

*Information for Spouse,  
Family Members,  
and  
Friends of  
Problem Gamblers*



Atlantic Lottery

KNOW YOUR LIMIT.  
PLAY WITHIN IT.

AGE  
19+

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une initiative de Loto-Québec



Living with an excessive gambler is a very stressful experience. You love this person and do not want to see him suffer. You want to help, but, at the same time, you are feeling helpless and frustrated. That is because you too are suffering from all the negative effects of problem gambling, such as family turmoil, physical and emotional stress, and more.

You need an attentive ear and emotional support.

If you are feeling overwhelmed, we strongly recommend sharing your burden with someone who is trustworthy and supportive. That could be another family member, a close friend, a counselor, a clergy member, your family physician, or someone else you are particularly comfortable with. You don't have to feel ashamed, because what's happening is not your fault.

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



## DO

- Be patient
- Give encouragement
- Communicate openly and talk about 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
- Be sure to protect your financial resources from being appropriated by the gambler
- Share your burden with people who are supportive
- Clearly express your expectations and fears
- Set your sights on a healthy approach – rather than depending on the gambler, try to live independently
- Enrich your life experience by volunteering, taking some courses, going back to school, looking for a job, etc.
- Establish some new goals for yourself and work towards realizing them

## **DON'T**

- Try to control the gambler
- Do all the work
- Defend them
- Try to save him/her
- Yell
- Threaten
- Punish
- Blame
- Sacrifice yourself

You could feel overwhelmed when you want to help a person who is dependent on games of chance. It is not an easy task and there is no magic formula, but we would like to offer you some suggestions to establish a good beginning:

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

### 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.  
Example:
  - "I would like you to seek some help."





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

Example:

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

- ● ● **Tell the person exactly what they have done that concerns you.**

Example:

- "After our argument last night, you went out and lost \$500 at gambling."

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

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 you are 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 the person has to say.



## How to Approach the Excessive Gambler

- ● ● **Offer some suggestions and propose alternative solutions.**

Example:

- “Gambling may help you to vent your frustrations and reduce your stress in the short run, but it is definitely not a solution to your unemployment. We would be far better off to find another way to solve the problem.”
- “Do you think talking to a counselor might help you control your gambling behaviour? Won’t you give it a try?”

- ● ● **Tell the person that you want and are able to help. Offer some suggestions and propose alternative solutions.**

Example:

- “I am here to help if you want it.”

Urge the gambler to get help, and assist them in finding the best support available. This is likely to be the most caring thing you can do for them.

Generally speaking, people like to handle things by themselves! They do not like to seek help from others, particularly not from people outside the immediate family circle. However, when confronting situations that we are unable to handle ourselves, we must ask for help. The following section outlines some of the help and support resources available.



Visit the Responsible Gambling Information Centre (**RGIC**) located at Red Shores Racetrack and Casino to access gambling information and educational tools on responsible gambling, problem gambling, gambling products offered at Red Shores, and links to community resources. For more information or support you can speak to an on-site Responsible Gambling Representative.



The **RGIC** can be reached at  
**(902)620-2467** in Charlottetown or  
**(902)888-5675** in Summerside.

Information is also available online at  
[www.alc.ca/PlayResponsibly.aspx](http://www.alc.ca/PlayResponsibly.aspx)



### Provincial Support Lines:

1-888-299-8399 in Prince Edward Island

1-800-461-1234 in New Brunswick

1-888-899-HELP (4357) in Newfoundland & Labrador

1-888-347-8888 in Nova Scotia

- **Gamblers Anonymous**

[www.gamblersanonymous.org](http://www.gamblersanonymous.org)

Gamblers Anonymous is a group of men and women who share their experiences, strength, and hope with each other to help themselves and others recover from gambling.

- **Gam-Anon**

[www.gam-anon.org](http://www.gam-anon.org)

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.

- **Responsible Gambling Council**

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

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

- **Credit Counselling Canada**

[www.creditcounsellingcanada.ca](http://www.creditcounsellingcanada.ca)

Credit Counselling Canada is a national association of not-for-profit credit counselling agencies and Orderly Payment of Debt programs from all across Canada. This site can link you to an agency in your area that can help you deal with debt concerns and money management.





