

Protecting Yourself

Family and friends of problem gamblers often harbor feelings of guilt, shame and helplessness. As well, there may be feelings of frustration and anger caused by the impact of the gambling. People affected by problem gambling may not know where to turn or who to talk to for assistance, so isolation may occur.

There are several things you can do to lessen the impact of the problem gambling on yourself and your family: protecting your finances, maintaining your physical and emotional well-being and taking time for yourself.

Protect your finances

Visit your financial advisors (banks, etc) to make sure you have control over the finances that you are able to control.

You may choose whether or not to tell your financial advisors about the gambling problem in your family. In some instances, divulging the problem may not be in your best interest.

Don't let the gambler have unnecessary access to cash and credit that you can control on your own or have the gambler's cooperation to control.

Put your family on a budget that allows for spending money, but not access to money required for necessities.

Don't assume the gambler's debt.

Talk to financial experts to find out what your rights are regarding another person's debt and to get professional advice on your finances.

Don't sign anything you don't understand without professional advice.

Maintain your physical and emotional well-being

Physical or emotional abuse is not acceptable at any time or in any situation. Don't let the gambler blame you or harm you. Your safety is the top priority, so do whatever is necessary to keep safe. In severe situations, this may mean calling the police or finding an alternate living arrangement.

Take time for yourself

You may find yourself so wrapped up in the gambler's problem and its impact on you and your family that you become resentful and angry.

It's important to put the problem out of your mind at times so you can have some happy, stress-free time to yourself.

Take time to participate in the activities you enjoy and to spend time with friends. Doing this will give you the break you need to enable you to better deal with the problem.

For more information on helping yourself, call 1-800-Gambler

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