



# PROBLEM GAMBLING

A Guide for Parents

# GAMBLING



**LUCK**  
*chance*



**Problem Gambling  
Institute of Ontario**

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Centre for Addiction and Mental Health  
Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale

# Problem Gambling: A Guide for Parents

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Problem Gambling: A Guide for Parents  
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# Introduction

This guide is for parents who have a gambling problem, as well as other parents who are concerned about the effects of problem gambling on their children. It may also be beneficial for other family members, friends and helping professionals who would like to better understand how children are affected by a parent's gambling.

If you have problems with gambling, please see the booklet *Problem Gambling: The Issues, The Options*. If someone close to you gambles too much, consult the booklet *Problem Gambling: A Guide for Families*. If you are a helping professional, the booklet *Problem Gambling: A Guide for Helping Professionals* and the reference sheet *Working with Parents Who Have a Gambling Problem: A Guide for Professionals* may be valuable. All of these resources are available without cost at [www.problemgambling.ca](http://www.problemgambling.ca).

You may be worried about how your gambling is affecting your children. Perhaps you are concerned about the impact on your children of your spouse's or another family member's gambling. Alternatively, you may be an adult child who has been coping with a parent's gambling, or a health care professional who wants to know more about helping parents with their gambling problems.

This guide has been developed to help you:

- better understand problem gambling
- better understand how gambling may affect your children
- find ways to reduce the risks to your children

- learn how counselling or other professional services can help you and your family
- find resources that have helped other families.

**Gambling may be causing serious financial and family difficulties. But with help, your family can learn to better cope with and overcome problems related to gambling.**

You may feel a little overwhelmed right now. Gambling may be causing serious financial and family difficulties. But with help, your family can learn to better cope with and overcome problems related to gambling. Specially trained counsellors have helped many people stop or control their gambling. People with gambling problems do recover, and their families do heal. Your family can be one of them.

By picking up and reading this guide, you have taken an important first step.

# 1

# Introduction to Gambling

## What Is Gambling?

You are gambling whenever you take the chance of losing money or belongings, and when winning or losing is decided mostly by chance.

There are many different ways to gamble, including:

- casino games
- bingo
- cards
- lottery or raffle games, such as keno or tombola
- slot machines
- lottery tickets
- scratch-and-win or pull-tab tickets, such as Nevada tickets
- mah-jong or dominoes
- betting on horse racing or other sports
- betting on games of skill, such as golf or pool
- stock market speculation.

In Canada, 2.4% of the population has a gambling problem.<sup>1</sup>

Gambling can also take place via the Internet, through online sports betting, poker and other card games, and virtual casinos.

## What Is Problem Gambling?

Problem gambling is not just about losing money. Gambling problems typically affect a person's whole life.

Gambling is a problem when it:

- gets in the way of work, school or other activities
- harms your mental or physical health
- hurts you financially
- damages your reputation
- causes problems with your family or friends.

There are different levels of gambling problems (see box below).

### LEVELS OF GAMBLING PROBLEMS

Gambling problems can range from mild to severe:

- *Most people who gamble* do so casually, for pleasure, without any harm.
- *Serious social gamblers* play regularly, but gambling doesn't come before family and work.
- *People who gamble excessively* often have trouble in their work or with family and friends. Their gambling often causes financial problems.
- *For some people*, gambling seriously harms most or all parts of their lives.

Not all people who gamble excessively are alike, nor are the problems they face. People with gambling problems are found in all age groups, income groups, cultures and jobs.

Not all people who gamble excessively are alike, nor are the problems they face. People with gambling problems are found in all age groups, income groups, cultures and jobs. Some people develop gambling problems suddenly, others over many years. There are many reasons why a gambling problem may develop. Some people begin gambling excessively when they try to win back money they have lost, or because they like to be "in the action." Others have many life stresses that make gambling a welcome relief.

