



**ProblemGambling.ca**

**TREATMENT PROGRAM**

*for*

**People Affected by Problem Gambling**

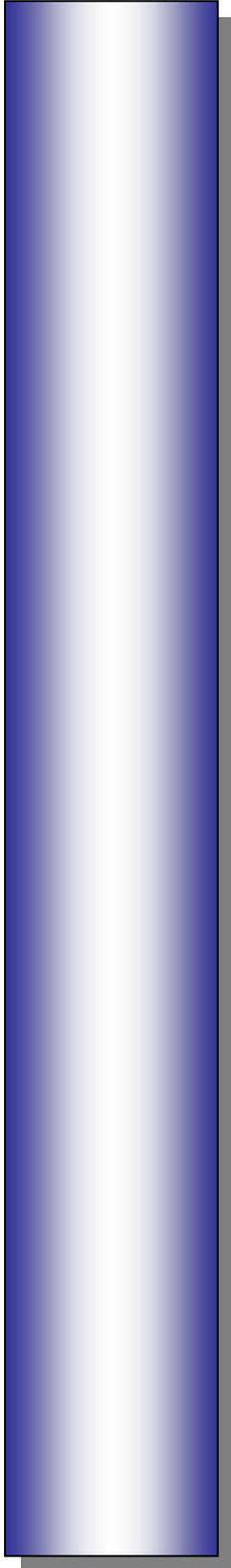
*How to quit or reduce your gambling*

**PERSONAL WORKBOOK**

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## WELCOME

You may have been thinking about doing something about your gambling for a while. Or, something may have happened to you recently as a result of your gambling that has prompted you to decide that this is the right time to take action. You may also be fed up with the stress that gambling can cause and want to get a firm handle on this habit. There are many reasons why people may decide to change a habit but usually it generally has to do with a lot of bad things happening as a result of the habit. In the case of gambling, this usually means having very serious problems with money, conflicts with the important people in your life (usually your family and close friends), and a damaging effect on your emotional and physical health.

Even though you may be worried about your gambling and feel that it has gotten out of hand, it is still not always easy to ask for help, or even know where to get the right kind of help. You might have felt too embarrassed to ask for professional help before, or you might not have thought you needed to get help. It is also possible that you thought you would try to solve this problem on your own.

This treatment program will suggest to you a number of techniques and strategies to help you cut back your gambling to a healthy level or, if you prefer, to quit gambling entirely. You will find this program helpful even if you have just begun to experience problems as a result of your gambling but did not think it was serious enough to seek intensive treatment, go to Gamblers Anonymous, or attend a gambling treatment centre. If this is the case, then completing this program may prevent you from developing a more serious problem in the future.

## FEATURES AND BENEFITS OF THIS TREATMENT PROGRAM

This program differs from some other treatment programs for gamblers in the following ways:

- Studies have shown that most clients attend treatment an average of 6 times, which is why this Program has been structured so that the bulk of the treatment can be completed in about 6 weeks.
- This Workbook summarizes the most effective ways to help someone trying to overcome a gambling habit. As you may have noticed, each of the Treatment Topics includes a short description, some information for you to think about, and an exercise for you to work on.

## ABOUT EACH OF THE SIX TREATMENT TOPICS

We believe that the material contained in this Workbook will go a long way towards helping you to make a change in your gambling behaviour. Here is a brief overview of what will be discussed in each session.

### TREATMENT TOPIC ONE: SETTING GOALS

This first topic will ask you to define your goal with respect to gambling. Your goal will help guide your efforts throughout the program. We will provide outlines of 2 different types of goals, quitting gambling completely or cutting back. We will also provide you with some guidance as to which goal may be right for you.

### TREATMENT TOPIC TWO: STRENGTHENING YOUR COMMITMENT

In this second topic, we want to strengthen your commitment to solving your gambling problem.

Many individuals who decide to change a habit that is causing them problems do so because of a crisis or a sudden avalanche of problems. While this may be very motivating at first, this type of motivation sometimes does not last very long. As a result, what seemed like a good idea at one time (that is, doing something about your gambling) may now seem less urgent or critical.

To help prevent this happening to you, this topic will help maximize your motivation to change your gambling by helping you to examine the role gambling has had in your life and its effects, both good and bad, in a very honest and open way. We also will explore some of your important personal values and the way gambling may have threatened them.

## TREATMENT TOPIC THREE: TAKING ACTION

In Treatment Topic Three, we will discuss some practical ways for you to quickly make changes in your gambling behaviour. We know that you may already have done quite a bit on your own so this may be like a refresher for you. We will ask you to consider how you spend your free time, with whom you spend it, and your relationship to money. You can, and probably have already started to, make different decisions about how you live your life and spend your available free time and money. The goal of this session is to strengthen your efforts at changing your lifestyle so that gambling no longer fits in. Even if you have already stopped gambling, reading this section will serve as a good summary and review.

We will also discuss coping with urges, temptations and cravings, which most gamblers experience after cutting back or stopping. Since we know that urges and temptations can be a serious obstacle to your gambling goal, we will discuss ways of coping with them.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: TRACKING YOUR THOUGHTS

We know that many gamblers develop strong beliefs about their chances of winning, how to win, how to avoid losing, and so on. These beliefs can be a serious problem in the long-term since they still provide the illusion that you may be able to eventually succeed at gambling. Even though you may cut back or stop entirely, these gambling thoughts and beliefs do not generally disappear on their own. They need to be discussed and directly treated.

In this topic we will look at specific beliefs and attitudes about gambling and winning that may apply to you, how to identify them, and what to do when they become a threat to your treatment goal.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FIVE: HEALING RELATIONSHIPS

In this session, we examine the state of your relationships with the people you care about the most. As is true with any habit that has gotten out of control, you are not the only one who suffers. Many others can also be harmed, concerned, or in some way affected by gambling. As part of your recovery, it is important to take action to improve these relationships as much as possible. We know that this may take longer than can be done in a short treatment program. But by identifying it at this point, and being ready to do something about these relationships earlier rather than later, we hope to improve your success in controlling this habit and improving your quality of life.

## TREATMENT TOPIC SIX: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The focus of the period until the 6<sup>th</sup> session will be to be on the lookout for any obstacles or hindrances that you encounter which get in the

way of sticking to your treatment goal or that are getting in the way of managing your gambling successfully.

Topic Six is an important session because it is a way of checking to see what is and isn't working for you. While the material in each section may sound very reasonable and helpful, sometimes applying it to your own situation may be difficult. You may find that the gambling habit is stronger than you thought or you find it hard to keep to your goal. Whatever the difficulty, this session will help you figure out how to get over these obstacles. If, however, everything is going very well, then you should summarize what *is* working and how to strengthen it.

## PLEASE READ THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION!

You have made a serious commitment to solving your gambling problem. *Congratulations!!* Looking ahead, your future without gambling (or with a responsible gambling goal) should look brighter and more hopeful. Unfortunately, many people affected by problem gambling often face a serious situation in which they owe money, a lot of money, as a result of their gambling. For some people this debt may seem overwhelming. It may take years of financial discipline to repay it or it may even be impossible to repay if your income is threatened (i.e., loss of job) or if your income is significantly lower than your debt. As a result, as you work on gaining control over your gambling, you may find yourself also becoming demoralized or depressed over the prospect of having to repay money that will take most of your working life to earn.

The feelings that this kind of situation can produce may have a strong impact on your motivation to continue to work on your gambling and your long-term recovery. You may feel that it is not worth working on your gambling since the situation may appear too hopeless or you may feel that gambling may be the only way that gives you a chance to solve the financial problems quicker.

Unresolved financial problems may also have a severe impact on the relationships with your family, on their emotional and physical health as well as on yours. This can be even more serious if your family is not fully aware of the extent of the financial difficulties and only later find out the true severity of the financial problem.

The dangers of not addressing these problems as early as possible is the real possibility of seeking out illegal means to repay the loan, asking money from individuals who may charge excessive interest rates, or turning to gambling as a way to 'fix' the problem. Any of these 'solutions' would, of course, worsen your financial problems and must be avoided.

Finally, some distraught gamblers are unable to see a way out of their problems. They carry with them a great deal of shame and guilt. They may be angry with themselves and be the subject of anger from others who have been affected by the gambling. The gambler may begin to believe there is no way out of the situation they find themselves in, and seriously consider the option of suicide. They may believe that this is the only option left to them. If you find yourself having these types of feelings, or if you have begun to consider hurting yourself, then it is very important that you speak to a professional counsellor or therapist, clergy, family physician or The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health at 416.535.8501 as soon as possible to assist you past this crisis and work constructively towards solving this problem.

If you believe that you may be facing this kind of financial situation, then we highly recommend that you meet with a professional financial counsellor to discuss specific strategies to deal with such debt. We have provided you with information on credit counselling and where you can find it in your local area in Appendix A.

## GETTING STARTED

### SETTING GOALS: WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT

Very likely, as you were making your decision to begin this treatment program, you had in mind what you wanted to do about your gambling. People close to you may have also given you some advice about your gambling and what you should do about it, which you may or may not want to take into account in making your own decision.

You may have thought about stopping all gambling completely. Or you may have wanted to get rid of the gambling that was causing you the most difficulty. It is possible you may just want to reduce your gambling habit so that it is not causing you or anyone else any difficulty. Some people find themselves unsure about what they want to do yet or find themselves changing their minds from day-to-day.

In changing any habit it is important to set a goal for yourself, even if it is temporary or short-term. The best treatments for changing personal habits all advise that setting a goal allows you to aim your efforts to change your gambling. It also tells you when you have achieved what you want to achieve. A well thought-out goal can keep you,

- focused (e.g., “I know what I want”),
- on-track (e.g., “going to the casino today is not consistent with my goal”), and also
- protect you from day-to-day indecision (e.g., “Do I gamble today or don’t I?”) which can lead to confusion and usually lack of progress.

Not having a treatment goal is like deciding to go on a vacation but not knowing where you

want to go – you will never know when you get there or if you are even close. Not having a goal can also lead to confusion both for you and others who may be affected by your gambling. That’s because a goal gives you a way or benchmark to measure your progress. Without a goal, for example, others might take your decision to gamble socially as a sign that you have relapsed. Or you, yourself, might not know whether you are gambling too much or spending too much. So it is very helpful to set to work on a goal as early as possible and then aim to get there as soon as possible. For those of you who have already set a goal and are on your way to achieving it, this exercise can be useful in helping review your decision and solidifying your decision.

### SETTING GOALS: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

Even though you may decide to change your goal later, it is important to decide on one as soon as possible. There are two main goals you can choose from:

1. Complete Abstinence: If you choose abstinence, you should also think about whether this includes stopping all forms of gambling, even ones that are not causing you any difficulty at the present time.

**For example, although you are concerned about your slot machine gambling you may decide to stop ALL other gambling, including lottery tickets, even though you don’t have any difficulty with lotteries.**

2. Responsible Gambling: All gambling is done within certain limits and controls you decide on to make sure you do not have any

problems. These limits and controls will tell you how often you play, how long you play, and how much you spend.

**For example, although you are concerned about your slot machine gambling, you decide to REDUCE your slot machine gambling to a safe level, such as once per month with a maximum amount of \$100 to spend.**

If you are not sure which goal is best for you, answer the questions on the next page. This will give you some help to decide what might be a gambling goal for you.

## HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR GAMBLING GOAL

<b>To help you choose the best goal for you, you might find it helpful to ask yourself the following questions:</b>		
▼	YES	NO
1. Is my gambling considered to be a severe problem?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have I already made an attempt(s) to moderate my gambling but did not succeed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Will any gambling hurt me financially?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Have I been mandated to seek treatment by my employer or by the criminal justice system?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Are my personal relationships at risk (that is, friends or family) if I continue to gamble?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Do I want to continue gambling so that I can win back lost money?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Am I always thinking about gambling and ways to win?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Am I using gambling to escape other problems or feelings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered YES to any of the questions above, then trying to cut down may not be the best choice or an easy goal for you to achieve. In this situation, abstinence may be the best choice for you. That's what we'd recommend. If you decide to continue gambling, even if it is much less than it was, it will likely aggravate your financial situation, upset people around you who you will be depending on, and be difficult to achieve and maintain. However, we also understand that the final decision is yours.

Most importantly, if your motivation to gamble at all includes the idea of winning (even if gradually) money you have lost, then you are at a serious risk of worsening your problem. In this case, we would recommend that you stop gambling altogether. That would be the safest way to proceed. This point is so important that it is worth repeating.

### REMEMBER!

**If your motivation to gamble includes the idea of winning ANY of the money you have lost, then you are at serious risk of worsening your problem.**

### RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING GOAL

If you have answered all of the above questions with a NO, then you may succeed at low-risk gambling. Many gamblers ask whether they can continue to play other games other than the one that has caused them the main difficulties. This will depend on whether you have had any difficulty with any of these other types of games before and whether your motivation to keep playing these games has anything to do with winning money or winning back lost money. For example, if you decide to cut out slot machines, which have caused you the greatest difficulty, but increase your lottery wagering to try to win back some money, then this would

indicate that it is best to stop the lottery playing as well. So, be honest about why you want to keep playing other games. You should also definitely not increase your betting on any other games you might play while you decrease the one causing you the most harm. On the next page you will find the GUIDELINES FOR LOW-RISK GAMBLING to make sure you gamble safely.

### STARTING WITH ABSTINENCE

One of the dangers with Controlled Gambling is that you may eventually cross the line and begin to gamble too much or too often. It takes a lot of planning to make sure you stay within healthy limits when you are controlling your gambling.

