

Minnesota Department of **Human Services**  
**TREATMENT WORKS**

**Tips for Talking to a Parent About Problem Gambling**

Tell them you're concerned. Express to them how important your relationship with them is 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. Your relationship with me is very important, and I don't want anything to damage it. I want to know if we can talk about what might be going on?*

Be specific about your concerns. Talking about finances with a parent can be difficult because of family dynamics, particularly in relation to problem gambling. Tell them how their gambling negatively affects their relationship with you. Be specific and use examples.

*Example: I'm concerned about the extent to which gambling has become a part of your life and how it's affecting our relationship. You are a very important part of my life.*

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. As the younger generation, you are in a unique position to help your parent receive the help and care they need. You need to intervene for the sake of their psychological, emotional and financial health. 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 us to explore one of these services.*

Offer to help; explain why you care. Remember to explain how much you care about them and what you want them to do. By expressing your concern, you can clarify your feelings regarding their gambling and make them accountable for their addictive behavior. Be non-judgmental and offer to help.

*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 you weren't so important to me. If you need support, you have someone you can count on.*

Keep the door open for future talks. There is a difference between being aggressive and being firm. You can be direct without alienating your parent. 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 parent. You're human. Let's deal with this together. Take it one step at a time.*