



INFORMATION PACK

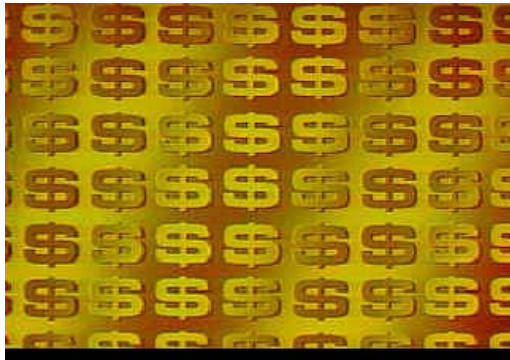
for people with concerns
about gambling

developed by

Break Even

**Gambling Rehabilitation Service
Relationships Australia (SA)**

in consultation with their clients



Why Do People Gamble Too Much?

Gambling problems are often a symptom of other problems that are occurring in a person's life. People may gamble too much:

- As a way to numb the pain of:
 - grief due to loss of something important like the death of a family member or a relationship,
 - abuse (childhood and adult),
 - unemployment,
 - physical or mental illness or injury,
 - illness eg depression.



- To distract themselves from unhappy or unhelpful relationships.
- Because of a lack of money.
- To have time out from a stressful life.
- To get some time for themselves instead of putting everyone else first.



- Because of boredom or loneliness.
- For the thrill of it!
- To get back at a partner or family member.
- Chasing losses (trying to recover money already lost).
- Self-punishment.

It is hard to stop something that you enjoy unless the pain is greater than the pleasure

What do you enjoy about gambling?

fun
I forget all my problems
some time for me
the thrill of winning
beating the system
time out
risk taking

How do you change as a result of your gambling?

moody
depressed after a session
cannot sleep
feeling like there is nothing to live for
aggressive
withdrawn from family and friends
it is hurting my partner and children
lying
insomnia
financial strife

What concerns you about these changes?
What concerns others about these changes?

I am not in control
I am destroying myself and my family
I have changed for the worse
I hate lying
I have lost all my joy

*What are **YOU** going to do about it?*

nothing
think about it
cut down
stop

Should I Be Worried?

When does gambling become a “problem” for you?

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I think about gambling more than anything else?
 - Do I spend more money than I planned when gambling?
 - Do I return to win back losses?
 - Have I borrowed money to gamble from:
 - friends/family?
 - housekeeping?
 - bill money?
 - Do I lie about or hide my gambling from my family and friends or employer?
 - Is someone close to me worried about my gambling?
 - Does my gambling hurt anyone close to me?
 - Has gambling stopped being fun?
- Am I punting off form?
 - Do I abandon my system half way through a session?
 - Have I started betting multi-lines on the poker machines?



If you have answered **YES** to any of these questions, you may find it useful to talk with a trained counsellor:

- Our service is free
- This can be done over the phone or in person
- There is no obligation!

Staying Safe When Your Partner Gambles Too Much

Gambling may have major effects on your relationship, health and wellbeing. You may have friends you can talk to but we can also help. The *Break Even* service is available free of charge to **anyone** concerned about the gambling of a partner, friend or family member. You do not need to come with your gambling partner or have their agreement to gain an appointment with a *Break Even* counsellor.

Some important points for you to know are:

- The person gambling is responsible for their behaviour and is the only one able to change that gambling behaviour. Trying to shame or lecture them into changing seldom works.
- It is easy to take their behaviour as a personal rejection but most of the time people who gamble too much are not aware of how it is affecting their relationships. You probably feel like judging, blaming, accusing and condemning them but this often makes things worse.
- It is possible to say “I care about you but I will not support or accept problem gambling behaviour!” Share what you are experiencing using “I feel” statements rather than blaming language like “you make me feel”.
- Ask them what they enjoy about gambling – this may help you both understand why they are gambling. Together try to come up with other ways of getting this enjoyment eg spending family time together, spicing up your relationship, hobbies.
- Don’t make it easier for them to continue gambling by bailing them with money or by ‘covering for them’. Do not trust them with your money.
- Go through this guide with them and encourage them to seek help.

