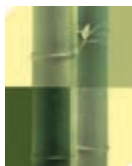




改變的第一步



如果賭博影響您或您的家庭，而您想改變，您已經跨出了第一步。本指南將幫助您瞭解賭博，以探討您是否需作改變，並助您決定如何面對實際改變的過程。若您對賭博有任何顧慮，本指南可適用於您。

改變的第一步

如果您已下定決心改變，本指南可助您開始改變的歷程。您可依最適合自己的方式來使用本指南。您可一次回答所有問題，分幾次回答，或者把本指南留作參考材料，隨時查看。本指南分為以下三節：

第一節：賭博的真相

本節向您解釋賭博是如何運作的，以及賭博為何會對某些人造成問題。

第二節：瞭解您的賭博情況

本節幫助您思考自己的賭博情況，瞭解自己為何賭博。

第三節：考慮作改變

本節引導您實現改變的過程。

第一步要先知道您是否需要或想要改變。請試著回答下列問題：

1. 您花在賭博上的時間是否比您預計的時間來的長，或賭博次數比您預計的次數來的多？ 是_____ 否_____
2. 您是否常賭到一分錢不剩？ 是_____ 否_____
3. 想要賭博的念頭是否常使您失眠？ 是_____ 否_____
4. 您是否曾將本來應該用來支付帳單的錢拿去賭博？ 是_____ 否_____
5. 您是否多次努力戒賭，卻從未成功？ 是_____ 否_____
6. 您是否曾因賭博而被逮捕或者上法庭？ 是_____ 否_____
7. 您是否曾借錢去賭博或支付賭債？ 是_____ 否_____
8. 您是否曾因為賭輸而有情緒不佳或有自殺的念頭？ 是_____ 否_____
9. 您是否曾在賭完之後有悔意？ 是_____ 否_____
10. 您是否曾以賭博的方式來籌款支付帳單或債務？ 是_____ 否_____

如果您對任何問題回答「是」，也許您要考慮改變。
本指南以下幾節可幫助您。第一節介紹一些您可能不知道的賭博相關資訊。

第一節：賭博的真相

「瞭解賭博」

賭博只不過是用有價值的東西來押注。會賭博的人通常是因為想要得到比原本價值更高的獲利。如果您有失去金錢或財物的風險，就是賭博；即使這種賭博是在和朋友或家人之間進行。亞裔喜歡的賭博活動包括：

- 樂透獎或刮刮樂
- 賭場賭戲（二十一點、輪盤、誰是賭王、牌九、骰寶）
- 體育比賽押注
- 骰子賭戲
- 跑馬場押注
- 電動撲克
- 網上押注
- 麻將

「何謂問題賭博？」

問題賭博是指賭博行為對賭博者本身及其周圍的人造成情緒、家庭、法律、或財務上的問題。問題賭博會隨著時間而日益嚴重，而且問題的狀況也有從輕微到劇烈。

「問題賭博的徵兆有哪些？」

有賭博問題的人常會覺得需要加押更多賭注，當他們試著不賭時，脾氣會變得很暴躁，而且會有把錢「追」回來的想法。即使債務累累、失去朋友及親人的信任，他們還是不斷地賭下去。一般而言，有賭博問題的人通常會把絕大部分的收入花在賭博上。

手氣

雖然很多人認為輸久必贏，您卻從來不會因此而贏。每次擲硬幣得到人頭向上與向下的機會各為50%。也就是說，如果您擲了十次硬幣，十次人頭都向上，第十一次人頭向上或向下的機會仍然各半。每次擲硬幣的結果對下一次的投擲並不會有影響。硬幣本身是沒有記憶的。

運氣

有賭博問題的人往往相信他們能夠改變運氣，影響輸贏的結果。舉例來說：選擇「有好運氣的」數字、莊家、座位、賭博機，穿某件衣服等等。這種種舉動其實對輸贏沒有影響。機會就是機會。