As an initial step towards this goal, it is advisable to try to have a period of abstinence from ALL gambling. This would serve the purpose of showing that, yes, you are able to eliminate all gambling from your life and function well. Also, it would reveal any hidden motivations or attractions of gambling that may not be obvious to you right now and which could harm you later. Remaining abstinent for a few weeks may bring some relief to the pressures you are experiencing as a result of gambling without having to worry or figure out how you are going to control your gambling frequency and expenditures.

So we would recommend that even if you wish to gamble in some form in the future, that you take the challenge to refrain from gambling while you are participating in this program.

Ultimately, of course, the final decision is left up to you, as we know that people are more likely to succeed at changing a habit when they have chosen their own goal. Of course, you always have the option of changing your goal at any time.

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## GUIDELINES FOR LOW-RISK GAMBLING

The following guidelines may help you stay within safe gambling limits and will allow you to enjoy your favourite games risk-free.

1. Decide ahead of time what is an acceptable amount to wager and what is an acceptable loss — don't bet money you can't afford to lose.

Assume that whatever you wager you will lose. So it is wise to have a pre-set limit as to what is acceptable to lose. This will allow you to enjoy gambling but not lose in excess of what you can reasonably afford. Any loss you (likely) incur will then be acceptable.

2. Do not rely on gambling to earn money. Although most people who gamble hope to win money, low-risk gamblers neither expect or plan on winning. They know that gambling is a game and money that is wagered is likely to be lost, but enjoy the game anyway. In the same way we attend movies, eat in restaurants, go to sporting events, etc. and expect to pay for these pleasures, gambling is seen in the same way. Of course, winning is an unexpected bonus; it's like getting free tickets to an event or a complimentary meal, but it should not be expected. Gambling should be mainly fun, not a way to earn money.
3. Keep track of how much time and money you spend gambling. Keeping track of your gambling maintains your awareness of how much time and money you devote to gambling and allows you to make changes if you think it is too much. Without keeping track, it is very easy to underestimate the truth and start a bad gambling habit. Our memories can

sometimes mix things up. Keeping track keeps us honest.

4. Never borrow money to gamble. If you need to borrow money to gamble, then there is no justification to gamble. View gambling as a leisure activity that must be comfortably affordable within your financial situation. Whether it is from friends or family, from credit cards or from your own future paycheque, borrowing to gamble is a high-risk activity and not recommended.
5. Know when you should not gamble. Consider sacrificing your gambling activity if it disturbs those closest to you, if you keep exceeding your money limits, if it is illegal, if you find that you gamble in a high-risk fashion or if you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. There are times when it is best to just not gamble. Be aware of these kinds of situations that apply to you.
6. Do not gamble to cope with unpleasant emotions and stress. Gambling is best viewed as a fun, leisure activity and not as a medicine to make you feel better. This will set up an unhealthy relationship between gambling and your personal mental health. It gives gambling a power it should not have. If you gamble to cope, it is best to get professional help.
7. If you lose, DO NOT try to win that money back. Losses are normal and should be expected. It would be strange or unreasonable to expect to get back the money we just spent eating at a restaurant. Losing money from gambling is really just paying for the right to gamble and that's normal and to be expected. Trying to win back your losses suggests you misunderstand what healthy gambling is. Losing is just paying for the right to gamble. Don't think about getting that money back.

## MY GOAL STATEMENT

Decide on which goal you will follow over the next several weeks and indicate your choice by completing one of the two goal boxes.

## ABSTINENCE

I intend to achieve total abstinence from the gambling that has harmed me. I understand that I may choose to change my goal at a later date.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING

I intend to gamble responsibly.

This means that I will gamble:

\_\_\_\_\_ times per  day,  week, or  month.

I will wager a maximum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per gambling occasion.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

### THE ROLE OF GAMBLING IN YOUR LIFE

In preparing to work on your gambling habit over the next several weeks, it is important to remain very aware of the fact that gambling isn't always an entirely negative activity. There is no question that, as with any type of addictive habit, there are some pleasurable or rewarding aspects to gambling. When you began to gamble, and even now when gambling is harming you, you may still find the gambling experience attractive. Having a realistic motivational state to change your gambling habit involves being aware of all aspects of gambling, both the positive and negative.

This next exercise will tell us a little more about the overall impact of gambling on your life. We need to look at the bigger picture and get an idea of the function or meaning of gambling in your life. One way to do this is to ask you to consider the positive and negative aspects of continuing to gamble and about the positive and negative aspects of not continuing to gamble. Your answers will put some perspective on the role of gambling in your life and what you might expect when you are gambling less.



#### GOOD THINGS ABOUT GAMBLING

What are the benefits about continuing to gamble? What would you enjoy most about continuing to gamble (e.g., I love the excitement)?

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#### BAD THINGS ABOUT GAMBLING

What are the costs of gambling? How does gambling negatively impact your life (e.g., I spend too much)?

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#### GOOD THINGS ABOUT NOT GAMBLING

What are the benefits of stopping gambling (e.g., I'll feel less stress)?

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#### BAD THINGS ABOUT NOT GAMBLING

What are the costs of stopping gambling? What would you miss most if you stopped gambling (e.g., I'll miss the chance of winning money)?

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*START TODAY!!!*

Now that you have decided what your goal is, even if it may change in the future, we suggest you begin to act consistently with this goal RIGHT NOW.

If you have decided abstinence is the best goal, stop gambling altogether TODAY!!!

If you have decided to cut back on your gambling, then start gambling along your guidelines (as you stated in your Goal Statement) starting TODAY!!!

Of course, if you have already cut back or stopped your gambling, then keep on doing this. You are already succeeding.

Use any and all of your techniques, ideas, skills that you can think of to achieve your goal. You can ask someone who you trust to help you achieve your goal. This Program will work best if it builds on strengths and resources you already have – achieving your goal will then be much easier and longer-lasting. This Program is set up so that you read each week's topic and complete the exercises. Please list below some of the things that you can do right now (or are doing already) to help you achieve your treatment goal TODAY. (Example: cut up credit cards, avoid racetrack, spend time with family, etc.)

▶ \_\_\_\_\_

▶ \_\_\_\_\_

▶ \_\_\_\_\_

▶ \_\_\_\_\_

▶ \_\_\_\_\_

▶ \_\_\_\_\_

**BE CREATIVE!!!**

**ASK OTHERS TO HELP!!!**

**CHALLENGE YOURSELF!!!**

**WORK HARD!!!**

**USE WHATEVER HAS  
HELPED BEFORE!!!**

## STRENGTHENING YOUR COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

## PROGRESS SINCE THE PREVIOUS TOPIC

**Ask yourself the following questions as you get ready to go through Treatment Topic Two:**

1. Are you meeting your gambling goal?

Yes     Mostly     No

2. If you are not meeting your goal, briefly describe what you think is getting in the way of achieving your goal:

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3. Have you made any changes to your goal since the previous Topic?

Yes     No

If your answer is Yes, describe how your goal has changed:

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## STRENGTHENING YOUR COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

### BECOMING AWARE OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF GAMBLING

The main purpose of this session is to strengthen your commitment to changing your gambling habit. Even though you have taken the important step of beginning this Program and even if you think you are 100% committed to the goal that you defined in Treatment Topic One, it is still helpful for you to read this material and complete the exercises. We want to make sure that your desire to stop or reduce your gambling is as strong as possible and based on a firm understanding of the effect of gambling on your life. We want to make sure that your desire to stop or reduce your gambling now is stronger than your desire to gamble has been in the past.

We know from the way that people change other habits like dieting, exercise, and smoking, for example, that motivation can be very high when the decision to do something about it is made. Sometimes decisions to change a habit are made when we are fed up with a part of ourselves. We get really motivated to do something about it. But once you begin to make the actual effort needed to change the habit (e.g., like changing eating habits, going to the gym, not buying cigarettes, etc.), then it is not always easy to remain highly motivated. It is easier to FEEL motivated but hard to stay motivated. Of course, you have to stay motivated in order to do all of the little things that need to get done to achieve the goal. The result is that motivation to change a habit can go up and down, and with it, the actual effort to change. When this happens, one may find that you stop going to the gym,

you sleep in rather than jogging, you smoke more cigarettes than you intended, and so on.

The situation described above is even more likely when the motivation to change a habit is made suddenly, based on a recent bad event or situation. It is in this kind of situation that we find that motivation to change a habit does not last very long. Good motivation seems to result when (1) we have thought through all of the consequences of the behaviour we want to change, (2) tied it to important values that may be threatened if that behaviour is not changed, and (3) when we set reasonable and achievable goals for ourselves.

It seems that the more people are aware of the reasons why they want to change a behaviour or habit, the more they can see the benefits of changing that behaviour or habit. This in turn helps you stay on course and actually change the behaviour. We believe this to be the case with a habit such as gambling as well.

Having a firm motivation will also be very helpful if and when there will be some bumps along your recovery such as if you find yourself gambling when you do not want to, or gambling more money than you want to, or when the urges or temptations to gamble become very strong. During these challenges, which are completely normal and are not unexpected during the course of habit change, it may be helpful to strengthen your motivation by reviewing the information in this Treatment Topic.

### STRENGTHENING MOTIVATION BY EXAMINING WHERE YOU ARE NOW

Keeping your motivation at its peak acts like armor, protecting you against situations, thoughts and influences that could lead you to return to unhealthy gambling.

Keep your motivation high by examining how gambling has affected all aspects of your life including finances, emotions, physical health, relationships, self-concept, values and lifestyle. The following exercise will help you conduct this motivational analysis. To enhance the effectiveness of this exercise, make use of the powers of your imagination to become aware of the impact of gambling on your life. We expect that the following exercise may be somewhat disturbing as you will become in touch with many feelings, thoughts, and images of the way gambling has harmed you and others. This emotional effect can be very positive if it is experienced in a positive way by strengthening your desire to change your gambling. The best way to do that is to use whatever emotions are generated by this examination as further reason to do whatever it takes to achieve your gambling goal!!!

Starting on the next page you will be asked to think about how gambling has affected your life. Take the time to answer all the questions. Try to imagine clearly these effects. Writing it seems to help people remember better, so we encourage you to complete all of the motivational exercises.

## 1. HOW HAS GAMBLING AFFECTED YOUR FINANCES?

a. How much money has gambling cost you over the past 12 months?

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b. How much money has gambling cost you over your lifetime?

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c. What kinds of financial sacrifices have you had to make as a result of gambling?

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d. What has been the impact on your lifestyle as a result of these financial losses?

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e. How has the financial losses due to gambling affected the people who are most important to you?

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**Summarize what you have just written into one or two key words (e.g., bankrupt, ruined, huge debt):**

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2. HOW HAS GAMBLING AFFECTED YOUR EMOTIONAL HEALTH?

a. How has your gambling affected your emotions (e.g., anger, sadness, stress, panic)?

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b. How have these emotional effects affected your lifestyle?

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c. How have these emotional effects on you affected those you love?

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d. How has your gambling affected the emotions of those closest to you?

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**Summarize what you have just written into one or two key words (e.g., guilty, ashamed, suicidal):**

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3. HOW HAS GAMBLING AFFECTED YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH?

a. How has your gambling affected your physical health (e.g., sleep, diet, stress)?

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b. How have these health effects affected your lifestyle?

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c. How have the health effects on you affected those you love?

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d. How has your gambling affected the physical health of those closest to you?

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**Summarize what you have just written into one or two key words (e.g., insomnia, headaches):**

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4. HOW HAS GAMBLING AFFECTED YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SPOUSE/PARTNER (if applicable)?

a. How has gambling affected your spouse/partner?

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b. How has gambling affected your relationship with your spouse/partner?

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c. How has the effect of gambling on your spouse/partner affected you?

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d. What sacrifices has your spouse/partner had to make as a result of your gambling?

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Summarize what you have just written into one or two key words (e.g., anger, separation, arguments):

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5. HOW HAS GAMBLING AFFECTED YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILDREN (if applicable)?

a. How has gambling affected your children?

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b. How has gambling affected your relationship with your children?

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c. How has the effect of gambling on your children affected you?

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d. What sacrifices has your children had to make as a result of your gambling?

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**Summarize what you have just written into one or two key words (e.g., anger, separation, arguments):**

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6. HOW HAS GAMBLING AFFECTED YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR FRIENDS/FAMILY (if applicable)?

a. How has gambling affected your friends/family?

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b. How has gambling affected your relationship with your friends/family?

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c. How has the effect of gambling on your friends/family affected you?

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d. What sacrifices has your friends/family had to make as a result of your gambling?

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Summarize what you have just written into one or two key words (e.g., anger, separation, arguments):

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7. HOW HAS GAMBLING AFFECTED YOUR VIEW OF YOURSELF?

a. What has been the impact of gambling on your self-esteem?

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b. What has been the impact of gambling on your self-confidence?

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c. How has gambling affected your character or personality?

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**Summarize what you have just written into one or two key words (e.g., feel low, not as nice a person as I thought):**

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8. HOW HAS GAMBLING AFFECTED YOUR FUNCTIONING AT WORK/SCHOOL (if applicable)?

a. How has gambling affected how well you work (or study)?

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b. How has gambling affected your ability to keep your job (stay in school)?

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**Summarize what you have just written into one or two key words (e.g., poor work, late, lost job):**

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9. HOW HAS GAMBLING AFFECTED YOUR LEISURE AND SOCIAL LIFESTYLE?

a. How has gambling affected your social life?

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b. What lifestyle sacrifices have you made as a result of gambling?

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c. What activities, hobbies, and recreation have been affected by gambling?

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**Summarize what you have just written into one or two key words (e.g., no vacations, fewer outings):**

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## HOW HAS GAMBLING AFFECTED YOU?

