

# GAMBLING HARM

## GAMBLING HARM: SUMMARY



Key messages for supporting someone who is experiencing gambling harm:

- Be mindful of privacy
- Use judgement free language

- There are specialised services that support the person who is gambling and those who are affected by someone else's gambling. As a worker, you can help prepare your client for a [referral to a specialist service](#).
- Gambling can cause harm to the person who is gambling as well as to the people around them.
- Research says the best way to identify someone experiencing harm from gambling is to ask them about gambling.
- There are tools and strategies people who gamble can use to control and/or reduce their gambling.
- Gambling is commonplace in Australian culture. It is almost impossible to not be exposed to it, especially when watching TV or sport. Australia has 20% of the world's pokie machines.

## Community support services

[Meli](#)

03 5226 8900  
[intake@bethany.org.au](mailto:intake@bethany.org.au)  
[Online form](#)

[Meli](#) offer a Gambler's Help Program in the Geelong & Colac regions. Workers and clients can call, email or complete an online referral form to get support.



1800 512 341  
[fcintake@cultura.org.au](mailto:fcintake@cultura.org.au)

[Cultura](#) have a financial counsellor who is specially trained to support people whose gambling is causing them harm. Workers and clients can call, email or complete an online form to get support.



Online chat available

Counselling, information & support 24/7, for professionals and anyone affected by gambling

## USEFUL RESOURCES



Refer the Bethany Gamblers Help Toolkit to help you be aware of signs of gambling harm and how to refer to support.

[03 5226 8900](tel:0352268900)

[intake@meli.org.au](mailto:intake@meli.org.au)

[Online Form](#)

[Download Meli Gamblers Help Toolkit](#)



[Cultura](#) has a financial counsellor specialising in supporting people who gamble

[1800 512 341](tel:1800512341)

[fcintake@cultura.org.au](mailto:fcintake@cultura.org.au)



Explore tips, tools + programs to help people gain control of their gambling online. Include:

- 100 Day Challenge
- Self-exclusion
- Gambling calculator



Download this self-help guide.

Include things like:

- Self-assessment tools
- Activities & strategies



Available on website & social platform

News, information & research focusing on preventing & reducing harm from gambling

## GAMBLING HARM: DEEP DIVE

This section on gambling harm provides an overview of how a frontline support worker can identify, support and refer a client who is experiencing harm from gambling.



### Key messages for supporting someone who is experiencing gambling harm

- **Be mindful of privacy** – make sure when starting a conversation you choose a time when you can talk in private and are both calm.
- **Use judgement free language** – using professional, a matter of fact language can help reduce the shame the person might be feeling due to the stigma that surrounds gambling.
- **Be aware of the boundaries of your role** – it is not your role to fix someone, or to force someone to talk or seek help.

## Definition

Research has identified seven types of harm that can be experienced by people who gamble and those close to them. These harms can be experienced on a spectrum that extends from no harm through to very severe harm. They can range from minor negative experiences to crisis point.



Click on each picture and watch these short videos to find out more about how gambling can cause harm, how it can trick the brain, and how it is possible to reduce gambling.



What is gambling harm?



How gambling can trick the brain



Is it too late to change?



Frontline workers in the community can be the first port of call for people experiencing harm from gambling. A person whose gambling is causing them harm may not have spoken about it previously, or be ready to ask for help. This could be due to a number of factors, including:

- Stigma
- Shame
- Not identifying that there is a problem
- Previous negative experience of asking for help.

Therefore it is important for frontline workers to be able to:

- identify signs that someone's gambling may be causing them harm
- feel comfortable having a conversation about it
- know where to refer for specialised support.



## Signs of gambling harm

### Initial signs of harm:

- having less time or money to spend on recreation and family
- reduced savings
- increased consumption of alcohol
- feelings of guilt or regret

### Advanced signs of harm:

- relationship conflict
- reduced work or study performance
- financial difficulties
- Anger
- feelings of shame and hopelessness

Research says the best way to identify someone experiencing harm from gambling is to ask them about gambling. This gives permission for the client to talk about gambling in a non-judgmental and professional way. **For more information on starting the conversation click on the information icon**



## Having the conversation – things you might say if you suspect someone’s gambling is causing them harm

It is important to be genuine when having difficult conversations, so practice starting the conversation in a way that feels comfortable to you. It is useful to consider what has worked well for you in difficult conversations previously.

You could start by enquiring generally but genuinely:

“I’ve noticed you seem more stressed lately, has something changed to make you feel this way?”

What could you say?

Or, if you know the person is gambling you could be more specific:

“I’ve been worried about you, can I tell you why?”

“I’ve heard you talk about making some bets; can I ask if you think you are betting more than you can afford to?”

What could you say?

## Self-help tools for people who gamble

There are various tips, tools and programs people can access if they have noticed that gambling is negatively impacting their life, including tracking spending, self-exclusion or even just hearing the stories of others who have been in a similar situation. We have included two tools below, but there are plenty more to explore [here](#).



It can be difficult for a person to know if their gambling is getting out of hand and causing harm to themselves and the people around them. If someone is starting to be concerned about their gambling, they can use this checklist to assess whether their gambling is becoming a problem. **To try it out click on the Quiz icon**