

# YOU CAN CONTROL YOUR GAMBLING

Self-help guide



Gambling<sup>gh</sup>elp  
QUEENSLAND



Queensland  
Government



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REMEMBER  
PROBLEM  
GAMBLING  
CAN  
BE  
BEATEN

# YOU CAN CONTROL YOUR GAMBLING

For many people gambling is an enjoyable recreational activity, but for some, gambling can become a problem. They lose sight of the fact that the odds of winning differ for different types of gambling activities, but one element stays the same—the odds always favour the house.

If gambling has become a problem for you, this guide can help. It's for any person who is spending time and money gambling in a way that is harmful to them, or is hurting people close to them such as their partner, friends, family or work colleagues. If you want to check whether you are a problem gambler, ask yourself:

*'Am I always in control of how much I spend on gambling?'*

*'Is the time and money I spend gambling hurting anyone else?'*

This guide can help if:

- ▶ you want to learn more about the impact of gambling on your life
- ▶ you have a gambling problem and have made up your mind to do something about it
- ▶ you want to enjoy problem-free gambling, or
- ▶ you want to stop gambling.

## How this guide can help

This guide asks you to fill in information about yourself. Once you do that, it stops being just a guide and can become a real help. Every suggestion in this guide has been included because it can help with gambling problems. The ideas come from years of listening to gamblers talking about how they coped, as well as from information about gambling.

To give yourself a fair go, you should plan on working at your problem for 12 weeks. This guide can be kept with you during the 12 weeks. When you've got that far, see what you've achieved and decide where to go from there.

Go through the steps in this guide carefully and slowly. Even if it works really well for you don't throw the guide away. Keep it somewhere safe so you can check out how you're going later on.

“IF  
YOU  
FELL  
DOWN  
YESTERDAY,  
STAND  
UP  
TODAY”

H.G.WELLS

## How bad can problem gambling become?

Before we look at ways to manage gambling it's important to have a really clear idea of how severe gambling problems can become. The harm caused by gambling can impact on:

**Emotions:** It doesn't feel good to be out of control, losing a lot of money and juggling bills. Having to lie to friends and family to cover up losses can leave you feeling isolated and alone.

**Money:** When gambling gets out of control you can lose money much faster than most people can earn it. Borrowing delays the disaster but debt makes the drive to gamble even stronger.

**Work:** Work performance suffers when you're worrying about gambling losses, debts and lies. Sometimes you feel so bad you can't go to work, or you gamble instead of working.

**Family:** Relatives get caught in a bind; they want to save you from losing your job, being taken to court etc., but they may get fed up with lending money and never getting repaid.

**Social life:** People with gambling problems have little time for socialising and often lose friends.

**The law:** People with gambling problems may end up stealing to continue gambling and could end up in court and/or dismissed from jobs as a result.

## Am I a problem gambler?

Sometimes people with gambling problems are referred to as being 'ill' or 'addicted'. When it comes to using this guide, the labels don't matter as long as you accept that your gambling is a problem and understand it is within your power to change that problem.

If you're still not sure whether you have a gambling problem, try answering the following questions.

“WHAT  
YOU DO  
TODAY,  
CAN  
IMPROVE  
ALL  
YOUR  
TOMORROWS”

RALPH MARSTON



**Tick the boxes below, as truthfully as you can, about your experiences over the last 12 months.**

Sometimes I've felt depressed or anxious after a session of gambling.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Sometimes I've felt guilty about the way I gamble.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Sometimes when I think about it, gambling has sometimes caused me problems.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Sometimes I've found it better not to tell others, especially my family, about the amount of time or money I spend gambling.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
I often find that when I stop gambling, I've run out of money.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Often I get the urge to return to gambling to win back losses from a past session.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Yes, I have received criticism about my gambling in the past.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Yes, I've tried to win money to pay debts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p><b>Source:</b> 'Eight' Gambling Screen—Early Intervention Gambling Health Test, developed by Sean Sullivan, Goodfellow Unit, Auckland Medical School</p>	

If you ticked ‘Yes’ for four or more this indicates a problem, however, even if you have ticked one and are still unsure why not find out more?

