

Gambling harm is a health issue

Essential information for health professionals

What is gambling harm?

Gambling harm is any negative consequence or side effect experienced as a result of gambling.

The experience of gambling harm ranges in seriousness from low, such as occasional feelings of regret, to severe, such as depression and anxiety.

Gambling harm leads to poorer health and wellbeing outcomes for the individual who gambles, family members, friends, communities and populations.

Gambling harm is highly stigmatised. People affected by gambling harm and another stigmatised issue, such as drug use or a mental health diagnosis of anxiety or depression, have reported they are more willing to acknowledge the other issue.

Financial problems are the most obvious harm, but others include:



feelings of embarrassment, regret, shame and guilt



increased tobacco and alcohol and other drug (AOD) use



reduced work or study performance



sleeplessness, stress, anxiety, depression, suicide



family violence and relationship problems.

Is your client experiencing gambling harm?

People who are experiencing harm from gambling sometimes disclose their struggles to someone they trust before seeking help. Often, the person they trust is a health professional who provides support or treatment for other health issues. This factsheet provides useful information about how to talk to your client about gambling and the range of support options that are available.

Starting a conversation about gambling harm

In the past 12 months, have you had an issue with gambling?

This screening question is validated as having a 92% detection rate for identifying gambling harm in patients in a primary care and medical setting.

Gambling harm frequently co-occurs with mental ill-health, AOD use or family violence. Often, however, people do not seek out or receive support for gambling harm.

If you think your client may be experiencing harm from gambling, asking them if they have had an issue with gambling in the past 12 months is the best way to find out.

By starting a conversation about gambling, you can support your client by recommending one of many ways they can access free, confidential and tailored support.

Many ways to get support

All Gambler's Help services are professional, free, confidential and available 24/7 for people experiencing harm from their own, or someone else's, gambling.

Treatment options include:

- counselling (face-to-face, telehealth, online)
- peer support
- financial counselling.



Gambler's Help has the expertise to support people experiencing complex co-occurring AOD and mental health issues.

Tailored support

Encourage your client to visit gamblershelp.com.au or call **1800 858 858** to find the support that's right for them. Alternatively, you can call Gambler's Help on your client's behalf for advice on how best to support them.

Help in other languages

Support in Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese and Vietnamese. Call **1800 858 858** to arrange an interpreter for free.

Self-help

Reset (ResetApp.com.au) and **100 Day Challenge** (100dc.com.au) are free and confidential apps to help people understand and manage their gambling.

Gambler's Help Youthline

Under 25s who are worried about their own or someone else's gambling can call **1800 262 376**.

First Nations communities

Support is also available for First Nations people. Visit gamblershelp.com.au or call **1800 858 858**.

Gambling help online

A national resource that provides information and online counselling via live chat, online forum or email. Visit gamblinghelponline.org.au/.

Self-exclusion

Free services to help people ban themselves from gambling products and venues. Visit gamblershelp.com.au/self-exclusion/.

FURTHER READING

Browne, M, Greer, N, Armstrong, T, Doran, C, Kinchin, I, Langham, E & Rockloff, M 2017, *The social cost of gambling to Victoria*, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, Melbourne.

Browne, M, Langham, E, Rawat, V, Greer, N, Li, E, Rose, J, Rockloff, M, Donaldson, P, Thorne, H, Goodwin, B, Bryden, G & Best, T 2016, *Assessing gambling-related harm in Victoria: a public health perspective*, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, Melbourne.

Rockloff, M, Browne, M, Hing, N, Thorne, H, Russell, A, Greer, N, Tran, K, Brook, K & Sproston, K 2020, *Victorian population gambling and health study 2018-2019*, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, Melbourne.

Submission to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, 2019, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, Melbourne, Victoria.