

LIFELINE CANBERRA GAMBLINGCARE FACT SHEET

PROBLEM GAMBLING

Gambling is part of the Australian culture. Many traditional events such as the Melbourne Cup and Anzac Day involve nation-wide gambling.

For most people, gambling is a fun form of entertainment and does not cause any serious harm to them or their families. However, for approximately 2% of the Australian population, gambling becomes problematic.

What is problem gambling?

Problem gambling is any pattern of gambling that causes **harm** to a person. This includes their:

- ↪ Physical health
- ↪ Mental health
- ↪ Relationships
- ↪ Financial situation
- ↪ Performance at work or study
- ↪ Social life

Warning Signs

- ↪ Gambling money you cannot afford
- ↪ Being preoccupied with gambling (re-living past gambling experiences, thinking of ways to get money to gamble etc)
- ↪ Feeling compelled to gamble even though you don't want to
- ↪ Making repeated but unsuccessful attempts to cut down or stop gambling
- ↪ Feeling irritable when unable to gamble
- ↪ Chasing your losses
- ↪ Lying to friends/family to hide the extent of your gambling
- ↪ Obtaining money illegally to gamble
- ↪ Risking relationships and other commitments due to gambling
- ↪ Borrowing money to finance your gambling
- ↪ Gambling a large proportion of your income on pay day
- ↪ Feeling stressed, ashamed and/or regretful after a gambling session
- ↪ Feeling as though gambling is the only way you can really relax and escape from your problems.

Strategies to control problem gambling

1. Seek professional counselling to help you understand your gambling problem.
2. See a financial counsellor to plan ways to manage your debts without the need for a "win" at gambling.
3. Leave your ATM cards at home
4. Let a trusted friend/family member control your finances until you feel able to resist gambling.
5. Gamble with trusted friends, not alone.
6. Avoid drinking alcohol when gambling as this increases your chances of gambling past your limits.
7. Find healthy or non-harmful ways to escape from your worries on a regular basis, eg, watch a movie, play the computer, have a bath, cook a meal.
8. Phone a trusted friend, family member, your counsellor or G-Line when the urge to gamble feels overwhelming
9. Remind yourself that gambling is a form of entertainment, not a way to make money.
10. Tell yourself that urges are just strong feelings that will pass.

What does Lifeline Canberra do for Problem Gamblers?

At any given time around 6400 Canberra residents are thought to have a **significant** gambling problem. For each problem gambler, approximately 7 others are also affected (eg spouse, children).

Lifeline Canberra provides a **free face-to-face** counselling service to anyone affected by problem gambling. This includes problem gamblers and/or their family and friends.

The service is provided by fully trained professional counsellors and is confidential. There is no limit to the number of sessions available to each person. We provide counselling to individuals and couples and family members.

We provide community education and awareness of problem gambling and responsible gambling. We do this through presentations to the public, community workers and interested persons. We also run groups for people experiencing problems with gambling.

Interesting gambling facts

You have a much higher chance of being hit by lightning in Australia (1 in 1,603,250) than winning Powerball (1 in 54,979,15).

There is absolutely **no skill** involved in poker machine gambling. Nothing you do to the machine will influence the result of your game. The outcome of any one game is randomly generated and is not influenced by previous plays.

A poker machine that has not paid out in a while is no more likely to pay out than one that just hit the jackpot.

Australians spent almost **\$17.5 billion** in 2006 on gambling. We spent around \$6.5 billion on Gas and Electricity in the same year.

75% of problem gamblers who seek help state it is because of a problem with poker machines alone.

One in eight regular gamblers is a problem gambler and they contribute 30% of the total gambling revenue.

Sources:

ANU Centre for Gambling Research
Tasmanian Gaming and Racing Commission 2004 Gambling Statistics
Productivity Commission's Gambling Inquiry 1999



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