To get further help or if you are still unsure whether you have a gambling problem, pick up the phone now and call the **Gambling Helpline, 24 hours, 7 days a week on 1800 858 858** or visit **[gamblinghelpqld.org.au](http://gamblinghelpqld.org.au)**. Interpreter services are also available.

## Do I need to give up gambling?

Some people who experience problem gambling can return to a controlled level of gambling. Some people who experience problem gambling can return to a controlled level of gambling. However, most people prefer to abstain, or give up gambling for good. There are no rules for determining whether you should reduce or stop your gambling. Generally if you’re losing more money than you can afford, accumulating debts, suffering mentally, physically, and/or socially, giving up may be your best option.

# WHY DO I GAMBLE?

People gamble for lots of different reasons and sometimes those reasons change. You might gamble regularly at the TAB 'to win money' but join the Melbourne Cup sweep in your office 'to be sociable'. You might usually play the pokies alone but share a machine when you go out with family and friends.

**Understanding why you gamble can help you change your behaviour. Read the reasons below and tick the answer that best applies to you.**

- |                            |                                |                                    |                                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| To win money               | <input type="checkbox"/> never | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> regularly |
| For entertainment          | <input type="checkbox"/> never | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> regularly |
| To be sociable             | <input type="checkbox"/> never | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> regularly |
| To make a big win          | <input type="checkbox"/> never | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> regularly |
| To forget troubles         | <input type="checkbox"/> never | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> regularly |
| To escape from problems    | <input type="checkbox"/> never | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> regularly |
| For something to do        | <input type="checkbox"/> never | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> regularly |
| For excitement             | <input type="checkbox"/> never | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> regularly |
| To avoid talking to people | <input type="checkbox"/> never | <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> regularly |

## Write other reasons below

\_\_\_\_\_ ☐ never ☐ sometimes ☐ regularly

\_\_\_\_\_ ☐ never ☐ sometimes ☐ regularly

\_\_\_\_\_ ☐ never ☐ sometimes ☐ regularly

## Check your reasoning

### **‘To win money’, ‘For entertainment’, ‘To be sociable’.**

Most regular gamblers say they gamble to win money, for entertainment or to be sociable. Ticking these common reasons does not necessarily indicate a gambling problem.

### **‘To make a big win’**

Quite a few regular gamblers also tick ‘to make a big win’. Often people with gambling problems had a really big win in their past that put them thousands of dollars in front. When they get into debt they think gambling will deliver another big win and solve their money problems. If you think this way, you should be aware that this is a really dangerous reason for gambling. You are chasing your losses and this is a step towards losing control. Use page 23 to get your thinking straight.

### **‘To forget troubles’**

If you regularly gamble to forget your troubles, you are adding to them. There are better ways to cope with problems. The relaxation strategies on page 31 can help.

### **‘To escape from problems’**

If it's a problem that can't be fixed, like a job you've got to put up with for a while or a sick relative you must look after, there are other ways of escaping for a while. See page 30 for ideas.

### **‘For something to do’**

Sometimes a problem gambler starts gambling because they don't have any interests, sports or hobbies to enjoy. You might want to work on other interests to fill the gap (see page 30).

### **‘For excitement’**

People who regularly get very excited while gambling are more likely to lose control of their losses. You might want to set some limits and reduce the amount of cash you carry. Page 29 can help.

### **‘To avoid talking to people’**

Sometimes it's natural and healthy to want to be alone. But if you never feel easy in company and gambling is your escape, you can end up feeling cut off and alone. Counselling can help you deal with these feelings (see page 36).

“IN  
ORDER  
TO SUCCEED  
WE  
MUST FIRST  
BELIEVE  
THAT  
WE CAN”

NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS

As well as all these reasons, people may gamble as a habit. The reasons they started have been forgotten and the habit just goes on. The following chapters can help you break the habit.

Speaking with a counsellor can help you to decide how you can best deal with these feelings.

# HOW CAN I CUT BACK?

## Tell others about your decision

It is easier to stick to decisions if you tell other people about them. Why not start by telling someone important to you that you are going to try to cut back on your gambling.

