

Chances are, Some of your Clients Gamble

Gambling is a popular activity in Nova Scotia. In the past year, almost 600,000 adults gambled in some way or another. But did you know 50,000 of those people are at risk for developing gambling problems? And 15,000 of them will have very serious difficulties because of their gambling.

That's why it is important for you to read this brochure. Chances are, some of your clients gamble. Chances also are that some of them may already have, or be on their way to having, gambling problems.

Getting Help Costs Nothing

If someone needs information, counseling, or a referral, call the number below any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, toll free. Talk to a professional counsellor. Find out more about gambling problems. All calls will be kept private.

Nova Scotia Health Promotion's Problem Gambling Help Line:

1-888-347-8888

Or contact the Addiction Services office nearest you.

Addiction Services in the District Health Authorities

South Shore Health
South West Health
Annapolis Valley Health
50 Vancouver Street, Yarmouth, NS B5A 2P5
Phone: (902) 742-2406, Fax: (902) 742-0684

Colchester East Hants Health Authority
Cumberland Health Authority
Pictou County Health Authority
PO Box 359
199 Elliott Street, Pictou, NS B0K 1H0
Phone: (902) 485-4335, Fax: (902) 485-7026

Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority
Cape Breton District Health Authority
235 Townsend Street, Sydney, NS B1P 5E7
Phone: (902) 563-2590, Fax (902) 563-2059

Addiction Prevention and Treatment Services
Capital Health
PO Box 896
300 Pleasant Street, Dartmouth, NS B2Y 3Z6
Phone: (902) 424-5623, Fax: (902) 424-0627

Visit our website:

www.gov.ns.ca/ohp/gambling

*Straight Facts...
About Gambling*

Is your client at risk?



Know the signs.


NOVA SCOTIA
Health Promotion


Addiction Services

What are the Signs my Client is having Gambling Problems?

Your client may come to you with many different types of symptoms or problems. He or she may not tell you right away that gambling is involved. If your client has any of the signs below, gambling may be at the root of the problem.

Financial

- Recent or ongoing money problems, such as unpaid bills or mounting debt
- White collar crime (bad cheques, embezzlement)

Relationships

- Secrecy
- Less time for family and friends
- Stress, confusion, anger at home
- Friends, relatives, teachers, co-workers express concern
- Missed commitments at work, home, or school
- Marriage breakdown

Mental Health

- Depression
- Extreme mood swings
- Nervousness, anxiety, restlessness
- Emotional outbursts (rage, jealousy, despair)
- Suicidal thoughts

Physical Health

- Loss of appetite and sleep
- Digestive problems, irritable bowel syndrome
- Cardiac problems
- High blood pressure
- Back or neck pain
- Hypertension

How can you find out if gambling is the source of your client's problem?

Ask the Right Questions

Include questions about gambling in your routine screening interview. Remember that many people may not think of themselves as being 'gamblers.' They may 'just play' bingo, scratch tickets, or video lottery terminals (VLTs). They may see going to the casino or engaging in poker games with friends as social activities. But all of these are forms of gambling. And all of them can get out of control.

If your client tells you that he or she participates in any form of gambling, ask these two questions:

Are you spending more time gambling than you used to?

Are you spending more money on gambling than you intend to?

If your client answers "yes" to either question, he or she may have a gambling problem. Help is available.

How You Can Help

Take the problem seriously. Gambling problems can quickly progress to an addiction that is just as destructive as a chemical addiction.

Refer your client to the appropriate resources. Give them the number for the Problem Gambling Help Line: 1-888-347-8888, or see the back cover of this brochure for other resources, such as your local Addictions Services office.

Call the Problem Gambling Help Line yourself for advice and support on how to help your client.

Follow up on your referral. Make sure your client has made the intended contact.

Engage the support of the spouse or partner. Family members can have a significant positive influence on the person's recovery. At the same time, families of persons with gambling problems can also be affected by the problem. They need support as well. Make sure they have the Help Line number.

Some Quick Facts

- Of the Nova Scotians who use VLTs or gamble at the casino once a month or more often, one in four will end up having gambling problems.
- In Nova Scotia, one in every five adults, that's 150,000 people, knows someone who they think has a gambling problem.
- People with gambling problems come from all walks of life. It is not a just a problem for disadvantaged people or those on social assistance.
- For most of the Nova Scotians who have gambling problems, their trouble started within the first year they began gambling regularly on VLTs or at the casino. Problems are likely to be hidden during the early stages.

