

What if I Know Someone Who May Have a Gambling Problem?

Just thinking about talking to someone about a gambling problem can be scary, but knowing how to start can help you find the courage to have the conversation. First, be informed. Before starting a discussion, learn about problem gambling and the resources available such as The Gambling Clinic (901-678-STOP - www.thegamblingclinic.memphis.edu), the State of Tennessee Redline (800-889-9789), or Gamblers Anonymous. *Next...*

- Choose a comfortable place where you feel safe and won't be interrupted. Then, keep it simple and straightforward. Try to focus on giving the person information, not advice. Remember this conversation is between adults who care about each other and should not resemble a therapy session. Keep in mind that this is likely a scary conversation for them as well.
- Tell the person you care about him/her and you are concerned about how they are acting. Explain what you've seen that makes you worry for them. Describe how his/her behavior is affecting other people – be specific but make sure this is about your concern for them and not punishment. Make sure you are not being confrontational and backing them into a corner.
- Be clear about what you expect from him/her. For example, "I want you to talk to someone about your gambling" or "Do you think talking to someone might help?" Also let them know what they can expect from you. "I don't feel comfortable covering for you anymore."
- Listen with a non-judgmental and supportive attitude. It is important to avoid being confrontational. It is likely that being confrontational will make it difficult for them to seek any additional help.
- Let the person know that you are there for support.
- Encourage him/her to call for additional help. It might be good to offer to help them find help if they would like some. Talk about how other people find it helpful to talk with someone about options for making changes in their life.
- Be proactive, if necessary. If your financial assets are in jeopardy, take steps to protect your financial resources. You can also help him/her gain control of their spending by offering to manage checkbooks, credit cards, and the household budget.
- Finally, take care of yourself. Stay in touch with your feelings. Realize that you are not responsible for his/her problem. You may find it helpful to seek out someone to talk to during this time such as a family member or counselor.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

The Gambling Clinic A Center for Self-Change
The University of Memphis
901-678-STOP (7867)
website: www.thegamblingclinic.memphis.edu
email: gambling@memphis.edu