Remember, you need to choose carefully and talk to people you can trust when looking for the support of others.

### Tick which of these people you have told:

Partner ☐ Yes ☐ No

Parent/family ☐ Yes ☐ No

Close friend ☐ Yes ☐ No

Other friends ☐ Yes ☐ No

Workmates ☐ Yes ☐ No

Other ☐ Yes ☐ No

## Set limits and stick to a budget

You need to decide how much money you want to spend (that means ‘risk losing’) on gambling each week. Think of it as entertainment money, not an investment. For example, if you choose to spend \$20 at the TAB, for sports betting, or on the poker machines, spend only that amount. If you win, do not add the winnings to your initial stake—spend it another way.

If you have debts, then include regular repayments of these as part of your budget. Set repayments as low as you can so you don’t end up really short of money—that could just add pressure and make you want to gamble more.

When you’ve decided on your budget write it down in the space provided below. This is your goal to start with—you can revise it up or down after the first two weeks. Always write down your new target.

**Expenditure—bills/loans/debts/general expenses  
(groceries, transport, etc)**

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**Extra money for social activities**  
(movies, sporting events and other entertainment—  
including gambling)

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## Write your own gambling diary

A gambling diary helps you be honest with yourself about how often you gamble and how much you lose. Keeping a diary can help you develop self-awareness and change your behaviour. Remember, you do not have to gamble every day or lose money every session to have a problem with gambling.

By identifying the thoughts, feelings and situations that occur before and during a gambling session, you can start to understand the causes of your gambling. This knowledge is important if you are going to break your gambling habit, as it will tell you exactly what triggers each episode.

“OUR  
GREATEST  
WEAKNESS  
LIES  
IN  
GIVING  
UP”

THOMAS A EDISON

Remember, you may have made the decision to gamble hours or days before you actually gambled. Gambling is not spontaneous, you choose to do it...just as you can learn to choose not to do it.

Different people may gamble for completely different reasons, and the diary can help to identify the reasons that are relevant for you. For example, while one person might gamble to be around other people, or to escape their loneliness, someone else might gamble to be away from the pressures of others and so they can be ‘alone’.

## Keep your diary up to date

Once you’ve set your budget limit, keep your gambling diary for at least 12 weeks. If you get behind it’s a good signal that you are not really taking your problem seriously. Try putting a diary sheet where it catches your eye: on the fridge door, by a mirror, or next to the phone. If you’ve got someone supporting you, put it where they can see it too.

## Gambling diary example

Before you gambled...	4 April	20 May	30 November
<b>What was the situation?</b>	Bad day at work. Driving past the pub	Payday. I was in the pub having a drink	At home by myself
<b>What were you feeling?</b>	Stressed, tired and angry	Drunk	Bored and lonely
<b>What were your thoughts?</b>	Just put \$20 in	I always lose. Surely I'm due for a win	Gambling won't hurt. It's a good escape
<b>When you decided to play...</b>			
<b>What were you feeling?</b>	Hopeful	Happy	Excited
<b>When you were playing...</b>			
<b>Were you winning or losing?</b>	Losing \$300	Winning \$200	Losing heaps
<b>What were your thoughts?</b>	I can't afford to lose. Machine must pay soon	I'm on a roll. Bet more	Who cares if I lose?
<b>What were you feeling?</b>	Panic. Scared	Excited	Depressed
<b>What did you do next?</b>	Lost another \$200 chasing after the \$300	The roll ended and I lost everything	Went home, and felt even more bored and lonely

## Use your diary to work out danger signs

Using information from your diary you can work out when gambling is likely to be a problem for you and how to get it back under control. You might find that gambling is a problem for you when you:

- ▶ are bored
- ▶ feel fed-up/angry before you start gambling
- ▶ have time to spare
- ▶ have more cash on you
- ▶ are worried about debts
- ▶ have already lost a lot of money
- ▶ believe you will win today or believe that you know a 'sure thing' or that the poker machine is just about to pay out
- ▶ lose money you can't afford to lose or have committed to something else (e.g. rent, food).

