

Supporting employees who may have gambling issues



Workplaces have a responsibility to take reasonable care of health and safety at work. Here are ideas on how to meet your obligations to employee health and wellbeing regarding the risk of gambling harm.

Do you have a workplace gambling policy?

It might seem like common sense that gambling in the workplace is banned, but having a clear policy in place can help reduce the impact:

- Assess the risk. Take a close look at whether workplace computers and digital devices are used for gambling.

- Be proactive. Distribute gambling awareness information to your employees.
- Formalise a workplace gambling policy. What's acceptable in your workplace? Footy tipping and Melbourne Cup sweepstakes may be okay, but using workplace equipment to access online gambling sites may not be permitted.
- Communicate. Make sure everyone knows about the policy and how to get help. Have conversations with staff about the need to be gamble aware. Provide information about help and support options.

Signs gambling may be an issue

Changes in how someone manages their time, their productivity and mood, and their financial wellbeing can all be clues. Any indicator taken on its own doesn't necessarily mean an employee has an issue related to gambling – there may be other things going on. But if you see a pattern, it's worth having a conversation.

GAMBLEAWARE
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Time

- they arrive at work late or leave early, or take long lunch hours
- they disappear without explaining, or they're absent more frequently
- they gamble on company time (online, mobile, landline).

Productivity

- they're irritable, moody or can't concentrate
- their mind is on other things
- they're not as productive, or they don't complete projects
- they're overusing the work phone or internet.

Financial problems

- they're borrowing money from workmates
- they often ask for salary advances
- they get calls at work by companies chasing payment
- they frequently volunteer for overtime or additional shifts to cover debts.

Other signs

- they may avoid taking holidays, so backfill to cover their job isn't required
- they're often on betting websites or reading the form guide.

Having a one-on-one conversation

Starting a conversation can be challenging. Plan ahead, and consider if someone else would be better equipped than you to talk to them. Approach your HR team, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or GambleAware service for advice on who may be the best person to have the conversation.

How you might start the conversation

"I'd like to talk to you about a sensitive issue. I think it's important for us to talk about it because I'm concerned about you."

You're a valued employee and colleague here – that's not going to change. But I've noticed you've seemed stressed / depressed / anxious / distracted / not yourself lately. Would you mind if I ask you some questions to find out more about your situation, and if there's anything I can do to help?

Please know that I'll keep your answers totally confidential."

Questions to get the conversation going

"How have you been feeling lately?"

"What's been happening in your life to make you feel that way?"

"Can you tell me more about that?"

"Have you ever had an issue with gambling?"

Help is close at hand

No matter how you're affected by gambling – your own or someone else's – GambleAware can help. For free, confidential advice and support, and to find services near you, go to gambleaware.nsw.gov.au or call us on **1800 858 858** 24/7.