

Minnesota Department of **Human Services**
TREATMENT WORKS

Tips for Talking to a Family Member About Problem Gambling

Tell them you're concerned. Express to them that your love for them as a family member is unconditional and that you want them to get help for their problem gambling.

Example: _____, I need to talk to you about something serious. I've noticed recently that you haven't been your usual self, and I'm concerned. You're very important to me, and I don't want anything to damage our relationship. I want to know if we can talk about what might be going on?

Be specific about your concerns. Tell them how their gambling interferes with their family life and relationship with you. Let them know how it is negatively affecting your relationship.

Example: I'm concerned about the extent to which gambling has become a part of your life and how it's affecting your relationships. As your niece/grandson/brother, you are very important to me.

Don't judge, instead listen. If you want them to hear you out, you need to give them the same courtesy. Allow them to speak their mind, and let them know you heard what they have to say.

Example: _____, I hear what you have to say and want to help you find a solution before the situation becomes worse.

Say what you want them to do. The point of talking to them in the first place is so they know they need help. Have a direct conversation, be specific and use examples. Ask them to seek counseling or enroll in a gambling recovery group.

Example: I'd like to help you find a way to fix this. I know of a 24-hour, confidential hotline you could call (800-333-HOPE) and a few gambling recovery programs. I'd like you to call one of these services.

Offer to help; explain why you care. Let them know that you are approaching them because you care and offer to be an aid in their recovery. From making the phone call for help to attending meetings with them, there are a variety of ways to help them – from easy to involved.

Example: I want you to know that I am here to help in any way I can. I wouldn't have come to you if I didn't value our relationship so much. If you need support, you have someone you can count on.

Keep the door open for future talks. Talking to a family member with a gambling addiction can be especially difficult. Above all else, don't be judgmental and keep the door open for future conversations. If you engage them in a hostile way, they will most likely shut down and ignore your attempts to help. Handle the subject with care so they feel like you are a resource in their recovery.

Example: _____, you are a good person. You're human. Let's deal with this together. Take it one step at a time.