You have a right to be safe financially, as well as physically and emotionally. To stay safe you need to develop some ‘bottom-lines’:

- Consider arranging separate bank accounts.
- Get legal advice about how to protect your share of your house.
- Cancel and destroy joint credit cards.
- Keep your credit cards and cash secure.
- Pay bills yourself or arrange an automatic bank transfer.
- Be mindful of the high stress you are experiencing.
- Seek support from a trusted friend/family, books, groups and/or counselling.

The **Legal Services Commission** (1300 366 424) provides a free telephone advice line:
Mon - Fri: 9am – 4.30pm

The **Women’s Legal Service** (08 8221 5553) provides a telephone advice line:
Mon, Thurs & Fri: 1pm – 3pm & Tues 1pm – 3pm and 6pm – 8pm

What About The Kids?

You owe it to your kids to get help for yourself



Kids pay a price
when someone they love gambles too much.

Children whose parents gamble too much are **at risk of:**

- **Health problems** eg drugs, drinking, gambling.
- **Psychological problems** eg depression and suicide attempts.
- **An unhappy childhood** because sooner or later gambling will destroy the life of a family.

THE IMPACT OF PROBLEM GAMBLING ON CHILDREN

Many parents believe that children are not aware of the stress and distress that their parents are experiencing. But if you think about your memories of your own childhood, you will know that this is not true. Some studies have shown that even a baby's sleeping and feeding can be affected by stress or conflict in their family.

A study led by Jacobs in the United States in 1989 examined the impact of parental problem gambling on children. They found that children of problem gamblers were at consistently greater risk than their peers in the following areas:

- **Health threatening behaviours** - smoking, drinking, drug use, overeating and gambling.
- **Psychosocial risk indicators** - broken homes, unhappy childhood, legal action pending, overall quality of youth rated as 'poor'.
- **Psychological problems** - profound sadness, school and work problems and suicide attempts.

Jacobs *et al* believe that there is a definite linkage between parental problem gambling and elevated risks for problem behaviours among their offspring. They concluded that, without early and competent intervention, children of problem gamblers -

- (a) will be seriously disadvantaged when attempting to solve their present and future problems of living, and
- (b) as a consequence are, themselves, high-risk candidates for developing one or another form of dysfunctional behaviour, including one or another addictive patterns of behaviour.

It is generally a good idea to tell children about any major crisis in the family and let them know that we as adults are trying to sort things out and that they are not to blame. This prevents children of any age making up their own explanations. It also lets them know that they don't have to be responsible for their parents.

It is most important for you as an adult and parent to get help first with any sadness, grief, anger or other strong feelings that you may be dealing with before you can hope to help your children.

You owe it to your children to get help for yourself.

Reference: Jacobs, D F, Marston, A R, Singer, R D, Widaman, K, Little, T, and Veizades, J. (1989). Children of Problem Gamblers. *Journal of Gambling Behaviour*, 5(4), pp.261-268.

CHILDREN REACT DIFFERENTLY TO FAMILY PROBLEMS ACCORDING TO THEIR PERSONAL NATURES AND THEIR LIFE STAGES.

Signs and behaviour depend a lot on their age and could include the following:

0 - 5 YEARS

Young children are likely to show their distress by:

- having sleeping troubles.
- becoming clingy or withdrawn.
- regressing in such things as toilet training and general behaviour.
- turning more to security blankets and soft toys for comfort.
- using baby talk when normally they may be able to speak quite well.

5 - 8 YEARS

Children of this age have difficulty expressing their worries and tend to demonstrate them through undesirable behaviour such as:

- behaving badly by being unusually angry, aggressive and restless.
- withdrawing and daydreaming.
- exhibiting baby behaviour.
- wanting to stay home to be near parents.
- asking lots of questions.
- appearing anxious or sad.

