



GAMBLING ADDICTION: LET'S TALK, SUPPORT AND HEAL TOGETHER

Gambling may begin as entertainment, but it can lead to serious harm. Raising awareness reduces stigma, encourages early intervention, and supports healthier coping mechanisms. Gambling addiction is a real mental health condition that deserves understanding and support.



THE SCIENCE BEHIND GAMBLING ADDICTION

Gambling triggers dopamine release in the brain, creating a cycle of pleasure and tolerance. Over time, this can lead to compulsive behaviour, much like substance addiction.



THE IMPORTANCE OF OPEN CONVERSATIONS

Talking openly about gambling helps break the shame and stigma associated with this addiction. Honest conversations with friends, family, or colleagues can lead to a deeper understanding, support, and ultimately, recovery.



RECOGNISING THE SIGNS OF GAMBLING ADDICTION

Be aware of these common signs:

- Preoccupation with gambling
- Needing to gamble with increasing amounts of money
- Lying to hide gambling activity
- Chasing losses
- Jeopardising relationships or work due to gambling
- Feeling restless or irritable when trying to stop



TYPES OF GAMBLING

Gambling comes in many forms, including:

- Online betting
- Casinos
- Sports betting
- Lottery games
- Informal social gambling



IMPACT ON FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Gambling addiction can deeply affect families, leading to emotional distress, broken trust, and strained relationships. Loved ones may experience anxiety, depression, and feelings of betrayal, while children often face emotional neglect and instability.

Financially, families may lose savings, assets, or even their homes, creating long-term hardship. Children of problem gamblers are also at greater risk of developing addictive behaviors, and communities bear the burden through increased demand for mental health and social support services.



HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

- **Educate yourself:** learn about the risks and signs of gambling addiction
- **Share resources:** distribute information in your workplace or community
- **Host a talk or workshop:** invite a speaker or mental health professional
- **Support a cause:** donate to or volunteer with organisations that help those affected
- **Check in:** ask colleagues or friends how they're doing – your support matters.



Gambling addiction is a serious issue, but with awareness, compassion, and support, recovery is possible. Let's work together to create a culture where seeking help is encouraged and wellbeing is prioritised.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE – WE ARE HERE TO HELP.

Sources: <https://responsiblegambling.org.za/>
<https://headroom.co.za/where-to-get-help-for-gambling-addiction-in-south-africa/>

