

## BEATING GAMBLING PROBLEMS

- Plan activities in advance to avoid being alone with time, money and opportunity on your hands (biggest risk).
- When feeling emotional try not to gamble in response to this – do something else
- Limit alcohol and other drugs because they can lower your ability to resist gambling
- Do not enter a gambling venue alone
- Do not gamble on your first urge – distract yourself and try to avoid at least 5 urges – seek support if urges persist
- Do not carry your ATM cards on you – this may tempt you to gamble, leave them in a safe place
- Try not to be influenced by other people's stories on winning – people often don't discuss how much they are also losing
- What situations / emotions in the past have led you to gambling (eg stressed at work, lonely)? When you see the warning signs ask a trusted person to hold your cards for the next few days. Outsmart the gambling problem.
- Make time-out a priority. Make plans to relax and unwind every single day, that way you will be less likely to feel the need to escape through gambling. Do not feel guilty about taking time out for yourself. It is essential in order to overcome your gambling problem.
- There are literally thousands of other activities you can do instead of gambling....get a massage, go for a swim, walk the dog, have a coffee with a friend, see a movie, read a magazine. You may have forgotten what you used to enjoy doing to relax.
- Be careful not to replace gambling with another harmful activity (eg drinking to excess).
- Exercise is a scientifically proven way to increase the feel-good chemicals in your brain....and it's free!
- Stay connected to friends and family to avoid isolation.

- Be honest with yourself about the chances of winning. Poker machines are a form of entertainment, not a realistic answer to your money problems. Increasing your bets on the pokies does NOT increase your chances of winning.
- Think about how bad you feel every time you gamble and lose money. Think about how good you feel when you choose not to gamble. The choice is yours.
- Each time you beat the urge to gamble, you will increase your self-esteem and confidence. This will have positive effects in all other areas of your life.
- Ask yourself how many months or years have you been gambling and felt unhappy – its time you made a change. Where do you want to be in life this time next year?
- If you can identify other problems in your life that make you unhappy, talk to a counsellor to help you resolve them. Going gambling to avoid problems just makes things worse.
- Self exclude from the venue where you are most at risk. It takes courage to do this but it works for many people.
- Talk with your doctor if you suffer from depression / anxiety to get help with managing your symptoms
- Contact Gambling Care on 62470655 to make an appointment with a Counsellor