Take the key words for each of the previous sections and repeat them in the space below:

## KEY WORDS FOR:

1. Finances: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Emotional Health: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Physical Health: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Relationship with spouse/partner: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Relationship with children: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Relationship with friends/family: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Self-view: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Work/School: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Leisure/Social: \_\_\_\_\_

Now use these words to form a POWERFUL IMPACT SENTENCE. This sentence is a summary of the impact of gambling on your life. It shows what gambling has done to your life. Repeat this sentence often.

It helps if you repeat this sentence with vivid, emotionally powerful imagery. Think about the consequences you listed EVERYDAY.

## IMPACT SENTENCE:

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This sentence is an expression of the effect that gambling has had on your life and can help you maintain a firm and focused motivation.

**STRENGTHENING MOTIVATION:  
IMAGINING YOUR FUTURE**

You have just completed an exercise in which we asked you to outline what the effects of past gambling have been on you and your personal world. You can view all of these effects and consequences as the *reasons* that are pushing you to do something about your gambling. This is actually very healthy since it means that you are listening to the messages that your body, emotions, your social relationships, your life are giving you about the dangers of gambling and are prepared to do something about it.

The next exercise is aimed at getting you to consider what kind of effects continued problem gambling might have on you and your family in the future. Often, many of our decisions to change habits are guided not just by what has happened to us, but also by what we fear or expect to happen if we do not change this habit. For example, many people will stop smoking, drinking, or overeating to avoid having future health problems. In the following exercise, we will ask you to imagine and then describe what you expect would be the consequences if you just kept on gambling the way you always have. This analysis will extend the previous exercise, which looked at the PAST, by now looking to the FUTURE. As you go through this exercise, it will not be hard to imagine what could happen if you kept on losing and losing. The effect this has on motivation is one of avoidance or fear. While this is, of course, a powerful motivation to change (e.g., who wants to end up bankrupt?), it is also helpful to include an analysis of what will happen if in fact the future does not include gambling.

We also know that healthy motivation is not based on just avoiding unpleasant future consequences. What kind of life could you

expect if you successfully achieve your gambling goal? How would your life be different if all the bad effects were gone? In general, we would expect that your life would be much happier and satisfying. So in the following exercise, we will ask you to imagine both outcomes: if you continued to problem gamble, and if you did not have a gambling problem in the future.

By remaining very aware of past and potential consequences of continued problem gambling, as well as the potential and anticipated benefits of not continuing to gamble in a problematic way, your motivation to work on this habit will remain firm. This is important since without a strong motivation on which to rely, it may be difficult to devote the necessary effort needed to change this habit. If your motivation is fragile, you may be tempted to drop out of treatment, experience relapses or be seduced by irrational thoughts and beliefs about gambling.

So, just as you did in the previous exercise, please take the time to answer the questions on the next few pages as honestly as you can.

YOUR FINANCIAL HEALTH IN THE FUTURE

1a. If you keep on gambling without any change over the next one, two or three years, imagine what would be the effect on your finances? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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1b. If you stop or control your gambling, imagine what your financial situation would be like over the next one, two or three years? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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YOUR EMOTIONAL HEALTH IN THE FUTURE

2a. If you keep on gambling without any change over the next one, two or three years, imagine what would be the effect on your emotions? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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2b. If you stop or control your gambling, imagine what your emotional health would be like over the next one, two or three years? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH IN THE FUTURE

3a. If you keep on gambling without any change over the next one, two or three years, imagine what would be the effect on your physical health? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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3b. If you stop or control your gambling, imagine what your physical health would be like over the next one, two or three years? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SPOUSE/PARTNER IN THE FUTURE

4a. If you keep on gambling without any change over the next one, two or three years, imagine what would be the effect on your relationship with your spouse/partner? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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4b. If you stop or control your gambling, imagine what your relationship with your spouse/partner would be like over the next one, two or three years? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILDREN IN THE FUTURE

5a. If you keep on gambling without any change over the next one, two or three years, imagine what would be the effect on your relationship with your children? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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5b. If you stop or control your gambling, imagine what your relationship with your children would be like over the next one, two or three years? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR FRIENDS/FAMILY IN THE FUTURE

6a. If you keep on gambling without any change over the next one, two or three years, imagine what would be the effect on your relationship with your friends/family? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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6b. If you stop or control your gambling, imagine what your relationship with your friends/family would be like over the next one, two or three years? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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YOUR VIEW OF YOURSELF IN THE FUTURE

7a. If you keep on gambling without any change over the next one, two or three years, imagine what would be the effect on your view of yourself? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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7b. If you stop or control your gambling, imagine what your view of yourself would be like over the next one, two or three years? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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YOUR WORK LIFE IN THE FUTURE

8a. If you keep on gambling without any change over the next one, two or three years, imagine what would be the effect on your work? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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8b. If you stop or control your gambling, imagine what your work life would be like over the next one, two or three years? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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YOUR LEISURE/SOCIAL LIFESTYLE IN THE FUTURE

9a. If you keep on gambling without any change over the next one, two or three years, imagine what would be the effect on your leisure and social lifestyle? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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9b. If you stop or control your gambling, imagine what your leisure and social lifestyle would be like over the next one, two or three years? What would your life be like?

Try to form a clear image of this effect. What do you see?

Circle the KEYWORD in your response:

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## HOW WILL GAMBLING AFFECT YOUR LIFE IF YOU DON'T CHANGE?

Take the key words you circled from the “a” questions for each of the previous sections and repeat them in the space below:

## KEY WORDS FOR:

1. Finances: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Emotional Health: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Physical Health: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Relationship with spouse/partner: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Relationship with children: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Relationship with friends/family: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Self-view: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Work/School: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Leisure/Social: \_\_\_\_\_

Now use these words to form a POWERFUL IMPACT SENTENCE of what would happen if you continued to gamble without changing. This sentence is a summary of the future impact of gambling on your life. It shows what gambling will do to your life if you don't change your gambling habit. Repeat this sentence often.

It helps if you repeat this sentence with vivid, emotionally powerful imagery. Think about the consequences you listed EVERYDAY.

## IMPACT SENTENCE:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

This sentence is an expression of the effect that gambling will have on your life if you don't change and can help you maintain a firm and focused motivation.

## HOW WILL STOPPING OR RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING IMPROVE YOUR LIFE?

Take the key words you circled from the “b” questions for each of the previous sections and repeat them in the space below:

## KEY WORDS FOR:

1. Finances: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Emotional Health: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Physical Health: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Relationship with spouse/partner: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Relationship with children: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Relationship with friends/family: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Self-view: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Work/School: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Leisure/Social: \_\_\_\_\_

Now use these words to form a POWERFUL IMPACT SENTENCE of what would happen if you stopped or controlled your gambling. This sentence is a summary of the future impact of stopping/controlling gambling on your life. It shows the benefits of changing your gambling habit. Repeat this sentence often.

It helps if you repeat this sentence with vivid, emotionally powerful imagery. Think about the consequences you listed EVERYDAY.

## IMPACT SENTENCE:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

This sentence is an expression of the effect that changing your gambling habit will have on your life and can help you maintain a firm and focused motivation.

You have just completed a large amount of work all aimed at strengthening your motivation to change. The exercises asked you to consider the ways in which gambling has affected your life in the past, how continued gambling might affect your life in the future and the role gambling has had in your life. You also examined what you might expect to experience when you are gambling less or not at all. Review this session often but particularly when you feel that your motivation is weakening, when you are thinking about gambling more than you have, or when you think you might want to change your goal.

## TAKING ACTION

## PROGRESS SINCE THE PREVIOUS TOPIC

**Ask yourself the following questions as you get ready to go through Treatment Topic Three:**

1. Are you meeting your gambling goal?

Yes     Mostly     No

2. If you are not meeting your goal, briefly describe what you think is getting in the way of achieving your goal:

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3. Have you made any changes to your goal since the previous Topic?

Yes     No

If your answer is Yes, describe how your goal has changed:

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## TAKING ACTION

### GAMBLING SITUATIONS

Gambling too much, for too long, or with too much money does not occur randomly, out of the blue. Like most of your behaviour, your decision to gamble too much after you have decided to stop or cut down may depend on specific situations and contexts. Some people gamble too much when they are seeking fun or excitement; others may decide to gamble when they want to win some money. For others, socializing is a big attraction to gambling, whereas others might gamble when they feel stressed or upset. In other cases, being tempted to gamble when there is a possibility of a big jackpot or just being in a gambling situation might lead you to decide to gamble.

If you are someone who is trying to cut down and control your gambling rather than stop altogether, then there are other types of situations that might lead you to gamble too much. This could include having more money available than would be wise, feeling stressed or upset, or being in a gambling situation where you find yourself influenced by others to keep on gambling. You can imagine that there are many challenges to keep yourself within safe gambling guidelines. That is why it is important for you to be aware of any situation (whether it is in your environment, or whether it is within yourself) that could lead you to stray from your decision to either stop gambling or only gamble moderately.

By being aware of these situations, you can plan effective responses and make different, healthier choices than you might have in the past. One thing we know about changing a habit is that awareness is very, very important. By awareness, we simply mean that you should be

quite knowledgeable about the factors that affect your decision to gamble.

- You should know when you are in a situation that may tempt you;
- You should know what might happen if you follow through on the temptation,
- You should know of alternative ways you have to respond to these situations and temptations.

Sometimes when we are really involved in a habit, we can become unaware about the factors that affect our gambling and how we react seems to be almost automatic and impulsive. We can feel like the habit is out of control. The truth is that we always have the option of controlling any habit or behaviour. If that was not true, this treatment program or any program couldn't help you. One of the best ways to begin to develop control over a habit is to become very aware of the specific situations and contexts in which the habit (or strong urges to do the habit) occurs. So awareness is a very healthy characteristic to develop.

The more that you know exactly about the situations that can affect your decision to gamble too much, the more power you gain over that behaviour. You now have an idea of what you may need to prepare for so that you do not find yourself either gambling (if you have decided to quit) or gambling past your limits.

In the next exercise, you will find 13 common types of situations that are frequently associated with gambling or the urge to gamble. We would like you to go through these thirteen situations and rate how much they would lead you to gamble too much or feel strong urges to gamble at the present time. We will examine each of these situations later on in this treatment topic and help you develop an effective coping response.

IMAGINE YOURSELF IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS.

AT THE PRESENT TIME, HOW LIKELY WOULD YOU BE, IN EACH SITUATION, TO GAMBLE TOO MUCH OR FEEL A VERY STRONG URGE OR TEMPTATION TO GAMBLE?

Please indicate your likelihood by circling a number for each situation.

SITUATION:	NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
1. When I am feeling good.	1	2	3	4
2. When someone strongly encouraged me to bet.	1	2	3	4
3. When I am feeling stressed or unhappy.	1	2	3	4
4. When I am having conflicts with others.	1	2	3	4
5. When I have a strong urge to gamble.	1	2	3	4
6. When I lose money gambling and want to win it back.	1	2	3	4
7. When I was with others who wanted to gamble.	1	2	3	4
8. When I wanted to have some fun and excitement.	1	2	3	4
9. When I am short of money.	1	2	3	4
10. When I believed I could control my gambling.	1	2	3	4
11. When I feel confident about my gambling skills.	1	2	3	4
12. When I convinced myself that I was a new person and could make a few bets without going too far.	1	2	3	4
13. When I have money available.	1	2	3	4

## COPING WITH GAMBLING SITUATIONS

Like with any habit change, you will find yourself in situations that put you in a position where you have a choice to gamble or not. Even if you decide not to gamble, you may be quite tempted to and find yourself having strong urges to do so. If you have stopped gambling altogether then you are probably dealing with these kinds of situations already. If you have decided to cut down your gambling and are still in situations where you can gamble, then the challenge becomes one of playing within your limits and not being tempted to exceed them.

It is important to have some ready-made, effective coping strategies to make sure you stick to your treatment goal. In general, the most effective coping techniques are very practical, simple, and easy to do. There are two major ways or categories of coping that can help when you find yourself in a situation where you might normally gamble, or in a situation where you have a strong urge to gamble, or in a situation where you are making efforts to control your gambling but you are at risk to gamble excessively.

One way is focused on taking action, doing something concrete. This is called behavioural coping. This is generally the best way to deal with gambling situations and urges as it is action-oriented and directly related to the specific situation. But there are times when it is hard to take direct action or when doing so might create additional problems. In these situations you should be prepared to cope with the gambling situation by changing your perspective or the way you look at the situation. This is called mental coping. In many cases, you will use a combination of both behavioural coping and mental coping.

## BEHAVIOURAL COPING

As we mentioned before, *Behavioural Coping* is action-based problem solving. We recommend that you use behavioural coping as your first choice when dealing with gambling situations or strong urges to gamble. In behavioural coping, the emphasis is on doing something else, other than gambling, when you find yourself in a gambling situation. Behavioural coping also includes improving your overall lifestyle, who you spend time with, how you have fun, and how you spend your money.

Many of the ideas that we will share will be familiar to you since behavioural coping with gambling will resemble behavioural coping with any other habit or behaviour that you have ever faced. In Treatment Topic One, on page 42 we asked you to list all the ways you were going to achieve your gambling goal. Many of these were probably examples of behavioural coping.

