

Gambling Counselling Service Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital

ABOUT THE GAMBLING COUNSELLING SERVICE

- *What is the Gambling Counselling Service?*

The Gambling Counselling Service is a **free** and **confidential** service which offers treatment and support for problem gamblers and their families. We provide confidential support, understanding, advice and information for all drug, alcohol and gambling related issues.

We offer:

Comprehensive assessment.

Ongoing personal counselling and support.

Advice and help to assist you to combat urges to gamble.

Counselling for a range of associated problems including depression, anxiety, substance use and mental health issues and referral to specialist services where appropriate.

Information on community resources including legal and financial services.

Relapse prevention strategies.

Counselling and referral for family and friends.

The Gambling Counselling Service is staffed by a team of qualified and experienced clinicians including a Psychiatrist and Clinical Psychologists.

WHERE ARE WE?

- *Where is the Gambling Counselling Service?*

The Gambling Counselling Service is part of the Hornsby Drug, Alcohol and Gambling Service at Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital and has outreach services in Mona Vale, Queenscliff, Chatswood and Ryde.

HOURS

- *When is the Service open?*

The Gambling Counselling Service is open Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm. Appointments are essential.

For assistance outside our service hours, please contact the G-Line (NSW) problem gambling information, counselling and referral help line which operates 24 hours 7 days per week.

Phone 1800 633 635

TTY 1800 633 649

- *Are after hours appointments available?*

No. Unfortunately we are not able to offer after-hours appointments.

CONTACT US

Hornsby Drug, Alcohol and Gambling Service

Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital
Lowe Road Entrance
Hornsby 2077
Phone: 9477 9567

Mona Vale Drug & Alcohol Centre

Mona Vale Hospital
Phone: 9998 0360

Ryde Drug & Alcohol

37 Fourth Avenue
Eastwood (Ryde Hospital)
Phone: 9858 7776

Alternatively, contact the

Area Drug and Alcohol Services Intake line

Phone: 1300 889 788

COST

- *How much does treatment cost?*

This is a free service. However tax deductible donations to the Service are greatly appreciated.

APPOINTMENTS

- *How do I make an appointment?*

The Drug, Alcohol and Gambling Service accepts referrals from the Willoughby/Ryde, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai, and Pittwater/Manly Local Government Areas.

Appointments are essential. To make an appointment, please call:

Hornsby Drug, Alcohol and Gambling Service

Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital
Lowe Road Entrance
Hornsby 2077
Phone: 9477 9567

Mona Vale Drug & Alcohol Centre

Mona Vale Hospital
Phone: 9998 0360

Ryde Drug & Alcohol

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Eastwood (Ryde Hospital)

Phone: 9858 7776

Alternatively, contact the
Area Drug and Alcohol Services Intake line
Phone: 1300 889 788

- *Do I need a referral from my doctor?*

No. You do not need a referral from your doctor prior to making an appointment.

- *Interpreter Service*

A free and confidential interpreter service is available. If you require an interpreter please inform staff when you make your first appointment.

- *I have children and find it hard to find a babysitter.*

A free childcare service for up to two hours is available for clients of the Hornsby Drug, Alcohol and Gambling Service only. Please inform the staff prior to your appointment so that the necessary arrangements can be made.

ABOUT TREATMENT

- *What kind of treatment will I receive?*

Following a thorough assessment, your counsellor will develop a personalised treatment program that takes into account your goals and individual circumstances. Treatment usually consists of eight to ten, one-hour sessions. Typically the sessions are weekly initially and are gradually spaced out as you start to learn new skills and develop the confidence to use them effectively to manage your problem. This is a guide only – treatment duration may vary depending on the client.

At the Gambling Counselling Service the therapists use a skills-oriented approach to treatment called *cognitive behavioural therapy* (CBT). Research suggests that CBT is the most effective treatment for problem gambling. The main components of CBT include:

- strengthening motivation to control/stop gambling
- explore strategies to get you through the initial crisis such as self-exclusion, restricting access to cash and accounts
- education about the probabilities of winning at gambling
- exploring and challenging the thoughts that can lead to gambling, for example “I’ll just spend \$20” and “I just need to wind down”
- relapse prevention skills
- alternative activities and goal setting...getting your life back!

- *What if I have other problems?*

Problem gambling is often associated with other problems, including depression, anxiety, problematic alcohol and/or drug use, and relationship difficulties. Your

clinician at the Gambling Counselling Service will thoroughly assess these issues and treat them where possible. However, if the problem is complex or severe, a referral to a specialist clinician, such as a psychiatrist or relationship counsellor, will be arranged.

DO YOU HAVE A GAMBLING PROBLEM?

