



GAMBLING HELP WA



# LIVING WITH PROBLEM GAMBLING

Information for Family and Friends



# ABOUT CENTRE CARE

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Centrecare is a not-for-profit organisation which aims to strengthen people and communities through a variety of counselling and professional social services, inspired by compassion and respect for human dignity.

Make contact: (08) 9325 6644



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# 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.

## ABOUT GAMBLING HELP WA

Gambling Help WA is a government funded, free, confidential counselling service provided by Centrecare, offering appointments in our Perth, Joondalup, Midland, Cannington, Bunbury and Kalgoorlie offices.

The counsellors are all qualified and have specific knowledge of the difficulties associated with problem gambling. Counselling is available for both the individual experiencing gambling harm and their loved ones. The service offers sessions to individuals, couples and families. Financial counselling is also available to help you manage debts caused by gambling.

Gambling Help WA also offers a group program for people wishing to reduce or stop their gambling. The group is free and runs for six consecutive weeks. Several groups are run each year, coinciding with Western Australian school terms.

*"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" - Gambling Help WA client.*

# 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 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 page is a list of signs that may indicate that your loved one may have a problem with gambling.



# Indicators

## 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 that is needed for living expenses.
- Chasing losses or 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, like 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 gambling seems to be a priority for the person, this may jeopardise your wellbeing and those around you.

## What you may notice

- The person talks about their gambling wins but hides their losses.
- Unexplained missing money from the house or from bank accounts.
- Final notice reminders for accounts that were assumed to have been paid.
- Mood swings.
- Outbursts of anger.
- Household goods missing.
- Unexplained absences from home, work or school.
- Neglect of children and/or partner.
- Withdrawal and isolation from family and leisure activities.
- Secretiveness about time and/or money.
- Household financial pressure.



# IMPACTS OF GAMBLING HARM

Gambling harm behaviours not only affect the person gambling, but also their family, friends and the wider community. The consequences of harmful gambling behaviours are far reaching and can impact on many areas, as indicated in the diagram below:





## Impact on Partners

Partners often struggle with how to navigate life with someone experiencing gambling harm behaviours.

Harmful gambling behaviours are frequently accompanied by deep feelings of shame, which can prevent individuals from being honest about their situation or seeking support.

Coping with a partner's gambling issues can be emotionally challenging and takes time to process. There is no single right way to approach this journey.

You may feel uncertain about the future of your relationship. It can be helpful to share your concerns with trusted family and friends. Seeking professional counselling in a confidential setting is also an option.

You may experience a variety of different emotions upon discovering your partner's gambling, such as:

- Have difficulty staying or falling asleep.
- Experience irritability and outbursts of anger.
- Being hypervigilant.
- Have difficulty concentrating.
- Frequently ask about the whereabouts of the person.
- Lose your trust with your partner.
- Feel guilty, or think - 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.
- Seek support from a professional counsellor.

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 others 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.
- Seek advice and create a financial plan with a financial counsellor if debt has become unmanageable.

## Impact on Children

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

Children are affected both directly and indirectly, and they often don't express in words what they feel or how their experiences are impacting them. Children are greatly aware of the moods that surround them and are often aware of household issues even when they are not told explicitly about them. Engaging counselling services 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 for supporting your child.

Centrecare offers free counselling to children aged 6–18 years.

Phone (08) 9325 6644 to enquire further.

## Impact on Parents

Parents are often concerned about their children's problem gambling. Research has begun to demonstrate the gambling-adjacent activities found in computer and console games, and the negative effects this is having upon children. It is important for parents to communicate with each other to provide consistent and helpful boundaries and support.

You may choose to:

- Discuss the impact that 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.
- Support your child to access a professional counsellor.

## Will the Person Change?

Change is possible but it 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 play a role in encouraging and supporting change. However, your willingness to provide support may naturally fluctuate over time. It is understandable for loved ones to feel hurt, exhausted or angry and not be ready to offer support.

Professional counselling and support may be valuable in helping everyone involved navigate this journey of change.

## Self-Exclusion and Third-Party Exclusion

It is always a preference for the person with gambling harm behaviours to self-exclude themselves from venues such as the TAB and Crown Casino. However, self-exclusion and third-party exclusion are processes that are available to you and the person you are concerned about.

**What is self-exclusion?** Self-exclusion is a process where any person can nominate to be excluded from the gaming areas of Crown Entertainment Complex. The minimum period of exclusion is 12 months. If the person would like to return to the gaming areas after 12 months, they can apply for a revocation of their self-exclusion to permit entry back into the casino. The revocation process requires attending counselling at Gambling Help WA to discuss previous gambling behaviour and to gain a better understanding of responsible gambling practices. Thereafter, the Crown PlaySafe (CPS) Team will meet with the person, and a decision will be made about whether it is in that person's best interest to return to the casino at that time. The CPS Team will also provide support to the person when they first return to the casino.

**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 CPS review a person with a view to have the person excluded from the casino due to gambling harm behaviours.