「有賭博問題的人很多嗎？」

如果您認為賭博對您來說是個問題，您並不是唯一的一個。問題賭博是一個全球問題。美國、加拿大、香港、新加坡有嚴重賭博問題者的比例相似（佔成年人口的 0.6%至1.9%）。1999年舊金山唐人街地區調查了1,808名美國華人，其中70% 的人把賭博列為社區裏的首要問題。

「要是輪到我贏了呢？」

有時候賭博的人會認為贏家終會是自己，但事實上往往並非如此。原因如下：賭博是基於機會、機率及隨機性。如果一場賭局的輸贏機會各半，這跟之前您輸贏多少並無關。下次您再賭時，輸贏的機率仍然各半。

「某些賭博遊戲是否較容易導致賭博方面的問題？」

所有的賭博多多少少都有風險。快速的賭局通常風險也會較高，例如：電子機的樂透遊戲、吃角子老虎機和刮刮樂。但不論哪一種遊戲種類都會導致賭博方面的問題, 即使是麻將或網上賭博。

莊家優勢

許多有賭博問題的人相信他們能夠跟系統「鬥智」，或是認為他們有贏的能力。但是，博彩行業設計的賭場遊戲都是為了賭場賺錢，因此賭場總是處於優勢。即使您能獲得讓分盤，或能數牌，影響賭局結果的原因仍然很多，因此，您希望賭局能盡如人意，甚至對賭局的結果有相當程度的影響是不可能的。賭博就是賭博 — 結果永遠是未定的，賭客永遠無法影響賭局的機率。

第二節：瞭解您的賭博習性

瞭解賭博如何運作及賭博所引起的問題，是您解決賭博問題歷程中的重要一步。本節幫助您瞭解自己的賭博習性。請回答下列問題，以更進一步檢視您的賭博情況：

1. 您是否曾經試圖減少賭博的次數？
是_____ 否_____
2. 有其他人因為您的賭博行為而不高興嗎？
是_____ 否_____
3. 您曾獨自去賭博嗎？
是_____ 否_____
4. 您曾對自己的賭博行為感到愧疚嗎？
是_____ 否_____
5. 您曾用賭博來使自己感覺好過一點嗎？
是_____ 否_____

如果您對任何問題回答「是」，您也許要考慮一下自己的賭博行為。許多人並不知道賭博可能給自己的生活造成什麼影響。下一頁的問卷能幫助找出您可能面臨的困難。回答這些問題可使您警覺到沒有想到過的問題。

1. 過去十二個月內，您曾否花很多時間思考要如何取得金錢去賭博？
是_____ 否_____
2. 過去十二個月內，您下的注是否越來越大以求獲得興奮感？
是_____ 否_____
3. 您是否覺得過去十二個月來，下注較小，較不能像過去一樣給您興奮感？
是_____ 否_____
4. 過去十二個月內，您是否因為戒賭或中斷賭博而導致情緒起伏不定？
是_____ 否_____
5. 過去十二個月內，您是否曾為了消除不愉快的感覺而賭博，而且您的不愉快是因為中斷賭博或減少賭博而引起的呢？
是_____ 否_____
6. 過去十二個月內，您是否曾藉著賭博來忘卻壓力？
是_____ 否_____
7. 您是否在輸了之後，為了要贏回來而又去賭博呢？
是_____ 否_____
8. 過去十二個月內，您是否曾針對您賭博的行為、金額或次數，向家人或其他人說謊？
是_____ 否_____
9. 過去十二個月內，您是否曾利用不正當手段取得金錢去賭博？
是_____ 否_____
10. 過去十二個月內，您是否曾為了賭博而失去或差點失去感情、工作、求學或就業機會？
是_____ 否_____
11. 您是否依靠他人（家人、朋友或同事）支付您因賭博造成的負債？
是_____ 否_____
12. 過去十二個月內，您曾經想過要戒賭或限制自己的賭博行為卻失敗？
是_____ 否_____

以上各問題會幫助您發現自己因賭博而遇到的問題。其中每一問題都指向一個非常嚴重的狀況。如果您對任何問題回答「是」，您也許要考慮減少或停止賭博。

延伸問題

另一個瞭解自己賭博情況的方法是思考賭博對您造成的影響。很多有賭博問題的人都有各種與金錢、家庭、其他社會關係相關的困擾。回答下列問題，檢討自己是否有和問題賭博者經歷相同的問題：

