

# PROBLEM GAMBLING

## Where to go when you're looking for help

### What is gambling?

Whenever people take the chance of losing money or belongings, and when winning or losing is decided mostly by chance, it is gambling. There are many different ways to gamble, including buying lottery tickets; buying scratch, Nevada or pull-tab tickets; playing bingo; betting on cards, dice games or tile games such as dominoes and mahjong; playing slot machines and other casino games; sports betting; betting on video games; and online gambling.

### When does gambling become a problem?

Problem gambling is not just about losing money. Gambling problems can affect a person's whole life. Gambling becomes a problem when it gets in the way of work, school or other activities; harms your mental or physical health; hurts you financially; damages your reputation; or causes problems with your family and friends. Gambling problems share many similarities with other addictions; however, there are no visible signs or physical changes that will indicate a gambling problem.

### Getting help

Some people choose to stop all forms of gambling. Others may choose a harm reduction approach, which means they continue to gamble while developing some strategies that could reduce the harms of gambling, such as limiting the amount of time they play or stopping certain types of gambling that have caused the most problems.

In Ontario, free counselling is available to anyone affected by gambling, including family members. Call ConnexOntario at [1 866 531-2600](tel:18665312600) to get linked to the supports you need. An information and referral specialist will answer calls, e-mails or web chat 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The service is free, confidential and anonymous and open to anyone, including family members or concerned friends. For more information, see [www.connexontario.ca](http://www.connexontario.ca).

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If any of this information is incorrect or outdated, or if there are additional organizations or programs that would be helpful to include, please e-mail the information to us at [access.resources@camh.ca](mailto:access.resources@camh.ca).

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Other types of supports include peer-based approaches such as Gamblers Anonymous (where you meet with others with gambling problems), outpatient and residential treatment. Treatment approaches include cognitive-behavioural therapy and mindfulness-based relapse prevention for problem gambling.

## Community Resources: Full or Partial OHIP Coverage

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care funds 48 agencies across Ontario that provide specialized problem gambling treatment services. To locate an agency in your area, contact ConnexOntario at 1 866 531-2600.

### Arab Community Centre of Toronto

555 Burnhamthorpe Rd., Ste. 209, Toronto, ON

[www.acctonline.ca](http://www.acctonline.ca)

416 231-7746 ext. 231

**Services offered:** Problem gambling program for Arabic- and English-speaking clients, counselling services to individuals and families affected by problem gambling

**Eligibility:** People who gamble and those affected by gambling (open to everyone)

**Languages:** Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Assyrian, Dari, Dutch, English, French, Hindi, Lithuanian, Punjabi, Russian, Tigrinya, Ukrainian, Urdu

### Chinese Family Services of Ontario

3330 Midland, Ste. 229, Scarborough, ON

[www.chinesefamilyso.com](http://www.chinesefamilyso.com) (Search under: “Services” and then “Programs”)

416 979 8299

1 866 979-8298

[info@chinesefamilyso.com](mailto:info@chinesefamilyso.com)

**Services offered:** Program for for problem gamblers and their families, which includes counselling services in both Cantonese and Mandarin; links to other gambling resources online, including a problem gambling video in Cantonese

**Eligibility:** All ages welcome, no referral required

**Languages:** Mandarin, Cantonese, English

### COSTI Immigrant Services

Sheridan Mall, 1700 Wilson Ave., Ste. 105, Toronto, ON

[www.costi.org](http://www.costi.org) (Search under: “Program and Services”)

1 866 222-9993

[gamblingservices@costi.org](mailto:gamblingservices@costi.org)

**Services offered:** Individual, marital, family, group and telephone counselling to identify and treat problem gambling; family education and support groups; psychosocial assessments; referrals and prevention

**Eligibility:** Open to all, with a focus on newcomer or ethnocultural communities

**Languages:** English, Italian, Spanish

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## Oasis Addiction Recovery Society

921 Danforth Ave., Toronto, ON

[oasismovement.org](http://oasismovement.org)

416 461-7739

**Services offered:** Employment Essentials program for Ontario Works recipients in recovery, job placement/retention for Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients, Oasis Café, a café and social club that offers 12-step meetings, a drop-in relapse prevention program Thursdays at 2:00 p.m.

