



PROBLEM GAMBLING & CO-OCCURRING ISSUES

GAMBLING MAY OCCUR CONCURRENTLY WITH OTHER HEALTH CONDITIONS AND BEHAVIOURS, SUCH AS SUBSTANCE ABUSE, MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS, SMOKING, DANGEROUS DRIVING AND OBESITY. THESE HEALTH CONDITIONS CAN EXACERBATE, OR TO BE EXACERBATED BY PEOPLE'S GAMBLING ACTIVITIES.

MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

Mental health disorder describes a range of disorders, such as

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar disorders

MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS AND PROBLEM GAMBLING

- People with gambling problems often have high levels of stress, depression, anxiety and other mental illness.
- Mental health issues might be the reasons for some people to start gambling. They use gambling as a coping strategy to deal with complex issues in life, such as financial issue, stress, isolation and anxiety.
- The mental health issues might also increase people's engagement with gambling or escalating their gambling problem.

PROBLEM GAMBLERS ARE 2.4 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE DEPRESSION THAN NON-PROBLEM GAMBLERS!

Mental health disorders are either highly stigmatised or ignored in some cultures. People would think that having mental health disorders means they are "crazy". They would, therefore, simply ignore any early signs of possible mental health disorders and not seek help until very late.

SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

IF YOU CONCERN THAT YOU OR THE ONE YOU CARE MIGHT HAVE SOME ISSUE WITH MENTAL HEALTH, CHECK IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS HAPPEN TO YOU OR THE ONE YOU CARE ABOUT:

- Feeling anxious or worried
- Feeling depressed or unhappy
- Emotional outbursts, such as extreme distress or anger
- Sleep problems, such as insomnia
- Weight or appetite changes, such as rapid weight loss
- Quiet or withdrawn, such as isolating themselves or refusing to join in social activities
- Substance abuse, such as drinking a lot or using drugs
- Feeling guilty or worthless, such as frequently criticizing or blaming themselves
- Changes in behavior or feelings

IF A PERSON EXPRESSES A FEELING TO HURT OR KILL THEMSELVES. IT COULD MEAN THE PERSON IS SUICIDAL AND URGENT HELP IS NEEDED. CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000) FOR AN AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE AND PROBLEM GAMBLING

- Recreational gamblers are 1.3 times more likely to report having an alcohol-related disorder.
- Alcohol can impair people's judgement. When drinking, individuals are more likely to start gambling.
- People are more likely to increase their spending on gambling when under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
- The prevalence of problem gambling increases as the amount of alcohol consumed increases. 50%-70% of people with gambling problems have a co-occurring alcohol use disorder

SIGNS OF ALCOHOL USE DISORDERS

DRINKING ITSELF IS LEGAL IN NEARLY ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD. BEING A LITTLE DRUNK OR A LOT DRUNK IS ACCEPTABLE OR EVEN NORMAL IN MANY CULTURES. HOWEVER, IF THE ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE AND ABUSE ARE LEFT UNTREATED, THEY CAN DEVELOP INTO DRUG DEPENDENCE OR ALCOHOLISM. THE FOLLOWING ARE SIGNS OF ALCOHOL USE DISORDER

- Temporary blackouts or memory loss.
- Recurrent arguments or fights with family members or friends as well as irritability, depression, or mood swings.
- Continuing use of alcohol to relax, to cheer up, to sleep, to deal with problems, or to feel "normal."
- Headache, anxiety, insomnia, nausea, or other unpleasant symptoms when one stops drinking.
- Flushed skin and broken capillaries on the face; a husky voice; trembling hands; bloody or black/tarry stools or vomiting blood; chronic diarrhea.
- Drinking alone, in the mornings, or in secret.

FREE SUPPORTING SERVICE: GAMBLER'S HELP

IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE A PROBLEM, TALKING TO SOMEONE YOU TRUST IS A GREAT FIRST STEP TO GET BACK IN CONTROL.

GAMBLER'S HELP IS A FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL SERVICE TO SUPPORT PEOPLE AFFECTED BY GAMBLING RELATED PROBLEMS ACROSS VICTORIA. IT OFFERS SUPPORT, ADVICE AND INFORMATION TO PEOPLE AFFECTED BY GAMBLING (BOTH GAMBLERS AND NON-GAMBLERS) AND TO THE BROADER COMMUNITY.

Counselling for gambling-related problems offers:

- A professional, confidential and free service
- A thorough assessment of gambling and other related issues
- Information to fit the needs of the client
- Referrals to other agencies and help services where appropriate
- Services for individuals, couples, families or groups
- Support for both the gambling and/or their partners and families
- Culturally appropriate assistance

To get in touch with a local, free of charge counsellor, you can also call Gambler's Help on 1800 858 858 or Gambler's Help Youthline on 1800 262 376. Interpretation services can be arranged for free upon request.

Most of the content of this information sheet comes from the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation website. For further information, please visit: <https://www.responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/>.