1. 過去十二個月內，您是否曾被信用卡公司拒絕？
是_____ 否_____
2. 您是否曾在賭博中輸掉作為家用的錢？
是_____ 否_____
3. 您常有別人上門討債的問題嗎？
是_____ 否_____
4. 過去十二個月內，您是否曾經把生活必需開支拿去當賭金？
是_____ 否_____
5. 過去十二個月內，您是否曾因為要付賭金而遲付家中帳單？
是_____ 否_____
6. 過去十二個月內，您是否曾使用信用卡借錢當賭金？
是_____ 否_____

如果您對任何問題回答「是」，就可能表示賭博已經影響到您和對您重要的人。現在您可能還不確定是否想改變，但重要的是您已經對自己的賭博有了進一步的瞭解。本指南的下一節會幫助您思考自己賭博的原因；如果您決定自己應該改變，本指南還可幫助您思考如何改變。

第三節：考慮改變

「我真的想要改變嗎？」

在您真的下定決心改變之前，最好考慮每個決定的利弊。填寫下列表格有助您瞭解賭博各個決定的利弊：

比如：

不賭博的好處：

我會有更多錢用在其他方面。
我會有更多時間跟我關愛的人相處。
我會有更多時間學習新技能。

不賭博的代價：

我必須承擔責任。
我必須做其他事來消磨時間。

賭博的好處：

賭博讓我忘卻煩惱。
我喜愛從賭博得到的興奮感。

賭博的代價

我會背負龐大的債務。
我會憂鬱並焦慮不安。
我會對家庭造成傷害。

現在請您試著填入自己的答案：

不賭博的好處：

賭博的好處：

不賭博的代價：

賭博的代價：

您在哪一個項目列出最多答案？

-不賭博的好處	選擇_____
-不賭博的代價	選擇_____
-賭博的好處	選擇_____
-賭博的代價	選擇_____

這對您有何意義？

持續賭博的好處是否高於您所需付出的代價？

如果您認為所需付出的代價高於繼續賭博所得到的好處，您或許該考慮改變自己的賭博行為。這是您個人的決定。

決定目標

請想想：

有些人只不過減少賭博的次數，但有些人已經下定決心戒賭。有關研究的結果顯示：可將減少賭博的次數當成目標。然而很多人認為這個目標很難達成，因為人們很容易恢復原來的賭博惡習。但如果減少賭博次數對您來說很困難，不如就完全戒掉賭博吧。顯然沒有哪一個目標是容易達成的，但僅減少賭博次數可能成功機會更低。

決定改變後下一步便是設立目標。例如：

- 您何時想改變？
- 您想要戒賭或只是比現在少賭一點？

切記，改變是一個過程且需要時間。前三個月通常最難熬。過了這三個月之後雖然也不容易，但不像初期那麼困難。雖然這些過程看似困難，但多數人的經驗顯示賭博習性確實可由此改變。

要改變賭博習性，您必須首先做出決定。請考慮您想要做出怎樣的改變。比如說，也許明年您就想要達成戒賭的目標，或是六個月內您要讓自己減少賭博次數。

您會選擇下列何者？請在合適的空位打鉤：

____戒賭 ____減少賭博次數

現在寫下您會用哪些具體方法來達到這個目標。例如：您打算何時開始？您會有何種跟以前不一樣的具體行為？

這是您改變的目標。請簽名對自己作一個承諾：

簽名 _____ 日期 _____

「當我想賭時，我該怎麼辦？」

對戒賭的人來說，有想賭的衝動是正常的。這衝動通常很難克制，但是經過一次又一次的練習，您可以緩和這股衝動而不會向其屈服。您或許會發現戒賭或少賭之後，這股衝動較以前變本加厲。這是很正常的。重要的是您知道這種衝動是暫時的，過了就好了。

以下是一些建議：

轉移注意力到別的事情上。以其他活動取代所有和賭博有關的事物及習慣，讓自己避免想起賭博。發掘新的消遣時間的方式。最重要的是，想想賭博開始進入您的生活之前，您都喜歡做些什麼。