You might find that gambling is safer for you when you:

- ▶ have company
- ▶ are busy, and thinking about other things
- ▶ have no/little time to stay and gamble
- ▶ have small amounts of cash
- ▶ don't take your credit or EFTPOS card
- ▶ tell other people what you're doing
- ▶ don't lie about how much you spend
- ▶ are not feeling angry, depressed or upset
- ▶ close online betting accounts.

You can use the information in your diary to weigh up the pros and cons of your gambling. Fill in below:

Things I like about my gambling

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Things I do not like about my gambling

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## Control cash for gambling

Lots of gamblers keep their losses under control by keeping only small amounts of cash on them. They only take cash for lunch or a drink. They leave EFTPOS cards, credit cards and cheque books at home and they do not borrow money. On the days they plan to gamble they decide how much to spend and take only that sum of money. These simple things are very effective in keeping the gambling under control (see page 29 for more cash control tips).

## Limit the time to gamble

Sticking to a budget works well when you combine it with a gambling time limit. You can limit time by:

- ▶ arranging another appointment so that you cannot stay at the gambling venue longer than originally planned
- ▶ starting later so there's less time to gamble before races end or the club closes
- ▶ having a friend with you who you really want to talk to so your gambling doesn't go on non-stop.

## Get your thinking straight

People with gambling problems often end up with some pretty strange ways of thinking about how much they lose and how skilful they are at gambling.

Often gamblers have no idea how much they win or lose in the long term but they believe they are in front. The only way a gambler can be sure that he or she is thinking straight when they say ‘I’m ahead’ is if their diary records actually add up to a profit. Otherwise, you must assume that you are behind and make sure your thinking fits the facts. If you know that your thinking is wrong then practise saying straight things to yourself, like:

- ▶ ‘Gambling has put me in debt by \$2,000’
- ▶ ‘Each week I lose/spend about \$60 on the pokies’
- ▶ ‘The more I play the pokies, the more likely it is that my play will result in me losing overall’
- ▶ ‘After a run of losses, raising my stakes and betting on outsiders is stupid’.

Some forms of gambling are about chance rather than skill. Regular poker machine players often think they know when a machine is about to pay out however it’s impossible to predict the result when the reels are spun at random and there are several million combinations. If you think you can predict a win you need to get your thinking straight.

When you start to make changes to your gambling habits, say good things to yourself. This may seem silly but what we say to ourselves is really important. It helps you change old habits. Say things like:

- ▶ ‘I’ve saved \$100 already. It really is worth the effort’
- ▶ ‘I felt really good not betting on every race. I was more careful in really choosing my bets’
- ▶ ‘It’s getting easier to keep my gambling under control’.

## Practical tips for regaining control

For some gamblers cutting out gambling is the only way to really solve gambling problems. The following tips may be useful if you are trying to cut down gambling and reduce problems.

Gambling can be triggered by things that you do. It’s like a chain, one link leads to the next. If a bar with the racing on TV, or a club with your favourite poker machine is the beginning of the chain for you, then avoid going there for a while. You can even exclude or ban yourself from gambling venues or activities, including hotels, clubs, casinos, TABs, Keno, bingo, racing and lotteries. For more information and support on self-exclusion, call the **Gambling Helpline** on **1800 858 858** or visit **[gamblinghelpqld.org.au](http://gamblinghelpqld.org.au)**. To self-exclude, the customer liaison officer from each venue must be contacted and a self-exclusion notice completed. A Gambling Help counsellor can do this for you.



## For poker machine players

- ▶ limit your cash and gambling time
- ▶ buy small amounts of change
- ▶ don't mix drinking and gambling
- ▶ don't believe the feeling that you can tell when the machine will pay out
- ▶ make a rule to cash out credits above 100
- ▶ when you get to the club, hotel or casino, talk to someone and delay your session for 1/2 hour
- ▶ take regular breaks
- ▶ go only at scheduled times which are pre-planned, not when the mood takes you.

## For punters

- ▶ never believe you are onto a 'good thing'
- ▶ write out your selection before you get to the TAB
- ▶ watch the odds but don't always change your bet at the last minute
- ▶ if you are sure, place your bet well before the start
- ▶ don't bet on every race
- ▶ don't always stay and listen/watch the race
- ▶ collect your winnings when all races are over or the next day.