8 - 12 YEARS

Children of this age are embarking on finding their own place in the world and are likely to show distress by:

- being bossy and angry.
- being judgemental about parents.
- having stomach aches and headaches.
- wanting to stay home from school.
- lying and stealing.
- school performance dropping.
- finding it difficult to talk about what has happened with others.
- running away or other general anti-social behaviour.

12 - 16 YEARS

At this age young people are capable of seeing their parents' decisions and actions as quite separate from themselves, however they show their distress by:

- lacking concentration at school.
- blaming parents.
- increased acting-out behaviour.
- taking on parental concerns.
- withdrawing from family members.

Please talk to your counsellor if you are concerned about the impact of gambling or other problems on your children.

Counselling For Gambling Problems: Our Approach

Break Even Relationships Australia (SA) is a free service available to anyone who has concerns related to gambling.

It is a confidential service staffed by professionally trained counsellors.

Appointments are normally an hour long and we can talk on the phone or face to face. We can see you at Hutt St Adelaide, Berri, Renmark, Loxton, Waikerie, Ridgehaven, Murray Bridge and Mt Barker.

At *Break Even Relationships Australia (SA)* we believe that our client-centred approach respects the individual's choices, allowing you to decide what you want to discuss and your desired outcomes.

In other words:

- You are in charge.
- We will ask you what your goals are:
 - If you want to work out why this has happened - we'll help
 - If you want to cut down the amount you spend - we'll help
 - If you want to give up gambling altogether - we'll help
 - If you want to manage your money better - we'll help
- You will not be expected to talk about anything that you don't want to.
- Should you wish, we can talk about the impact of a sadness or loss in your life (eg job retrenchment, partner's death, unhappy childhood).
- We will help you work out relationship issues if you decide that might help.
- We will provide ongoing counselling for as long as you think it is helpful.
- If you are a partner or family member of someone who gambles we can give you support and strategies to help.

Be An Expert On Your Behaviour

Fill in the following diary for one week as accurately as possible - it is a record of your actual behaviour for your eyes only! Be honest!
Permission is given to photocopy this page for personal use.

Day of week	Actual gambling behaviour				Trigger to gambling	Why did you stop?
	Time of Day	Money (\$)	Time Period (hrs)	Where (Venue)	eg had a fight with partner, went past hotel	eg ran out of money, closing time, hungry
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						

Beating The Urge To Gamble

Urges are the thoughts, feelings and situations that lead you to gamble. These urges are often triggered by something else such as TV advertisements, the desire for a drink, signage for pokies outside pubs, hunger, cigarettes, anxiety, frustration, stress, having cash in your hand on payday (or the money in your bank account).

Usually there is some sneaky thinking that goes with the urge that makes it hard to resist. It's like being a passenger in a car going the wrong way that you cannot get out of.

Sneaky thinking that gives power to gambling urges

- Pokies are 'money making machines'.
- I deserve a win.
- Dreaming about winning.
- Just a couple of bucks won't hurt.
- This is my lucky day.
- I have a good feeling about today.
- I will get lucky today.
- I can't cope with the urge to gamble – I have just got to gamble or I'll explode.
- I have been good this week so a few bets or dollars won't matter.



The more you resist the gambling urges the less power they will have over you

How to resist urges:

- **Recognise** when you are getting an urge.
- **Monitor** when you get urges in each day.
- What were the **factors (thoughts, feelings and situation) that contributed** to the urge?
- How can you **avoid or change these factors? Plan to avoid** situations that you know will make you vulnerable eg use electronic funds transfer for your money rather than receive cash, drive a different way home to avoid your favourite gambling venue.
- **Dispute the sneaky thinking** around the urge.
- **Distract yourself** eg radio, relaxation exercises, do something for someone else.
- **Work out a strategy to beat urges to gamble** eg whenever you recognise an urge call a friend, fill spare time with other enjoyable activities.

