

Helping the Gambler

While no one can make gamblers stop gambling, you can support them by: talking to them about their gambling, not giving or loaning money, becoming knowledgeable about problem gambling and encouraging the person to seek help:

Talk to the person about the gambling

- ❑ Ask the person about his or her gambling. If you think there might be a problem, the direct approach is best.
- ❑ Consider how you might be willing to support or assist if the person is having a problem. Tell them you care about them.
- ❑ If you think there is a problem with gambling, tell them what you have observed. Then ask for their feedback on your observations.
- ❑ Try to avoid arguments, and don't blame the person. These approaches may cause defensive behavior in the gambler.
- ❑ Use a positive approach so the person feels your concern and understands that there are some ways that you would consider helping.

Don't offer to give or loan money

- ❑ It's tough for family members and friends to watch a problem gambler run into financial problems. But the question is, should money be loaned or given in these circumstances?
- ❑ The experts say "no." This may sound uncaring, but it's really the only thing you can do so that the gambler will experience the consequences of his or her gambling. If problem gamblers are bailed out, they don't have to face the financial problems and can continue to gamble, adding to future problems.
- ❑ However, you can still make it clear that you will stand by the gambler and be there to support him or her.

Become knowledgeable about problem gambling

- ❑ You will be better able to help both yourself and the problem gambler if you gather as much information as possible about the problem.
- ❑ Becoming more knowledgeable will also help you to prepare for future issues, enabling you to minimize the impact that problem gambling may have on you and your family.

Encourage the person to seek help

Problem gamblers often need encouragement to obtain professional help or support, and they may not be able to control the problem without this help. You can talk to the person about this, and provide contact information for counseling and support services. For more information on how to get help, please call 1-800-Gambler.

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