If you think that you might have a gambling problem, take a few minutes to answer the following questions:

'EIGHT' Gambling Screen

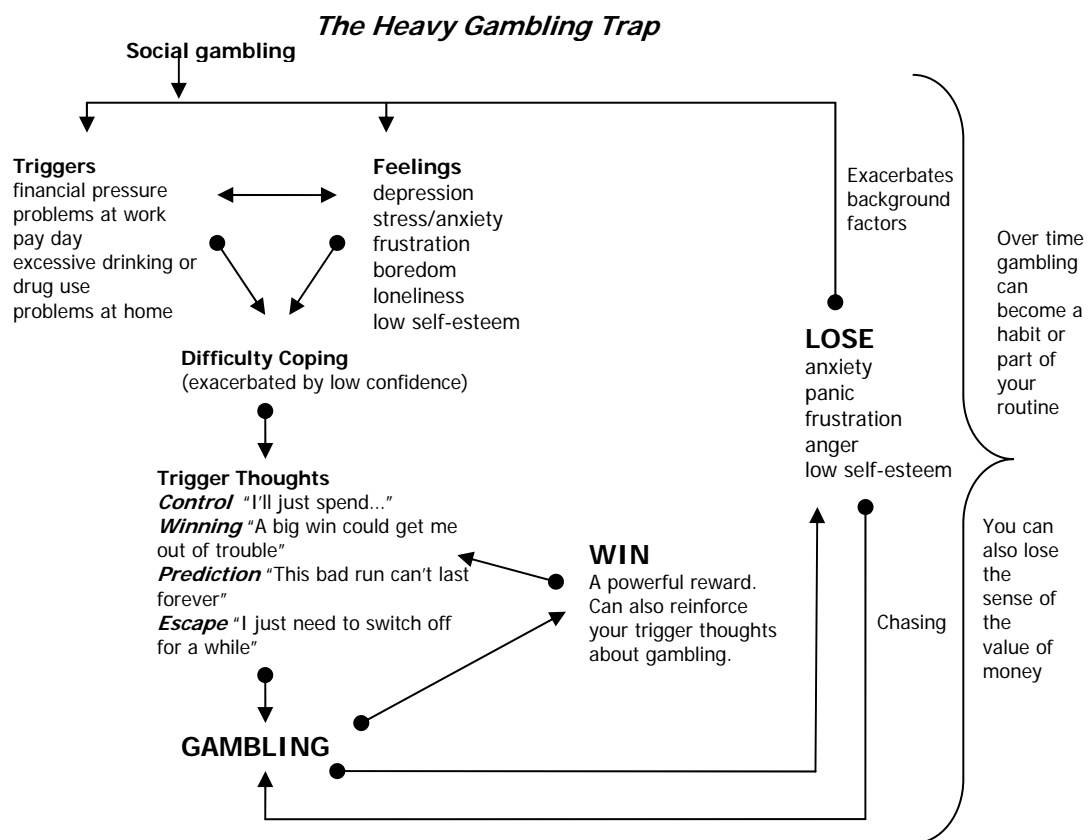
1. Sometimes I've felt depressed or anxious after a session of gambling.
ث Yes, that's true.
ث No, I haven't.
2. Sometimes I've felt guilt about the way I gamble.
ث Yes, that's so.
ث No, that isn't so.
3. When I think about it, gambling has sometimes caused me problems.
ث Yes, that's so.
ث No, that isn't so.
4. Sometimes I've found it better not to tell others, especially my family, about the amount of time or money I spend gambling.
ث Yes, that's true.
ث No, I haven't.
5. I often find that when I stop gambling I've run out of money.
ث Yes, that's so.
ث No, that isn't so.
6. Often I get the urge to return to gambling to win back losses from a past session.
ث Yes, that's so.
ث No, that isn't so.
7. I have received criticism about my gambling in the past.
ث Yes, that's true.
ث No, I haven't.
8. I have tried to win money to pay debts.
ث Yes, that's true.
ث No, I haven't.

If you answered YES to four (4) or more of these questions, you may have a gambling problem. For further information or to make an appointment, please contact the Gambling Counselling Service in your area or phone the Intake line on 1300 889 788.

For assistance outside our service hours, please contact the G-Line (NSW) problem gambling information, counselling and referral help line which operates 24 hours 7 days per week. Phone 1800 633 635
 TTY 1800 633 649

HOW DOES GAMBLING BECOME A PROBLEM?

Many people find it very difficult to cut back or stop gambling without assistance. The diagram below shows how easy it can be to get caught up in the 'downward spiral' of problem gambling and why it can be so hard to break the cycle...



You can see from this diagram that problem gambling can be very complex – there are many factors that may contribute to the problem including financial problems, stress at work or home, depression and anxiety. The diagram also illustrates that no matter what the outcome of a gambling session – whether you win or lose – it usually results in further gambling. For example you may keep playing after a win because you want to win more or return to gambling after a loss in an attempt to chase your money. Over time the problems caused by gambling can get gradually worse which can also trigger more gambling. The example below helps to illustrate this destructive downward spiral.

'Peter had never really been interested in the pokies until one day while playing with his mates he won \$200 from \$5 at his local pub. "This is easy money!" he thought. His gambling was controlled for a while but as pressure at work increased he found himself spending more time at the pub drinking and playing the pokies in order to help himself 'wind down' after a hard day.

