



Supporting someone you care about through gambling-related harms

A practical guide for families, friends,
and peers

Call the gambling helpline
1-800-461-1234

Explore resources at
GNB.CA/MentalHealth



MESSAGE TO FAMILY MEMBERS, SUPPORTIVE FRIENDS, AND PEERS OF AN INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCING GAMBLING-RELATED HARMS

Supporting or living with someone affected by gambling-related challenges can be emotionally demanding and bring many mixed feelings. You care deeply about this person and want to help, yet it is natural to sometimes feel unsure, stressed, or stretched in your own capacity to cope. These experiences can affect your emotional and physical well-being.

You deserve care and support as well. Reaching out to someone you trust, such as a family member, friend, supportive peer, counselor, clergy member, or health-care professionals, can help lighten the load. Support is available, and you do not have to face this on your own. Reaching out is a positive step forward in a complex situation.

The following tips will help you deal with the situation more effectively.

WHAT HELPS AND WHAT TO AVOID: GUIDANCE FOR FAMILIES, FRIENDS AND PEERS



Helpful do's

- Be patient.
- Give encouragement.
- Communicate openly and talk about your own feelings and concerns.
- Be understanding while remaining clear and firm about appropriate boundaries.
- Take care of yourself by staying connected with others and participating in social activities.
- Protecting your financial well-being may include setting clear and respectful financial boundaries.
- Share your concerns with people who are supportive.
- Clearly express your expectations and fears.
- Aim for a healthy approach by focusing on your own independence and well-being.
- Enrich your life experience by volunteering, taking some courses, going back to school, looking for a job, etc.
- Create new goals for yourself and work toward achieving them.



Things to avoid

- Avoid taking on the role of controlling or managing someone else's behaviour.
- Avoid taking on all the responsibility.
- Avoid defending harmful behaviours.
- Avoid trying to rescue or fix the situation alone.
- Avoid yelling or escalating conflict.
- Avoid using threats or punishment.
- Avoid blame.
- Avoid neglecting your own well-being.



HOW TO HELP THE INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCING GAMBLING RELATED HARMS

You may feel overwhelmed when trying to help a person who is experiencing harms related to gambling. It is not an easy task and there is no magic formula, but we would like to offer you some suggestions:

- Raise the issue when you have time to listen and choose a place where you will not be disturbed.
- Tell the person clearly 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 that you are concerned about them and about your own future. Be sure to avoid moralizing.
- Clearly express your expectations and fears.

For example:

"I would like you to seek some help."



*Source: Acti-Menu et coll. Do you know how to gamble... without losing your head? Montréal, Acti-Menu, p.10, 1998

HOW TO TALK WITH SOMEONE ABOUT GAMBLING-RELATED CONCERNS



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

For example:

"I care about you, and I'm concerned about how gambling may be affecting you."

"I want to share how this is affecting me, because I care about you and our family."

Explain clearly and calmly what you have noticed that concerns you.

For example:

"After our argument last night, you went out and spent \$500 on gambling, and that concerns me."

After you tell the person that you are concerned about them, and what you've seen, it is important to be willing to listen to what they have to say.

For example:

"I know that this is a difficult situation for you, but I am willing to share it with you."

"Can you tell me what is happening and what are you thinking and feeling?"

The person may say nothing or may become angry. They may tell you that it is none of your business. Or they may thank you and promise to make changes. Whatever the case may be, it is crucial to listen to what they have to say.

Offer some suggestions and propose alternative solutions.

For example:

"It seems like gambling may help relieve stress for a moment, but I'm concerned it isn't helping with the bigger challenges you're facing. I'd like us to talk about other ways forward."

"Have you thought about speaking with a counselor to get some support around what you're going through? If you're open to it, we could explore that together."

Tell the person you are willing and able to help them.



SIGNS THAT GAMBLING MAY BE CAUSING CONCERN

- Spending more time or money on gambling than originally planned.
- Tension or conflict with family members, friends, or peers related to gambling.
- Feeling a strong urge to return to gambling after losses in an effort to recover money.
- Experiencing feelings of guilt, regret, or distress related to gambling.
- Thinking about risky or unsafe ways of getting money to gamble.
- Missing work, school, or other responsibilities due to gambling.
- Keeping gambling activities secret or downplaying their extent.

Gambling affects more than the person who is gambling. If you are affected by someone's gambling, or you would like to gain more information about gambling, help is available. You can call your local Addiction and Mental Health Services to get in touch with someone who will work with you during these difficult times. Local support services are available to provide helpful tools and information related to gambling.



SUPPORT RESOURCES



If gambling is becoming a concern for you or someone you know, support is available across the province.

CONTACT US to make an appointment

Bathurst	547-2110
Campbellton	789-2440
Edmundston	735-2092
Fredericton	453-2132
Miramichi	778-6111
Moncton	856-2444
Saint John	658-3737
Tracadie-Sheila	394-3615

WEBSITES

Gambling information

GNB.CA/MentalHealth

Gamblers Anonymous

GamblersAnonymous.org

Is a group of people who share their experiences to help one another address their gambling problem.

Gam-Anon

www.gam-anon.org

Is a self-help organization for those affected by the gambling problem of a loved one.

Responsible Gambling Council

[*www.responsiblegambling.org/home*](http://www.responsiblegambling.org/home)

The Responsible Gambling Council works with individuals and communities to address gambling in a healthy and responsible way. The council research and public awareness programs designed to prevent gambling-related problems.

Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines (LRGG)

[*gamblingguidelines.ca*](http://gamblingguidelines.ca)

**For additional information and support, call
1-800-461-1234**