Examples of behavioural coping include:

- Avoid the gambling situation to avoid urges and temptations:**
  - Make sure you are not in a situation where gambling can occur.
  - Change your travel habits if they take you past places where you may be tempted to gamble.
  - Do not go to the casino or racetrack or bingo hall or lottery kiosk if this is where you would gamble (or gamble too much)
  - Applying the principle of 'out of sight, out of mind', which works well in the early stages of changing a bad habit.
- If you have been frequenting casinos, consider the Self-Exclusion offered by the casino:**

- Request entry into this program so you can help yourself by making it illegal for you to enter any casino in Ontario and reduce the temptation to even go to a casino.
- Ask someone you know to support your efforts to (reduce or) not gamble:**
  - Identify key people whom you have an agreement with that you can call and receive immediate support if you find yourself strongly tempted to gamble.
  - Avoid going to gaming places alone where there may be greater temptation or opportunity to exceed your limits – for this reason, identifying a key trustworthy person who can accompany you would be very helpful.
- Avoid people with whom you would normally gamble (or gamble too much):**
  - Avoid socializing in gambling places. If you wish to see these friends or acquaintances, then it is not wise to do so in places where you could gamble or that might eventually lead to a gambling place (e.g., meeting friends for dinner but then deciding afterwards to go play slots).
  - Have a plan to remove yourself from gambling situations as quickly as possible if you find yourself going along with people who are intending to go gambling.
  - Learn to be assertive with people who might pressure you into gambling.
- Plan activities that do not include gambling:**
  - Enhance your lifestyle with more rewarding and gratifying activities that can replace some of the rewarding aspects of gambling.
  - Spend time with people who can enhance your leisure and recreational life.
- Start a new good habit or hobby based on your interests and passions.
- Do things you used to enjoy but have neglected as a result of gambling or other life situations.
- Manage your money to reduce the chance you might spend it gambling:**
  - Have a trusted person manage your money for a while if necessary. This would involve letting them have access to your money and having very limited access to your money. While this may be an unpleasant action to take, the need for it would be influenced by the severity of your gambling and the ability for easy availability of money to increase the chance of gambling or urges to do so.
  - Eliminate easy sources of money like credit and debit cards and require co-signatures on cheques.
  - Do not bring credit cards or cheques to places where you might gamble.
  - Plan any visits to gambling venues by deciding in advance what a reasonable amount of money would be to bring with you and letting someone whom you trust hold on to excess cash and any other sources of credit.
- Establish good relationships with people important to you:**
  - Spend more time with people who are supportive of your efforts to change your gambling, and whom you care about, whether they are family, friends or relatives. Just being with people you care about and who care about you will make a difference.
  - Work to repair relationships that have been strained or damaged by your gambling. We

will discuss more about this in Treatment Session 5.

- Demonstrate to those closest to you of your sincere intentions to do something about your gambling. This will go a long way towards bringing important people back into your life at a time when you may most need them.

### MENTAL COPING

When Behavioural Coping is not possible or not enough, then it is important to work with how you see things. Working with your gambling perceptions, thoughts and beliefs to help you deal with situations where you may be tempted to gamble is called mental coping. This includes anything you tell yourself in order to make sure that this gambling situation does not lead to gambling. Mental Coping is described sometimes as a kind of self-talk, using attitude change or creative thinking, to help you avoid either gambling at all or keeping within your controlled gambling guidelines.

Examples of mental coping include:

- Distract yourself from thinking about the gambling situation:**
  - Shift your mind away from thinking about the gambling situation. Leaving your attention focused on the gambling situation can increase the urge to gamble. Instead, learn to direct your mental focus on anything else other than gambling (or the desire to). This can be done by stimulating your senses in any way that is reasonable such as listening to music, concentrating on your senses, speaking to someone, fantasizing, concentrating on other tasks that you may need to do, and so on.
  - Repeatedly interrupt any thought patterns that encourage you to gamble (this includes

thoughts that you should gamble more money or longer than you know is healthy for you) even though the thoughts keep returning.

- Engage in any mild activity (including sports and exercise) since this tends to interrupt any ongoing mental activity.
- Recall the damage gambling has done to your life:**
  - Remember all the reasons why you are trying to change your gambling habit.
  - Imagine what might happen if you let gambling back into your life (or gamble too much).
  - Remind yourself that you always have a choice as to whether you actually gamble or not regardless of how tempting or desirable gambling might be.
- Come up with alternative activities other than gambling:**
  - Shift your mind away from gambling thoughts and focus on other things you could do instead.
  - Challenge yourself to find another way to spend your time or money other than gambling.
  - Identify people who you know would help you avoid gambling at all (or too much if you are planning to gamble moderately).
- Reason with yourself so that you do not let the gambling situation lead you to gamble:**
  - Become aware of all the negative effects that gambling has brought you.
  - Remind yourself of the virtual impossibility of really winning.
  - Realize any benefits of gambling that you may be thinking about with all of the benefits of NOT gambling.

**Imagine the bad things that could happen if you continue to gamble:**

- Imagine all of the effects on your financial situation, your emotional health, key people in your life, and your self-esteem that would almost certainly occur if you gamble (or gamble too mu

The *Mental Coping* and *Behavioural Coping* responses discussed above should be viewed as additions to whatever you may already be doing and finding effective. Whatever technique and/or strategy you are using, if you practice them often, you will certainly have a major impact on your gambling (and your life) over the long-term.

To put this into practice, in the next exercise we will ask you to apply Mental and Behavioural Coping to the gambling situations you have checked off as being important to you at the present time. Try to come up with your best ways to cope with these thoughts using both mental (thinking) and behavioural (action) coping techniques. You can use some of the ideas that were described earlier or ones that you personally prefer.

Once completed, this exercise is like an action plan for you to rely on as you proceed with your gambling recovery. However, none of these exercises will be useful if you do not make a strong effort to apply them when you are in the face of these situations. Like any habit change, it takes practice, practice, and more practice!!!

Complete only those situations from page 42 that you checked would “OFTEN” or “ALMOST ALWAYS” increase the chance that you will gamble, gamble too much, or trigger an urge to gamble at the present time.

SITUATION 1:

WHEN I AM FEELING GOOD

1a. What kinds of behavioural coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you feel good”*?

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1b. What kinds of mental coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you feel good”*?

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SITUATION 2:

WHEN SOMEONE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED ME TO BET.

2a. What kinds of behavioural coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“someone strongly encourages you to bet”*?

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2b. What kinds of mental coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“someone strongly encourages you to bet”*?

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SITUATION 3:

WHEN I AM FEELING STRESSED OR UNHAPPY.

3a. What kinds of behavioural coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you are feeling stressed or unhappy”*?

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3b. What kinds of mental coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you are feeling stressed or unhappy”*?

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SITUATION 4:

WHEN I AM HAVING CONFLICTS WITH OTHERS.

4a. What kinds of behavioural coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you are having conflicts with others”*?

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4b. What kinds of mental coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you are having conflicts with others”*?

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SITUATION 5:

WHEN I HAVE A STRONG URGE TO GAMBLE.

5a. What kinds of behavioural coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“your urges to gamble are strong”*?

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5b. What kinds of mental coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“your urges to gamble are strong”*?

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SITUATION 6:

WHEN I LOSE MONEY GAMBLING AND WANT TO WIN IT BACK.

6a. What kinds of behavioural coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you lose money gambling and want to win it back”*?

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6b. What kinds of mental coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you lose money gambling and want to win it back”*?

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SITUATION 7:

WHEN I WAS WITH OTHERS WHO WANTED TO GAMBLE.

7a. What kinds of behavioural coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you are with others who want to gamble”*?

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7b. What kinds of mental coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you are with others who want to gamble”*?

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SITUATION 8:

WHEN I WANTED TO HAVE SOME FUN AND EXCITEMENT.

8a. What kinds of behavioural coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you want to have some fun and excitement”*?

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8b. What kinds of mental coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you want to have some fun and excitement”*?

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SITUATION 9:

WHEN I FEEL OVERWHELMED WITH WORRIES ABOUT MY DEBTS.

9a. What kinds of behavioural coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you are feeling overwhelmed with worries about your debts”*?

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9b. What kinds of mental coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you are feeling overwhelmed with worries about your debts”*?

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SITUATION 10:

WHEN I BELIEVED I COULD CONTROL MY GAMBLING.

10a. What kinds of behavioural coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you believe you can control your gambling”*?

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10b. What kinds of mental coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you believe you can control your gambling”*?

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SITUATION 11:

WHEN I FELT CONFIDENT ABOUT MY GAMBLING SKILLS.

11a. What kinds of behavioural coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you feel confident about your gambling skills”*?

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11b. What kinds of mental coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you feel confident about your gambling skills”*?

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SITUATION 12:

WHEN I CONVINCED MYSELF THAT I WAS A NEW PERSON AND  
COULD MAKE A FEW BETS WITHOUT GOING TOO FAR.

12a. What kinds of behavioural coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you convince yourself that you are a new person and can make a few bets without going too far”*?

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12b. What kinds of mental coping techniques will help you to overcome the urge to gamble when *“you convince yourself that you are a new person and can make a few bets without going too far”*?

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## TRACKING YOUR THOUGHTS

### PROGRESS SINCE THE PREVIOUS TOPIC

**Ask yourself the following questions as you get ready to go through Treatment Topic Four:**

1. Are you meeting your gambling goal?

Yes     Mostly     No

2. If you are not meeting your goal, briefly describe what you think is getting in the way of achieving your goal:

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3. Have you made any changes to your goal since the previous Topic?

Yes     No

If your answer is Yes, describe how your goal has changed:

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## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### TRACKING YOUR THOUGHTS

#### THE POWER OF GAMBLING BELIEFS AND THOUGHTS

You may have noticed that even if you are gambling less or even not gambling at all, it does not mean that you are not thinking about gambling. An everyday trip to the corner store, sports scores on the radio or television, commercials for casinos, pop-up internet ads for online gambling can all create strong urges to gamble. It is hard to avoid signs and indications of gambling in our culture. Like all advertising, they are meant to stir in you a desire for the product they are trying to sell to you.

In the case of gambling, it starts by thinking about it more than would be healthy. You may begin to miss gambling, you may think about the fun you had, about new ways to win money, about the sounds and sights, fantasizing about how life would be so different if you could hit the big jackpot. You may even believe that there is a way to win the jackpot and that you could eventually figure out how. These thoughts are normal during the early stages of changing any bad habit. The challenge is to be on guard against letting them harm you in any way by leading to the decision to gamble (or gamble too much or too often).

We know that many relapses can first start with a return of thoughts about gambling that basically encourage you to believe that gambling again is okay, or that you will be able to control it this time, or that you have learned how not to lose and want to try again, and so on.

We know that such thoughts are to be expected so you should see them as perfectly normal. We also know that such thoughts, unless they are

addressed in some way, can get in the way of progress and lead to relapse. These thoughts are indicators or signs that gambling had (and may still have) some positive aspects associated with it, even though it may have done a lot of harm to your life.

#### THE MOST DANGEROUS GAMBLING BELIEF

In recent years, quite a bit of research has shown that certain beliefs and thoughts about gambling can affect your decision to gamble, how much money you wager, and how much you persist in playing even when you are losing. In particular, there is a certain type of belief that you need to be on the lookout for, to become aware of it when your mind begins to think this way, and be prepared to challenge.

**This is the belief that there is a reliable way to predict or control gambling outcomes.**

To state this belief in a different way, it is the idea that there are ways which you may believe you know or have heard about how to predict what will happen (for example, horse races, sporting events, card games) or control what will happen (for example, playing bingo, lotteries, slot machines) when you gamble.

This key or core belief leads to all kinds of techniques and strategies that gamblers believe can help predict and control gambling outcomes.

Some of techniques and strategies include:

- attempts to find reliable systems of winning,
- using the power of your mind or attitude to affect gambling outcomes,
- trying to get luck on your side,
- finding lucky numbers or objects,

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

- using gut instincts or feelings to guide your gambling decisions,
- getting so overly involved in fantasies of winning and living the high life that you overrate your chance of winning,
- playing even when you are losing, convinced that you will eventually win,
- using specific rituals or lucky objects that may affect gambling outcomes.

There may be many other ways that you believe can give you an edge over the next gambler and maybe help you win a little more often. Unfortunately, these thinking patterns are ultimately quite destructive since they feed that core belief, that there is some way that you can find that will allow you to predict or control gambling outcomes on a regular basis. This belief has to be let go in order to protect your recovery in the long term. Even if you stop gambling for a while but still hold on to this core belief, you may be at risk to eventually try your luck again at gambling.

In this Treatment Topic, we will be examining some of the beliefs and thoughts that gamblers may have and help you see through them and find ways to combat them.

Recall, in Treatment Topic Three, we discussed how to cope with gambling situations in which you have gambled heavily in the past and which may threaten your current recovery. We discussed *mental coping strategies* and *behavioural coping strategies*. In this session, we will discuss how to use these same kinds of strategies (mental and behavioural coping) to cope with gambling thoughts and beliefs.

As with coping in gambling situations, coping with gambling thoughts requires you to become aware of these thoughts. Acknowledging them to yourself (and to anyone else who you think can help you with your gambling) will help.

When you bring these thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes into your conscious awareness, you immediately have a choice as to how you will react to them. Becoming aware of these thoughts will serve as a type of protection. If you remain unaware of these thoughts, they can influence your gambling in an automatic or habitual way. Before you know it, you may find yourself acting on these beliefs and thoughts. In fact, some people define a habit as something you do with very little awareness or reflection. Whether you want to break an old habit or start a new one, becoming aware of what goes through your mind and in your environment are important steps to success.

In the exercise on the next page, you will find 10 common types of gambling-related thoughts and beliefs that are frequently encountered by gamblers (many of which are similar to the questions we asked you about at the beginning of this program). We would like you to go through these 10 types of beliefs and rate how closely they are related to either actual heavy gambling or urges to gamble **AT THE PRESENT TIME**. We will examine each of these types of beliefs later on in this session and help you develop an effective coping response.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS:

*RIGHT NOW*, HOW LIKELY WOULD THESE THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS LEAD YOU TO GAMBLE EXCESSIVELY OR EXPERIENCE A VERY STRONG URGE OR TEMPTATION TO GAMBLE?

Please indicate your likelihood by circling a number for each statement.

