

# GAMBLING SELF CHANGE.

FACE A BRIGHTER FUTURE  
WITHOUT GAMBLING.

## FACT SHEET 5: HELPFUL HINTS FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

For people who wonder if or how they could say something to a family member, a friend or a colleague about their gambling.

Some people find it easy to say what's on their mind – even in a tricky situation like raising the issue of someone's gambling behaviour. However, for many people it's hard.

This fact sheet explores some approaches you might use if you find yourself in this situation.

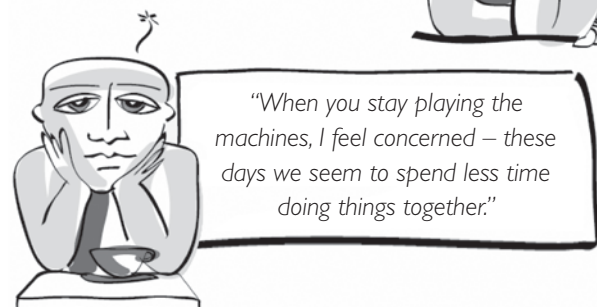
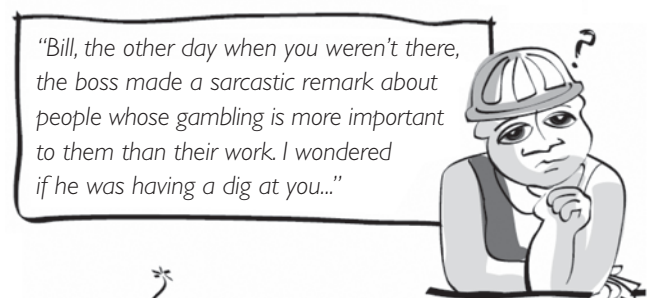
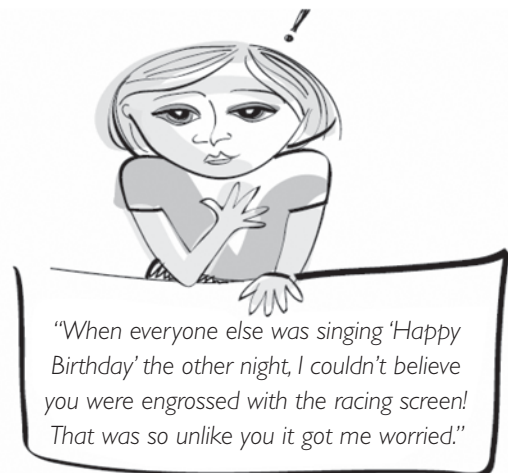
### Plan the conversation, know your stuff

When you think of bringing up a personal issue like this, the more aware you are about your own motives the more effective your conversation may be.

You may need to accept that their attitude to gambling is very different to yours. Some people see all gambling as a problem, while others see it as an entertainment. No matter how your friend sees their own gambling, you may need to carefully explain your point of view so it doesn't just end up as an argument about "who can do what".

To avoid the risk of your motives being misunderstood, you may need to keep the conversation within strict limits. You are entitled to talk about your concerns, they are entitled to choose their behaviour. So if you focus on their behaviour you are getting away from your concerns – and probably getting into hot water. The topic of your conversation is your concern about their behaviour – not the behaviour itself.

### Your conversation might start like this



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These are just a few examples. In reality such personal matters are not always simple or easy to talk about. So what can we do to keep the conversation from getting into trouble?

### Checklist for a safe and effective conversation

- Have in your mind a clear idea of what you intend to say.
- Many people find that writing it down is the best way to decide what to say.
- Avoid any criticism, blame, guilt or moralising.
- Make sure the time and place is good for both of you.
- If either of you is busy or distracted, find another time to speak.
- If either of you is affected by drugs or alcohol, it won't help.
- Anger or negative emotions will also get in the way.
- It is well to remember that any effective and safe conversation depends on continuing trust and respect.

In bringing up a sensitive subject like this, it is vital to have your own safety as a priority.

### Consider your safety

One way to ensure this is to have an 'exit strategy' – a way to close the conversation before it gets out of control. It could be a good idea to plan what you would do and say if the person:

- becomes angry
- goes quiet
- cries
- whinges
- says you just don't understand
- says you really hurt them
- says you have a problem, not them

### What if I'm still not sure?

If you feel that they are not prepared to hear what you are saying, or there's a low chance of success, don't proceed. However, if your own nervousness is the main hurdle, you could practise deep breathing, relaxation or other techniques such as actors use when they rehearse a difficult role.

If you want to talk with someone about the situation or what you plan to say, call the 24-hour Gambling Helpline on 1800 858 858 as the counsellors there deal with these issues all the time. Helpline counsellors can also give you details or link you up with face to face personal, family and financial counselling in your area.

There is no guaranteed formula or magic words that will make it easy to bring up a potentially difficult topic like someone else's gambling behaviour. By being clear in your own mind why you are doing it and by planning what you will say, you may be able to express what concerns you.

### Fact sheets in this series

- 1 Gambling a problem? Help is at hand.
- 2 If you don't need help, read this.
- 3 Coping with the effects of someone else's gambling.
- 4 Test your gambling behaviours.
- 5 Helpful hints for family and friends.

### Gambling Helpline 1800 858 858

Funded by the Community Support Levy

#### CONTACT DETAILS

Gambling Support Program, GPO Box 125, Hobart TAS 7001  
1800 858 858 [gambling@dhhs.tas.gov.au](mailto:gambling@dhhs.tas.gov.au) [www.gamblingsupport.org](http://www.gamblingsupport.org)