As he spent more money he lost more and soon found himself having trouble paying his bills. He would think "If I can just double my money I'll be OK". Sometimes Peter did win and he was able to pay the bill but after a while it got to the point that even after winning he found it very hard to walk away from the machine. "I can't stop now...this machine's on a role!" he'd think to himself. Inevitably, he'd lose the lot.

Out of panic and desperation Peter started to gamble more of his wages in an attempt to chase his losses. He maxed out his credit card and applied for a personal loan to help him 'get back on track'. Now his gambling wasn't fun anymore. In fact Peter was feeling depressed and anxious. His finances were a mess, his job performance was slipping, he was starting to drink heavily. His gambling was destroying his life but he just couldn't see a way out. If he could just win that jackpot he'd be OK and then he'd quit...and the cycle would start again.'

Sometimes it **can** feel as though there is no way out, that there are no solutions. But there is a way out!! Through counselling and a commitment to working hard to achieve your goals it IS possible to recover from problem gambling. Seeking help is the first step.

INFORMATION FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- *I think my partner or family member has a gambling problem.*

If you suspect that your partner's or family member's gambling is out of control it is important to encourage them to seek help. Below are a few tips that may help you to communicate your concern.

- Choose a time when everyone is reasonably relaxed and calm
- Speak quietly and calmly. If you feel yourself getting angry or upset, stop and return to the conversation when you are calm again
- Tell the gambler that you care about them. For example, say 'John, you know that I really care for you and I want what is best for you.'
- Validate the gambler's experience and feelings. For example, say 'I know how it feels when things aren't going right. It can be lonely and you can feel that no-one understands.'
- List your concerns specifically. State the actual behaviours that concern you, rather than labelling the gambler an addict or other wise

blaming them. For example, say 'I am worried that this is the third week in a row that you have come home without your wages, looking depressed and angry.'

- Offer to assist the gambler to take responsibility for their problems and to find help. For example, say 'I want you to know that if you want to talk about what's going on, I'm here for you. You've said before that gambling is not a problem, but if it is causing problems now, the quicker you get help, the quicker everything will be back to normal'.
- Offer a solution. For example, say 'I know people who can help you if you need it.'

From 'Stop Gambling: A self-help manual for giving up gambling' (2001) by Simon Milton.
Used with permission.

You may also consider making an appointment to see a financial counsellor who can offer advice about protecting any joint assets or shared finances

- *Can I refer a friend or relative?*

No. We believe that it is important for the person needing treatment to contact us directly in order to arrange their first appointment. This gives them the opportunity to ask any questions and discuss any concerns that they may have prior to the appointment.

Family members and friends often accompany clients to appointments as support persons, however as a general rule family members and friends do not sit in during treatment sessions.

FURTHER SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

G-Line (NSW) problem gambling information, counselling and referral help line
24 hours 7 days per week.

Phone: 1800 633 635

TTY: 1800 633 649

www.dgr.nsw.gov.au

Financial Counselling

- Wesley Gambling Financial Counselling
Phone: (02) 9951 5566
- Credit and Debt Hotline
Phone: 1800 808 488

Legal Counselling for gambling-related problems

- Legal Advice Line
Phone: 1800 731 073
- Legal Aid (Parramatta)
Phone: (02) 9891 1600
- Wesley Gambling Legal Services
Phone: (02) 9951 5544

Self Exclusion Programs

- Hotels/Pubs
Game Change
Phone: 1300 137 404
- Registered Clubs
BetSafe
Phone: (02) 9874 0744
Or ask Club staff for information
- TAB
Contact staff at the TAB outlet
- Casino
Approach Security at the Casino or the Director of Operations, Casino Control Authority

Relationship Counselling

- Relationships Australia
Phone: (02) 9418 8800 (Northern Sydney)
www.relationships.com.au

Know the Odds (especially for young people affected by problem gambling)

www.knowodds.org

Gambling Impact Society

Phone: (02) 4421 5077
www.gisnsw.org.au

Gamblers Anonymous

www.gamblersanonymous.org.au
Phone: (02) 9564 1574

Gam Anon (support for friends and family members of problem gamblers)

www.gamblersanonymous.org.au
Phone: (02) 9564 1595

Other Treatment Services for Problem Gamblers

- Phone G-Line (NSW) problem gambling information, counselling and referral help line 24 hours 7 days per week.
Phone: 1800 633 635
TTY: 1800 633 649

- St Vincent's Hospital Gambling Treatment Program
Darlinghurst
Phone: 8382 3448
- The University of Sydney Gambling Treatment Clinic
Camperdown
Phone: (02) 9351 6346
- Wesley Gambling Counselling Service
Phone: (02) 9951 5566

Self Help Books

- Simon Milton (2001) 'Stop Gambling: A self-help manual for giving up gambling' Sydney: Pan Macmillan
- Alex Blaszczynski (1998) 'Overcoming compulsive gambling: A self-help guide using cognitive behavioural techniques' London: Robinson
- Federman, Drebing and Krebs (2000) 'Don't leave it to chance: A guide for families of problem gamblers' Oakland: New Harbinger

Financial assistance for this project is provided by the NSW Government from the Casino Community Benefit Fund.