THOUGHT/BELIEF:	NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
1. When I believed that I could find a reliable way of winning.	1	2	3	4
2. When I believed that certain numbers were more likely to come up.	1	2	3	4
3. When I believed that my attitude could affect whether I won.	1	2	3	4
4. When I felt I could make luck work for me.	1	2	3	4
5. When I believed I could rely on gut feelings and instincts to guide my gambling.	1	2	3	4
6. When I believed that I should keep on gambling after repeatedly winning.	1	2	3	4
7. When I imagined all of the ways I could spend the money if I won the jackpot.	1	2	3	4
8. When I thought that I could find out a way to predict gambling outcomes.	1	2	3	4
9. When I believed I could find a way to control gambling outcomes.	1	2	3	4
10. When I thought I had figured out a way to increase my chance of winning.	1	2	3	4

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### COPING WITH GAMBLING THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

#### MENTAL COPING WITH GAMBLING THOUGHTS

Whenever you have any stream of thought that tells you there is some way for you to control or predict gambling outcomes, we suggest that you first acknowledge that this is occurring, look at the thought honestly and openly, and keep the following ideas in mind.

Just having a gambling thought, even if it seems to be really convincing, does not mean that it is true, or that it has to be obeyed, or above all, acted upon by actually gambling. Thinking it does not make it true. It can help to not take these thoughts seriously at all, but just to know that they are happening and that you have choices as to how you will respond that DO NOT include gambling.

Regardless of how convincing or compelling or tempting your gambling thoughts and beliefs may be, it is important to remember that they are after all:

- temporary (they do not last long at all, if you wait awhile they will go away),
- very fragile (they can easily be interrupted or terminated),
- harmless (the thought itself cannot harm you or control you UNLESS you believe in it too much and then ACT on it), and
- a sign of your mental creativity (gambling thoughts can be fanciful or exaggerated or extreme and sometimes even a bit bizarre and unusual, but that does not make them important or true, no matter how convincing they may seem).

Here are some mental coping techniques you can use to deal with gambling thoughts and beliefs:

1. One of the best ways is to IGNORE gambling thoughts and beliefs. To give too much attention to these thoughts is to give them too much power, too much influence, too much importance. When a gambling thought takes over your mind, make the effort to shift your mental attention (or your mind's eye) away from that specific thought. Instead, direct your attention towards any other aspect of your environment. Refrain from discussing the thought in your mind, expanding it, or in any way engaging in a mental discussion with it. Like a blackboard, just wipe it off your mental screen and focus on anything else that may be of interest to you. You may have to do this repeatedly, especially in the beginning of treatment. Eventually, you will actually find yourself easily ignoring gambling thoughts simply by being aware that they have occurred.
2. Another way to mentally cope with gambling thoughts is to take up an attitude of DOUBT, not giving your gambling thoughts any credibility, validity, or truth. In other words, just because you think it, does not make it true!!! And most likely, the gambling belief is irrational or incorrect. This is especially true in the case of gambling thoughts, which from your own experience, you know have gotten you into quite a bit of trouble. Learn to DOUBT what the thoughts tell you about your chance of winning (or winning back) money! Since many people who get into trouble with gambling are often convinced that their hunches, systems, beliefs, or predictions were true and real, DOUBT can be a very powerful antidote. The opposite of doubt,

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

which is conviction, is a dangerous way to react to gambling thoughts.

3. An additional way to mentally cope with gambling thoughts is to vigorously CHALLENGE them. Challenge their validity, see through them, argue with them, and show how irrational these thoughts are. Recall what we said earlier that just because you have the thought does not mean that it is valid or true. Do not automatically believe them; do not automatically act on them. Instead, challenge them, refute them, argue with them, laugh at them, and find the weakness in the logic of the thought. Sometimes discussing a thought with someone you know brings out how impossible it is for them to be true and how strangely bizarre they sound when you put voice to them.

Below we have listed several ways in which you can assertively CHALLENGE your gambling thoughts. Ask yourself the following questions when a particular belief or attitude becomes very salient and potentially able to affect your decision to gamble:

### **Q3a: How do I know this gambling thought is true?**

In other words, am I assuming the thought is true? Do I simply want it to be true? Is there any evidence for its validity?

### **Q3b: Is it always true?**

In other words, is the thought true at this moment, even when you have lost at gambling, even if someone else also believes it? Even if it is true, isn't it more dangerous if you act on it?

### **Q3c: Do I have to act on it?**

In other words, even if the belief may be true, do I have to gamble, do I have to obey the thought?

Are there dangers to my recovery if I give in to the thought?

### **Q3d: Is there another way for me to look at it?**

In other words, is it possible the thought is just wishful thinking, or possibly completely wrong, or just a bad thinking habit that keeps on going but is not really true?

### **Q3e: What's the danger if I act on this thought?**

In other words, given what has happened before when I have gambled, what is the risk I am taking if I gamble? What makes me so sure that the outcomes will be any different this time? Just having the thought won't harm you, but acting on it is.

Some people may find these mental coping skills difficult to use. IGNORING, DOUBTING, and CHALLENGING take a lot of energy and can be difficult to do. If you find this to be the case, there is another kind of mental coping that you can use. This technique is based on the idea that it might not be helpful to think about whether the gambling thought is true or not. It can be confusing to get caught in that kind of analysis. In this case, it is probably best to focus on the following counter-thought whenever you are plagued by tempting gambling-related thoughts:

**What are the consequences to my life, my loved ones and to my future if I believe and act on this gambling thought (regardless of whether it is true or not)?**

If your answer is that it will lead me to gamble, then you know it is a dangerous thought which you need to strongly counteract. One of the best ways to do this is to become very aware (using thoughts and images) of all of the bad things that gambling has brought into your life. Make

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

sure you can imagine all of these negative consequences vividly and realistically. This technique can be a very powerful way to dispel and dissolve gambling thoughts that might draw you towards a decision to gamble. Remember: You do not have to be a victim of your thoughts.

### BEHAVIOURAL COPING WITH GAMBLING THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS

In addition to dealing with gambling thoughts using self-talk and changing your attitude, there are also action-oriented ways to help you cope with gambling thoughts. Action or behavioural coping includes doing anything that helps you prevent gambling thoughts from leading you to gamble (or gambling excessively).

Here are some behavioural coping techniques you can use to deal with gambling thoughts and beliefs:

1. One of the best ways to behaviourally cope with gambling thoughts is to make sure being in a gambling situation or spending time with people you used to gamble with a lot is not tempting you. Being in such situations tends to stir up gambling thoughts (just like being tempted to eat when you are hungry and having food in front of you). If you find yourself in gambling situations and with other gamblers, and your mind begins to be bombarded by beliefs that you can win if you play, then the best way to get a handle on these thoughts is to GET OUT of the situation as soon as you can. This can have the effect of “putting out” these thoughts. Even if it means cutting an evening or event short, this is better than giving in to the thoughts.
2. On occasions when your gambling thoughts are hard to manage on your own, rely on a

good and trusted friend or family member to help you cope with your gambling thoughts. By discussing them out loud you can help gain the necessary perspective to help avoid acting on the thoughts by actually gambling. Often, just saying the thoughts to someone else destroys their power.

3. Interruption of sustained thinking about winning at gambling is crucial to success in making sure that they do not affect your gambling goal. It is sometimes tempting to focus on gambling thoughts, expanding them, elaborating them, allowing them to grow in certainty and truth, almost like a fantasy. It's almost like we let ourselves get carried away by our mental fantasies. If such focused thinking gets too far, it begins to have a life of its own and may influence your decision to gamble. One of the ways you can prevent this is to repeatedly interrupt these gambling thought patterns, refusing to let them gain any momentum. It would be like repeatedly turning the tea kettle on and then off every ten seconds — it would be very hard to ever get the water to boil. When you focus too much on your gambling thoughts and start believing in them, then it is like putting the tea kettle on the highest temperature and leaving it there! For sure, the water will boil, just as your desire to gamble (or at least gamble more than would be wise for you) would become 'hotter' and 'hotter'. Fortunately, any thoughts, including gambling thoughts are easily ruptured and destroyed by the slightest movement you make. Just getting up, washing your face, eating something, listening to music, talking to someone, going for a walk will make it difficult to focus on gambling thoughts and keep them 'cool'. The worst thing you could do is sit or lie there and work them, expanding and

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

playing with them. Avoid the temptation to remain still in their influence. That's why having a regular program of exercise and sport can be quite healthy for your recovery. Get up! Move! Do Something! Get active!

4. In general, being busy doing things that you find rewarding, fun, and gratifying is one of the most important ways for you to ensure that gambling thoughts don't take root and lead you to make an unwise decision. It seems that many gamblers find their minds flooded with gambling thoughts when they are not feeling very good; they may be depressed, bored, angry, or otherwise upset. Turning your thoughts towards gambling is a kind of coping response intended to make you feel better. If you find that you think about gambling most when you are not feeling very good, then it is a sign that you would benefit from enhancing the quality of your lifestyle. By becoming active and engaging in positive and meaningful activity, there is less chance for gambling thoughts to become the focus of your life. Since for many people, doing fun and meaningful things involves other people, it is worth repeating the importance of maintaining good relations with as many people as possible.
5. Confide in someone you trust about the strong thoughts that you are having about gambling. This is especially valuable when you have been doing well and sticking to your gambling goal and the thoughts take root in your mind about the possibility of playing (again), or playing more than is healthy, or wagering more than you had planned. At this stage, checking with people you trust can have the effect of shattering these beliefs and protecting you from a lapse or relapse. Doing the opposite, keeping quiet about these thoughts, letting them

grow and strengthen, can eventually lead you to make an unwise gambling decision, one that, unfortunately will produce the same results that you have had in the past: Losing!!

6. If your thoughts about winning resist efforts to dissipate them or argue them away or other efforts you make, you might consider testing your gambling beliefs and attitudes. By testing we mean playing your game without actually wagering money. This is not possible for all types of gambling. For example, you could test your beliefs about winning at lotteries or the racetrack or sports without setting foot in a store or racetrack. You can just follow the results in the newspaper. For card games and slot machines or other casino games, it may be harder to actually test your beliefs although playing card games at home with trusted people can help test some of your beliefs about winning at card games.

In the next few pages, we will describe eight different gambling-related beliefs and thoughts. Some will be more relevant to you than others. You should complete the beliefs that you indicated on page 67 that OFTEN or ALMOST ALWAYS had the ability to affect your gambling or gambling urges. Even if you are not gambling at the present time and decide that none of these beliefs are currently affecting you, you may still want to go through them anyway just to make yourself aware of them should they ever occur to you.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### GAMBLING BELIEF NO. ①

#### ***"MY SYSTEM WILL DELIVER!!!"***

You may be very confident in your ability to find a betting system to help you win at gambling. You may believe that not only is there a way to consistently win, but you will find it, if you keep on working at it. These kinds of systems sound so reasonable and logical that you can be persuaded that if you found the right one, you could make winning wagers. You may even think that your betting system is better than those other gamblers may be using and that you will be more likely to win in the end.

**1. How much do you believe that finding the right betting system can affect gambling outcomes?**

not at all       a little bit       quite a bit       very much

**2. How often do you try to find betting systems to help you win?**

not at all       a little bit       quite a bit       very much

\* If you answered 'not at all' to question 1 or 2, this may not apply to you. However, we ask that you read this section anyway, as you may find it helpful should these thoughts ever occur to you.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### GAMBLING FACT NO. ①: THERE IS NO SYSTEM

Betting systems are supposed to work by providing a technique or strategy that bypasses the random nature of gambling outcomes. In cases of games where the outcome is randomly determined (such as slot machines, bingo and lotteries, roulette), the outcomes cannot be controlled or predicted at all (at least legally). It is the random nature of such games that guarantee the complete failure of any system over time. In games where some skill is presumed (such as card games, race tracks or sports betting), the factors that affect the outcomes are so numerous that no system would have available all of the necessary information. For example, the outcome of a horse race is affected by so many factors that it would be impossible for all that information to be available at the right time in order to allow you to make a winning wager. This makes consistent prediction impossible, and so the system, again, will fail.

Another example is the 'Martingale System' commonly used on money games such as roulette. According to this system, the bettor doubles each consecutive bet so that when he/she does eventually win, he/she is able to cover all losses up to that point and perhaps even make a small profit. The problem with this 'system' is that eventually, the bettor will reach a point where he/she cannot afford to double the bet after each loss. Let's say one starts off and bets \$10 per spin and loses. The next bet must be \$20 then \$40 then \$80 then \$160 then \$320 then \$640 then \$1280 then \$2560 then \$5120 per spin. At some point, the gambler is going to run out of money OR the table limit will be hit. In addition, no matter what your bet, your percentage of return remains the same. This means that even if you increase the frequency or amount you bet you also increase the amount you lose when ultimately the 'system' fails.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

Now, try to come up with your best ways to cope with these thoughts using both mental and behavioural coping techniques. Once completed, this exercise becomes an action plan to help you deal with thoughts about betting systems as you progress with your gambling recovery.

Q: What kinds of behavioural techniques will help you to cope with beliefs about betting systems?

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Q: What kinds of mental techniques will help you to cope with beliefs about betting systems?

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## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### GAMBLING BELIEF NO. ②

#### *"I FEEL LUCKY!!!"*

This belief suggests that there is a way that you can control your luck at gambling. Your goal is to avoid bad luck, unlucky people, and unlucky gambling places and figure out when luck is on your side, which are lucky people, and the luckiest places to wager. You might rely on certain numbers, special rituals, special objects, or routines that you believe increase your chance of winning. You may believe you are luckier than others on specific types of gambling or that you can do things to try to attract good luck and repel bad luck. Certain people may bring you luck, either good or bad. You may wait until you believe that luck is on your side before you make any large bets.

