

*Even in your Darkest Hour,  
There is Always...*



Hope.

Problem gambling is of great concern to families, individuals, public and mental health officials, government, gamblers and many others. This brochure provides recovery strategies for individuals struggling with a gambling problem, but it may also be useful to others. The following tactics have been tested by clinicians and been found to be very useful.

### **Key Problem gambling recovery strategies**

- Protect your money.
- Build your support network.
- Avoid gambling venues.
- Manage your free time.

### **How to protect your money**

- Have your income deposited directly into your bank account.
- Only keep one bank account open and avoid incurring debts.
- Keep a small amount of money in your personal account.
- Have a joint bank account, requiring two signatures for withdrawals.
- Budget a specific amount of money to be used for weekly expenses.
- Take the minimum amount of money you need to carry out your day.
- Make it a priority to buy gas as well as pay bills, food and rent first.
- Be transparent with your loved ones about your finances.

- Ask your partner to monitor your finances regularly.
- Do a complete credit check to flag credit cards that might have been overlooked or forgotten. If you find any cards, cancel them.
- Ask to be barred from banks, pawn shops and other creditors.

### **How to build your support network**

- Go to self-help groups.
- Admit your gambling problem to someone close to you – reach out for help.
- Go to out-patient counselling; consider rehabilitation programs.
- Get private counselling for personal issues.
- Obtain financial counselling, if needed.

### **How to avoid gambling venues**

- Take a different route to avoid triggers.
- Avoid going to gambling venues; if you do go, bring someone with you.
- Ask to be barred from gambling venues.
- Carry the minimum amount of money you need when you go out.
- Have an alternate, safe plan in case you get upset and are tempted to gamble.

### **How to manage your free time**

- Pinpoint times when you frequently gamble and occupy them with another activity or someone's company.
- Revisit old hobbies or pastimes and explore new ones.
- Exercise, rest, and eat well.
- Do volunteer work.

### **Gambling recovery ideas**

- Keep a coin with a photo of a loved one attached to it.
- Keep a photo of your partner and children in your wallet or purse.
- Place a happy-face sticker on dates on a calendar to indicate days when you have not gambled.
- Call a friend each day to report whether you have gambled.
- Get a pet if an empty home triggers your urge to gamble.
- Identify the amount of money that triggers your desire to play.
- Have a loved one help you manage your finances to save money for a dream trip or purchase to reward yourself for not gambling.
- Pick up your paycheque on Monday instead of Friday.
- Buy a gas and/or food cards.
- Collect tips you have earned and ask a friend to keep them for you; or have a locked money box for tips.

- Have money automatically withdrawn from your bank account to pay your bills.
- Pay bills by cheque.
- When planning on paying a bill with cash, call the business first to announce you will be coming; or bring a non-gambling friend with you to help you in the process.
- Destroy your bank cards.
- Reduce the daily cash-withdrawal limit of your automatic telling machine (ATM) card, if you decide to keep one.
- Carry only small amounts of cash.
- Bring a book to read in case you get bored.
- Change into your evening clothes after work.
- Close all your credit card accounts.

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