“WE  
MAKE  
OUR  
CHOICES,  
THEN  
OUR  
CHOICES  
MAKE  
US”

ANNE FRANK

## Summary of main points

To get your gambling back under control you can:

1. Tell others about your decision
2. Set limits and stick to a budget
3. Keep a gambling diary
4. Use your diary to work out danger signs and plan your gambling
5. Control your cash
6. Limit the time to gamble
7. Get your thinking straight.

# HOW CAN I STOP GAMBLING?

If gambling is causing you a lot of trouble and you are really struggling financially, it might be best to give it up altogether. Here are some extra strategies to help you kick the habit.

## Get someone to help you

Don't be put off by this. You can do it on your own but a support person makes it easier, especially if you've got serious problems caused by gambling. This person might be a partner, parent, friend or counsellor. Once you choose a support person, make an agreement to work on the plans in this chapter with them.

## Talk about lying

Many people with gambling problems end up hiding their gambling from people around them. This is understandable as it is hard to explain to a partner, family member or friend some of the things that problem gamblers do to keep their gambling going, such as borrowing money from finance companies, applying for multiple credit cards, or taking cash from a child's money box.

When people lie about gambling and debts, they may sometimes try to gamble their way out of debt so they won't have to 'come clean'. This usually leads them further into debt. Coming clean about your gambling with a trusted person can relieve pressure and provide the space to prepare a more thoughtful plan for recovery.

Lying is a hard habit to break. If it happens with your support person, it stops them being able to help you because they won't trust what you say. You and your support person need to talk about this and plan out how to cope:

- ▶ talk about some of the worst lies you've told in the past
- ▶ check out what is the hardest to talk about
- ▶ understand that more gambling will happen and agree to talk about it when it does.

One last thing you have to agree with your support person—you must not expect them to give or lend you cash for any purpose. They can't do this and help you.

## Control your cash

About one in five people with a gambling problem can give up gambling fairly easily. Most find that for quite a time they can't stop if they have cash in their pocket and the club, TAB or casino is open. Many who stop gambling take a lot of trouble to get their cash flow under control.

### **Tick the steps you are going to try:**

- ☐ no large sums of cash kept in the house
- ☐ carry only enough cash for the day's expenses
- ☐ wages paid direct to savings or bank account
- ☐ wages collected by partner
- ☐ all accounts need two signatures to take out cash
- ☐ bills paid by automatic transfer, cheque or credit card
- ☐ family and friends know what you're doing and have been told not to lend you money
- ☐ all cash flow is 'visible' on account print-outs
- ☐ new plans to control cash flow are made when there is a change, such as a holiday or a new job
- ☐ teller machines are used to provide limited amounts of cash per week
- ☐ jobs handling cash are avoided
- ☐ ask your bank to lower the withdrawal limit on your ATM card (e.g. \$100 a day).

This may seem a lot of work but if you have a gambling problem, you know what an expert you are at getting hold of cash. Once you work out a system that suits you, you can relax a bit as you have made it ‘difficult’ to gamble. There is another benefit if you are in a relationship that has been hurt by gambling. Your partner may not start to trust you straight away but you can explain what you are doing and encourage them to look at account statements and check up for themselves.

## Fill the gap

People with gambling problems may spend a lot of time thinking and worrying about their gambling. When you give up gambling you need to fill the gap it leaves. There are lots of ways to do this:

- ▶ plan ahead
- ▶ reconnect with family and friends if you have neglected them while gambling
- ▶ get a part-time job
- ▶ if you are a lunch-time gambler, go somewhere different with workmates, arrange to meet someone, take a sandwich and read a book, go for a walk or a jog
- ▶ take up a hobby or a sport
- ▶ set short and long term goals
- ▶ look at other things you can do to ‘treat’ yourself
- ▶ make your home an interesting place to be in, with interesting things to do
- ▶ start to do the things you may have stopped when you started to gamble too much.

