Motivating Yourself To Stop

- If you are in a crisis situation and likely to self-harm consult your doctor immediately. Once you are no longer in danger of harming yourself you can continue with this advice.
- First you need to decide if your goal is to become completely abstinent and never gamble again, or to control your gambling to acceptable levels.
- List reasons for and against complete abstinence and controlled gambling, to help you decide on your ultimate goal.
- You need to be honest to your partner, about your level of debt and perhaps seek financial assistance.
- If you are committing offences to support your gambling habit: stop any further offences immediately; take responsibility for your actions – accept the consequences, with legal help; discuss your actions with your partner.
- Avoid drinking before or during gambling; talk to your partner rather than drowning your sorrows in drinking after losing; if you are dependent on alcohol and/or drugs, consult your doctor; in a crisis seek help immediately rather than turn to alcohol or drugs which may increase your risk of self-harm.
- Marital problems are caused by the financial strain of gambling and you may want to consult a marital counsellor.
- Exposure to gambling may lead to the development of a gambling habit; gambling has many similarities with substance abuse and may be treated effectively using addiction treatment strategies; emotional responses such as stress, anxiety and depression may cause increased gambling behaviour.
- Keep in mind that overcoming gambling will considerably improve your quality of life.
- You may feel ambivalent about giving up gambling – it is necessary for you to understand your motivation.
- Write down at least ten reasons to stop gambling and list them starting with the most important. Do the same for reasons to continue gambling.
- Compare the two lists – can you see that your behaviour is affecting not only you but also others close to you; your gambling arises from selfish reasons and causes problems in all aspects of life; your stress levels would be much lower if you stopped gambling.
- Is your self-aim, abstinence or controlled gambling? If it is the latter you need to review your motivation. You will need to specify how much time and money you can allow yourself each week and stick to the plan. You should involve someone close to monitor your gambling each week, as well as seeking support from an external professional. If you are reluctant to do this and feel you can monitor yourself alone, you need to seriously reconsider your motivation to overcome your problem gambling.
- Others can help motivate a gambler by:
  - Not pressurizing the gambler to seek help, since nagging tends to lead to resistance to help.
  - Ensure the gambler takes responsibility for action to stop gambling.
- Provide him or her with information on what help is available.
- Do not keep the problem hidden from others.
- Protect yourself against any debts the gambler may incur and remove yourself from being responsible for these debts.
- Do not pay off the gambler’s debts – they need to learn to be responsible for any problems caused by their gambling.
- The gambler should not be seen as suffering from an illness and unable to control their self – rather they fail to control their self.
- Consider the benefits for yourself and others if you stop gambling. Determine your level of motivation – are you realistic in your goal?