

## Gambling and Mental Health Correlation

### Facts about Gambling

Gambling is a public health issue rather than an individual problem and it is considered as an addictive disorder.

While most people use gambling as a leisure activity and would not be harmed by it, addiction to gambling/online gaming or online betting can have negative consequences on people who gamble, their families and their friends, communities and wider society. Partners and children of people who gamble could be at an increased risk for depression, anxiety and social isolation.

Harms resulting from gambling include but are not limited to:

- Relationship harms such as divorce, separation, violence, arguments and disagreements;
- Increased level of stress, depression and panic attack;
- Homelessness and unemployment;
- Life disruption;
- Lack of motivation to do ordinary activities; and
- Inability to concentrate at work.

In Victoria around 39% of people who gamble have a diagnosed mental illness. Among those, 41% have been diagnosed with depression, and 39% with anxiety.

Once people develop an addiction to gambling, it can be hard for them to stop. They might not want to talk about their situations nor receive professional support.

If you or someone you care about is experiencing harm from, help is available. For more information visit [gamblers.help.com.au](https://gamblers.help.com.au) or call Gambler's Help on **1800 858 858** 24 hours a day, seven days a week for free, confidential information, advice and counselling. Interpreters can be arranged for free if you speak another language than English.

## Facts about Mental Health

Mental health conditions can affect every individual in community and negatively impact on our relationships and day-to-day functioning at home and at work. People can experience mental health conditions from early childhood to late adulthood. So, the earlier we receive help, the earlier we can recover.

Mental health disorders impact on people's thinking and behaviour. For example, they might

- Thinking about ending their life;
- Forgetting simple things quickly;
- Showing aggressive behaviour;
- Being lonely and not connecting with others; and
- Hearing voices and seeing things that others cannot hear or see.

There are common mental health disorders including:

- 1. Depression:** Depression affects the way we feel. We all have experiences of feeling sad, moody, low and unhappy when we lose money or loved ones, get hurt or when we are disappointed. Sometimes we have these feelings without any reason at all.

Depression can cause poor physical health including tiredness, changes in sleep patterns, sexual problems, alcohol and drug dependence and body aches.

Some other symptoms are:

- Feeling sad and down
- Feeling worthless or bad about yourself
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Having difficulty in making decisions
- Feeling hopeless about the future
- Impaired thinking, concentration and memory
- Having less interest in work, life and everyday activities
- Having suicidal thoughts
- Feeling anger, irritability and anxiety
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2. **Anxiety:** Being fearful, distress, worried, stressed, and nervous is a common reaction to stressful situations we face in our lives. However, like depression if these fearful and anxious feelings last for more than two weeks, professional support is needed.
3. **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD):** is a set of reactions that may develop in people who have experienced or witnessed a terrifying event. It could be when a person is a victim of a crime or a victim of physical or sexual assault. It could also happen to people who have experienced war-related events, natural disasters such as bushfire and flood, torture and terrible accident, and leave them in a fearful and anxious state.
4. **Postnatal depression:** This is a common condition that develops following the birth of a baby and it could begin slowly or suddenly. For some people it passes quickly, but if it becomes serious women need to seek professional help.
5. **Drug and alcohol abuse and gambling addiction:** are addictive habits that change the way our brain and body work and cause symptoms of anxiety and depression.

For some people these feelings might not exist for a long-time. However, if these feelings last for two weeks or longer and negatively impact on daily activities, people should seek professional help.

Effective support is available if you feel that you may be affected by mental health disorders:

- **Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636**
- **Lifeline: 13 11 14**
- **SANE Helpline: 1800 187 263**
- **Gambler's Helpline: 1800 858 858**