

PREPARING TO CHANGE THE WAY YOU GAMBLE

- Perhaps this is a good time to identify the benefits and costs of **your** gambling; that is the effects of your gambling. These effects are more than just the financial costs of gambling. They include the effects on your family and the stress or stress relief you experience around gambling.
- Over the next couple of days set aside a few hours to carefully examine the reasons for changing your gambling, this will be summarised in the page called **Reasons for Changing Gambling**.
- Choose a time when you will not be disturbed or distracted, and when you can seriously and honestly list the benefits and costs of your gambling.
- You may find this exercise difficult to get started on, that's OK. Relax, take your time and don't rush through this exercise. You can always call the Gambling Helpline on 0800 654 655 for help in working through the issues.
- Your gambling habits didn't develop overnight – it may take a while to examine their costs and benefits.
- When you have decided that you are ready, complete the **Decision to Change** form. If you want to talk this over with your counsellor just give them a call.

REASONS FOR CHANGING GAMBLING

The most important reasons why I want to change my gambling:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

DECISION TO CHANGE GAMBLING

One of the things that might help you make a change in your gambling is listing all the benefits and costs that relate to **changing your gambling** as well as the benefits and costs of **continuing with your gambling unchanged**. Your counsellor will be interested to discuss these pros and cons with you and you can email your work directly to the Gambling Helpline to help this process.

Use the decision to Change Form to list the benefits and costs of **changing your gambling** and the benefits and cost of **continuing your gambling unchanged**.

The following is an example of how the completed form might look. A blank version is at the end of this document.

	CHANGING MY CURRENT GAMBLING	CONTINUING TO GAMBLE WITHOUT CHANGE
BENEFITS OF:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel I have control over my life • Support from family and friends • Decreased job problems • Financial gain • Improved health • More control over my behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps me relax • Feels good • Stops me thinking and worrying about problems • Might have a big win • Can continue to socialise with my gambling friends
COSTS OF:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won't have a way to relax • Lack of excitement • Lose pleasure I get from gambling • Will have to admit I have a problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disapproval from friends or co-workers • Family problems • Could lose my job • Break-up of relationship • Financial problems • May have to resort to crime to meet the bills

Things to consider

The following are some things you might want to consider when looking at the costs and benefits of your gambling and completing the Decision to Change Form.

How much is gambling part of your lifestyle? Has your gambling come to play a major role in your life? For example, has gambling become your main recreation activity, are most of your friends gamblers? Lifestyle changes may be a necessary part of changing your gambling.

Take a look at the following areas in your life:

AVAILABILITY OF GAMBLING: Is gambling use more likely to occur at time when you are using alcohol or drugs?

AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT GAMBLING: If you spend a great deal of time gambling or thinking about gambling you may need to fill in this time with low risk activities.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS: a change in social relationships may be necessary to avoid gambling. If you decide that associating with people who gamble or who you need to spend time with in hotels is too risky for you, then a change in your circle of friends might be necessary.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN COMPLETING YOUR DECISION TO CHANGE FORM

The following table presents a listing of questions and categories that can assist you in preparing your homework answers.

QUESTIONS

1. Where and when do you tend to do your gambling?
2. What other people tend to be present on these occasions and how do they act?
3. How do you feel BEFORE and AFTER gambling?
4. What thoughts were foremost in your mind RIGHT BEFORE gambling?
5. What are the lies you tell yourself about your gambling? E.g., I'll only spend \$50; I'll stop when I've doubled it.
6. What do you accomplish by gambling? What purposes does it serve for you?

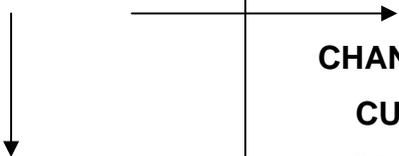
SOME GENERAL CATEGORIES OF TRIGGERS

- Your **emotional state** (e.g. angry, depressed, happy, jealous, sad, bored).
- Your **physical state** (e.g. relaxed, tense, tired, aroused).
- The **physical setting** (e.g. hotels, TAB).
- **Activities** (e.g. at work, working at home, playing sports, watching TV, playing cards).
- **Your thoughts** (e.g. having to make major decision; worried about financial problems; bored; work pressures; wanting to go someplace else).

SOME GENERAL CATEGORIES OF CONSEQUENCES

- Physical consequences (bodily sensations).
- Emotional consequences (mood changes feeling powerless).
- Social consequences (having to lie to others; how others act towards you).
- Material events (e.g. legal charges; financial debts; property damage).
- What you are thinking (e.g. feeling guilty; feeling out of control).

DECISION TO CHANGE FORM

	CHANGING MY CURRENT GAMBLING	CONTINUING TO GAMBLE WITHOUT CHANGE
BENEFITS :		
COSTS :		