

101 Ways to

Play Wise™



Way #44

Tips for Families of Someone Who Gambles.



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A Message of Encouragement for Family Members

Living with someone whose gambling behaviour concerns you can be stressful. You don't want to see someone you love struggle. You want to help, but at the same time may have many different feelings that you are struggling with. That's because you are also feeling the negative effects of gambling. Family turmoil, physical and emotional stress and more can affect your well-being. It's important to remember you need support too.

Some individuals find it helpful to share what they are going through with someone trustworthy and supportive. Maybe it's another family member, close friend, clergy member, a counselor or someone else you feel comfortable talking to. You don't have to feel ashamed, because what's happening is not your fault.

The tips in this brochure may help you deal with the situation more effectively.

How You Can Help

It's understandable to have many mixed feelings when you want to help someone whose gambling behaviour concerns you. It's not easy and there is no magic formula, but we'd like to offer a few suggestions to help establish a good beginning.

- Raise the issue when you have time to listen.
- Choose a place where you will not be disturbed.
- Be clear that you are not judging them, but that you are raising the issue because they are important to you and vice versa. Let them know you are concerned about them and about your own future. Be sure to avoid judgement.
- Clearly express your expectations and fears.

Example: "I would like you to seek some community support."

**Source: Acti-Menu et al. Do you know how to gamble...without losing your head? Montreal, Acti-Menu, P. 10, 1998*



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Know that it's OK to ask for help with gambling concerns.

How To Talk With Someone About Their Gambling

Tell the person you care about them and are very concerned about their gambling behaviour.

Examples:

- *“I am worried about your gambling behaviour. It makes me sad to see you hurting yourself.”*
- *“Your behaviour is hurting me/the family very much.”*

Tell them exactly what they have done that concerns you.

Example:

- *“After our argument last night, you went out and lost \$500 gambling.”*

After telling the person that you are concerned, how you feel, and what you’ve seen, it is important to be willing to listen.

Example:

- *“I know that this is a difficult situation for you, but I am willing to be here to support you.”*
- *“Can you tell me what is happening and what you are thinking and feeling?”*

They may say nothing or they may become angry. They might tell you it is none of your business. Or maybe they’ll thank you and promise to make changes. Whatever happens, it is important to listen to what they have to say.

Offer suggestions and propose alternative solutions.

Example:

- *“Gambling may help vent your frustrations and reduce your stress in the short run, but it is definitely not a solution to your unemployment. Can we talk about other ways to solve that problem?”*
- *“Do you think talking to a counselor about your gambling might help? Would you give it a try?”*

Tell the person you can help.

Example:

- *“I am here to help if you want it.”*

Support Is Available

Urging someone to seek support and assisting them in finding the best support is likely the most caring thing you can do. Generally speaking, people want to handle things themselves. They don't like seeking help from others, particularly with personal matters. The important thing to know is that when things get out of hand, it's OK to ask for support.



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Know that help is available and where to find it.

How You Can Provide Support

It's important to:

- Try to focus on the strengths of the person you are concerned about
- Try to reward behavior you want to see
- Be patient
- Give encouragement
- Talk openly and share your own feelings and concerns
- Be understanding but firm in setting limits on the gambler's behaviour
- Take care of yourself by enlarging your social circle and participating in social activities
- Protect your financial resources from being accessed by someone who gambles
- Lean on people you trust for emotional support
- Clearly express your expectations and fears
- Focus on a healthy approach – rather than depending on someone who gambles, try to live independently
- Enrich your life by volunteering, taking courses, going back to school, looking for a job, etc.
- Set some new goals for yourself and work towards them

Available Resources

CRAFT (Community Reinforcement and Family Training)

Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) is for anyone who is concerned about another's substance/gambling use. CRAFT teaches family and friends effective strategies for helping their loved one to change and for feeling better themselves. CRAFT works to affect the loved one's behavior by changing the way the family interacts with him or her. For more information, dates and times please contact Provincial Addictions Treatment Facility at **902.368.4120**.

PlayWise Information Centre

For information and educational tools on responsible gambling, problem gambling, the products offered at Red Shores, and links to community resources, or to speak with a PlayWise Advisor, visit the PlayWise Information Centre inside our Red Shores locations or call **(902) 620-4267**. Helpful information is also available online at redshores.ca/play-responsibly or alc.ca/playwise

PEI Addiction Services

Information, assessment, support and treatment is available at PEI Addiction Services locations in Charlottetown, Summerside, Alberton, Montague, and Souris. For more Information, call **1-888-299-8399** or visit healthpei.ca/addictions

PEI Gambling Support Line

Confidential help is available toll free, anytime, to anyone seeking information or support about gambling. Call **1-855-255-4255** or visit peigamblingsupport.com

Gamblers Anonymous (GA)

GA is an anonymous fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other to help themselves and others recover from gambling.

For more information on locations and meeting times in PEI, call Addiction Services at **1-888-299-8399** or visit gamblersanonymous.org

Gam-Anon

Gam-Anon is a support group for spouses and other family members to help them deal with the consequences of their problem gambler's behaviour. For information visit

gam-anon.org

SMART Recovery

SMART Recovery is a leading addiction recovery support group. The SMART Recovery 4-Point Program® helps participants learn tools for addiction recovery and join a world-wide community that includes free, science-based mutual help groups. For more information, email smartrecoveryqueenspei@gmail.com or visit the SMART Recovery PEI – Queens County Facebook page.

Therapeutic and Credit Counselling PEI – Family Services

Therapeutic counselling can assist individuals, couples and families when facing life challenges. There is a fee for therapeutic services, which is covered by many insurance plans. A fee subsidy is also available for those who qualify. Credit counselling assists individuals in dealing with debt concerns and money management. There is no charge for this service, but there is a small charge for those entering the debt repayment program. For more information call **(902) 892-2441** (Charlottetown), **(902) 436-9171** (Summerside), or visit familyservice.pe.ca

