



## HELP SHEET

### SUPPORT SERVICES

Finding the right support service can sometimes seem a bit daunting particularly when you may already feel uncomfortable about having to take steps outside your normal way of life to obtain assistance. This help note has been put together to provide an overview of the different kinds of gambling specific support services available in the community. Of course not all these services are always available in one area.

**G-line - 1800 633 6635** is a 24 hour counselling and referral service who can help you find services in your local area. Most areas also have their own community health centre/service and this is another good starting point for finding information.

**Counselling** – Professional counselling is provided by a number of different services some run by government departments such as G-line and Health others run by the non-government sector such as charitable bodies. Gambling specific counselling is provided at approximately 60 free services across the State of NSW (see list this information kit). However, even if a gambling specific service is not available in your area, you may be able to access quality counselling from another service. Many areas have drug & alcohol counsellors and these people may have significant experience in working with addictions of other types. Counselling may be provided one-to-one, with couples or families. It is important to find a counsellor who you feel comfortable with and can relate to. The activity of counselling is providing a safe space where you can be heard,

learn new skills and deal with problems you may be facing in a supportive manner. Counsellors are trained to assist people to identify their own strengths and support them with areas for change.

**Group treatment programs**- some services offer gambling specific or addiction based group treatment programs. These are usually professionally facilitated groups where people dealing with gambling problems in their lives have the opportunity to come together to obtain professional support. They often combine a mixture of education about gambling, skills based learning and group therapy. Some group treatment programs are residential and may be part of an overall rehabilitation program within a hospital setting. Other programs are offered in the community and may vary in the number of sessions or weeks of attendance. Programs are run for both people who gamble and their family members.

**Support groups** – these are more informal groups often open-ended so people may come and go a bit as opposed to coming together for a set period. Support groups offer the opportunity for those affected by similar problems to gain information about problem gambling, share ideas for change and learn from each other. One of the biggest benefits of support groups is the sense of shared experience gained from knowing you are not alone. Some support groups are professionally facilitated by a counsellor and may have a focus upon



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education and self-help skills, whereas others such as GA & Gam Anon are facilitated by volunteers from the group and have their own 12- step program of recovery. All group programs have a high regard for the value of confidentiality.

**Self-help organisations** – as with many other health problems there are self- help organisations aimed at providing specific information and services for those affected. They may range from provision of information only to direct support in the form of groups, counselling and advocacy (see attached list for services for gambling).