

***Gambling becomes a problem when it causes harm to the gambler and those close to them. Usually this means the gambler is spending more money or time on gambling than they can afford.***

*People with gambling problems often experience other health-related issues at the same time. Typically these include mental health, drug and alcohol and family/relationship issues.*

### **Mental health**

International community based studies show that:

- between 40% and 60% of problem gamblers have been found to have anxiety disorders;
- between half and three quarters of problem gamblers reported past year depression;
- more than 60% of problem gamblers have had a lifetime personality disorder;
- problem gamblers are at least 18 times more likely to suffer from a severe mental disorder than non-problem gamblers.



### **Drugs & alcohol**

There is a high level of association between problem gambling and drug and alcohol abuse. International community based studies show that:

- between half and three quarters of problem gamblers have been found to have a co-occurring alcohol use disorder with the prevalence of problem gambling increasing as the number of units of alcohol consumed weekly increases;
- more than 25% of problem gamblers experience both alcohol abuse and severe mental disorders;
- between 30% and 46% of problem gamblers report drug dependence or drug abuse;
- Victorian problem gamblers are 3 to 4 times more likely to be current smokers than non-problem gamblers.

### **Families & relationships**

Families of problem gamblers face enormous pressures including lying, lack of trust, arguments and financial stress.

- Approximately one in 10 problem gamblers report that their gambling led to a relationship breakdown.
- There are more than 1600 gambling-related divorces in Australia each year.
- Problem gamblers are more likely than non-problem gamblers to be isolated socially. Studies show that more than 25% of problem gamblers cannot get help from family, friends or neighbours when they need it compared with just over 2% of non-problem gamblers.

The children of problem gamblers are:

- 2 to 4 times more likely to develop gambling problems than their peers;
- more likely to demonstrate a range of physical, psychological and behavioural problems;
- twice as likely as their contemporaries to attempt suicide.

## **Specialist problem gambling portfolio services**

The Gambler's Help service system provides professional, free of charge problem gambling services to all Victorians. Yet only around 10% of problem gamblers seek help from formal problem gambling counselling services. They are more likely to present at other health services such as mental health, drug and alcohol and family services for their gambling-related problems. Problem gambling may be one factor in a complex array of other personal and health problems.

To help health and welfare professionals respond to clients with co-occurring gambling problems, Gambler's Help offers specialist problem gambling portfolio services. These services offer clients with gambling issues the opportunity to maintain their primary therapeutic relationship while still receiving a problem gambling intervention.

Portfolio services include:

- problem gambling outreach services to agencies already engaged with clients
- specialist secondary consultation
- specialist clinical interventions in other services
- new practice and clinical approaches in other service settings including single session and co-counselling

Based on the available evidence for key co-occurring problems, the Department of Justice has prioritised three portfolio service areas:

- mental health
- alcohol and drug
- family and relationship services.

The portfolio services program aims to develop strong links between agencies in the three priority service areas and problem gambling services. Portfolio workers are located at Gambler's Help sites (refer back of brochure).

## Gambler's Help Services

In addition to portfolio services, problem gamblers and their families can seek help in a range of ways including:

### Face to face counselling

Problem gambling counselling is available at approximately 100 Gambler's Help service locations in metropolitan and regional Victoria. Problem gambling counsellors are professionally qualified in social work, psychology or psychotherapy and must meet the eligibility requirements of their relevant professional association.

Specialist financial counsellors are also available and their role includes administering the Recovery Assistance Program (RAP) which provides material and financial assistance to individuals and their families when gambling has resulted in financial crisis.

### Gambler's Help Line 1800 858 858

The Gambler's Help Line is a toll free, 24-hour, seven days per week anonymous telephone service providing information, referral, counselling and support to problem gamblers and their family members.

### Gambling Help Online

[www.gamblinghelponline.org.au](http://www.gamblinghelponline.org.au)

Gambling Help Online offers counselling, information and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Qualified counsellors are available to provide online support to problem gamblers and their families via live counselling or email.

### Problem Gambling Professionals website

[www.professionals.problemgambling.vic.gov.au](http://www.professionals.problemgambling.vic.gov.au)

This website provides information, guidance and resources for health and welfare professionals on how to identify problem gambling clients and respond to their needs.

### Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS)

[www.vahs.org.au](http://www.vahs.org.au)

VAHS provides problem gambling counselling and community education to Indigenous communities.

Ph: 9419 3000

Region	Gambler's Help service	Phone number
<b>Metropolitan Services</b>		
East	Eastern Access Community Health	1300 131 973
Inner	The Salvation Army	03 9653 3250
North	Banyule Community Health Service	03 9450 2000
South	Bentleigh Bayside Community Health	03 9575 5353
West	ISIS Primary Care	03 9296 1234
<b>Regional Services</b>		
Barwon	Bethany Community Support	03 5278 8122
Central Victoria	Goulburn Valley Community Health Service	03 5823 3200
	Mitchell Community Health Service	03 5784 5555
	St Lukes Anglicare	1800 244 323
Grampians	Child and Family Services Ballarat	03 5337 3333
	Relationships Australia (Victoria)	03 5337 9222
	Grampians Community Health	03 5362 1200 (Horsham) 03 5358 7400 (Stawell)
Wimmera	Wimmera Uniting Care	03 5382 6789
	LaTrobe Community Health Service	1800 242 696
Loddon Mallee	St Lukes Anglicare	1800 244 323
Northern Victoria	Gateway Community Health Service	02 6022 8888 1800 657 573
	Community Connections	1300 361 680
Western Victoria	Community Connections	1300 361 680
<b>Indigenous Service</b>		
Inner metro suburbs	Victorian Aboriginal Health Service	03 9575 5353

Contact details correct as at July 2010

#### For more information

- [www.professionals.problemgambling.vic.gov.au](http://www.professionals.problemgambling.vic.gov.au)
- [www.gamblinghelponline.org.au](http://www.gamblinghelponline.org.au)
- Gambler's Help Line 1800 858 858
- Deaf, hearing or speech impaired TTY 1800 777 706
- Interpreting services available

Copies of this brochure can be downloaded from [www.professionals.problemgambling.vic.gov.au](http://www.professionals.problemgambling.vic.gov.au)

The website also lists the reference sources for the statistical information in this brochure.

Please note: The people depicted in the photographs are models.



## Gambler's Help Services in Victoria

Responding to problem gamblers with co-occurring issues

mental health

alcohol and drug

family & relationship issues

gambler's help  
1800 858 858

[gamblinghelponline.org.au](http://gamblinghelponline.org.au)

take the **problem** out of gambling

A Victorian Government initiative



A Community Support Fund initiative