**Eligibility:** People in recovery from substance use or gambling addictions, their friends and families

**Languages:** English, Greek

## Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services

27 Roncesvalles Ave., Ste. 407, Toronto, ON

[www.polycultural.org](http://www.polycultural.org)

416 533-9471 ext. 4222

**Services offered:** Problem gambling counselling for Polish and Russian communities

**Eligibility:** Immigrants, refugees, permanent residents and first-generation Canadians

**Languages:** English, Polish, Ukrainian, Russian

## Problem Gambling Institute of Ontario, CAMH

[www.problemgambling.ca](http://www.problemgambling.ca)

**Services offered:** Resources on problem gambling and technology use on their website, including self-help worksheets for people who gamble and their family and friends; a gambling quiz you can take to see if gambling is having a negative impact on your life; a web tool to keep track of when you gamble or feel the urge to gamble; and an online community forum and discussion board

**Eligibility:** People who gamble and their family members and friends

## Problem Gambling and Technology Use Treatment Service, CAMH

[www.camh.ca](http://www.camh.ca)

**Services offered:** Counselling for individuals and families experiencing problems with gambling or technology use; groups for parents, family, adults, youth and young adults; initial assessments; psychiatric consultations; referrals to other CAMH services as needed

**Eligibility:** For the problem gambling program, people over 18 and their families; for the problem technology use program, people over 16 and their parents; services also available to family members who do not have a loved one in treatment

**Languages:** English, French, Farsi, Finnish

## Vasantham, A Tamil Seniors Wellness Centre

2660 Eglinton Ave. E., Toronto, ON

[vasantham@live.ca](mailto:vasantham@live.ca)

416 847-4172

**Services offered:** Problem gambling counselling

**Eligibility:** Tamil speakers of all ages

**Languages:** English, Tamil

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## Vietnamese Association

1364 Dundas St. W., Toronto, ON  
 3585 Keele St., Unit 13, Toronto, ON  
 11A Glen Watford Dr., Unit 220, Scarborough, ON  
[www.vatoronto.ca](http://www.vatoronto.ca) (Search under: “Services and Programs”)  
 416 536-3611, 416 636-8887

**Services offered:** Gambling counselling and workshops

**Eligibility:** Immigrants and refugees

**Languages:** English, Hindi, Filipino, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tibetan, Vietnamese

## Residential Treatment

### Bellwood Health Services, Problem Gambling Program

175 Brentcliffe Rd., Toronto, ON  
[www.edgewoodhealthnetwork.com/bellwood](http://www.edgewoodhealthnetwork.com/bellwood) (Search under: “What We Treat”)  
 416 495-0926  
 1 800 387-6198 (toll free)

**Services offered:** Inpatient problem gambling program (42 days or longer), general outpatient program for addiction support and stabilization

**Eligibility:** Women and men over 18 years old

**Waitlist:** None

**Fees:** Inpatient program fee is \$595 per day, individual counselling is \$175 per hour

### The Jean Tweed Centre

215 Evans Ave., Toronto, ON  
[jeantweed.com](http://jeantweed.com)  
 416 255-7359 ext. 239

**Services offered:** A women’s problem gambling support group every Thursday at 2:30 p.m., a three-week day or residential program, an individual counselling program and a trauma program

**Eligibility:** Women above age 16 and their families

**Waitlist:** Variable, depends on program

**Note:** Intake is every Tuesday at 4:30 p.m., no appointment necessary

## Youth

Note: Most programs accept clients age 12 or older but age criteria may vary by agency.

### YMCA Youth Gambling Awareness Program

2200 Yonge St., Ste. 300, Toronto, ON (19 locations across Ontario)  
<https://ymcagta.org/youth-programs/youth-gambling-awareness-program>

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1 877 525-5515

**Services offered:** Awareness education and prevention around gambling issues; developmentally appropriate presentations for children and youth eight to 10 years old, 11 to 14 years old, 15 to 18 years old and 19 to 24 years old; workshops for parents, guardians, role models and professionals involved in youth's lives

**Eligibility:** Children and youth eight to 24 years old

## Support Groups

### East Metro Youth Services

1200 Markham Rd., Ste. 200, Toronto ON

<http://emys.on.ca>

416 438-3697

**Services offered:** General counselling and support to youth by drop-in or referral, Youth Zone drop-in program that is free for participants

**Eligibility:** Youth 12 to 18 years old and their families

**Referral process:** Self-referral, call for information

### Gamblers Anonymous (GA)

Note: Information about local meetings can be found on their website.