**1. How much do you believe that controlling your luck will affect gambling outcomes?**

not at all       a little bit       quite a bit       very much

**2. How often do you try to control your luck to help you win?**

not at all       a little bit       quite a bit       very much

\* If you answered 'not at all' to either question 1 or 2, this may not apply to you. However, we ask that you read this section to gain further insight.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### GAMBLING FACT NO. ②: YOU CANNOT CONTROL YOUR LUCK

If you examine closely your patterns of winning and losing, you will notice that you will lose as often as not, whether or not you are using any special form of luck control. Of course, there will be times when a win is associated with some specific set of numbers, lucky object or ritual. But these will be quite rare, especially if you keep a record (memory can be deceiving). Also, you should consider how a lucky number or lucky object can possibly affect gambling outcomes – that is, how does the gaming machine (e.g., lottery computers) know that you are doing something that is supposed to bring luck (e.g., betting your favorite numbers, going to your ‘lucky’ store)?

We sometimes use the idea of luck as a kind of influence that can work with or against us. But the closer you examine the idea of luck, the more difficult it is to understand what exactly it is and how it could possibly have any effect. For example, where would ‘luck’ be found, what is it made of, is it a thing or a substance, how does it actually affect your behaviour or future outcomes when you gamble? Then there is the issue of how luck identifies you, either to receive good or bad luck. As you examine the idea of luck, it may become more difficult to actually believe that it exists as a force that we can do anything about. Finally, how do you know if something is lucky or not, or if a person or place is unlucky or not? If you go by whether you win or not, then almost everywhere you gamble will probably be unlucky!!!

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

Q: What kinds of behavioural techniques will help you to cope with thoughts about controlling your luck?

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Q: What kinds of mental techniques will help you to cope with thoughts about controlling your luck?

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## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### GAMBLING BELIEF NO. ③

#### *"IF I FEEL IT, IT MUST BE TRUE!!!"*

You may rely on gut feelings, instincts, hunches, or special signs that tell you that you might win. You are even sensitive to moods or sensations that you have learned to associate with winning or losing. Naturally, you try to bet when you feel certain that you may win and avoid wagering as much at other times. On the basis of your gut instincts and inner feelings, you are able to predict if and when you will win. You wait for a sign that the time is right to bet or to bet big. You might also give significance to certain signs, weather phenomena, unusual coincidences or events.

**1. How much do you believe that your instincts, hunches or special signs can affect gambling outcomes?**

not at all       a little bit       quite a bit       very much

**2. How often do you try to find instincts, hunches or special signs to help you win?**

not at all       a little bit       quite a bit       very much

\* If you answered 'not at all' to either question 1 or 2, this may not apply to you. However, we ask that you read this section to gain further insight.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### GAMBLING FACT NO. ③: NO ONE IS ABLE TO PREDICT A WIN

Even though there will be times that there seems to be an association between our hunches, gut feelings and gambling outcomes, you should also be very aware of all the times that this does not happen, where your hunches and instincts don't work out. Our memory tends to be selective and will overestimate how often such predictions actually work. Again, you also should consider how your feelings, instincts or sensations could possibly perceive into the future and figure out that a certain gambling outcome would occur. Usually such feelings are more the results of wishful thinking or anticipation rather than having any real ability to predict what will happen.

It is quite reasonable to believe in such connections when once in a while such feelings are followed by a sizeable win, it seems quite convincing that we can trust these signs. But again, if you look at the overall pattern, there really is no reliable connection between such feelings and gambling outcomes.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

Q: What kinds of behavioural techniques will help you to cope with thoughts that you can rely on gut feelings and instincts to predict a win?

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Q: What kinds of mental techniques will help you to cope with thoughts that you can rely on gut feelings and instincts to predict a win?

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## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### GAMBLING BELIEF NO. ④

#### *"NEVER SAY NEVER!!!"*

You may believe that you should keep on gambling even if you are losing since you are bound to start winning eventually. You believe that persisting, not giving up, is the only way to get back the money you have lost. In fact, losing may even mean that your turn to win is coming soon. So, in a funny way, being on a losing streak almost has to be followed by a break and lead to a winning streak. As you continue to lose, it becomes harder to pull away and cut your losses and very attractive to play just one more time, and then again one more time, and then again, and so on since your turn to win has to come up soon enough (or so you might assume). You rationalize that with so many losses, your turn to win is about to come up.

**1. How much do you believe that persisting in playing until you win will affect gambling outcomes?**

- not at all       a little bit       quite a bit       very much

**2. How often do you persist in playing until you win?**

- not at all       a little bit       quite a bit       very much

\* If you answered 'not at all' to either question 1 or 2, this may not apply to you. However, we ask that you read this section to gain further insight.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### GAMBLING FACT NO. ④:

#### HOPING TO WIN AFTER LOSING LEADS TO JUST MORE LOSING

When someone is losing consistently, there is a belief that it is only a matter of time before a win occurs. This is an example of the “gambler’s fallacy”. While this is statistically true (meaning that eventually there will be a win), you have no idea whether it is going to be sooner or later. There is a natural assumption that the win will be sooner, of course. This is a dangerous assumption since it encourages continued gambling and continued wagering. However, if you have limited money, then your money may well run out before you do (eventually win). This is another example of the ‘gambler’s fallacy’.

This kind of thinking may work in either of two ways, either one of which will work against you. The first way the gambler’s fallacy can work is if you believe that if you’ve been getting a lot of losing spins on a slot machine during a certain period, that you’re soon due to have a hot streak on the machine since ‘the odds have to even out’. The other way this fallacy comes into play is what is sometimes called an “inverse gambler’s fallacy”. Let’s say you are on a hot streak for a time. You believe that the machine is due to turn cold because the casino isn’t going to let it pay out forever. Both situations are gambler’s fallacies in that there is a belief that something that has been happening a lot in the past is less likely to happen in the future. Inversely, something that hasn’t happened in the past is more likely to happen in the future. The truth is that the odds of hitting a jackpot on a slot machine are the same on every spin. It doesn’t matter what happened on the last spin and it doesn’t matter how long it’s been since the jackpot last hit. The odds don’t change.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

Q: What kinds of behavioural techniques will help you to cope with beliefs that you should persist in playing when you are on a losing streak?

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Q: What kinds of mental techniques will help you to cope with beliefs that you should persist in playing when you are on a losing streak?

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## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### GAMBLING BELIEF NO. ⑤

#### *"IF I BELIEVE I CAN WIN, I WILL!!!"*

You may believe that your attitude can affect the gambling outcome. As a result, you are careful to keep the right mental attitude while you are playing. This could include maintaining a hopeful attitude towards winning, positive thinking, positive winning imagery, expecting to win, and being optimistic are key ingredients to winning. In your experience, having a pessimistic, losing, negative way of thinking gets in the way of winning. You may even try praying, hoping that you can get the Higher Power on your side, especially if you really need to win (e.g., to pay off debts, help someone you know).

**1. How much do you believe that a positive, optimistic and hopeful attitude can affect gambling outcomes?**

not at all       a little bit       quite a bit       very much

**2. How often do you try to have a positive, optimistic and hopeful attitude in order to enhance your chances of winning?**

not at all       a little bit       quite a bit       very much

\* If you answered 'not at all' to either question 1 or 2, this may not apply to you. However, we ask that you read this section to gain further insight.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### GAMBLING FACT NO. 5:

#### HAVING THE RIGHT ATTITUDE WILL NOT AFFECT GAMBLING OUTCOMES!

If having the right attitude, praying to a Higher Power, or 'trying hard' was truly effective, then most gamblers would have won the big jackpot by now. While such attitudes may help you feel good about playing, you should examine very closely the idea that such beliefs and attitudes could affect the outcomes of inanimate objects such as lottery computers, slot machines, or animate ones such as horses, sports athletes.

Although in our society we are often told that wanting something bad enough will often get it for you, this does not apply to gambling where effort and outcomes are not related. Such attitudes and feelings, even if they were associated with winning from time to time, are not always related as most gamblers find out. We give our thoughts, feelings and creative imagery too much power and influence when we believe that they could influence the physical world of gambling. Gambling outcomes are not affected by what goes on in our minds.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

Q: What kinds of behavioural techniques will help you to cope with beliefs that your attitude could increase the chance of winning?

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Q: What kinds of mental techniques will help you to cope with beliefs that your attitude could increase the chance of winning?

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## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### GAMBLING BELIEF NO. ⑥

#### *"I NEED THE MONEY TO LIVE MY DREAM!!!"*

You may fantasize about all the things you can do if you were to win the jackpot. You imagine the great lifestyle you will have if you win, the people you could help, and the things you would buy for yourself and others. Since someone does win, eventually it could be you, so having such fantasies and dreams are potentially realistic. Part of you may even enjoy the feeling of power that comes from having plenty of money, getting special attention and privileges that money can bring. In our society, having lots of money puts you in a special category. If you have lived much of your life with little in the way of money and material possessions, you may enjoy the feeling of now having whatever you want, having others treat you special, and trying to be your friend.

**1. How much do you believe that fantasies of winning can affect gambling outcomes?**

not at all       a little bit       quite a bit       very much

**2. How often do you fantasize about all the things you could do if you were to win a jackpot?**

not at all       a little bit       quite a bit       very much

\* If you answered 'not at all' to either question 1 or 2, this may not apply to you. However, we ask that you read this section to gain further insight.

### GAMBLING FACT NO. ⑥:

#### MONEY FANTASIES REMAIN JUST FANTASIES

Fantasies of winning and all that it would do for you can be a powerful motivator to gamble. They can even cloud your judgment and encourage you to bet more often or more money than would be wise in an effort to win the big jackpot. The more you value money and all that it would mean to you, the more you will be tempted to do whatever it takes to succeed. Given the random and uncontrollable nature of gambling outcomes, this will set you up for certain failure and painful frustration.

While it is true that someone will win, the odds of it being you are astronomically low (for example, 1 in 14 million to win lottery jackpots). In games where the chance of winning may be higher, it rarely pays enough to make you wealthy or to quit your day job (e.g., race track, card games). So believing it will be you who wins the jackpot is, statistically speaking, wishful thinking. So it is important to be careful not to let fantasies of wealth and power affect what is really just a game that rarely can make anyone wealthy. As your gambling debts pile up it even becomes more tempting to fantasize that winning the jackpot will solve all of your financial problems. This kind of thinking further encourages gambling when the wisest thing to do would be to stop.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

Q: What kinds of behavioural techniques will help you to cope with fantasies of winning and their effect on your gambling?

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Q: What kinds of mental techniques will help you to cope with fantasies of winning and their effect on your gambling?

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## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### GAMBLING BELIEF NO. 7

#### *"MY CHOICES ARE SPECIAL!!!"*

If you play lotteries or bingo or even sports lotteries and track betting, you may come to rely on certain numbers, teams, players, or horses as being particularly likely to lead to a win. As a result, you will stick with these numbers (or teams, players, or horses) even when they do not win since you truly believe they will eventually come through for you. You may even look for patterns between certain numbers (or teams, players, or horses) hoping to find the ideal combination that will win reliably for you.

**1. How much do you believe that lucky numbers (or teams, players, or horses) can affect gambling outcomes?**

not at all       a little bit       quite a bit       very much

**2. How often do you use lucky numbers (or teams, players, or horses) to help you win?**

not at all       a little bit       quite a bit       very much

\* If you answered 'not at all' to either question 1 or 2, this may not apply to you. However, we ask that you read this section to gain further insight.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### GAMBLING FACT NO. ⑦: NO NUMBER IS SPECIAL

Although certain numbers seem to have special significance for many people (e.g., 7 or 13), when it comes to gambling all numbers are created equal. For example, some people choose the same set of 6 numbers for each lottery draw and believe that this gives them an edge (frequently these numbers represent birth dates, anniversaries, age, etc.) over those who randomly choose their set of 6 numbers which are different for each draw. The truth is that the probability of winning on any one day is the same for both strategies. If the lottery has a choice of 49 numbers, then imagine a very large hat containing one ticket for every possible combination of 6 numbers. In total, there would be 1,906,884 tickets. On the day of the draw, only one ticket is picked.

The person using the 'special numbers' strategy and the person who randomly picked the numbers on the ticket each has an equal chance of winning and losing. Each lottery draw is an event independent of all events in the past. It doesn't matter what numbers were drawn previously. The probability of winning with one's numbers today has absolutely no effect on the probability of that or any other combination winning tomorrow. This is another example of the 'gambler's fallacy'. The idea is that the longer the lottery goes without your 'special' numbers coming up, the more likely they will come up in the future. To make matters even more complicated, you need to know almost all the lottery numbers to win a sizeable prize, which makes the challenge of finding 6 or 7 lucky numbers very, very difficult.

Similarly, when it comes to sports teams or horses, their 'specialness' for you will have little to do with whether they win or not, which is influenced by so many factors that it would be impossible for anyone to have all of the necessary information to make a sure prediction (and that would include the teams' or horses' owners!!!).

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

Q: What kinds of behavioural techniques will help you to cope with beliefs about special numbers, teams, or horses, etc.?

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Q: What kinds of mental techniques will help you to cope with beliefs about special numbers, teams, or horses, etc.?

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## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### GAMBLING BELIEF NO. ⑧

#### *"I AM IN CONTROL!!!"*

Many experienced gamblers have learned to use whatever is needed to give them an edge when it comes to winning. This could include certain rituals or lucky objects they hold on to, believing that it could have some impact on the gambling outcome. You may gamble only on certain slot machines, or in certain bingo halls or lottery kiosks, or with certain dealers, or on certain days with certain people or hold on to their lucky charm, and so on. It couldn't hurt and you never know if there is some connection between winning and your choices. It gives you a measure of control when it is so hard to otherwise predict if and when you will win.