## RISK FACTORS

There are many risk factors that make a person more likely to develop gambling problems. A person is more at risk for problem gambling if he or she:

- had a big win early in his or her gambling history
- has money problems
- has experienced a recent loss or change, such as relationship problems, divorce, job loss, retirement or the death of a loved one
- is coping with a health concern or physical pain
- often feels lonely
- has few interests and hobbies, or feels his or her life lacks direction
- takes risks or acts without thinking
- needs excitement and often feels bored
- uses gambling, or alcohol or other drugs, to cope with bad feelings or events
- often feels depressed or anxious
- has been abused or traumatized
- has (or had) problems with alcohol or other drugs, or previous issues with gambling or overspending
- has a family member who has had problems with alcohol or other drugs, gambling or overspending
- thinks he or she has a system or a way of gambling that increases his or her odds of winning.

The more items in this list that are true for someone, the more care the person needs to take with gambling.

## Why Can't They Just Stop?

Most people with gambling problems slowly lose track of how much time and money they spend gambling. They are pre-occupied with gambling and often neglect their family's and their children's needs. Some people who gamble excessively do not see the connection between their life problems and their gambling.

**Some people who gamble excessively do not see the connection between their life problems and their gambling.**

**The first step for people with gambling problems is to accept their losses and their hopes of a big win. Then they can begin to regain control over their gambling and their lives.**

Most people who gamble excessively have mixed feelings about gambling. They know they are causing problems for themselves and the people they love. They may feel anxious, depressed, angry or ashamed. The urge to gamble is very strong, though, and people may have difficulty stopping or putting greater limits on their gambling. Some feel irritable and upset when they try to make changes.

Some individuals with gambling problems fear their loved ones will realize that they have a problem. This drives them to lie about their gambling, going deeper into hiding and further into debt. They keep hoping a big win will end their problems.

The first step for people with gambling problems is to accept their losses and their hopes of a big win. Then they can begin to regain control over their gambling and their lives.

#### **HOW TO GET HELP**

If you think that you, a friend or family member has a gambling problem, you can get help. Chapter 5 will tell you how.

## 2

# Risks for Children with a Parent Who Has a Gambling Problem

## Problem Gambling and Families

As you probably already know, gambling can hurt both the person who gambles and the people around them. In fact, for each person with a gambling problem, between eight and 10 other people are directly affected in some way.<sup>2</sup>

If a family member has a gambling problem, the household can be disrupted in several ways, due to:

- trouble paying bills and the accumulation of debt
- encounters with the law for things such as stealing
- mental and physical health problems for both the person who gambles and family members
- parenting difficulties
- physical, verbal and emotional abuse between family members
- fighting in front of the children
- physical or emotional unavailability of the person who gambles
- separation or divorce
- discomfort talking about the gambling problem with other family members or friends

**For each person with a gambling problem, between eight and 10 other people are directly affected in some way.**

- feelings of isolation among all members of the family.<sup>3</sup>

If you are experiencing any of these issues, you are not alone. Counselling or other professional services can help families cope with these difficulties (see Chapter 5).

## Increased Risk in Children

**Parental problem gambling is the single factor that most strongly influences the development of problem gambling among children and adolescents.**

Even though problem gambling affects everyone in a family, the impact it has on children sometimes gets overlooked. For this reason, this guide focuses on how a parent's problem gambling affects children.

One of the risks of a parent's problem gambling is that gambling problems may be transmitted to the children.<sup>4</sup> Children of a parent with gambling problems are between three and 11 times more likely to develop a gambling problem than other children are.<sup>5</sup> This increased risk touches children of all ages, from preschool to young adulthood. Parental problem gambling is the single factor that most strongly influences the development of problem gambling among children and adolescents.<sup>6-8</sup>

### WHY MIGHT THE CHILD OF A PARENT WITH GAMBLING PROBLEMS ALSO BE AT RISK?

There are several reasons why children of a parent with a gambling problem might develop a gambling problem too. Research has shown that genetics plays a role, as does the environment that a child grows up in. Two important environmental factors are role modelling and coping skills.