Stress Management

“If you always do what you have always done, then you will always get what you have always got.”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like yourself 	<p>Try to judge and accept yourself fairly (look through your best friend’s eyes).</p> <p>Try to find activities, work or a hobby which give you a sense of satisfaction or accomplishment.</p> <p>Take time for yourself each day without feeling guilty.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept what <u>you</u> cannot change 	<p>If something is a fact of life the only thing that is changeable is <u>your attitude</u> toward it.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operate 	<p>Competing and always trying to get what you want is stressful.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share your feelings 	<p>With someone you trust, who lets you be yourself.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work off tensions 	<p>Try sport, gardening, crying, laughing, cleaning, exercising, etc.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be positive 	<p>Recall and reward yours and other successes, thus encouraging further improvement and helping you through set backs.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get fit 	<p>Walking, swimming, jogging or any other vigorous activity burn off the biochemical products of daily stress, improve sleep and the way we feel.</p> <p>Fitness helps the body recover from stress.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep well 	<p>Sleep is a natural restorative.</p> <p>Avoid coffee, tea, coke, etc. after 6 pm.</p> <p>Make your bed a peaceful place (no TV etc).</p> <p>Relax before bed.</p> <p>Exercise regularly but not just before bed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be assertive 	<p>Learn to express your needs and wants while <u>still</u> being respectful to others’ rights to have differing opinions.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RELAX - slow your breathing 	<p>Put your hand on your stomach and breathe in deeply, filling your stomach out like a frog’s.</p> <p>Breathe out by pushing your tummy in and up under your ribs.</p> <p>Do this slowly, in and out 5 times.</p> <p>[This technique is useful for calming tension; releasing anger; gaining alertness.]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - untense your muscles 	<p>Relaxed muscles relax your mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loosen your jaw, let it sag. - Let your shoulders drop. - Uncurl your fingers and toes. - Let your stomach hang out.

Developing A Strategy That Will Work For You!

If you are unhappy with your gambling behaviour consider any or all of the following suggestions.

Gambling:

- Be honest with yourself about how much money you are losing and how much time you are spending. Perhaps consider keeping a record for a week.
- Only gamble with your own money.
- Plan to do something else that you enjoy at the time when you would normally gamble.
- Arrange appointments or commitments at times that will limit your time to gamble.
- Make a rule to cash all credits over 100.
- If the gambling is a secret, break the silence by talking to people who care about you, or telephone us at *Break Even* Relationships Australia (SA) or the Gambling Helpline.

Money Management:

- Keep a record of all money won and lost.
- Limit the amount of cash you take gambling.
- If you decide to gamble, know how much you are going to spend and leave all other money and any credit cards at home (the car glove box or a friend's purse is too close).
- Arrange a bill paying service, use B-pay or the Internet to avoid using cash.
- Budget for gambling loss the same as other recreational costs.
- Cancel credit cards and begin paying them off.
- If you are worried about managing your finances, contact a financial counsellor or your bank manager.

Remember:

A *Break Even* counsellor is available to talk to you either on the telephone or face to face. It is a free service and there is no obligation for you to say or do more than you wish.

Developing A Strategy That Will Work For You! (Cont.)

Health

Health is often forgotten when gambling is out of control. However, many clients report positive changes in their gambling behaviour after health issues were addressed.

- If you feel depressed, anxious or suicidal see your doctor – medication may help you.
- If you are not sleeping well consult your doctor or a counsellor.
- To help reduce anxiety and improve your sleep, limit your intake of:
 - coffee
 - soft drink (coke, pepsi)
 - chocolate and sweets
- Develop a regular, healthy eating pattern, particularly include breakfast - it will help you to think clearly.
- Always eat before gambling (not sweets).
- Research has shown consuming two standard alcoholic drinks leads to you spending twice as much money and time on a gambling session. Similarly, smoking and gambling are linked.

