

# Why do I gamble?

Being aware of why you gamble can be very helpful if you want to change.

### There are four main reasons why people gamble:

1. For social reasons - This may be because it's what a group of friends do when they get together, or because it makes a social gathering more enjoyable
2. For financial reasons - to win money, because someone enjoys thinking about what they would do if they won a jackpot, or because winning would change someone's lifestyle
3. For entertainment reasons - because they like the feeling, to get that rush or "high", or because it makes them feel good
4. For coping reasons - for someone to forget their worries, because they feel more self confident, or because it helps when they are feeling nervous or depressed

### The effects of gambling

When you think of the effects of gambling, certain things spring to mind like financial worries, relationship difficulties and other serious issues.

But you might not be aware of the emotional effects of gambling, which many people experience no matter how much or how often they bet. These effects start off small and often build up, causing stress in our lives.

But they don't have to. Because if you understand what's causing stress, you can take the pressure off yourself or help a loved one do the same.

### Gambling triggers



**Relationship difficulties** - You may gamble when you are in conflict with the people in your life. You might benefit from leaving the situation, being assertive, or getting help from other people. If this is a problem in the long-term, it may be necessary to improve your skills in communication, conflict management or try counselling.



**Worrying about debts** - Having the belief that the only way to get money is by gambling, will likely worsen your financial state and trigger more gambling. You can break this cycle by creating a budget or exploring other ways of managing your money. Financial counselling through Bethany may also be helpful to build some more long-term solutions.

### For more information, contact Gambler's Help at Bethany

Bethany Community Support 5278 8122 [www.bethany.org.au](http://www.bethany.org.au)  
Gamblers Help 1800 858 858 [www.gamblershelp.com.au](http://www.gamblershelp.com.au)

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**Experiencing unpleasant feelings** - You may gamble to escape from, or cope with, feelings such as depression, loneliness or frustration. Gambling may provide short-term relief but will result in an increase in negative feelings in the long run. You may need to identify and change your negative thoughts. You could identify some alternative activities that you enjoy and try to do these more often.



**Using alcohol and/or drugs** - You may gamble more when you have been drinking or taking drugs. You could explore the relationship between alcohol or substance use and gambling. Does drinking/drug use trigger your gambling? Or does gambling trigger your drinking/drug use? Or both? Research suggests there is a relationship between alcohol and riskier types of gambling as well as making it harder to stop or stick to limits. Making a plan with a counsellor could be a great way to help change your habits.



**Feeling confident in your gambling skill** - You may gamble more when you are confident about your skill or believe that a system could help you to win at gambling. You may need to address some mistaken beliefs about how odds work. It is also helpful to figure out how much money you've spent overall, rather than focusing on individual wins.



**Certain social situations** - You may gamble when people around you want you to gamble. You may need to find alternative activities to do with friends or discover other possibilities for socialising. You might also need to be assertive in resisting social pressure to gamble and ask other people to support your efforts to change.

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