#### **Role Modelling**

Parents are the most important role models for their children, and so in families where a parent has gambling problems, children may come to reflect their parent's attitudes, beliefs and behaviours about gambling.<sup>9,10</sup> Many children and youth start gambling with their parent, and some start very young.<sup>11</sup>

Children of parents with a gambling problem often:

- believe that gambling is a good way to make money<sup>4</sup>
- view excessive gambling as a normal thing to do<sup>11</sup>
- think gambling is exciting<sup>9,10</sup>
- gamble to cope with loneliness, depression, anxiety and other issues<sup>11</sup>
- often gamble quite frequently.<sup>12,13</sup>

When a parent condones or participates in a child's gambling, this puts the child at greater risk for developing gambling problems, as well as many other difficulties.

### **Coping skills**

Coping refers to a child's understanding of a situation and his or her way of responding to or managing it.<sup>14</sup> Parents have an important role in teaching their children positive ways of coping with stress.

Children exposed to parental gambling problems are placed under increased stress. They also may lack positive ways of coping with the stress, which puts them at greater risk for developing a gambling problem themselves. This is because children of parents with a gambling problem may gamble as a way to increase positive feelings, such as excitement and fun, and decrease negative ones, such as stress or depression.<sup>11</sup>

Positive coping mechanisms include communicating effectively, managing strong emotions, using good problem-solving and decision-making skills, and seeking social support when needed.<sup>15</sup> Even for children who do not have strong coping abilities, these strategies can be taught. Good coping skills protect children from the effects of problem gambling and also reduce their risk of developing a gambling problem themselves.

Family or individual counselling can help change gambling attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. It can also improve coping skills, which will reduce risks for children of a parent who gambles (see Chapter 5).

**Parents have an important role in teaching their children positive ways of coping with stress.**

## SAFETY CONCERNS

If you are concerned about your safety or the safety of your children, please get help.

If there is a risk of violence or suicide, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency department.

You may also call any of the following helplines:

- Assaulted Women's Helpline: 1 866 863-0511 (24 hours a day, seven days a week and available in 154 languages)
- Ontario Distress Centres: [www.dcontario.org/help.html](http://www.dcontario.org/help.html)
- Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline: 1 888 230-3505

For more information on getting help, and where to get help, see chapters 5 and 6.

# 3

## The Effects on Children of a Parent's Problem Gambling

Although children can be extremely resilient, most children are affected in some way by a parent's gambling problem. However, each child may be affected differently and may cope in a different way.

The degree to which a child is affected by problem gambling is influenced by many factors, including:

- the age and developmental stage of the child
- the child's personality or temperament
- the child's and the parents' coping and problem-solving skills
- the presence of other difficulties for the child or family
- financial stress and lack of important basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, shelter)
- the quality of the relationship between the parents
- the severity of the gambling problem
- the degree to which the child is taking on adult roles and responsibilities
- whether the parent with gambling problems is the primary caregiver
- the presence of social support (e.g., extended family, friends, school, community, spiritual or religious group).

**Most children are affected in some way by a parent's gambling problem. However, each child may be affected differently and may cope in a different way.**

## How Are Children Affected?

### PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES

Children of parents with a gambling problem may experience psychological difficulties, including a loss of their sense of safety and security, and low self-esteem.

### EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

Parental gambling problems may contribute to strong emotional reactions in a child. Many children feel insecure—some may appear anxious or clingy, while others may be distant and avoidant. Other signs of emotional problems are:

- worrying
- crying often
- irritability, tantrums, emotional outbursts
- decreased laughing or smiling.

### POOR MENTAL HEALTH

Children may have various mental health concerns, including feeling down or depressed, feeling anxious or having thoughts of suicide.

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### POOR PHYSICAL HEALTH

Some children have more physical health problems when they are stressed. These can include:

- physical discomfort or pain (stomach aches, headaches, muscle pain or respiratory problems such as asthma)
- sleep difficulties (difficulty falling asleep, waking up during the night, nightmares, wanting to sleep with a parent)
- eating problems (not eating enough, eating too much or having poor eating habits).

### SCHOOL DIFFICULTIES

Children may have greater difficulties at school in the following areas:

- behaving appropriately and following school rules
- making and maintaining friendships

- staying focused, being motivated and completing work
- understanding the material being taught
- being bullied or picking on others.

### BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS

Children of parents with gambling problems often experience a great deal of stress, which may lead to behaviour problems such as:

- difficulty listening
- being defiant or aggressive
- being very emotional or reactive (e.g., tantrums)
- self-harm
- substance use (e.g., drinking alcohol or using other drugs)
- spending a lot of time on the computer (e.g., on video games, gambling online, social media)
- gambling.

**Children of parents with gambling problems often experience a great deal of stress, which may lead to behaviour problems**

### FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

Problem gambling often leads to financial difficulties for families, resulting in unstable or inadequate housing, poor nutrition or lack of food, limited recreational activities for the child, limited and inadequate clothing, no money for postsecondary education, and much more.

Financial strain is often linked with other difficulties. Parents may argue, often more over debt and lack of money than over gambling. Sometimes money that a child obtains through a job, savings or an allowance may be used by the parent to gamble, or the parent may sell the child's possessions. Financial losses can also lead children to feel responsible for their parents' finances. Some children may not learn to budget effectively, showing little concern for finances and spending money frivolously.

### SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES

Children may experience social difficulties outside the home. Some children will make poor choices of friends, spending

time with people who do not treat them well or who engage in risky behaviours such as substance use. Other children will isolate themselves from others, wanting to protect themselves and avoid feeling ashamed.

### **POOR FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

When a parent has a gambling problem, the dynamic of the household changes. A child may witness or experience:

- more arguing
- distance
- poor communication
- less affection
- less quality time as a family
- greater levels of stress
- lack of trust.

It is important to help children understand that the family's problems are not their fault. Children may feel a range of emotions, including anger, frustration and resentment toward one or both parents. They may feel confused when a parent continues to engage in problem gambling even though the parent said he or she was going to stop. Children may feel sad about incidents in which hurtful things were said or done. They may feel alone if a parent is not around or is unavailable to spend time with them.

Children need to feel reassured, loved and safe. It can be difficult for a parent to think about the ways their children are affected by problem gambling. However, it is not too late to make changes. This may seem like too much to do on your own. You may not know where to start. Family or individual counselling can help you cope with these difficulties. It can also help make changes for you, your children and your family (see Chapter 5).

# 4

## Reducing the Risks and Consequences of a Parent's Problem Gambling

Although children of all ages can be affected by a parent's problem gambling, there are many ways to reduce the risks and consequences.

- The parent can *seek help for problem gambling*. Not only will this help you on many levels, but it will also make a huge difference for your children. For information on problem gambling treatment and services, see Chapter 6. There are also services for the parent who is coping with a partner's gambling problems. Even if the parent who gambles is not ready to stop or get help, seeking help can benefit you and your children.
- It can be difficult for the parent who is coping with the problem gambling of a partner or even a former partner. Ensuring that you are *taking care of yourself* can make a difference for your children. Children worry, and are affected when either or both parents are not doing well.
- *Avoid talking negatively about the other parent* to your children or in their presence, even when the person has behaved badly.

**Ensuring that you are taking care of yourself can make a difference for your children. Children worry, and are affected when either or both parents are not doing well.**

- *Do not fight in the presence of children*, and do not involve them in arguments.
- While you may not be able to reassure your children that the gambling will stop or that finances will get better right away, you can *reassure your children* in many other ways. You can tell them how much you care about them, and how much you are available for them. You can tell them about the strengths you have, which have helped you cope with the tough stuff. You can also reassure them if they witnessed something negative. A hug or other form of physical affection is a great form of reassurance.
- *Talk to your children more often and more effectively*. Children know when things are not going well; without an explanation or some reassurance from a parent, this can create a lot of anxiety. Try to adapt what you say and how you say it to your child's age and developmental stage. However, keep in mind that even adolescents and young adults worry about their parents, so don't overburden them with too much information. Talking often begins by listening.
- *Talk to your child about gambling* facts, clarify myths around gambling and tell them about the consequences of problem gambling. This can reduce your child's risk of developing a gambling problem.