## BetStop – The National Self-Exclusion Register

This register facilitates exclusion from all online wagering services in Australia, you can register on BetStop – the National Self-Exclusion Register by calling 1800 238 786 or online at <https://betstop.gov.au/>



## TAB

Exclusion from a TAB Agency can be done at any TAB Agency or by phoning Racing and Wagering Western Australia (RWWA) to undertake the third-party exclusion process on 1300 363 688 or email [selfexclusion@rwwa.com.au](mailto:selfexclusion@rwwa.com.au).

Download the RWWA Self-Exclusion application form from the website <https://help.tabtouch.com.au/knowledge-base/responsible-wagering-tab-agency-self-exclusion/>

Bans are for a minimum of 12 months. If you wish to revoke the ban after this time, you will need to have your application approved by RWWA and you will be asked to attend counselling at Gambling Help WA.

### SELF EXCLUSION PROGRAM PARTICIPATION FORM



#### APPLICATION FOR SELF EXCLUSION

GENERAL INFORMATION
Full Name:
If Known By Other Name Please Specify:
Date Of Birth:
Home Address:
Street:
Suburb:
State:



## Casino

Third-party exclusion from Crown Casino can be done by:

- Going online <https://www.crownperth.com.au/crown-playsafe>
- Contacting the Crown Playsafe Team on 1800 801 098.
- Emailing Crown [CPS@crownperth.com.au](mailto:CPS@crownperth.com.au)
- Visiting the Crown PlaySafe Centre, located at lower level of the Eastern Tunnel Entrance.

The Crown PlaySafe Centre is staffed by a dedicated Crown PlaySafe (CPS) Team who provide a free confidential service 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The CPS Team provide assistance to those seeking exclusion from the casino. Exclusion is a process which excludes you from entering the gaming floor of the casino for a minimum period of 12 months.

After a minimum of 12 months, you can apply for a revocation of your exclusion to permit entry back into the casino. The revocation process requires attending counselling at Gambling Help WA to discuss previous problem gambling behaviour and to gain a better understanding of responsible gambling practices.

**A Gambling Help WA Counsellor can assist in completing the third-party self-exclusion process.**

## What to Expect from Counselling

The counselling process involves the counsellor and client working together to find helpful solutions to problems in a confidential, non-judgmental 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 the positives and supporting the person to continue that momentum.
- Treating clients as experts in all aspects of their lives.
- Focusing 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 couples counselling appointments are available.

Counselling sessions run for 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.




## Helpful Websites

The following websites have more in-depth information on the topics discussed in this book. Some of them also have individuals' stories of the effect gambling had on their lives and how they gave up gambling.

[www.gamblinghelponline.org.au](http://www.gamblinghelponline.org.au): You can become a member and participate in exercises and educational activities to help you manage your gambling and talk to other community members. There are resources for gamblers, their loved ones and the wider community.

[www.gamblershelp.com.au](http://www.gamblershelp.com.au): You can find a lot of information about protecting yourself from lapses and how gambling affects many areas of your life, through e-brochures and videos.

[www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gambleaware.nsw.gov.au): Provided by New South Wales, this site provides information for gambling safely and provides support to people impacted by gambling.



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

# THE FACTS ABOUT GAMBLING

## National Statistical Snapshot

- Estimates suggest Australians lose approximately \$25 billion to gambling each year – the highest per capita average in the world.
- In 2024, it was estimated that 60.3% of adult Australians had gambled, compared to 65.6% in a 2019 study.
- Approximately three in four Australian adults have gambled within the preceding 12 months, and two in five adults gamble weekly.
- For one in five Australian adult problem gamblers, their problems started during their youth.
- The most common ways for Australian adults to gamble is: Lottery (46.8%); Raffle tickets (23.4%); Scratch tickets (15.7%); Electronic gaming machines (12.9%); and betting on races (10.0%).
- Following the COVID-19 pandemic, many Australians switched to online gambling methods, such as sports-betting.
- Up to a quarter of adolescent Australians have bet on a sport, and one in 10 adolescents have gambled online.
- In 2023, 78% of Australian adults were exposed to some form of gambling-related advertising.

The rapid growth of gambling following its liberalisation in the 1990's has produced significant industry growth. The risk of becoming a problem gambler is low for people who engage in non-continuous types of gambling such as Lotto, the risk significantly magnifies for people who gamble on continuous gambling types, such as electronic gaming machines, online gambling and apps. The significant social cost of gambling requires efficacious policies and strategies that target the wider range of gambling harms.

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## The State Picture

### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

- WA has a higher proportion of people who gamble compared to other states (62.9% vs 56.3% respectively), although WA has less problem gamblers.
- WA is now the only state in Australia that does not have high intensity electronic gaming machines, or 'pokies'. Low intensity gaming machines are available at the Crown Entertainment Complex. Gambling with electronic gaming machines in WA is approximately half that demonstrated in the rest of the country.
- In 2021, WA had 2,466 electronic gaming machines.
- The most popular form of gambling in WA is buying Lotterywest products.
- In 2019 to 2020, the total loss and expenditure for gambling in WA was \$1.4 billion.
- In 2023 to 2024, the Crown casino reported a gross revenue of \$521 million.
- Approximately 6.4 million people visited the Crown casino in 2023 to 2024. This figure increased from 6.2 million in 2022 to 2023.

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