## Relax and look after yourself

Giving up when you've previously spent hours each week gambling can make you feel tense and irritable. This can feel even worse when you still go into the places where you gambled, like to the club if you played the pokies, or pass a TAB or the casino if it's on your way to work.

Learning how to relax, getting plenty of rest and eating properly can help you stick to your goal of reducing or giving up gambling.

You can try getting used to not gambling by practising it in your head when you are relaxed. Yes, that's right practise not doing it! For example, Helen could picture herself going into the hotel with some friends, seeing and hearing the pokies, having a drink and sitting and talking. Then she pictures herself getting up and leaving the hotel. If Helen practises this many times in her head it is easier to do in real life. Other strategies to try:

### Muscular relaxation training

This consists of tensing and relaxing each muscle group in your body until you become expert in getting rid of all tension. You can learn this skill from health centre nurses or counsellors trained in the technique. A relaxation tape or app might also help.

### Exercise

Walking, cycling, swimming, tennis, running, football, golf and other sports are a great way to relax. Think of sports you've done and could take up again or try a new one. Try and fit it into your routine so it becomes a habit.

## Yoga/meditation

These are other good ways to relax and to stop your mind going over and over your problems. Find out where classes are being held and give it a go.

A counsellor may be able to help you with your own strategies.

## Consider self-exclusion

A self-exclusion (self-ban) is when you approach a venue and ask to be excluded/banned from whole or part of the venue or gambling activity. This may be a result of you being concerned about the money and/or time spent in the venue and the negative impact this has on work/family life etc. This is an important step in dealing with problems associated with your gambling.

Venues are required to assist any person requesting a self-exclusion. A nominated person at the venue (usually referred to as a customer liaison officer) should provide you with the self-exclusion forms and the contact details of your local Gambling Help service. A self-exclusion will take effect immediately and remain in force for up to five years, but you have a cooling off period of 24 hours.

Alternatively, your local Gambling Help service can assist you to remotely self-exclude from one or more venues without needing to physically attend the venue/s.

For more information contact the **Gambling Helpline** on **1800 858 858**, visit **[gamblinghelpqld.org.au](http://gamblinghelpqld.org.au)** or ask to speak to the venue's customer liaison officer.



# YOUR FUTURE

## Busts and setbacks

People with gambling problems can kick the habit, however, you must be fair to yourself. Problem gambling is like an addiction. It is really hard to stop or keep it under control. Even if you have carefully worked at the ideas given in the guide you must expect that the problem will come back at times.

One thing we know is that you can often predict when problem gambling will reappear. You are more likely to lose control when you have bad times in other parts of your life that make you feel sad, anxious, angry or depressed. When you feel this way, it's challenging to stick to your plans, as you may feel an urge to borrow some money and go back to the old habit.

When you feel like you might gamble again, or if you do gamble again, there are five things you can do:

1. Call the **Gambling Helpline** on **1800 858 858** or visit **[gamblinghelpqld.org.au](http://gamblinghelpqld.org.au)** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
2. Talk to your support person or write your feelings and actions in your gambling diary. If you gambled, look at what happened and see if you can spot ways of stopping it next time. Look for the good bits too. Did cash limits help? Did you find it easier to talk about it instead of lying about it? These are big steps forward and next time it will be easier to cope
3. Control your cash
4. Fill in the gap with new things to do
5. Practise your relaxation.

Relapses can happen to people with gambling problems even a year or so after giving up. You get better at knowing when it can happen and making sure that your plans limit the harm done. You'll find that if you learn from mistakes you'll get more confident.

## Friends can help

There is no doubt that if you have help from your partner, family and close friends you are more likely to succeed. By borrowing money, lying and spending all their free time gambling, people with gambling problems have often 'pushed' their partner or close family and friends away. Now that you are trying to keep your gambling under control, make an effort to explain your problem to your friends. Most people can understand the problems of getting addicted.

If you are short of this sort of help then you may want to try going to Gamblers Anonymous. You may find a good friend for life. Gamblers Anonymous is a voluntary self-help organisation run by people who have had, or still have, problems with their gambling.