Positive family relationships and being connected at school greatly protect children and adolescents from developing gambling and alcohol or other drug problems.<sup>11</sup>

**Reduce your child's exposure to gambling and do not involve your child in gambling.**

- *Reduce your child's exposure to gambling* and do not involve your child in gambling.
- *Set and maintain limits on your child's use of technology* (e.g., computers, smartphones, video games). Excessive gaming and Internet use can be problematic, and can put children at greater risk for problem gambling. Keep computers, tablets and smartphones in common areas of the house, and monitor all online activity.
- *Involve your child in activities* that interest him or her (e.g., sports, art, music). When kids are involved in activities they

enjoy, it can boost their self-esteem, give them a sense of belonging, help them make friends, and much more. There are many free activities; there might also be subsidies available for families. Check with your school and local community centres.

- *Teach children good coping skills*, so they can deal with different situations and emotions more effectively.
- Try each week to *spend time with your children*. This does not have to be an activity that costs money.
- Many parents avoid talking to relatives and friends about gambling problems in their family, but this can make both parents feel isolated. *Try to get support from family members or friends*. They may be able to listen and offer suggestions, or may be able to spend time with your children to give you a break. Children can also benefit from extra support from family and friends at difficult times.
- *Get support from school*. It can be helpful to let your child's school know if he or she is having a tough time at home.
- *Seek professional support for your family*. There are many professionals who can help you, your children and your family. These services can also help with discipline and other parenting issues. See chapters 5 and 6 for information on services for children and families.

There are many professionals who can help you, your children and your family.

## WAYS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR CHILDREN

- Talk when you are calm, even if that means waiting until the next day.
- Try to use "I" messages: "I would like," "I prefer," "I feel," "I need."
- Make it brief.
- Talk about only one subject at a time.
- It's not just *what* we say, but *how* we say it. Pay attention to your nonverbal communication, including tone of voice, facial expression and body language.
- Be aware of your own stress level as this will likely influence how you communicate with your children.
- Try to say something *positive* to your child every day.



# 5

## Getting Help

Problem gambling affects everyone in the family in different ways. Many problem gambling treatment centres offer free services for families, which can include individual counselling, family counselling or family support groups. Services are also available through mental health centres, hospitals, schools, community centres and family health clinics.

- *For the parent with a gambling problem:* Through professional help you can begin to gain control of your gambling problem. This will be beneficial for you, your children and your family. See Chapter 6 for information about free problem gambling services across Ontario.
- *For the other parent:* Even if your partner is still gambling and not ready to get help, it can be beneficial for you and your children to get help. When the parent with the gambling problem is getting help, it can also be valuable if you are involved in his or her treatment.

**Through professional help you can begin to gain control of your gambling problem. This will be beneficial for you, your children and your family.**

There are many services available for children and families through Children's Mental Health Ontario centres ([www.kids-mentalhealth.ca](http://www.kids-mentalhealth.ca); see Chapter 6). These centres can help you better understand your child and will also support you in your parenting role. Many of the centres offer individual and family counselling, as well as family support groups.

Counselling is confidential, unless there are safety concerns. Any counsellor you meet should explain the limits of

confidentiality to you before counselling begins, as well as explaining his or her role and the services available.

## How Can Professional Services Help Me, My Children and My Family?

Professional services can help you:

- gain a better understanding of problem gambling and the ways it affects both those who gamble and their families
- understand how your children have been affected
- learn how to cope with various concerns you may have about your children
- reduce tension and conflict in the household
- learn more effective coping strategies
- improve communication in the family
- improve parenting and discipline
- learn about self-care
- improve relationships and rebuild trust with family members
- set more effective limits or boundaries
- put your finances in order.

# 6

## Where to Find Help

### **Assaulted Women's Helpline**

1 866 863-0511

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

The Assaulted Women's Helpline offers free crisis counselling, emotional support, information and referrals via telephone and TTY to women in up to 154 languages, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is completely anonymous and confidential.