賭博開始變成您生活的一部分之前，您喜歡做的事有哪些，請將其列出。例如：聽音樂、看電視、看電影、運動、做義工、探親訪友等等。

開始做您以前喜歡做的事；您或許忘記您以前有多喜歡做這些事情。隨身帶著這份清單，如此一來每當您有賭博的衝動時，您可以看一下清單所列的活動，知道可以做些什麼去克制它。

如果這股衝動實在大到讓您無法專注於其他想法，或是去做您列出的活動，那就跟自己說：「好吧，或許我十分鐘後再賭。」然後等個十分鐘。如果這個衝動還在，就不斷告訴自己只要等個十分鐘。在這每十分鐘，就從列出的活動中找事情來做。賭博的衝動會隨著時間而消失。

察覺衝動

如果您有賭博的衝動，正視這股衝動是很重要的——千萬別忽視它。要想：「我現在有股衝動想去賭博。但是我知道這股衝動會隨時間消逝，因此我不必有任何反應。」當這個時候來臨時，盡快找出您所列的事項，並在其中找出事情做。

您還可試一試以下方法，可能會有幫助：

- 打電話給支援專線：
全國專線：1-800-522-4700
麻州專線：1-800-426-1234
- 參加國際戒賭組織（Gamblers Anonymous）的自助會，欲知開會地點，請電全國專線：1-888-GA-HELPS，即1-888-424-3577）。
- 避免進入或接近有賭博活動的場所。
- 少與賭博者相處，免得禁不住壓力而賭博。
- 身上只攜帶當天所需數額的錢款。
- 如果可能，最好安排自己的工資支票直接存入銀行。
- 銷毀自己的信用卡、借記卡、自動取款機卡。

現在，請打電話給您可以信任的朋友或家人。跟他們述說您想賭博的衝動，以及您如何克制這股衝動的感覺。會支援您改變的朋友和家人將扮演協助您達成目標的重要角色。但是您生活中，有些人不但不希望您改變，反而希望您繼續賭下去。如果您知道哪些人是這樣的，要避免去接觸這些人——尤其當賭博衝動出現的時候。

「如果我欲戒不能，該怎麼辦？」

如果您在戒賭過程中又去賭博，您並非是唯一會這樣的人。很多人都發現戒賭或少賭其實需要再三嘗試。戒賭或減少賭博是很困難的事，您或許無法在第一次嘗試時就成功戒賭。要記住，很多人甚至沒有辦法走到這一步。因為藉由這本指南所提供的資訊，逐步的詢問，以及決定改變賭博習性的念頭，您已經開始讓自己有更安全、更快樂、且更健康的生活。如果您又去賭博，而且欲罷不能，這不表示您無法達成戒賭目標。您需要的是不斷地嘗試、不斷地向信任的人訴說您的感覺並且不斷地尋找協助。破戒並非表示這些戒賭動作不值得嘗試或不可能戒賭。

希望這樣的引導對您有所幫助，並讓您考慮作改變。這可以是一個起點，也是您改變的藍圖。改變從來就不是容易的事。一旦您下定決心改變，這過程中必定有許多阻礙。做好心理準備並迎接挑戰。您的改變過程或許有時會很艱難，但絕對是值得的。

