

ADF MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

GAMBLING



JOINT HEALTH COMMAND
VICE CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE



Many different types of gambling activities are available in Australia. Individuals can bet on horse racing, greyhound racing, sporting events, as well as purchase lotto and raffle tickets, play electronic gaming machines (poker machines) or play the many types of casino games available online and at casinos in all states and territories around Australia.

Who and why do people gamble?

Recreational gamblers comprise the vast majority of the community. They generally gamble as a form of entertainment or to add excitement to their social outing. However, a percentage of the community is at risk of developing problems with their gambling. These people usually begin as recreational gamblers but their gambling can become increasingly problematic for a variety reasons.

Facts

- the actions of one problem gambler negatively impacts the lives of between five and 10 others. This means there are up to five million Australians who could be affected by problem gambling each year, including friends, family and employers of people with a gambling problem
- only around 15 per cent of problem gamblers seek help
- one in six people who play the pokies regularly has a serious addiction
- problem gamblers lose around \$21,000 each year. That's one third of the average Australian salary
- some poker machines can be played at extremely high intensity – a gambler could lose more than \$1,500 in just one hour
- young people (18-24 year olds) spend more on poker machines than any other age group
- problem gamblers are six times more likely to be divorced than non problem gamblers
- problem gamblers are four times more likely to have problems with alcohol and four times as likely to smoke daily than non problem gamblers
- children with parents who are problem gamblers are up to 10 times more likely to become problem gamblers themselves than children with non gambling parents.

Some signs of problem gambling

A person may have a gambling problem if they experience any one or more of the following:

- frequent thoughts about gambling (including opportunities and strategies)
- gambling with increased amounts to achieve the desired level of excitement
- unsuccessful attempts to reduce or stop gambling
- gambling as a way of escaping problems
- chasing losses
- lying to conceal the extent of gambling
- committing illegal acts to finance gambling
- jeopardizing or losing a relationship, job or career opportunity
- borrowing money to finance gambling.

Ways to reduce problem gambling

There are many practical ways that people can reduce their problem gambling behaviour. It helps if they can:

- understand and address the underlying issues that led to the problem
- alter beliefs about the likelihood of winning
- take only a fixed amount of money to gamble
- leave ATM and credit cards at home
- identify alternate activities to engage in
- talk to a friend, family member or counsellor about the problem
- enter into a venue self-exclusion program
- gain a better understanding of the rates of return for different types of gambling.

What is problem gambling?

Problem gambling is characterised by difficulties in limiting money and/or time spent on gambling which leads to adverse consequences for the gambler, others, or for the community.

Misconceptions about Gaming Machines

- there are no strategies for winning on a gaming machine!
- none of the following factors will make a difference:
 - the last time the machine paid out
 - how much you bet
 - how long you have been playing for
 - past and future plays
 - the time of day
 - touching the button a certain way or having a ritual
 - concentrating or having positive thinking.

Where to seek help

Your chain of command is a primary resource that can provide advice, referral and support. You can also contact your local on base Health Centre, Mental Health Professional, Chaplain or the Duty Officer/Officer of the Day for immediate assistance and referrals.

The ADF Mental Health All Hours Support Line (ASL) is a confidential telephone service for ADF members and their families available 24/7 on **1800 628 036** or if calling from overseas +61 2 9425 3878.

If you are away from base, or for out-of-hours assistance, you can call **1800 IMSICK** to locate the nearest support.

Chaplains are connected to all units in Australia and can provide support and appropriate referrals.

The ADF Health and Wellbeing Portal
www.defence.gov.au/health/healthportal/

The Portal is an online health information resource tool for all current and ex-serving ADF Members and their families.

Other Resources

Defence Family Helpline (1800 624 608)

The Defence Family Helpline is your first point of call for support, information and connection with your community. The Helpline is available 24/7 for ADF members and their families, and is staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists.

You can also email the Helpline on DefenceFamilyHelpline@defence.gov.au and receive a response within 24 hours.

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS). This 24 hour service is available to veterans of all deployments and their families on 1800 011 046.

Nation-Wide Gambling Help Online:
www.gamblinghelponline.org.au
or 1800 858 858