

# Having the conversation with family or friends



If you suspect that someone you know has a problem with gambling, it's important to help them.

The best way to find out if someone has a gambling addiction is to ask. Make sure you choose a time when you can talk in private and are both calm.

Before you talk to the person, prepare yourself for the full range of responses you may encounter, from relief through to anger. Be aware that they may feel ashamed or embarrassed and may not want to talk.

## Do

- Without blaming, tell them how their gambling might be impacting others
- Focus on positives and fixes rather than the problems themselves
- Let them know you're asking because you care about them
- Be patient. This is a process that can take weeks or months

## Avoid

- Blaming them for causing problems for others
- Labelling them a problem
- Lecturing or nagging the person to get help
- Telling them what you would do, unless you've been in a similar situation

## Explain how you feel

Explain what you've noticed, why it concerns you and how it makes you feel. For example, you may have noticed that they:

- have stopped doing activities they used to enjoy
- are always short of money or have money troubles with other people
- have more health or stress-related problems.

## Listen to what they have to say

It's very important to listen to what the person with the gambling issue has to say.

They may say very little or deny there's a problem as they aren't ready to talk. They may get angry and tell you to mind your own business. If they deny they have an addiction or get angry, you can:

- ask them to at least think about their gambling
- give them information about where to get help anyway – when they calm down, they just might follow up.

Often, people are relieved to finally talk about their gambling. An honest, non-confrontational discussion can be just what they need to get started on the road to recovery.