其他有用的資源

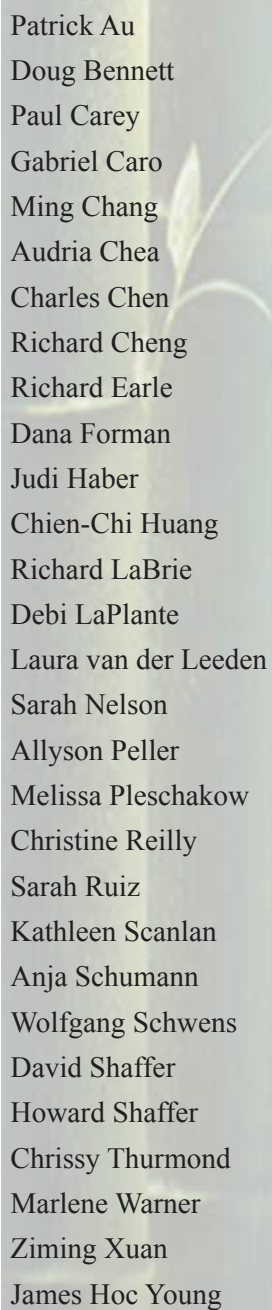
一路讀下來，您或許已經發現自己新的一面。且有些部分可能讓您很難面對。有些則是生活中必須處理的問題，跟賭博一點關係都沒有。如果您有非賭博方面的問題（或是其他賭博方面的問題），應該取得其他的支援或治療。如果您要尋找更多資訊或建議，本手冊後面的資料會對您有幫助。

致謝

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



If gambling is affecting you or your family and you are thinking about change, you've already taken the first step. This guide will help you understand gambling, figure out if you need to change, and decide how to deal with the actual process of change. If you're at all concerned about your gambling, this guide is for you.

Your First Step to Change

Should you decide to change, this guide can help you begin your journey. You can use this guide in the way you feel most comfortable. Complete it all at once, a little at a time, or keep it as a reference that you can read whenever you want. The guide is divided into the following three sections:

Section 1: *Facts About Gambling*,
will explain how gambling works and how
it can become a problem for some people.

Section 2: *Understanding Your Gambling*,
will help you think about how you gamble
and your reasons for gambling.

Section 3: *Thinking About Change*,
will lead you through the process of change

***The first step of your journey is to figure out if you need or want to change.
Try to answer the following questions:***

1. Have you gambled longer or more often than you had planned? Yes _____ No _____
2. Have you often gambled until you spent all your money? Yes _____ No _____
3. Have thoughts of gambling caused you to lose sleep? Yes _____ No _____
4. Have you gambled away the money that is intended to pay bills? Yes _____ No _____
5. Have you tried many times to stop gambling, but you can't? Yes _____ No _____
6. Have you been arrested or had to go to court as a result of your gambling? Yes _____ No _____
7. Have you borrowed money to gamble or pay your gambling debts? Yes _____ No _____
8. Have you felt low or thought of killing yourself because of your gambling losses? Yes _____ No _____
9. Have you felt sorry after gambling? Yes _____ No _____
10. Have you ever gambled to get money to pay bills or debts? Yes _____ No _____

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, then you may want to consider making a change. The following sections of this guide can help. Section 1 will explain some interesting things about gambling you might not know.

Section 1: *Facts About Gambling*

“Understanding Gambling”

Gambling is simply putting something at stake on the outcome of an event before it happens. If you risk money or things that you own, it is gambling. It is still gambling if you are playing with friends or family. Popular gambling activities in the Asian community include:

- Lotteries or scratch tickets
- Casino games (black-jack, roulette, baccarat, pai-gow, sic-bo)
- Sports betting
- Dice games
- Racetrack betting
- Video poker
- Internet betting
- Ma-jong

Problem gambling is gambling to the extent that it causes emotional, family, legal, financial or other problems for the gambler and the people around the gambler. Problem gambling can get worse over time, and gambling problems can range from mild to severe.

“What are some signs of problem gambling?”

When people have a problem with gambling, many times they feel like they need to bet more money more frequently, feel irritated when they try to stop, and think they can “chase” their losses to recover money. This can lead to more gambling, despite financial loss and the trust of friends and loved ones. In general, people with gambling problems usually spend a large portion of their income on gambling and often end up in debt.

Streaks

Every time you flip a coin your chance of getting heads is 50% and your chance of getting tails is 50%. This means that if you flip the coin 10 times and it comes up heads all 10 times, the chance of getting heads or tails on the 11th flip is exactly the same: 50%. The outcome of each coin toss does not affect the next. Although many people think that losing streaks are more likely to be followed by wins, you are never “due” to win.

Luck

People who have a problem with gambling often believe that they can change their “luck” and affect their chance of winning. Examples include choosing “lucky” numbers, dealers, particular seats, machines, or clothing. These things have no effect on chance. Chance is chance.

