gambling a secret from the family;
- ❑ include all family members in a support plan for the child experiencing problem gambling;
- ❑ decline requests for financial assistance;
- ❑ support your child to access a financial counsellor;
- ❑ make a commitment to spend quality time with each of your children regardless of the impact that problem gambling is having on your family;
- ❑ seek support for yourself from a professional counsellor; and/or
- ❑ support your child to access a professional counsellor.

Online Gambling and Gaming

Simulated gambling games imitate many of the core characteristics of gambling—such as the look, sound and actions—but do not provide an opportunity to bet, win or lose real money. This key point distinguishes them from commercial gambling. Recent years have seen a sharp increase in the availability of these games, leading to increased interest and use. They have received varying labels, including social gambling games, gambling-like games and free or practice games.

The most popular forms of simulated gambling are poker, “pokies”, lotteries and casino-style games such as blackjack. However mini gambling games may also be included within a bigger non-gambling game. There are also games that, while they do not appear to have a gambling theme, can include elements that are commonly associated with gambling.



A number of reasons why people play simulated gambling games have been identified in the existing research. Motivations for play can be grouped as being:

- ❑ for fun or entertainment: games are exciting and allow the player to spend time with their friends (or make new ones);
- ❑ a way to relax, relieve boredom or pass the time;
- ❑ a way to relieve negative emotion (e.g., anxiety, depression) and/or escape from problems; and/or
- ❑ a way to practice for “real money” gambling activities or for the challenge of the competition (Carran & Griffiths, 2015; Derevensky, Gainsbury, Gupta, & Ellery, 2013; Gainsbury et al., 2015; McBride & Derevensky, 2009).

With the exception of practicing, these motivations are very similar to motivations for gambling.

Four characteristics define and differentiate between types of simulated gambling games:

1. How central the theme of gambling is within the game;
2. The payment model used;
3. The social features; and
4. The available platforms.

Using these characteristics, there are five different types of simulated gambling games within a typology: practice games, social gambling games, gambling games, games with embedded gambling and games with gambling features.

Practice Game

In a practice game, gambling is central to the theme of the game, but no money is involved (Gainsbury, King, Delfabbro et al., 2015; Gainsbury, Hing, Delfabbro, & King, 2014). While traditionally practice games were played on a computer, they are now also available on mobile and tablet apps. Practice games are often affiliated with a commercial gambling company.

Social Gambling Games

A social gambling game has gambling as a central theme and there is some kind of link to a social media site. While money is not required to play, it can be used to extend or enhance game play.

Gambling Games

A gambling game also has gambling as a central theme, but there is no link to social media sites, nor does it contain social features. Again, money is not required but it can be used to extend or enhance game play (Gainsbury, Hing, Delfabbro, Dewar et al., 2014). Gambling games are available on many platforms, including mobile and tablet devices, game consoles and computers.

Embedded Gambling

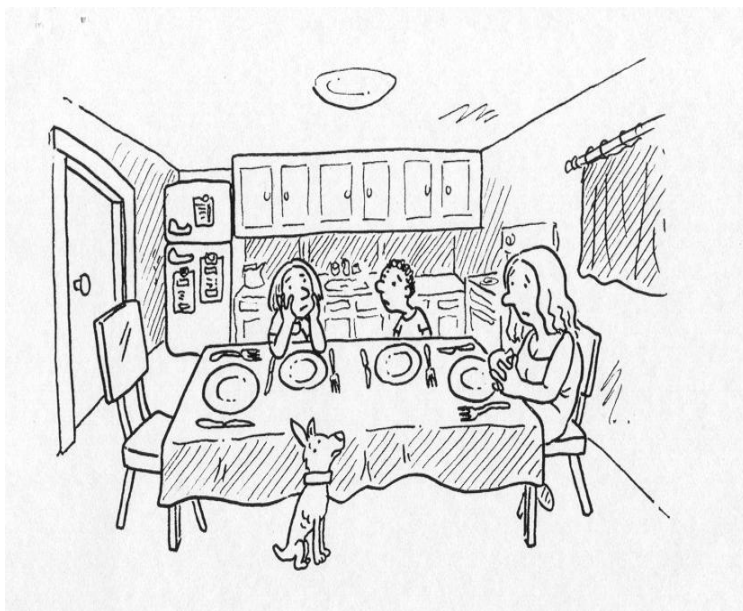
A game with embedded gambling does not have gambling as the central theme, but has a minor gambling game or activity inserted into the broader game. Progress in the wider game may be contingent on a certain outcome within this embedded gambling game. (e.g. winning a poker game)

Games with Gambling Characteristics

These games do not overtly include gambling, but have been included as they exhibit some gambling characteristics. The most prominent of these features are the inclusion of reinforcement schedules that are similar to those used in many chance-based gambling activities (Griffiths et al., 2014). These games may also have the ability to use money to extend game play.

Is it gambling or a game? Simulated gambling games: Their use and regulation

<https://aifs.gov.au/agrc/sites/default/files/agrc-dp5-simulated-gambling-paper.pdf>



Will the person change?

Change is possible and requires time, effort, patience and commitment.

The decision to change is the responsibility of the person with the gambling problem.

Depending on the impact of the gambling behaviour, family and friends may play a role in encouraging and supporting change. However, the willingness to support this change can often fluctuate considerably over time.

