

# Is There a Gambling Problem in Your Family?

Sometimes gambling problems are right out in the open. Sometimes the family only gradually comes to realize that there is something wrong. You may be uncertain about whether there is a problem or how serious it is.

Some warning signs that may indicate a gambling problem in an adult:

## Money

- there is less money available, although income has not changed
- debts are building up
- money has gone missing from a bank account or wallet, or valuables have disappeared
- spending priorities or habits have changed
- a person holds a second job, but there is no change in his or her finances
- RRSPs, insurance plans, etc., have been cashed in or allowed to lapse
- a person commits criminal acts to obtain money for gambling or to pay gambling debts.

## Behaviour

The person:

- avoids family functions or other social events
- neglects responsibilities or makes excuses
- arrives late for work or other commitments
- disappears for large blocks of time
- spends a lot of time on sports statistics, racing forms or phone calls.

## Relationships

The person:

- withdraws from family and friends
- appears preoccupied
- appears deceptive or secretive about his or her behaviour, particularly around money
- appears to be edgy, reactive or defensive
- changes his or her sleep, eating or sexual relationship patterns.

Some warning signs that may indicate a gambling problem in an adolescent:

The young person:

- can't account for missing money
- skips school
- borrows or steals money from friends or family
- sometimes has large amounts of unexplained cash
- has a fake ID, casino entry card, race track or ProLine receipts among belongings
- is preoccupied with video arcades, Internet gambling sites or day trading
- has left a trail of Internet visits or credit card charges to gambling sites.

Counselling is available to anyone affected by gambling problems and can help you understand what is happening and support you in dealing with the problems caused by gambling. Contact the **Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline** for information on problem gambling counselling and related resources in your community at 1 888 230-3505. Services are free, confidential and available in many languages.