

## **What are your relapse triggers?**

It's important to identify what could trigger you to gamble and then come up with a plan for how to deal with each trigger. Read through these examples of Relapse Triggers to watch out for. Tick which ones apply to you and add your own.

### **External Triggers**

- Passing gambling venues
- Watching sports/gambling on TV
- Gambling marketing emails and adverts
- Talking about gambling
- Unexpected bills, costs or bonus

### **Relationship Triggers**

- Stress at home or work
- Relationship conflict
- Communication break downs
- Being invited to gamble/friends gambling
- Having unrealistic expectations of others

### **Internal Triggers- Changes in Feelings**

- Depression
- Loneliness
- Boredom
- Anger/frustration
- Impatience/feeling overconfident
- Self-hate/shame
- Loss

### **Internal Triggers – Changes in attitudes & self talk**

- Forgetting how bad the gambling problem was and the benefits of not gambling
- Dreaming of the gambling 'good times'
- Unrealistic goals/expectations of life without gambling
- Looking for reasons to justify a gamble
- "Sod it" syndrome - "I have started so I may as well continue."
- Urge to rebel against the "rules"

### **Internal Triggers – Changes in behaviour**

- Cutting yourself off from other people
- Quitting or forgetting new healthy behaviours
- Increasing destructive behaviour - getting drunk, taking drugs, eating to cope
- Stress/lifestyle Imbalance - 'Shoulds' out weighing 'wants' or 'needs'.

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| My top 6 relapse triggers are... | Just about anything can be a trigger. To begin exploring your own triggers, think about each of the categories listed below and list your responses. | Plan: If I am triggered, I will cope with this by... |
| 1. Emotional States              |  |  |
| 2. Thoughts                      |  |  |
| 3. Places                        |  |  |
| 4. People                        |  |  |
| 5. Activities                    |  |  |
| 6. Things                        |  |  |

## RELAPSE PREVENTION PLAN

**COPING SKILLS:** list of activities or skills you can enjoy that get your mind off gambling.

**Tip:** Cravings will eventually pass. They will not last long. Give it 15 minutes. At the same time do your best to distract yourself and ride it out

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |

**SOCIAL SUPPORT:** List of 3 people you can talk to if you think about gambling

**Tip:** Avoid situations that you know will put you at risk of relapse, such as spending time with friends who gamble or going places that remind you of gambling.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |

**CONSEQUENCES:** How will your life change if you gamble again? How about if you don't gamble?

| OUTCOMES OF GAMBLING RELAPSE | OUTCOMES OF GAMBLING ABSTINENCE |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|                              |                                 |
|                              |                                 |
|                              |                                 |

## COPING SKILLS

See a list below of some recommended coping skills. Reflect on which work best for you and explore how you can apply them.

|  | IDEAS  | DOES IT WORK FOR ME?<br>What will I do? |
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| <b>DIVERSIONS</b><br>Cravings are Brutal. At the same time they will not last for very long (usually less than 20 minutes). Resist | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Go for a walk</li><li>• Watch a movie</li><li>• Play an instrument</li><li>• Read a book</li><li>• Draw or paint</li></ul> |   |

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| <p>and eventually they disappear..</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go for a bicycle ride</li> <li>• Call a friend</li> <li>• Take photographs</li> <li>• Play a sport</li> <li>• Go for a run</li> <li>• Write a journal – write on GamCare’s forum</li> <li>• Exercise at home, put a video on You Tube</li> <li>• Play with a pet</li> <li>• Listen to music</li> <li>• Clean or cook</li> </ul>   |  |
| <p><b>SOCIAL SUPPORT</b><br/>It is very powerful having a supportive person in your corner.</p>   | <p><b>Daily social support :</b> This can be strengthening your relationships, attending support groups and building new friendships</p> <p><b>Crisis Social Support:</b> This is someone who will help to talk you through the situation. Who are these people ? or helplines? How can you reach them?</p>  |  |
| <p><b>BUILDING NEW HABITS</b><br/>Addictions require a long time. Gambling has been filling in a lot of your time. When you quit one of your greatest new resources is time. This is not about riding out a craving... this is about BUILDING A BETTER LIFE for yourself.</p> | <p><b>Build new relationships:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Join a sports league</li> <li>• Attend a local meetup for an interest or hobby</li> <li>• Get involved in community or volunteerism about a cause you care</li> <li>• Attend a GA meeting that you enjoy</li> </ul> <p><b>Develop new skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read books on subject you enjoy. Maybe study again?</li> <li>• Build new skills using free online resources</li> </ul> <p><b>Refocus on existing relationships:</b></p> |  |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a routine around socialising with friends and family</li> <li>• Be proactive, don't wait for others to reach you.</li> <li>• Say yes to social invitations you get that will not put you at risk of relapse</li> </ul>   |  |
| <p><b>PREVENTION</b></p> <p>Don't wait until you're in a bad situation to figure out how to escape it. Instead, avoid those situations altogether. Create a list of the people, places, and things that will likely lead to relapse, and come up with a plan to avoid them in the future.</p> | <p><b>Avoid triggers</b></p> <p><b>Healthy Lifestyle:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sleep</li> <li>• Exercise</li> <li>• Healthy Diet</li> <li>• Medical Compliance (taking medications as prescribed and attending appointments)</li> </ul>   |  |
| <p><b>MANAGING EMOTIONS TOOLS/RELAXATION</b></p> <p>Most addictions serve as an escape from uncomfortable emotions such as stress, anxiety, and anger. When the crutch of addiction is taken away, you may need to re-learn how to manage your emotions.</p>                                  | <p><b>Deep Breathing</b></p> <p>Breath in deeply enough that your hand begins to rise and fall. Imagine you are trying to completely fill your lungs with air. Time the inhalation (4s), pause (4s), and exhalation (6s) during every breath.</p> <p>Practice for 3 to 5 minutes at a time.</p> <p><b>Journaling</b></p> <p><u>Keep a daily Log:</u> Jot a few notes about each day. Whatever comes to mind is fine. Express your feelings.</p> <p><u>Gratitude:</u> Describe three good things from your day, no matter how minor they seem.</p> |  |

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|  | <p><b>Imagery</b></p> <p>Take a moment to think of a relaxing location or situation. This could be a memory, or something entirely made up. Is it a warm beach? Is it a snowy mountain? Are you alone at the top of a mountain, or at dinner with close friends?</p> <p>Imagine this scene through each of your senses. Don't think about each detail—really imagine them.</p> <p>What do you see? What sounds do you hear? What do you feel? What smells are around you? Use imagery for at least 5 minutes whenever you need a quick escape.</p> | <p>1)</p> <p>2)</p> <p>3)</p> <p>What do you see?</p> |
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