[www.gamblersanonymous.org](http://www.gamblersanonymous.org)

[www.gamblersanonymoustoronto.org/](http://www.gamblersanonymoustoronto.org/) (Toronto chapter)

1 855 222-5542 (Ontario hotline)

[intergroup@GamblersAnonymousOntario.org](mailto:intergroup@GamblersAnonymousOntario.org)

**Services offered:** Peer-led groups focused on helping people quit gambling

**Eligibility:** A desire to stop gambling

## Family Support

Most programs offer counselling support to family members.

### COSTI Immigrant Services

Sheridan Mall, 1700 Wilson Ave., ste. 105, Toronto, ON

[www.costi.org](http://www.costi.org) (search under: "Programs and Services")

1 866 222-9993

**Services offered:** Individual, marital, family, group and telephone counselling to identify and treat problem gambling; family education workshops; referrals

**Eligibility:** Open to all, with a focus on newcomer or ethno-cultural communities

**Languages:** English, Italian, Spanish

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## Gam-Anon

[www.gamblersanonymoustoronto.org/gamanon.html](http://www.gamblersanonymoustoronto.org/gamanon.html) (Toronto chapter)

[www.gam-anon.org](http://www.gam-anon.org)

1 855 222-5542 (Ontario hotline)

**Services offered:** Mutual aid and support for spouse, family or close friends of people with gambling problems

## Outside of Toronto

### ADAPT: Halton Alcohol Drug & Gambling Assessment, Prevention & Treatment Program

165 Cross Ave., ste. 203, Oakville, ON

777 Guelph Line, ste. 214, Burlington, ON

[haltonadapt.org](http://haltonadapt.org) (Search under: “Programs and Services Overview”)

905 639-6537

**Services offered:** Problem gambling day treatment program includes assessment, individual/group counselling, addiction supported housing

**Eligibility:** Adults, youth 12 and older and family members of affected people

### Addiction Counselling Services of Peel (William Osler H.C.)

20 Lynch St., Brampton, ON

101 Humber College Blvd., Etobicoke, ON

32 First Ave., Orangeville, ON

[www.williamoslerhs.ca/patients-and-families](http://www.williamoslerhs.ca/patients-and-families) (Search under: “Programs and Services,” and subheading “Addictions Services for Adults”)

905 796-3005 ext. 2

**Services offered:** Outpatient assessment and counselling, groups, brief individual therapy, counselling for significant others, consultation by an addiction psychiatrist

**Eligibility:** Adults and their family members

### Alcohol, Drug, and Gambling Services

Cooper Building, 21 Hunter St. E., 3rd floor, Hamilton, ON

[www.hamilton.ca/public-health](http://www.hamilton.ca/public-health) (Search under: “Clinics and Services,” then “Alcohol, Drugs and Gambling”)

905 546-3606

**Services offered:** Individual, couple and family counselling; DBT group; Bets Off support group; information and referrals

**Eligibility:** People age 12 and older for gambling programs, friends and family requiring support

**Waitlist:** Variable, depends on program start dates

**Note:** Intake will take about 15 minutes over the phone

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## ASyr (Addiction Services for York Region)

14785 Yonge St., ste. 210, Aurora, ON  
[www.asyr.ca](http://www.asyr.ca) (Search under: “Programs”)  
905 841-7007 ext. 322  
1 800 263-2288 ext. 222  
[maguinaldo@asyr.ca](mailto:maguinaldo@asyr.ca)

**Services offered:** A problem gambling program that provides counselling support to individuals with gambling problems

**Eligibility:** People over 12 years old

## Canadian Mental Health Association, Simcoe County Branch

[cmha.ca/branches/simcoe-county-branch](http://cmha.ca/branches/simcoe-county-branch)  
705 726-5033  
[jhenry@cmhastarttalking.ca](mailto:jhenry@cmhastarttalking.ca)

**Services offered:** Assessment, referral and counselling

**Eligibility:** People 12 years and older in Simcoe County whose primary concern is related to either their own, or someone else's, gambling or video gaming

## Pinewood Centre of Lakeridge Health

419 King St. W., ste. 125, Oshawa, ON  
[www.lakeridgehealth.on.ca](http://www.lakeridgehealth.on.ca) (Search under: “Mental Health and Pinewood Centre”)  
905 571-3344 ext. 114

**Services offered:** Individual and group counselling for gambling concerns through community offices in Oshawa, Ajax and Port Perry

**Eligibility:** Youth, adults and family members

**Fees:** Covered by OHIP