### **Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)**

1 416 535-8501

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

CAMH is Canada's largest mental health and addiction teaching hospital, as well as one of the world's leading research centres in its field. The central facilities are in Toronto. CAMH combines clinical care, research, education, policy development and health promotion to help transform the lives of people affected by mental health and addiction issues. The website provides information about mental health and addictions, as well as information on how to access services at CAMH.

### **Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO)**

1 888 234-7054

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

CMHO has more than 85 accredited children's mental health centres across Ontario, including walk-in clinics in some

areas. Services are free. Each centre has trained professionals who can provide support to children and families. The website provides detailed information on children's mental health.

### **Community Information Centres (CICs)**

Dial 0 for the operator or dial 211

[www.211Ontario.ca](http://www.211Ontario.ca)

CICs are not-for-profit groups that gather information on local government services, community services and social services. These include crisis services, shelters and counselling. Call the operator to see if there is a CIC in your area.

### **Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO)**

1 416 408-4420

[www.cleo.on.ca](http://www.cleo.on.ca)

CLEO is a community legal clinic that produces clear-language material for people with low incomes. Main topics include social assistance, landlord and tenant law, refugee and immigration law, workers' compensation, women's issues, family law, employment insurance and human rights.

### **Distress Centres**

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

Distress Centres offer support and a variety of services to their communities. If you are feeling lonely, depressed or suicidal you can find a listening ear, usually 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Many centres also have suicide survivor programs, support services for youth, telephone call-out programs for seniors and vulnerable people, and Mental Health Crisis Line services. The website has a listing of centres across Ontario.

### **Gamblers Anonymous (GA)**

1 855 2CALL-GA (1 855 222-5542)

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

GA is available in many communities. Based on Alcoholics Anonymous, GA uses a 12-step self-help approach to recovery.

### **Gam-Anon and Gam-Ateen**

1 855 2CALL-GA (1 855 222-5542)

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

Gam-Anon is a peer support group available in many communities for family members and friends of people with gambling problems. It helps them cope, stop blaming themselves for the gambling problems of others and focus on their own health and well-being.

### **Good2Talk**

1 866 925-5454

[www.good2talk.ca](http://www.good2talk.ca)

A free, 24-hour confidential and anonymous telephone support line for postsecondary students in Ontario, with a primary focus on those 17 to 25 years of age. Available in English and French.

### **Kids Help Phone**

1 800 668-6868

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

A free, 24-hour telephone support and information line for children and youth. Available in English and French.

### **Lawyer Referral Services (LRS)**

1 800 268-8326 or 1 416 947-3330;

e-mail [lawrefer@lsuc.on.ca](mailto:lawrefer@lsuc.on.ca)

[www.lsuc.on.ca](http://www.lsuc.on.ca)

LRS will give you the names of lawyers (including those who accept payment through Legal Aid) in your area who will provide a free half-hour consultation.

### **Legal Aid Ontario**

1 800 668-8258

[www.legalaid.on.ca](http://www.legalaid.on.ca)

Legal Aid can help you pay for legal help if you have a low income. If you qualify, you can get financial help for a variety

of legal problems, including criminal matters, family law and immigration and refugee law. You may also be able to get help with some civil cases and final appeals.

**Ontario Association of Credit Counselling Services (OACCS)**

1 888 746-3328; e-mail [info@oaccs.ca](mailto:info@oaccs.ca)

[www.oaccs.com](http://www.oaccs.com)

A not-for-profit organization that represents a membership network of accredited credit counselling agencies and certified credit counsellors. Its aim is to enhance the personal financial well-being of Canadians through financial literacy, education and industry leadership. OACCS establishes and regulates uniform standards of practice, knowledge, skills and ethics for the credit counselling and financial coaching profession.

**Ontario Children’s Aid Societies**

[www.oacas.org/childwelfare/locate.htm](http://www.oacas.org/childwelfare/locate.htm)

There are 46 Children’s Aid Societies (CAS) in Ontario. They are mandated to provide help and support to children and families at risk of abuse or neglect. If you are concerned about your child, contact a CAS in your area. Telephone service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Ontario Drug and Alcohol Helpline**

1 888 565-8603

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

The Drug and Alcohol Helpline provides information about alcohol and other drug addiction services in Ontario. It is a free, confidential and anonymous service. You can call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Ontario Drug and Alcohol Helpline can:

- provide information about treatment services and supports in your community
- listen, offer support and provide strategies to help you meet your goals
- provide basic education about drug and alcohol problems.

