

Do you have a gambling problem?

Problem gambling can be defined broadly as patterns of gambling behaviour that compromise, disrupt or damage personal, family or vocational pursuits.

Pathological gambling is the most extreme form of problem gambling. It is characterized by the loss of control over gambling, chasing of losses, lies and deception, family and job disruption, financial bailouts and illegal acts.

If you answer 'yes' to five (or more) of the following questions, then you are more than likely to have a gambling problem. (*In line with DSM IV Diagnostic Criteria for pathological gambling*).

1. Are you having problems in controlling, cutting back, or stopping yourself from gambling?
2. Do you feel resentful, angry, or irritable when attempting to cut back or stop gambling?
3. Do you gamble to escape from problems or feelings of resentment, stress, boredom, guilt, anxiety or depression?
4. Have you ever gambled to get money to solve your financial problems?
5. After losing money gambling, do you often return to gambling to chase your losses?
6. After a win, do you have a strong urge to return to win more?
7. Do you find that you need increasing amounts of money to achieve the desired satisfaction?
8. Do you ever gamble longer than you planned?
9. Did you ever gamble until you emptied all pockets?
10. Have you ever relied on others for money lost through gambling?
11. Did gambling affect your reputation, or jeopardise a significant relationship, career, or educational opportunity?
12. Do you lie to family members, counsellors, or others to conceal the extent of your gambling?

Generally, partners and family members tend to be confused about the subject of problem gambling and how to deal/cope with it. Counsellors and self-help groups can help you to understand and deal with the effects of problem gambling in your life. Self help groups provide social contact with other people with similar experiences - you're not alone.

You need to take the first step. No one can help you until you recognize that you want to change. If you think you might need help, call us on helpline 151. This call is free and confidential. No one will know you called, but you'll feel better knowing that you did.