“Do a lot of people have problems with gambling?”

If you think gambling is a problem for you, you are not alone. Problem gambling is a worldwide issue. The U.S., Canada, Hong Kong, and Singapore have similar rates of severe problems with gambling (0.6-1.9% of the adult population). Rates of problems among recent immigrants to North America might be higher. A 1999 poll in San Francisco’s Chinatown reports that 70% of 1,808 Chinese Americans ranked gambling as their community’s number one problem.

“What if it’s my turn to win?”

Sometimes people who gamble tend to think that eventually it will be their turn to win, but it’s probably not. Here’s why: gambling is based on chance, probability, and randomness. If you have a 50-50 chance at winning a game, it doesn’t matter how many times you have won or lost in the past. The next time you play, your chances of winning are still 50-50.

“Are certain games more likely to lead to gambling problems?”

All gambling is risky to some degree. Games that have a quick turnaround, such as video lottery, slot machines, and scratch tickets, are typically more risky. However, gambling problems can develop by playing any type of game, even Mah-jong or betting on the Internet.

House Advantage

Many problem gamblers believe either that they have found a way to “outsmart” the system or that they have an ability to beat the odds. However, the gambling industry designs casino games to make money for the house, so the casino always has the advantage. Even if you were able to handicap a race or count cards, there are still many factors that could change the outcome of an event. As a result, it is not likely that you have turned the odds in your favor or even affected them in any substantial way. Gambling is gambling—the outcome is always unknown, and there is no way for a gambler to affect the odds of the game.

Section 2: Understanding Your Gambling

Understanding how gambling works and the dangers that are associated with gambling is an important step in your journey. This part of the guide will help you to understand your gambling patterns. Complete the questions below to see if you should examine your gambling patterns more closely:

1. Have you tried to cut down on your gambling?

Yes _____ No _____

2. Are others upset by your gambling?

Yes _____ No _____

3. Do you ever gamble alone?

Yes _____ No _____

4. Do you ever feel guilty about your gambling?

Yes _____ No _____

5. Do you ever gamble to feel better?

Yes _____ No _____

If you answered “yes” to one or more questions, then you may want to consider looking at your gambling more closely. Many people are not aware of all the ways that gambling can affect their lives. The exercise on the following page will help you to identify difficulties you may be facing. Answering these questions can alert you to problems that you might not have thought about before.

1. Have you spent a great deal of your time during the past 12 months thinking of ways to get money for gambling? Yes _____ No _____
2. During the past 12 months, have you placed bigger and bigger bets to experience excitement? Yes _____ No _____
3. Did you find during the past 12 months that smaller bets are less exciting to you than before? Yes _____ No _____
4. Has stopping gambling or cutting down how much you gambled made you feel restless or irritable during the past 12 months? Yes _____ No _____
5. Have you gambled during the past 12 months to make the uncomfortable feelings that come from stopping or reducing gambling go away? Yes _____ No _____
6. Have you gambled to forget about stress during the past 12 months? Yes _____ No _____
7. After losing money gambling, have you gambled to try to win back your lost money? Yes _____ No _____
8. Have you lied to family members or others about how much you gambled during the past 12 months? Yes _____ No _____
9. Have you done anything illegal during the past 12 months to get money to gamble? Yes _____ No _____
10. During the past 12 months, have you lost or almost lost a significant relationship, job, educational, or career opportunity because of your gambling? Yes _____ No _____
11. Have you relied on others (e.g., family, friends, or work) to provide you with money to cover your gambling debts? Yes _____ No _____
12. During the past 12 months have you tried to quit or limit your gambling, but couldn't? Yes _____ No _____

These questions point out different problems you might have had because of gambling. Each question identifies a very serious problem. If you answered “yes” to one or more of these questions, you might want to think about reducing or stopping gambling.