It is reasonable for family and friends to feel hurt, exhausted and angry and not be ready to offer support.

Professional counselling and support may be valuable in assisting all parties in this process of change.

Self-exclusion and third party exclusion

Self-exclusion and third party exclusion are processes that are available to you and the person you are concerned about.

It is always a preference for the person with the problematic gambling to self-exclude themselves from venues such as the TAB and Crown Casino, however, you can third party exclude.

What is self-exclusion? - Self-exclusion is a process where any person can nominate to be excluded from the gaming areas of Crown Casino. The minimum period of exclusion is 12 months. If the person would like to return to the gaming areas after 12 months, they will need to make an application to the Responsible Services Gaming (RSG) Team at Crown Casino. The RSG Team will assess the application and make a decision with regards to revocation and offer additional support if required.

What is third party exclusion? - Third party exclusion is a process where a concerned family or friend, or a welfare professional, can apply to have Crown review a person with the view to having the person excluded from the casino due to problem gambling. The minimum period of exclusion is 12 months. If the person would like to return to the gaming areas after 12 months, the RSG Team will follow the same process as self-exclusion, as described above and a referral for counselling will be made. Following receipt of a report by the counsellor the RSG Team will review the person's application for revocation and a decision will be made about whether it is in that person's best interests to return to the casino at that time. The RSG Team will provide support to the person when the person first returns to the casino.

If you are concerned about the gambling behaviour of someone close to you, or you are concerned about your families' financial or emotional well-being, you can suggest that the person self exclude themselves from gambling venues. If the person refuses to self exclude then family or friends have the option to do this. In this case you may choose to contact the following organisations for further information.

- **For the Crown Casino Complex** you can contact the Responsible Gambling Advisor on (08) 9362 7500, or 1800 801 098. Alternatively you can speak to any staff member on the Main Gaming floor or approach the Security Podium at the Casino. The Responsible Gambling Team is available for support or consultation 24 hours, 7 days a week.
- **For the TAB and/or racetrack** you can enquire at any TAB agency or telephone Racing and Wagering Western Australia (RWWA) to begin the process. The Manager of Retail Administration can help you with the exclusion and can be contacted on either (08) 9445 5172 or (08) 9445 5303.

Gambling Help WA counsellors are also available to assist you consider the above processes.



What to expect from counselling

The counselling process involves the counsellor and client together finding helpful solutions to problems in a confidential, non-judgemental environment.

The essence of Centrecare counselling is strengths based and involves:

- ❑ Working with people rather than problems.
- ❑ Looking for resources rather than deficits.
- ❑ Exploring times when things were better.
- ❑ Exploring possible and preferred futures.
- ❑ Exploring what is already happening that the person wants to continue to happen.
- ❑ Treating clients as the experts in all aspects of their lives.
- ❑ Focussing on what is possible and changeable.
- ❑ The possibility of change.
- ❑ Resolution of problems.

Centrecare provides counselling for people experiencing problematic gambling for their concerned family, partners and friends. Individual, family and couple counselling are available.

Counselling sessions run for approximately 50 minutes and all counsellors are professionally qualified.

If you would like more information about the counselling process, please contact Centrecare on (08) 9325 6644

"I have found this service very helpful in solving my problem and makes me feel a lot more confident and happier about myself"



"I am very grateful to Centrecare and especially my counsellor for providing the service and space. I desperately needed to ask and received assistance, and allowed me to have a voice to speak openly"

Helpful resources

Gambling Help WA

Gambling Help WA is a confidential counselling and support service for people experiencing problem gambling, their family and friends. This service offers sessions to individuals, couples and families. Group counselling and financial counselling are also available.

Tel: (08) 9325 6644 Web: www.centrecare.com.au
email: enquiries@centrecare.com.au

Problem Gambling Helpline

This is a free, confidential telephone counselling and referral service, run 24 hours a day by qualified counsellors. As it is a free call the number will not appear on your phone bill for most landlines.

Tel: 1800 858 858 Web: www.gamblinghelponline.org.au

Responsible Gambling Information Centre

Crown has a dedicated Responsible Service of Gambling Team on site. Their qualified team has considerable experience working with individuals affected by problem gambling and they are available to discuss any aspect of your gambling behaviour. They are also able to provide further information on, and referral to, other support services 24 hours, /7 days a week

Tel: (08) 9362 7500 / 1800 801 098 Web: www.gamblersresponsibly.com.au

Gamblers Anonymous

This is a voluntary group organised and run by men and women who have been affected by problem gambling in their family or amongst their friends/ acquaintances and those who have had, or still have, problems with gambling. They run groups throughout Australia and you can get the help and support from a group of people who have had similar problems. The criterion for joining this group is willingness to abstain from gambling.

Tel: (08) 9487 0688

Emergency contacts

Police.....	131 444
Ambulance	000
Women’s Domestic Violence HelpLine.....	1800 007 339
Men’s Domestic Violence Helpline.....	1800 000 599
Crisis Care.....	1800 199 008
Life line.....	131 114
Kid’s Helpline.....	1800 551 800
Parent Helpline	1800 654 432
Department for Child Protection	1800 622 258
Mental Health Emergency Response Line....	1300 555 788

Making Contact

Talking to someone is easier than you think.

To make an appointment:

Telephone: (08) 9325 6644

Email: enquiries@centrecare.com.au.

Day and evening appointments are available in the metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas of Western Australia.