

# Gamble Aware Week

## October 19-24

### How to recognise gambling harm

Signs that someone may be experiencing gambling harm.

It is often more difficult to recognise the specific signs of gambling harm compared to a substance use issue. With gambling harm, the signs could be due to a number of causes, some of them legitimate. These signs incorporate financial, scheduling and mood related indicators.

#### Financial signs

- Money disappearing from wallets, purses, accounts or other investments that don't belong to the individual but to which they can gain access
- Valuable items missing from the homes of friends and relatives
- Despite being employed the individual is suddenly always short of money when they weren't previousl
- Constantly borrowing money from others but never seeming to be able to pay them back, while providing a variety of excuses as to why they can't do so
- Taking out numerous loans simultaneously
- Hiding financial information, records or payslips
- Frequent inability to pay bills, disconnection warnings or service disruptions for failure to pay
- Only limited food in the house and the items are not ingredients for meals but more snack-like, requiring little to no preparation.

#### Mood and behaviour signs

- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Poor work performance
- Becoming nervous, agitated, irritable or frustrated for no perceptible reason
- Mentioning feelings of hopelessness, helplessness over their own lives, depression, or suicidal thoughts without relating them to anything specific (e.g. gambling harm)

- Notable alterations in personality
- Decreased sleep and appetite
- Changes in sexual desire or performance
- Controlling, manipulative, or threatening behaviour aimed at obtaining money from others
- Using falsehoods or charm to influence others behaviours and willingness to give them money or get them out of trouble.

### **Scheduling related signs**

- Increasing amounts of time spent gambling either at a physical venue or online
- Hiding reasons for unexplained absenteeism
- Tardiness for even important commitments
- Frequently calling in sick or taking unplanned days off
- Simple errands take an inexplicable amount of time (e.g. buying milk from a nearby store takes 3 hours)
- Time set aside for simple tasks is unreasonable and the individual may return having not completed the task in question.

If you think that someone you know and love may be experiencing gambling harm, the first step you can take is to learn as much as you can.

Try to find a way to understand your loved one's perspective, and approach the problem from where they are, regardless of your own personal beliefs about their gambling issues.

If gambling has become a problem, you are not alone. You can call the **Gambler's Help** line on [1800 243 232](tel:1800243232) to speak with one of our counsellors.