Other Problems

Another way to understand your gambling is to consider the influence it has on you. Many problem gamblers experience various kinds of problems related to money, family, and other social relations. Answer the following questions to see if you have found yourself in some of the same situations as problem gamblers:

1. Have you ever been denied credit in the past 12 months?
Yes_____ No_____
2. Have you gambled away funds that are intended for the family?
Yes_____ No_____
3. Do you find yourself frequently bothered by bill collectors?
Yes_____ No_____
4. Have you used grocery money or money for other necessities to gamble in the past 12 months?
Yes_____ No_____
5. During the past 12 months, have you delayed paying household bills to get more money for gambling?
Yes_____ No_____
6. Have you taken cash advances from credit cards to use for gambling in the past 12 months?
Yes_____ No_____

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, it may be a sign that your gambling has affected you and people important to you. At this point you still may not know if you want to change. What’s important is that you have a better understanding of your gambling. The next section of this guide will help you to think about the reasons you gamble and how to change, should you decide a change is right for you.

Section 3: Thinking About Change

“Do I really want to change?”

Before you make a decision, it’s good to think about the costs and benefits of each choice. Filling in the boxes below will help you see the costs and benefits of your gambling:

Here’s an example:

Benefits of Not Gambling:

I would have more money to spend on other things and to take care of my family.
I would have more time to spend with people I care about.
I would have more time to learn new skills.

Costs of Not Gambling:

I will have to face responsibility.
I will have to somehow fill up my time.

Benefits of Gambling:

I forget all my troubles when I gamble.
I love the feeling of excitement when I gamble.

Costs of Gambling

I am heavily in debt.
I am depressed and anxious.
I cause harm to my family.

Now you try by filling in your own answers.

Benefits of Not Gambling

Costs of Not Gambling

Benefits of Gambling

Costs of Gambling

Which box has the most answers:

- Benefits of not gambling**
- Costs of not gambling**
- Benefits of gambling**
- Costs of gambling**

What does this mean to you?

Do the benefits of continuing to gamble outweigh the costs?

If you think the costs of continuing to gamble are greater than the benefits, you may want to consider changing your gambling behavior. This is your decision.

Deciding on Goals

Something to Think About

Some people simply cut down on gambling, while others try to stop completely. Research suggests that cutting down on gambling can be a goal. However, a lot of people find that just cutting back on gambling is a difficult goal to keep because it can easily lead back to problem gambling. If reducing your gambling is too hard for you, you may choose to stop gambling completely. Obviously, neither option will be easy, but just reducing your gambling might be more risky.

The next step in the process of change is deciding on your goals. For example:

- When do you want to change?
- Do you want to stop gambling or just gamble less than you do now?

Remember that change is a process and it will take time. The first three months are usually the most difficult. The period after that will be hard too, but not quite like when you began to change. Although getting through this process may seem very difficult, the experience of many people shows that you can change your gambling patterns.

To change these patterns, you must first make a decision. Think about what changes you would like to make. For example, you may decide that you want to completely stop gambling in the next year, or that you want to limit your gambling activity over the next six months.

Which of the following options would you choose?

Check the box that applies

☐ **Stop completely**

☐ **Limit Gambling**

Now write down some details about how you will accomplish the goal you just chose. For example, when are you planning to start? What specific things will you begin to do differently?

This is your goal for change. Sign your name as a promise to yourself:

Signature _____

Date: _____

“What can I do to handle an urge to gamble?”

Urges are normal for a person who is reducing the amount that they gamble. Urges are often very difficult to deal with, but with practice you will be able to let these feelings pass without giving in to them. You might notice that, after stopping or cutting back your gambling, you get more urges to gamble than you did before.

This is normal. What’s important is that you recognize that these urges are temporary and they will pass.

Here are a few suggestions:

Focus on doing other things. Replace the things in your life that you associate with gambling with other activities that will help to keep your mind off gambling. Find new enjoyable ways to spend your time. Most importantly, think about the things that you liked to do before gambling became a part of your life.

Make a list of those things you think you might enjoy or that you enjoyed before gambling became a part of your life. Examples: Listening to music, watching TV, going to the movies, exercising, helping out in the community, visiting with friends or family, etc.

Get involved with these activities; you might be surprised how much you enjoy doing them. Keep this list with you at all times so that you can refer to it should you get an urge to gamble.

