

Workplace signs of a gambling problem

- Work performance deteriorates (person is preoccupied, lacks concentration, misses deadlines).
- Frequent unexplained absences or disappearances from work.
- Eager to organize and participate in betting opportunities.
- Pay is requested in lieu of vacation leave; large blocks of vacation time are not taken.
- Frequently borrows money; argues with co-workers about money that is owed to them.
- Complains about mounting debts.
- Excessive use of the telephone for personal calls.
- Experiences mood swings often related to winning and losing streaks.
- Credit card or loan bills are mailed to work rather than home.
- Increasingly spends more time gambling during lunch hours and coffee breaks.
- False claims are made against expense accounts.
- Theft of company property.

General signs that partners and family members can look out for as signals that a problem might exist

- Betting tickets suggesting large bets.
- Preferring to play slot machines alone instead of remaining in social company at pub or club.
- Always short of cash despite regular income.
- Having a number of credit cards with little available credit.
- Having multiple loans.
- Mood shifts coinciding with major horse racing events and football results.
- Preoccupation with studying the betting guide and/or gathering other information about gambling.
- Calls from creditors requesting payment for outstanding debts, or threats of legal action.
- Sudden job changes.
- Repeated bounced cheques.
- Money or items disappearing from the home.
- Discovering less money in the bank accounts than there should be.



Tasks and techniques that you can learn to teach yourself lifelong skills in controlling your behaviour vis-à-vis gambling

- Step 1:** Improve your motivation to stop gambling by establishing alternative ways of spending the money saved (such as a holiday, a car, etc.).
- Step 2:** Monitor your level of gambling, (eg., by trying to keep to pre-set limit).
- Step 3:** Learn relaxation-based skills to enable you to overcome the urge to gamble. Learn to identify situations that trigger lapses.
- Step 4:** Identify and challenge irrational thoughts and beliefs related to gambling.
- Step 5:** Prevent future gambling episodes.
- Step 6:** Elicit family support.
- Step 7:** Seek professional help in case of need.

What can your organisation do?

- Policy statements
- Provide awareness training
- Refer employees for professional help if they need such assistance
- Inform employees about the help offered by Supportline 179



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SUPPORTLINE 179

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Foundation for Social Welfare Services



Life is not a gamble!
Don't let gambling lead the way!

What is gambling?

When time and money are spent taking a risk on an event with an uncertain outcome. Items of value like money, cars, holidays are given out according to the outcome of the event.

Types of gambling

- 🎰 Poker and fruit machines
- 🎰 Casino table games like blackjack or roulette
- 🎰 Sports betting including betting on horses, dog racing and football
- 🎰 Internet casinos and betting
- 🎰 Card games
- 🎰 Lotto tickets or scratch cards
- 🎰 Bingo
- 🎰 Raffle tickets

Levels of gambling

Social

- 🎰 Casual and fun. Gain enjoyment from gambling or social company.

Heavy

- 🎰 Gambles often and/or with large amounts of money. Moods and emotions likely to depend on gambling.

Problematic

- 🎰 Less able to resist the impulse to gamble.

Pathological/Compulsive

- 🎰 Unable to resist the impulse to gamble.

In case of **heavy**, **problematic** or **pathological/compulsive gambling**, one should seek professional help.

Problems caused by gambling

(To gamblers and to the people around them)

- 🎰 Psychological
- 🎰 Financial
- 🎰 Emotional
- 🎰 Marital
- 🎰 Legal



Some of the predictors of pathological gambling are:

- 🎰 The compulsion to chase losses.
- 🎰 Repeated failed efforts to stop gambling.
- 🎰 Gambling in response to negative emotions such as stress and depression.

People who compulsively gamble to excess commonly report the following feelings:

Before gambling

- 🎰 An increasing preoccupation with gambling to the point where nothing else is important. This is often experienced as sense of 'craving'.
- 🎰 A fear that they may miss an opportunity to win. They may think of those unlucky people whose lucky numbers turned up but who had forgotten to buy their ticket.
- 🎰 Irrational confidence and fantasies about winning.
- 🎰 Excitement in anticipation of buying the 'winning' ticket.
- 🎰 Fantasising what to do with the winnings.
- 🎰 Irritation, anger and mounting tension if something prevents them from gambling.

During gambling

- 🎰 A total focus of attention on gambling; all else fades in importance.
- 🎰 Excitement and physical arousal, shown by increased heart rate.
- 🎰 Irrational talk inside their head: "the next bet is the winning I have been waiting for. It must be my turn soon for a large win, I just know it".
- 🎰 Superstitious behaviour to increase the chance of a win.

After a successful session:

- 🎰 Relief and anticipation of the next occasion.
- 🎰 Confidence: "I knew I could do it", and a conviction that winning was a result of skill.
- 🎰 Elated mood.
- 🎰 Inflated ego, having beaten 'them' at their own game.
- 🎰 Self-satisfaction at having money and being able to impress a partner or spouse.



After losing

- 🎰 Guilt and remorse.
- 🎰 Fear of spouse or others finding out.
- 🎰 Worry over where to obtain money for living expenses.
- 🎰 Thoughts of what lies to tell to cover one's actions.
- 🎰 Self-directed anger.
- 🎰 Determination never to gamble again – but at the same time, thoughts of where to find money in order to return to chase losses.
- 🎰 Desire to forget problems through alcohol.

