

Making your organisation 'problem gambling aware'

There are well-known links between 'problem gambling' and offending behaviour in areas such as [fraud](#), [theft](#) and [domestic violence](#) yet few legal, justice or corrections professionals ask their clients about debt and gambling.

By your service including screening questions on client checklists to identify gambling problems and by supporting identified clients to seek [free Gambling Help treatment](#), we can all help prevent recidivism and promote recovery.

Screening considerations

- Clients with gambling problems will tend to deny they have a gambling problem.
- Clients may become defensive, as gambling is legal and may be one of their few enjoyments.
- As problem gambling is stigmatised, discussions around 'financial counselling' may be more effective.
- Different screening tools may be more effective for clients with Aboriginal or CALD backgrounds and/or people with disabilities.
- The word 'gambling' might not be specific enough for some clients. Where possible, refer to specific examples such as 'pokies', 'sports betting', 'racing', 'bingo', 'lotto', 'keno', 'scratchies', 'roulette', 'blackjack' and 'online gaming'.
- Clients with gambling disorders may also have drug and/or alcohol addictions and may be suffering from trauma.
- Anyone can have a gambling problem, including legal, justice and corrections professionals.

Gambling Help services are free

Gambling Help treatment is funded by Liquor & Gaming NSW and includes:

- [Free face to face counselling](#)
- [Free financial counselling](#)
- [Free Aboriginal counselling services](#)
- [Free counselling services for people with culturally and linguistically diverse \(CALD\) backgrounds](#)
- [Free legal help for gambling-related issues](#)

Gambling Help treatment can:

- Assist with supporting your clients through [self-exclusion](#) from gambling venues
- Be undertaken within [community based orders](#) and [diversion programs](#)
- Support clients, where applicable, to reduce fine debt through [Work and Development Orders](#)
- Provide free counselling to friends and families as well as clients.

How to screen for problem gambling

Try the [8-question Gambling Help NSW quiz](#)
or the [3-question Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen](#)

Other useful questions

- 'Have you tried to win back losses?'
- 'Have you ever lost more than you could afford to lose?'
- 'What does your family say about your gambling?'
- 'Have you tried to keep family or friends from knowing how much you gamble?'
- 'Have you borrowed from friends or family to pay your debts?'
- 'Have you become restless, irritable or anxious when trying to stop or cut down on gambling?'

Internationally-accredited tools used by professional counsellors

- [South Oaks Gambling Screen](#) (SOGS) (12 questions, available in 17 languages)
- [The Problem Gambling Severity Index](#) (PGSI) (9 questions)
- [DSM-5 American Psychiatric Association](#) criteria (9 criteria)
- [NORC Diagnostic Screen for Gambling Problems – Self Administered](#) (NODS-SA) (10 questions, National Council on Problem Gambling, US)

Research on gambling and crime

Problem gambling definition

- Reilly, C., Smith, N., [From Pathological Gambling to Gambling Disorder: Changes in the DSM-5](#), National Center for Responsible Gaming

Problem gambling and crime

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- May-Chahal, C., Humphreys, L., Clifton, A., Francis, B., Reith, G. (2017), [Gambling Harm and Crime Careers](#), *Journal of Gambling Studies*, March 2017, Volume 33, Issue 1, pp 65-84
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- Williams, R., Royston, J., and Hagen, B., (2005) [Gambling and problem gambling within forensic populations, A review of the literature](#), *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, Vol 32 No 6

Problem gambling and domestic violence

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- [Warfield, B. and Assoc \(various\)](#)

Systematic screening for problem gambling recommended

- [Problem Gambling and the Criminal Justice System](#), January 2013, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation
- The Allen Consulting Group and The University of Melbourne (October 2011) [Responding to gambling-related crime, Sentencing options and improving data collection in courts and prisons](#), *Report to the Tasmanian Government Department of Treasury and Finance*.