**Gamblers Anonymous may be contacted  
24 hours a day on 0467 655 799.**

## Become a good problem solver

If problems happen in other parts of your life, don't stick your head in the sand. Look your problem in the eye and cope with it. Good problem solving has the following steps:

- ▶ Recognise there is a problem and look closely at it. When does it happen? Who is involved? How long does it last? What starts it off?
- ▶ Brainstorm all the ways you could deal with the problem. Write out a list and put down even the silly or impossible ideas
- ▶ Decide which is the best solution and try it out
- ▶ Check to see if it works. If it doesn't—start again.

# WHAT OTHER HELP IS AVAILABLE?

Gamblers, and their family and friends have access to a range of help options, including phone, face-to-face and online support services across Queensland.

## Phone

Call the **Gambling Helpline** on **1800 858 858** for free and confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Services include:

- ▶ telephone counselling
- ▶ crisis support
- ▶ information and referral to the closest **Gambling Help service** for face-to-face assistance.

## Face-to-face

The **Gambling Help service** offers free and confidential face-to-face counselling through a network of Government-funded community organisations across Queensland. Operating during business hours, they offer a range of services to gamblers and their families and friends, including:

- ▶ support groups
- ▶ information and referral to a range of other support services, if required
- ▶ assistance with self-exclusions from gambling venues.

Some of the community organisations that provide Gambling Help support may also offer individual, addiction, relationship/marriage, and financial counselling.

## How can relationship/marriage counselling help?

Often a person with a gambling problem needs to work hard on repairing the damage he or she has done to their relationships. After years of lying about gambling, partners need to re-establish trust. Relationship/marriage counselling can help people with a gambling problem and their partners address these issues.

## How can financial counselling help?

Most people with a gambling problem need to sort out how to arrange repayment of debts and be sure that they have enough left over to live on. Financial counselling can help you regain stability with your finances.

## Online

**Gambling Help Online** is a national website that provides live online professional counselling and email support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The website includes extensive information and self-help tools to assist in identifying, and dealing with, problem gambling. It is a free, anonymous and confidential service that is available at **[gamblinghelponline.org.au](http://gamblinghelponline.org.au)**

## Other services

**Gamblers Anonymous** is a self-help program where members support each other in their recovery from a gambling problem. Membership is free - the only requirement is a desire to stop gambling. All information shared in the rooms is totally confidential. For more information including a list of meetings near you please visit **[gaaustralia.org.au](http://gaaustralia.org.au)** or call **0467 655 799**.

## Help in another language

To speak to someone in a language other than English, contact the **Telephone Interpreter Service** on **131 450**. Alternatively, contact multilingual counsellors through the **Gambling Helpline** on **1800 858 858** or visit **[gamblinghelponline.org.au](http://gamblinghelponline.org.au)**

## Other professionals

When people with gambling problems find themselves in crisis they may feel too depressed or anxious to think straight about their problems. Duty officers at health centres and most GPs are used to helping people in a crisis.

Another way to sort out why gambling causes you so much strife, is to have some sessions with a private counsellor, psychologist or psychiatrist. You may have to pay for their help but it may help you reach a better understanding of yourself. You may get a better idea of the kind of person you are and how gambling fits into your identity.

If you don't know who to contact, call the **Gambling Helpline** on **1800 858 858** or visit **[gamblinghelpqld.org.au](http://gamblinghelpqld.org.au)**

## More information

For more information visit **[gamblinghelpqld.org.au](http://gamblinghelpqld.org.au)**

# WALLET MATE

Do you sometimes find yourself visiting an ATM to withdraw more money for gambling even though you told yourself that you wouldn't?

The Wallet Mate (below) can be removed from this self-help guide or requested from your local Gambling Help service and placed in to your wallet in front of your credit cards or cash cards. The card is designed as a visual prompt and asks you whether you have 'reached your limit' whenever you open your wallet.

It looks just like a normal cash card and can be kept as a subtle tool to assist you with managing your spending habits for gambling.



“A JOURNEY  
OF A  
THOUSAND  
MILES  
BEGINS  
WITH A  
SINGLE  
STEP”

CONFUCIUS