

MEDIA RELEASE

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# How someone's gambling problems affect their family

Research estimates that for every person with a gambling problem, there are five to ten others who are negatively affected by it. (Productivity Commission 1999)

Approximately 20 per cent of people who use Gambling Help Services across Australia are family members of people who have a problem with their gambling.

23 per cent of callers to the SA Gambling Helpline were a family member or friend of a problem gambler in 2015-2016.

**This is why the theme for this year's Responsible Gambling Awareness Week (22-26 May) is focused on family members and significant others.**

The most common effects of problem gambling are impaired family relationships, emotional problems and financial difficulties.

A new report into interactive gambling suggests that online gamblers could be at greater risk because of 24/7 availability, the use of credit not cash, and increased possibility of hiding betting from family and friends.

Ann Lawrence is a Peer Support Worker at Relationships Australia SA and knows firsthand what it is like to recover from a gambling problem and the impact it has on families.

"The consequences of my lived experience with mental health issues and problem gambling had a great impact on my family. This led to a loss of my identity. It affected my role as a parent and consequently my relationships with my children and their relationships with each other," said Ms Lawrence.

When family members and significant others become aware of gambling problems, they play an important role in supporting the gambler to seek help and to address the problem.

Family and significant others can also benefit from services and resources which enable them to protect their own emotional, social and financial wellbeing.

There is a growing body of evidence about the multiple adverse effects on children when a parent is gambling problematically, for example family stress and financial insecurity, and as well as an increased risk of developing problems with gambling themselves as adults if they gamble.

When a loved one's gambling problem is discovered, many family members or significant others resist getting help to deal with the impacts of the problem to them or the family because they want to solve the problem on their own, or they feel ashamed or even to blame.

"We want people to know that help is available and seeking help early is extremely valuable. Gambling Help Services are **FREE**, **CONFIDENTIAL** and our staff help hundreds of people every year to overcome gambling related problems.

If you are concerned that someone close to you is being harmed by gambling then there is lots of good information available about what to look out for and what you can do," said Rosemary Hambleton, Practice Manager Gambling Help Service at Relationships Australia SA.

Responsible Gambling Awareness Week events are pivotal in educating friends, family and significant others about the role they can play and what services are available to them.

For more details about Responsible Gambling Awareness Week events from Relationships Australia, visit [www.rasa.org.au/rgaw2017](http://www.rasa.org.au/rgaw2017)

For immediate assistance, visit [www.problemgambling.sa.gov.au](http://www.problemgambling.sa.gov.au) or call the 24/7 free and confidential hotline on 1800 8585 858

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## **About Relationships Australia South Australia**

### **Supporting you through change**

As an independent, not-for-profit organisation, our work involves improving the health and wellbeing of people by providing a broad of range services including counselling, gambling help, post separation services, post adoption support, health and multicultural services and much more to individuals, couples, families, children, young people, schools and communities.

Our Registered Training Organisation, the **Australian Institute of Social Relations**, offers courses and nationally recognised qualifications to the human services sector and the family law system.

For more information about how we can support you through change, call 1300 364 277 or visit our website [www.rasa.org.au](http://www.rasa.org.au)

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