

# Gambling

Gambling is an activity where someone spends money on a game, with the chance of losing or winning money.

It might be betting with money on a card game, game of sport or a horse race. It might be putting money into a poker machine at a pub.

Gambling can be done at a hotel or betting shop, or on a phone or computer. It is not only men who gamble - women gamble too.

It can start like a game. It can look like a fun game. But if you are spending money and lots of time gambling or thinking about gambling, it will quickly become a problem. Gambling is designed to make people addicted, so you keep spending money. The only winners in gambling are the gambling companies.

People always talk about their wins. But **no one really wins at gambling**. They never talk about all the money they have already spent and lost. It is usually a lot more than they ever win. The more someone gambles, the stronger the urge to keep gambling can become. When a person is gambling, they think they are in control, they think there is a chance they will win. But afterwards, people usually feel bad. They can feel anxious and guilty. They might steal money and lie about what they are doing. Their family gets hurt and blames the person who is gambling.

You might think nothing can help. You might think that it is all the gambler's fault. You might think that there is something wrong with them. You might think that no one can help with this addiction. **But you can help**. You can help them see that gambling is hurting them and other people. You can let them know that you want to help them work out what to do.

When the urge to gamble comes on, you can help the person to do something that distracts them. They might find it helpful to chat with a friend, cook a special meal, have a long shower, or go for a walk. You can help them by making sure they cannot get cash or bank cards easily.

It also helps if the person gets professional help early on, before the urges and losses get too big. If you or a family member struggles with gambling, Anglicare Tasmania can help. Anglicare Tasmania has counsellors who have skills to help you take control of the urges to gamble and deal with the impacts it has had on your life. Phone Anglicare Tasmania 1800 243 232 and ask for an interpreter.

You can also call **Women's Health Tasmania** on **1800 675 028** and ask for a free counselling appointment. Women's Health Tasmania will organise an interpreter.