### **Ontario Mental Health Helpline**

1 866 531-2600

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

The Mental Health Helpline provides information about mental health services in Ontario. It is a free, confidential and anonymous service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Ontario Mental Health Helpline can:

- provide information about counselling services and supports in your community
- listen, offer support and provide strategies to help you meet your goals
- provide basic education about mental illness.

### **Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline (OPGH)**

1 888 230-3505

[www.opgh.on.ca](http://www.opgh.on.ca)

OPGH provides information about problem gambling services in Ontario. It is a free, confidential and anonymous service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. OPGH can:

- provide information about counselling services and supports in your community
- book your first appointment with a treatment provider
- listen, offer support and provide strategies to help you meet your goals
- provide basic education about gambling problems.

### **Problem Gambling Institute of Ontario (PGIO) at CAMH**

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

PGIO serves as a hub resource by offering CAMH's diverse expertise in mental health and addiction. PGIO brings clinical professionals and leading researchers together with experts in communication and knowledge translation. The combined knowledge is used in the prevention and treatment of gambling problems in Ontario and around the world. The PGIO website has great information about problem gambling and tools for families and people who gamble.

## Useful Websites

### **Canadian Mental Health Association**

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

### **Children’s Mental Health Ontario**

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

This website provides detailed information on children’s mental health.

### **Compulsive Gamblers’ Hub**

[www.cghub.homestead.com](http://www.cghub.homestead.com)

An Internet self-help group based on the principles of GA.

### **GamBlock**

[www.gamblock.com](http://www.gamblock.com)

GamBlock blocks access to Internet gambling sites. It helps people with gambling problems avoid the dangers of online gambling (from US\$64.95).

### **International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviours**

[www.youthgambling.com](http://www.youthgambling.com)

### **Know Your Limit—Play Within It**

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

This website, sponsored by the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation, provides information about how gambling works in Ontario, myths and facts, odds of winning by game and helpful tips to keep gambling fun.

### **Mood Disorders Society of Canada**

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

### **U.S. National Center for Responsible Gambling**

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

### **Niagara Multilingual Problem Gambling Program**

[www.gamb-ling.com](http://www.gamb-ling.com)

A multilingual website in 11 languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, Farsi, Hindi, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish and Urdu) that contains linguistically and culturally appropriate information, a confidential e-mail question-and-answer forum and links to other related sites.

### **Gambling Research Exchange Ontario**

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

An independent knowledge translation and exchange (KTE) organization that supports evidence-informed decisions about gambling, including its potential harm.

### **Problem Gambling Institute of Ontario**

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

A multimedia, bilingual website that provides opportunities for online collaboration, screening tools, training and resources for professionals as well as people who experience gambling problems and their family members.

### **Responsible Gambling Council (RGC)**

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

The RGC helps individuals and communities address gambling in a healthy and responsible way, with an emphasis on preventing gambling-related problems.

### **YMCA Youth Gambling Awareness Program**

[www.ymcagta.org/en/youth/learning-training/gambling.html](http://www.ymcagta.org/en/youth/learning-training/gambling.html)

### **YouthBet**

[www.youthbet.net](http://www.youthbet.net)

## Suggested Reading

Problem Gambling Institute of Ontario. (2008). *Problem Gambling: A Guide for Families*. Toronto: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

Problem Gambling Institute of Ontario. (2008). *Problem Gambling: A Guide for Financial Counsellors*. Toronto: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

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14. Orford, J., Copello, A., Velleman, R. & Templeton, L. (2010). Family members affected by a close relative's addiction: The stress-strain-coping-support model. *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy*, 17, 36–43.
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Copies of this resource and others are available  
for download at [www.ProblemGambling.ca](http://www.ProblemGambling.ca).

**Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline**  
**1 888 230-3505**