Hot tips

Individuals find creative and unique ways of managing their behaviour. Here are some of the ideas people have told us worked for them:

- Stop wearing shoes (bare feet are not permitted in gaming venues).
- Always wear jeans when in the city (Casino dress code precludes jeans).
- Take a different route to the bank and shops (even though it is longer), and a different way home.
- Give up caffeine (coffee, coke, pepsi).
- Start eating breakfast.
- Keep your children with you as under 18's not allowed in gaming rooms (but don't keep them home from school).
- Ring a friend or the Gambling Helpline 1800 060 757.
- Have a long bath or shower.
- Change the radio station you listen to.
- Record gambling urges by writing them down.
- Say "I'm having an urge to gamble AND I can choose NOT to act on it!"
- Get yourself BARRED from the Casino and/or your other regular gaming venues.
- Remove and/or destroy gambling pages from the newspaper before reading the paper.
- Mail your credit card to yourself after buying essentials (gives 2 days thinking time).

Slogans

These slogans may help you dispute the mistaken thinking about gambling as a source of money. Cut them out and put them in your wallet or make your own and paste them somewhere you will see them often eg on dashboard or car, on phone, above the bathroom sink.

faking
Money ~~Making~~ Machine

- 13 per cent interest

won't
I ~~might~~ get lucky

**My gambling makes
other people rich**

lose
I will ~~win~~ tonight

What other slogans can you think of?

Slip Ups

You may have planned to stop or cut down your gambling and gone well for a while. But **what happens when you have a slip-up?**

You may then think:

- This is hopeless - I really am an addict.
- I can't escape - life isn't worth living.
- I am hopeless because I cannot control myself.
- I hate myself.
- I am an idiot.
- I did it again - I will never change.
- Look how useless I am - I am ruining my life and cannot help myself.
- I am kidding myself that I can change.
- I told people I have stopped but here I am gambling. They will never trust me again.

***Changing a bad habit takes time
and often requires help from others.***

Gambling is like smoking: people find it easy to quit smoking but even easier to begin again. Smokers often take many goes before they finally quit the habit.

Don't despair: 'one swallow does not make a summer'.

Instead of going in to a tail spin you could ask yourself a different set of questions:

- How come it wasn't worse?
- How come I noticed the slip-up so soon?
- What factors conspired to make this slip-up happen?
- How can I change these factors?
- Does this mean I have to take my gambling problem seriously?
- What can I learn from this slip-up for next time? (plan for slip-ups)
- Did I think I was stronger than I actually am in resisting the urges - maybe I need to get some help?
- As a result of this slip-up how do I need to strengthen my plan to beat gambling and get my life back?

What Does Barring Mean? Is It Helpful?

Barring is an agreement made between you, the concerned gambler, and the Licensee of the particular venue that you will not enter the gaming rooms(s) of that venue.

Barring has legal consequences. After you have entered into a Barring Agreement it is illegal for you to enter that gaming room and the police may be called should you choose to try. If you are convicted of being in the gaming room you may be fined up to \$2,500.

You should consider how being barred from a gaming room will impact on your life:

- Will it create problems when you socialise with friends?
- Will you start gambling at another venue instead?

If, after considering the questions above, you still believe barring will be helpful you can either:

- Make an appointment with the Independent Gambling Authority, who can bar you from multiple venues. A bar organised this way will stay in place until you arrange for it to be lifted: this cannot happen for at least a year, or
- Make an appointment to meet the Licensee of the venue from which you want to be barred. The bar will be indefinite and cannot be revoked unless the hotel is satisfied you no longer have a gambling problem: this generally involves obtaining a letter from a doctor or counsellor. You will need to provide a photo of yourself.