**1. How much do you believe that specific rituals and techniques can affect gambling outcomes?**

not at all       a little bit       quite a bit       very much

**2. How often do you use specific rituals and techniques to affect gambling outcomes?**

not at all       a little bit       quite a bit       very much

\* If you answered 'not at all' to either question 1 or 2, this may not apply to you. However, we ask that you read this section to gain further insight.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

### GAMBLING FACT NO. ⑧:

#### SUPERSTITIOUS BEHAVIOUR MAY MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER BUT THEY HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH GAMBLING OUTCOMES

It is tempting to rely on rituals, special objects, and unique situations to give you an edge when it comes to predicting or controlling gambling outcomes. But like our discussions earlier about luck, attitudes, and numbers, these rituals and objects are not able to physically affect what will happen in the future.

The more you examine these superstitions, the more you become skeptical about how, for example, holding onto a lucky object, or playing a specific machine could affect the eventual gambling outcome. Such decisions may be emotionally satisfying (since they make you feel more confident) but if you look at the actual evidence, the only thing you can rely on is that you will lose, again and again and again, regardless of whether you engage in superstitious behaviour or not.

## TREATMENT TOPIC FOUR: *Tracking Your Thoughts*

Q: What kinds of behavioural techniques will help you to cope with thoughts about superstitious behaviours affecting your gambling outcomes?

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Q: What kinds of mental techniques will help you to cope with thoughts about superstitious behaviours affecting your gambling outcomes?

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## HEALING RELATIONSHIPS

### PROGRESS SINCE THE PREVIOUS TOPIC

**Ask yourself the following questions as you get ready to go through Treatment Topic Five:**

1. Are you meeting your gambling goal?

Yes     Mostly     No

2. If you are not meeting your goal, briefly describe what you think is getting in the way of achieving your goal:

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3. Have you made any changes to your goal since the previous Topic?

Yes     No

If your answer is Yes, describe how your goal has changed:

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## HEALING RELATIONSHIPS

It is well known that habits such as gambling do not just harm the gambler but those people closest to them as well. Since the crisis that many people affected by problem gambling face is often financial (but not just financial), others may also be affected. As a result, the gambler and family members may need to make major financial and lifestyle sacrifices through the redirection of money toward gambling that would have otherwise been used to pay for food, bills, needed items, vacations, investments, and so on. While many gamblers may begin by using money that they already have such as investments, liquid cash and savings, in many cases this eventually will be depleted and lead to the accumulation of debt, whether it is to banks or credit cards, or through borrowing from friends or family or shady loan companies. In some cases, gamblers will turn to illegal activities to obtain money. As a result, the consequences of being in financial trouble will almost always have an impact on people the gambler cares for most.

Depending on the severity of the financial problems, these may take years to completely undo. Along with the financial stresses, the gambler may find that their relationships with loved ones are strained in many other ways such as:

- lack of trust as a result of hidden gambling, lies, and deceptions;
  - poor communication which may include repeated broken promises, misunderstandings, accusations, lying about gambling behaviour and the extent of financial losses; and
  - decreased quality of life, which can take the form of sacrificed leisure and recreational activities, and diminished pleasure in family and social relationships.
- Over the past several weeks you have been working on your recovery from gambling by reducing your involvement in this habit (as you defined in your goal statement), and you have put in a lot of effort at rearranging your environment and lifestyle so that you can eliminate this bad habit from your life. While your recovery is progressing, it is also important to repair damaged relationships as much as it is possible at this point in your recovery, and as soon as possible. This is critical for your long-term recovery because healthy relationships with those closest to you will:
- be a source of support and assistance during your recovery in the short-term and especially in the long-term;
  - be important in developing alternative ways to spend leisure time and money that does not include gambling;
  - be important in developing and possibly participating in any financial re-payment plans that you may require;
  - improve the emotional health of those you care for, and as a result, yours as well; and
  - alleviate feelings of anger, regret, guilt, and depression that can linger long after you have stopped or cut back your gambling.
- conflicts between the gambler and others and may take the form of arguments and distrust, and may lead to emotional, verbal and/or physical abuse;
  - unpleasant and unhealthy emotional states such as anger, depression, anxiety about the future, chronic tension, and intense stress;

## TREATMENT TOPIC FIVE: *Healing Relationships*

In many cases, you may find just working seriously on your gambling problem solves most of the strains in your relationships. You can view your continued progress as possibly the best way to make sure that the relationships with those you love continues to be healthy and supportive.

In other cases, you may need to focus specifically on improving your relationships in addition to working on the gambling problem. If the health of your social relationships is avoided, then you may find that even though you are not gambling in a harmful way, that things are just not right. Your loved ones may be:

- very anxious about the future, wondering whether you will be able to recover successfully; or
- they may feel angry at you for the state of your relationships; or
- they may be depressed about the losses and how they will be addressed; or
- trust may be reduced and negative emotions may easily be triggered.

If this is the situation you are facing, then it may help if you to take specific steps towards improving your social relationships and not wait for it to happen on its own. Of course, not all of your loved ones will be ready to work on their relationship with you just yet. That's okay. At this point, we are trying to identify which relationships you need to think about healing and ways that might be helpful to do this, if and when they are ready.

The exercise on the following pages will help guide you in the process and lead you to make some efforts towards improving any damaged relationships.



TREATMENT TOPIC FIVE: *Healing Relationships*

Next, write down the names of the people from your list on the previous page who you feel you need to improve your relationship with. List what you believe is the main obstacle to improving this relationship.

NAME	CHALLENGES TO IMPROVING RELATIONSHIP
Pat	rebuild trust, help overcome anger

## TREATMENT TOPIC FIVE: *Healing Relationships*

Based on your relationship with each of the individuals you have listed, and based on how the two of you have worked out problems before, write what you believe you need to say and do that will have a positive effect on your relationship with this person. If possible, you can begin to act on these plans right away if it would not be harmful to the individual and if you are yourself prepared to do so. If it is appropriate, for each of the individuals you have named, make the necessary time to share with them what you describe below. Of course, the timing of this communication is important so choose a time where it will be received well by this person and where you can communicate your intention in a genuine way. Even if you don't do anything with this information now, it might be useful later.

NAME	
WHAT I CAN SAY TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	
WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	

NAME	
WHAT I CAN SAY TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	
WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	

NAME	
WHAT I CAN SAY TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	
WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	

TREATMENT TOPIC FIVE: *Healing Relationships*

NAME	
WHAT I CAN SAY TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	
WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	

NAME	
WHAT I CAN SAY TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	
WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	

NAME	
WHAT I CAN SAY TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	
WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	

NAME	
WHAT I CAN SAY TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	
WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	

TREATMENT TOPIC FIVE: *Healing Relationships*

NAME	
WHAT I CAN SAY TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	
WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	

NAME	
WHAT I CAN SAY TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	
WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	

NAME	
WHAT I CAN SAY TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	
WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP THIS RELATIONSHIP	

In combination with your continued efforts at maintaining your success over your gambling habit, the steps you take to improve the relationships with the people closest to you will certainly contribute to your longer-term success, help the emotional health of these individuals, and create a healthier interpersonal environment for you as well.

## PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

### PROGRESS SINCE THE PREVIOUS TOPIC

**Ask yourself the following questions as you get ready to go through Treatment Topic Six:**

1. Are you meeting your gambling goal?

Yes     Mostly     No

2. If you are not meeting your goal, briefly describe what you think is getting in the way of achieving your goal:

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3. Have you made any changes to your goal since the previous Topic?

Yes     No

If your answer is Yes, describe how your goal has changed:

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## PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

You have worked very hard on changing your gambling habits, using your own natural problem-solving skills and benefiting when necessary from the material in this Workbook.

Between Treatment Topic 5 and Treatment Topic 6 we have suggested a three-week gap. The reason we do this is to give you a chance to practice all of the strategies you have read about in previous Topics. For many of you, everything that you needed to get a firm handle on your gambling habit you found in the first five topics. In combination with your own efforts, you may feel like you are making good progress in achieving your goals.

This is a good time to give you some space to practice and identify if there are issues or difficulties that are important for you to solve.

Another reason for a three-week period between Treatment Topic 5 and 6 is to see if there is any effect of being out of treatment. It is generally known that most people who are motivated in trying to change a habit, especially addictive ones, may start off with plenty of success when they begin to change this habit but then find that they have more difficulty in keeping up the changes as time passes. They may find that their motivation, drive, or reason to keep changing their habit is decreased. To some degree this is quite normal. That is why we have anticipated this and want to help you cope with any difficulties you may encounter.

It would not be unusual or unexpected for you to have some ups and downs as you progress in your recovery. Over the next little while, we would like you to be aware of any obstacles that come along your way and think about ways to

cope with them. One thing is for sure, if you do not have a coping response ready, you are more likely to make an unwise decision.

- Many gamblers have told us that some of the risky situations that can get in the way of sticking to your goal include a concern about money or continued trouble with money (that's why we strongly advised you to get professional credit counselling).
- In addition to money worries, any upsetting emotion can also steer you away from your gambling goal. These emotions include depression, anxiety, stress and anger, but also feeling very happy, excited, or satisfied. Strong emotions, either good or bad, can sometimes lower our guard and let in old habits. So watch out how your mind thinks about gambling during these ups and downs.
- For some individuals, using too much alcohol can affect their decision to gamble. In general, excessive alcohol use can contribute to bad decisions and it is not unusual for many relapses to begin while someone has been drinking too much. So be aware of the effect other habits like drinking (if you do drink) can affect your commitment to your gambling goal.
- As well, feeling bored is also something to be on guard for. Many relapses seem to begin with a feeling of boredom, of feeling unstimulated. That is why we encouraged you to re-discover leisure activities that made you feel good and return to meaningful activities with people you care about.
- Conflicts with other people can also be a trigger to thoughts or urges about gambling. Again, be aware of how your relationships with others, especially when they are not going very well, can affect your gambling behaviour. That is why we suggested that you begin to at least think about improving your relationships with people that are closest to you.

We will ask you to continue to stick to your goal, as you have been doing from the

## TREATMENT TOPIC SIX: *Preparing for the Future*

beginning. All that we ask you to do over the next three weeks is to review the material in the previous sessions and to continue to do everything you need to do in order to succeed. This includes all of the strategies and techniques that you have found most useful in helping you gain control of your gambling.

The last exercise on the following pages is intended to help you over the next little while monitor your motivation to change and maintain your commitment to stick to your gambling goal.

## TREATMENT TOPIC SIX: *Preparing for the Future*

### CHECK FOR ANY CHANGES IN MOTIVATION

Watch out for any reductions in your commitment to your gambling goals. Look for any thoughts that tell you it is all right to ignore your goals, to gamble more than you want and with more money than you planned. Are you thinking it might be a good time to see whether you can gamble more safely? Is part of you saying that it's okay to relax your control, that maybe things aren't as bad as they seemed at first?

**WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO MAKE SURE *YOUR MOTIVATION REMAINS STRONG?***

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## TREATMENT TOPIC SIX: *Preparing for the Future*

### CHECK FOR ANY WORRIES ABOUT MONEY

Your worry about your debt may lead you to believe that gambling may be the only way to get money fast and get out of this situation. Even though you are not gambling or gambling less, you may still be faced with paying quite a bit of money. It is not unusual for some people to consider taking a risk to gamble again hoping to get a big payoff and get rid of accumulated debts.

**WHAT STEPS COULD YOU TAKE TO MAKE SURE** *YOUR WORRY ABOUT MONEY DOES NOT AFFECT YOUR RECOVERY?*

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## TREATMENT TOPIC SIX: *Preparing for the Future*

### CHECK FOR ANY CHANGES IN THINKING

You begin to think that you may be able to win at gambling. You may have come across a way or a system that might succeed at this point, that luck may be on your side, or that you have a strong feeling that you might win. Be on the lookout for thoughts that you might be able to stay in control of your gambling if you played outside of the limits of your goals.

**WHAT STEPS COULD YOU TAKE TO MAKE SURE** *YOUR CHANGES IN THINKING DOES NOT AFFECT YOUR RECOVERY?*

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## TREATMENT TOPIC SIX: *Preparing for the Future*

### CHECK FOR ANY EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS

If you have found that gambling was a way to help you feel better when you were sad, depressed or otherwise upset, then be very careful of how you cope with such emotions. Also, if you feel bored or not stimulated, you may feel attracted to gambling as a way of having fun. For some people, just feeling good can also lead to a desire to celebrate and have fun, and this could include gambling.

**WHAT STEPS COULD YOU TAKE TO MAKE SURE *EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS DO NOT AFFECT YOUR RECOVERY?***

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## TREATMENT TOPIC SIX: *Preparing for the Future*

### CHECK FOR ANY LIFESTYLE TRIGGERS

You may be simply bored, missing the excitement or challenge of gambling and decide that it is time to get some excitement into your life again. If you have taken gambling out of your life, you may not have replaced it with anything positive or gratifying. If your lifestyle isn't very satisfying currently, and you have lots of available time, you might turn to gambling to fill in the gaps.

**WHAT STEPS COULD YOU TAKE TO MAKE SURE *LIFESTYLE TRIGGERS DO NOT AFFECT YOUR RECOVERY?***

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## TREATMENT TOPIC SIX: *Preparing for the Future*

### CHECK FOR ANY SOCIAL TRIGGERS

Your friends keep on inviting you to go gambling, or your socializing often takes you into situations where you have gambled in the past. It is not easy to go into these situations and successfully resist gambling on all occasions. As you continue to progress, you may feel it is not a big risk to spend time with people you gambled with before or go to gambling venues you've been to before. This could eventually lead to decisions that get in the way of your gambling goal.

**WHAT STEPS COULD YOU TAKE TO MAKE SURE** *YOUR SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT DOES NOT AFFECT YOUR RECOVERY?*

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## TREATMENT TOPIC SIX: *Preparing for the Future*



This Program has now come to an end. However, your recovery and your progress are just at the beginning. We hope that this Workbook will provide a solid foundation to your recovery. While we understand that it is quite a short program, we believe that it is your own personal strengths and commitment to change that are the key ingredients to your success. We hope we have been able to support your own efforts and maybe even provide you with some additional ideas and techniques.

