

HARM REDUCTION TIPS

Here is a list of behaviors that could indicate problematic gambling. If you identify with any of the behaviors, review the list of ways to reduce potential harm caused by gambling.

Harmful Gambling Behaviors:

- Betting more money than you had planned
- Spending more time gambling than you planned
- Missing important events with family or friends due to gambling
- Feeling irritable when you are not gambling
- Being preoccupied with betting when engaged in other activities (not being fully present)
- Lying (or withholding information) about betting or the amount of money bet or lost
- Gambling more money than you earn
- Selling things to fund your bets
- Being asked by a loved one to cutback or stop gambling
- Taking out loans or payday advances to gamble
- Feeling guilt or shame related to gambling
- Missing work or having problems at work due to betting
- Cashing out retirement funds or savings to make up for money lost from gambling

Strategies to Reduce Harm:

- Set time limits and stick to them
- Only gamble on certain days or times of day
- Budget a set amount and stick to it
- Pay bills and important expenses first
- Meet with a financial counselor to get to know your finances better
- Only carry the cash you need for purchases when you go out
- Ask others to not lend you money
- Do not bet with credit
- Expect to lose
- Allow time between the urge to bet and making the actual bet
- Engage in other activities (such as hobbies, time with friends and family who do not gamble)
- Attend a support group meeting to learn more
- Know your triggers and develop healthy strategies to address them
- Do not gamble as a coping strategy
- Don't use gambling as a source of income
- Gamble as entertainment only

Note: If you are unsuccessful at reducing harmful gambling behaviors, reach out for help from a therapist or support group (Gamblers Anonymous or SMART recovery).