If your urge is so great that you cannot focus on your new way of thinking or an activity on your list, say, “Okay, maybe I’ll gamble in 10 minutes.” Then wait 10 minutes. If the urge is still there, keep telling yourself to just wait 10 minutes. Find other things to do from the list you made for each 10-minute interval. The urge to gamble will pass with time.

Recognize Urges

If you do feel an urge to gamble, it is important to acknowledge the urge—do not ignore it. Think, “I am having an urge to gamble right now. But I know it will pass and I don’t have to act on it.” When this happens, do something from your list of activities as soon as possible.

It might also help to try some of the following:

- Call a helpline for support:
National: 1-800-522-4700
Massachusetts: 1-800-426-1234
- Attend self-help meetings such as Gamblers Anonymous (National Hotline: 1-888-GA-HELPS or 1-888-424-3577 for locations of meetings)
- Avoid taking the casino bus or being near places where gambling is available.
- Spend less time with people who gamble to avoid being pressured into gambling.
- Carry only the minimum amount of money that you need for the day.
- Ask someone you trust to manage your finances.
- Have your paycheck direct-deposited, if possible.
- Destroy your credit, debit, and ATM cards.

Now, call or visit a friend or family member that you can trust. Talk about your urges to gamble and how you are dealing with these feelings. Friends and family who support your decision to change will play a big role in helping you achieve your goals. Some people in your life, however, might not want you to change, and these people could potentially encourage you to gamble. If you know someone who may do this, avoid contacting that person—especially when you are experiencing an urge to gamble.

“What if I gamble and I really don’t want to?”

If you find that you gamble even though you are trying to quit, you are not alone. Many people find that it takes several attempts to quit or cut down on gambling. Stopping or reducing gambling is a very difficult thing to do and you may not be able to do it the first time you try. Remember, however, that a lot of people don’t even get this far. By asking for information and thinking about change, you have already begun your journey to a safer, happier, and healthier life for you and your family. If you do gamble and you don’t want to, that does not mean that you will never be able to stop. Keep trying, keep talking to people you trust, and keep asking for help. Going back to gambling doesn’t make your goals any less valuable or possible.

Hopefully this guide has helped you think about change. It is a starting point, as well as a roadmap for the process of change. Thinking about change is not always easy. Should you decide a change is right for you, you will encounter many obstacles along the way. Expect them and be prepared. Your journey may be difficult at times, but it will be well worth it.

Additional Resources

Reading this guide may have helped you to notice new things about yourself. Some of these things can be hard to deal with. Some may even be life problems that don't have anything to do with gambling. If you think that you have some other types of problems (or even some gambling problems that you need more help with), you should consider getting additional support or treatment. Some of the resources found in the back of this booklet will help you, should you decide to seek additional information or counseling.

Problem Gambling Related Website Information

This list of websites has been compiled to help you better understand the issue of problem gambling. Some of these sites refer to research on problem gambling, some refer to self-help groups, and others are sites of organizations that focus on raising the awareness and education level of the general public around problem gambling.

Websites for support groups:

Bettors Anonymous - www.bettorsanonymous.org

Debtors Anonymous - www.debtorsanonymous.org

Gamblers Anonymous - www.gamblersanonymous.org

Website for family members:

Gam-Anon - www.gam-anon.org

Websites for professionals:

Division on Addictions, Cambridge Health Alliance, a teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School - www.divisiononaddictions.org

The Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders, a program of the Division on Addictions – www.divisiononaddictions.org/institute

Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling - www.masscompulsivegambling.org

Massachusetts Department of Public Health/Bureau of Substance Abuse Services (includes state gambling treatment centers) - www.state.ma.us/dph/bsas/

National Center for Responsible Gaming - www.ncrg.org

National Council on Problem Gambling - www.ncpgambling.org

Responsible Gambling Council - www.responsiblegambling.org

The BASIS - www.basionline.org

Website on Asian American demographics and issues related to gambling:

www.asian-nation.org

Additional Reading

If you would like to read more about problem gambling, you might find the following resources useful and interesting:

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Additional Resources Used For This Project Include:

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