If you require additional counselling, whether specific to gambling or another issue, please contact The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health at 416.535.8501. In addition, keep this Workbook close by you over the next several months if you need to review or remind yourself of the lessons you have learned. We wish you the best and the greatest success in your recovery.

Ontario Association of Credit Counselling Services  
 P.O. Box 189, Grimsby, Ontario, L3M 4G3  
 (905) 945-5644

## OACCS Member Agencies

BARRIE	<p><b>Credit Counselling Service of Simcoe-Georgian Bay Region</b>          P.O. Box 922, 4 Cedar Pointe Dr., Unit R          Barrie, ON L4M 4Y6  <i>Phone: (705) 726-2705 Fax: 726-6830</i>          e-mail: <a href="mailto:estelle@ccsbarrie.net">estelle@ccsbarrie.net</a></p>
BELLEVILLE	<p><b>Quinte Region Credit Counselling Service</b>          237B Coleman Street          Belleville, Ontario, K8P 3H8  <i>Phone: (613) 966-3556 Fax: 966-6092</i></p> <p><b>Branch of:</b>  <i>Kingston Community Counselling Centre</i>          417 Bagot St.          Kingston, ON K7K 3C1  <i>Phone: (613) 549-7850 Fax: 544-8138</i>          e-mail: <a href="mailto:kccc@kos.net">kccc@kos.net</a></p>
BRANTFORD	<p><b>Family Counselling Centre of Brant Inc.</b>          28 Brant Ave.,          Brantford, ON N3T 3G6  <i>Phone: (519) 753-4173 Fax: 753-9287</i>          e-mail: <a href="mailto:fccofb@familycounsellingcentrebrant.com">fccofb@familycounsellingcentrebrant.com</a></p>

BROCKVILLE	<p><b>1000 Islands Credit Counselling Service</b>  105 Strowger Blvd., Box 191  Brockville, ON K6V 5V2  <i>Phone: (613) 498-2111 Fax: 498-2116</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:info@eecentre.com">info@eecentre.com</a></p> <p><b>Brockville Credit Counselling</b>  438 Laurier Boulevard  Brockville, Ontario, K6V 7J6  <i>Phone: 1-800-379-5556 Fax: (613) 544-8138</i></p> <p><b>Branch of:</b>  <i>Kingston Community Counselling Centre</i>  417 Bagot St.  Kingston, ON K7K 3C1  <i>Phone: (613) 549-7850 Fax: 544-8138</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:kccc@kos.net">kccc@kos.net</a></p>
CHATHAM	<p><b>Family Service Kent</b>  P.O. Box 880, 770 Richmond St.  Chatham, ON N7M 5L3  <i>Phone: (519) 354-6221 Fax: 354-5152</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:rshepherd@famskent.ca">rshepherd@famskent.ca</a></p>
CORNWALL	<p><b>Family Counselling Centre of Cornwall &amp; United Counties</b>  P.O. Box 305, 26 Montreal Rd.  Cornwall, ON K6H 5T1  <i>Phone: (613) 932-1266 Fax: 932-5765</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:fcc@on.aibn.com">fcc@on.aibn.com</a></p>
GUELPH	<p><b>Family Counselling and Support Services  (Guelph/Wellington)</b>  409 Woolwich St.  Guelph, ON N1H 3X2  <i>Phone: (519) 824-2431 Fax: 824-3598</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:info@familyserviceguelph.on.ca">info@familyserviceguelph.on.ca</a></p>

HAMILTON	<p><b>Catholic Family Services of Hamilton</b>  2-735 King St. East  Hamilton, ON L8M 1A1  <i>Phone: (905) 527-3823 Fax: 546-5779</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:cfs@cfshw.com">cfs@cfshw.com</a></p> <p><b>Family Services, Hamilton</b>  105 Main St. East, Lower Level, Suite 101  Hamilton, ON L8N 1G6  <i>Phone: (905) 523-5640 Fax: 523-8699</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:stfshw@fshw.on.ca">stfshw@fshw.on.ca</a></p>
KINGSTON	<p><b>Kingston Community Counselling Centre</b>  417 Bagot St.  Kingston, ON K7K 3C1  <i>Phone: (613) 549-7850 Fax: 544-8138</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:kccc@kos.net">kccc@kos.net</a></p> <p><b>Branches:</b></p> <p><b>Belleville</b>  Quinte Region Credit Counselling Service  237B Coleman Street  Belleville, Ontario, K8P 3H8  <i>Phone: (613) 966-3556 Fax: 966-6092</i></p> <p><b>Brockville</b>  <b>Brockville Credit Counselling</b>  438 Laurier Boulevard  Brockville, Ontario, K6V 7J6  <i>Phone: 1-800-379-5556 Fax: (613) 544-8138</i></p> <p><b>Ottawa</b>  <b>Credit Counselling Service of Eastern Ontario</b>  209-1300 Carling Avenue  Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 8N8  <i>Phone: (613) 728-2041 Fax: 722-5609</i></p>

KITCHENER	<p><b>Catholic Family Counselling Centre (Region of Waterloo)</b>  400 Queen Street South  Kitchener, ON N2G 1W7  <i>Phone: (519) 743-6333 Fax: 743-3496</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:cfccentr@golden.net">cfccentr@golden.net</a>  website: <a href="http://www.counselling-cfcc.ca">www.counselling-cfcc.ca</a></p>
LONDON	<p><b>Credit Counselling London</b>  150 Kent St., Main Floor Front  London, ON N6A 1L3  <i>Phone: (519) 433-0159 Fax: 433-4559</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:aholt@creditcounsellinglondon.on.ca">aholt@creditcounsellinglondon.on.ca</a>  website: <a href="http://www.creditcounsellinglondon.on.ca">www.creditcounsellinglondon.on.ca</a></p>
MISSISSAUGA	<p><b>Family Services of Peel</b>  501-151 City Centre Drive  Mississauga, ON L5B 1M7  <i>Phone: (905) 270-2235 Fax: 270-2869</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:fsp@fspeel.org">fsp@fspeel.org</a></p>
NORTH BAY	<p><b>Community Counselling Centre of Nipissing</b>  361 Rue McIntyre St. East/Est  North Bay, ON P1B 1C9  <i>Phone: (705) 472-6515 Fax: 472-4582</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:cccentre@vianet.on.ca">cccentre@vianet.on.ca</a></p>
OAKVILLE	<p><b>Halton Consumer Credit Counselling Service</b>  Box 69523, 235 Lakeshore Rd. East  Oakville, ON L6J 7R4  <i>Phone: (905) 842-1459 Fax: 842-1462</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:info@haltonfamilyservices.org">info@haltonfamilyservices.org</a></p>
OSHAWA	<p><b>Credit Counselling Service of Durham Region</b>  P.O. Box 26046, 172 King St. East, Rm. 106  Oshawa, ON L1H 8R4  <i>Phone: (905) 579-1951 Fax: 579-1967</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:ccsdurham@direct.com">ccsdurham@direct.com</a></p>

OTTAWA	<p><b>Credit Counselling Service of Eastern Ontario</b>  209-1300 Carling Avenue  Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 8N8  Phone: (613) 728-2041 Fax: 722-5609</p> <p><b>Branch of:</b>  Kingston Community Counselling Centre  417 Bagot St.  Kingston, ON K7K 3C1  Phone: (613) 549-7850 Fax: 544-8138  e-mail: <a href="mailto:kccc@kos.net">kccc@kos.net</a></p>
PETERBOROUGH	<p><b>Community Counselling and Resource Centre</b>  351 Charlotte St.  Peterborough, ON K9J 2W1  Phone: (705) 742-1351 Fax: 742-2895  e-mail <a href="mailto:ccrc@accel.net">ccrc@accel.net</a></p>
RICHMOND HILL	<p><b>Family and Credit Counselling Services  (Serving York Region)</b>  10670 Yonge St.  Richmond Hill, ON L4C 3C9  Phone: (905) 884-9148 Fax: 884-6442  e-mail: <a href="mailto:paul@faccs.com">paul@faccs.com</a>  website: <a href="http://www.faccs.com">www.faccs.com</a></p> <p><b>Markham Stouffville Family Life Centre,</b>  4261 Highway 7, Suite 203,  Unionville, ON L3R 1L5,  Phone (905) 415-9719, Fax: 415-9706,  e-mail: <a href="mailto:msflc@on.aibn.com">msflc@on.aibn.com</a></p>

SARNIA	<p><b>Credit Counselling Services of Southwestern Ontario Inc.</b>  568 N. Christina Street, Unit D.  Sarnia, ON N7T 5W6  <i>Phone: (519) 337-8757 Fax: 337-8782</i></p> <p><b>Branch of:</b>  <i>Credit Counselling Services of Southwestern Ontario Inc.</i>  420 Devonshire Rd.  Windsor, ON N8Y 4T6  <i>Phone: (519) 258-2030 Fax: 258-9243</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:info@ccswindsor.com">info@ccswindsor.com</a>  website: <a href="http://www.ccswindsor.com">www.ccswindsor.com</a></p>
SAULT STE. MARIE	<p><b>Credit Counselling Services of Sault Ste. Marie and District</b>  2-298 Queen St. East  Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 1Y7  <i>Phone: (705) 254-1424 Fax: 254-2541</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:info@creditcounsellingssm.ca">info@creditcounsellingssm.ca</a>  website: <a href="http://www.creditcounsellingssm.ca">www.creditcounsellingssm.ca</a></p>
ST. CATHARINES	<p><b>Credit Counselling Regional Niagara</b>  264 Welland Ave.,  St. Catharines, ON L2R 2P8  <i>Phone: (905) 684-9401 Fax: 687-9904</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:info@ccrn.ca">info@ccrn.ca</a></p>
STRATFORD	<p><b>Family Services Perth-Huron</b>  142 Waterloo St. South  Stratford, ON N5A 4B4  <i>Phone: (519) 273-1020 Fax: 273-6993</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:fsph@orc.ca">fsph@orc.ca</a></p>
SUDBURY	<p><b>Sudbury Community Service Centre</b>  1166 Roy Ave.  Sudbury, ON P3A 3M6  <i>Phone: (705) 560-0430 Fax: 560-0440</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:scsc@vianet.on.ca">scsc@vianet.on.ca</a></p>

THUNDER BAY	<p><b>Family Services Thunder Bay</b>  544 Winnipeg Ave.  Thunder Bay, ON P7B 3S7  <i>Phone: (807) 684-1880 Fax: 344-3782</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:fstb@tbaytel.net">fstb@tbaytel.net</a>  website: <a href="http://www.familyservicesbay.org">http://www.familyservicesbay.org</a></p>
TIMMINS	<p><b>Credit Counselling Services of Cochrane District</b>  85 Pine St. South, Suite 7  Timmins, ON P4N 2K1  <i>Phone: (705) 267-5817 Fax: 264-9767</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:ccsmitch@ntl.sympatico.ca">ccsmitch@ntl.sympatico.ca</a></p>
TORONTO	<p><b>Credit Counselling Service of Toronto</b>  45 Sheppard Ave. East, Suite 810  Toronto, ON M2N 5W9  <i>Phone: (416) 228-3328 Fax: 228-1164</i>  e-mail: <a href="mailto:ccsmt@creditcanada.com">ccsmt@creditcanada.com</a>  website: <a href="http://www.creditcanada.com">www.creditcanada.com</a></p> <p><b>Branches:</b></p> <p><b>Danforth</b>  658 Danforth Ave., Suite 303,  Toronto, ON M4J 5B9</p> <p><b>Etobicoke</b>  2100 Ellesmere Rd., Suite 211C  Etobicoke, Ontario, M8Z 1J7</p> <p><b>Scarborough East</b>  208 Evans Ave., Suite 105  Scarborough, Ontario, M1H 3B7</p> <p><b>North York</b>  5075 Yonge St., Suite 304  North York, Ontario, M2N 6G6</p> <p><b>Scarborough North</b>  2942 Finch Ave., East, Suite 105  Scarborough, Ontario, M1W 2T4</p> <p><b>Scarborough Central</b>  2401 Eglinton Ave., Suite 303  Scarborough, Ontario, M1K 2M5</p> <p><b>Weston</b>  1920 Weston Rd., Suite 231  Weston, Ontario, M9N 1J7</p>

<p>WINDSOR</p>	<p><b>Credit Counselling Services of Southwestern Ontario Inc.</b>          420 Devonshire Rd.          Windsor, ON N8Y 4T6  <i>Phone: (519) 258-2030 Fax: 258-9243</i>          e-mail: <a href="mailto:info@ccswindsor.com">info@ccswindsor.com</a>          website: <a href="http://www.ccswindsor.com">www.ccswindsor.com</a></p> <p><b>Branches:</b></p> <p>Sarnia          568 N. Christina Street, Unit D.          Sarnia, ON N7T 5W6  <i>Phone: (519) 337-8757 Fax: 337-8782</i></p>
<p>ACCESS          (Telephone          counselling)</p>	<p><b>Family Services Thunder Bay</b>          544 Winnipeg Ave.          Thunder Bay, ON P7B 3S7  <i>Phone: 1-888-204-2221 Fax: (807) 344-3782</i></p>
<p>OACCS          REFERRAL          SERVICE</p>	<p><b>OACCS Referral Service</b>          P.O. Box 189, Grimsby, ON L3M 4G3  <i>Phone: (905) 945-5644 Fax: 945-4680</i>          e-mail: <a href="mailto:oaccs@indebt.org">oaccs@indebt.org</a>          1-888-7-IN DEBT (1-888-746-3328)</p>