

Problem Gambling

For many people, gambling is a pleasurable recreational activity; however, gambling for some can cause major disruption in their life and in the lives of their partners, families and friends. When gambling behaviour is becoming out of control, it is important that a person seek suitable help to gain control before further damage is done.

There are many factors which contribute to the development of a gambling problem. These may include:

- Believing myths about gambling, e.g.; that you will win eventually
- Using gambling to avoid facing difficult life circumstances or feelings
- Having a big win early in the gambling experience
- Not having other social options
- Easy access to gambling facilities

If gambling is getting out of control for you, it may be helpful to:

- Be honest with people whom you trust about the full extent of your gambling problem. This may include disclosing where you gamble, when you gamble and how much money you have lost through gambling. Think about what support you would like from these people and ask them if they are willing to provide that support.
- Limit the amount of money to which you have access. This may involve handing over ATM cards so that it is more difficult to gamble impulsively.
- Think carefully about the difficulties you were facing at the time the gambling became out of control. Take time to share your feelings with someone about these difficulties. If gambling has been a way of avoiding these difficulties it is important that you learn an alternative way of dealing with them. This may require you to learn to grieve, problem solve, resolve a relationship or make a new start in an aspect of your life. It is likely that you will find it much easier to resist gambling once you have addresses any underlying problems.
- If you are going to stop or reduce the time you spend gambling think carefully about what will replace the gambling behaviour. This lifestyle change may involve investing in new interests or friendships.

- Identify the financial impact of gambling on your life. Carefully estimate how much you have won, how much you have lost and decide if the loss is acceptable to you. This may assist you to identify that many beliefs around gambling are myths.
- If there is a gaming venue at which you normally gamble consider requesting to voluntarily exclude yourself from the venue.

Please feel free to contact Life Supports on 1300 735 030 if you would like to discuss your situation with a professional counsellor. You can find more information about Life Supports services by visiting www.lifesupports.com.au.