

FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF PROBLEM GAMBLERS

Problem gambling adversely affects the family and friends of the gambler in a number of ways because of the problem gambler's altered behavior, dishonesty and manipulation.

Helping a family member or friend with a gambling problem

If your family member or friend has a gambling problem, you can help by encouraging him or her to get treatment and by offering your support. This doesn't mean bailing the gambler out of trouble or covering up the problem. It's important to hold problem gamblers responsible for their actions—including the consequences. It's also important to take care of yourself. You have a right to protect yourself emotionally and financially. Don't blame yourself for the gambler's problems. You don't control your family member's or friend's behavior; the choice to stop gambling is theirs alone.

Tips for family members and friends of problem gamblers:

- Take over the family finances
- Review bank and credit card statements
- Request credit reports from the three main credit bureaus
- Monitor Internet use to see if the person is gambling online
- Be honest about how the gambler's behavior makes you feel
- Get counseling or join a support group such as Gam-Anon
- Encourage the person to go to Gambler's Anonymous

Problem gambling help is confidential and it works, call

**The Council on Compulsive Gambling of PA Helpline at
1-800-GAMBLER**

Don't wait for the problem to get worse!

Material in this handout is adapted from www.helpguide.org, published by the Rotary Foundation.