For further information about barring contact:

Independent Gambling Authority

Ph: 8226 7233

Email: iga@iga.sa.gov.au

Website: www.iga.sa.gov.au

Australian Hotels Association

Community and Public Relations Manager

Ph: 8232 4525

SkyCity Casino

Host Responsibility Department

Ph: 8218 4141

The Real Truth About Poker Machines

A poker machine is essentially a computer programmed with a particular game. The **random number generator** inside determines the chance of winning that is **not influenced by previous selections or the history of winning or losing**. Typically, there are between 30 million and 200 million possible combinations of symbols in a game cycle. This means that if you played one line, one credit, it could need up to 200 million presses before all the combinations have been played. **There is no surety that the machine will pay out after a certain length of time or after a certain number of credits is played.**

There is **nothing you can do** or think that will influence a poker machine to pay out. Sometimes your need is so strong that you HOPE the machine will respond to you. The following facts may be helpful in keeping your thoughts rational:

- **The chance of winning is totally unaffected by any external factors.**
- Nearly **1/3 of profits from pokies go to the Government** by way of taxes and duties.
- There are approximately 13,000 poker machines in over 500 venues in South Australia (December 2005).
- There are over 300 different games available on poker machines in South Australia. They are designed to ‘get you in’ by intermittent reinforcement or rewards that keep you playing.
- In 2004-2005 in South Australia:
 - The total money bet \$6.99 billion
 - Industry net profit \$453 million
 - The government tax \$296 million
 - Total money lost \$749 million – over \$2 million a day.

Break Even Gambling Services

METROPOLITAN ADELAIDE	COUNTRY REGIONS
<p><i>Central</i> Relationships Australia (SA). Telephone: 1800 182 325 (toll free) 8223 4566 City: 55 Hutt Street Adelaide SA 5000 Ridgehaven: 2/1273 North East Road Ridgehaven SA 5097 (Opposite St Agnes Shopping Centre)</p> <p>Website: www.relationships.com.au</p> <p><i>North</i> Anglican Community Services Telephone: 8285 8133</p> <p><i>South</i> UnitingCare Wesley Telephone: 8202 5100</p> <p><i>West</i> UnitingCare Wesley Telephone: 8346 4346 or Salvation Army Telephone: 8445 2111</p>	<p><i>Riverland, Berri</i> Relationships Australia (SA) Telephone: 1800 182 325 Telephone: 8582 4122 9 Kay Ave Berri SA 5343 Outreach services at other towns</p> <p><i>Murraylands</i> Relationships Australia (SA)</p> <p><i>Murray Bridge</i> Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Murray Bridge Telephone: 1800 182 325</p> <p><i>Mt Barker</i> Adelaide Hills Community Health Centre, Wellington Rd. Mt Barker Telephone: 1800 182 325</p> <p><i>West and Far North Region</i> Centacare Whyalla Telephone: 8645 8233</p> <p><i>Central Region</i> UnitingCare Wesley Telephone: 8633 8600</p> <p><i>South East Region</i> Lifeline Mt Gambier Telephone: 8723 2299</p>

Gambling Helpline - 1800 060 757

OTHER SERVICES	
<p>Vietnamese Community in Australia Telephone: 8268 8925</p> <p>Cambodian Australian Association Telephone: 8243 1679</p> <p>Intensive Therapy Service for Problem Gamblers – Flinders Medical Centre Telephone: 8204 4779</p>	<p>Overseas Chinese Association Telephone: 8445 1677</p> <p>CALD Statewide Service (PEACE) Relationships Australia Telephone: 8245 8100</p> <p>Nunkuwarrin Yunti Telephone: 8223 5217</p>

Dear Reader,

Thank you for your interest in our Information Pack. Research data has shown that, given access to relevant information, many people can solve their own problems. We hope you find it useful and would appreciate your feedback. Please fill in the section below and post it back to us in the envelope provided.

Should you wish to further discuss any issues related to gambling we are available FREE of charge and would be happy to talk with you.

The Break Even Team
Relationships Australia (SA)

EVALUATION

This pack was

_____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____
extremely useful very useful useful not very useful of no use to me at all

I obtained the Information pack from _____

It could be improved by _____

My other suggestions to *Break Even* are _____

My post code is _____

My year of birth is 19 _____

I am male

female