



# INFLUENCES OF PARENTS ON YOUNG PEOPLE AND GAMBLING



## HIDDEN HARM

**This is the negative impact that problem gambling within the family can have on a young person.**

'Hidden harm' is a term from the drug and alcohol field, and refers to the impact of the gambling of an adult on a young person who is dependent on them. Hidden harm is an emerging area of research in the field of gambling-related harm.

Parental attitudes are important determining factors. Evidence suggests that parents are far less likely to talk to their children about gambling than they are about other risky behaviours, such as alcohol and drug misuse or sex.

Parents may think that social gambling for children is fun, however by facilitating underage gambling they are, on most occasions, breaking the law.

Education and awareness about risks and consequences is often more beneficial than a prescriptive 'don't do it' approach - after all, young people are only a few years away from legally being able to gamble.

## KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS!

Young people watch what we do, so parental gambling is a major risk factor. Avoid emphasising winning, and talk to them about the risks involved in gambling. Awareness about safer gambling is really important - key messages include:

- **View any money lost as the cost of entertainment, accept losing as part of the game**
- **Remember to set time and spending limits and stick to them**
- **Don't borrow money and don't chase your losses**
- **Don't let gambling interfere with family life, and don't use it as a way to cope with pain!**

**If parents gamble, young people are twice as likely to be at risk...**

**...and four times more likely to develop an issue with gambling.**



## CONSIDER TALKING ABOUT:

- ⚡ How gambling occurs and the risk of placing bets.
- ⚡ The low odds of winning - compare these odds to being struck by lightning etc., to get the point across that gambling rarely results in financial gain.
- ⚡ The risks of gambling addiction in the same way as drugs/alcohol abuse.
- ⚡ How they can enjoy card games etc. without placing bets.
- ⚡ What they could do with money they save by not gambling, and how gambling could affect their ability to save for these activities.
- ⚡ What to do if they suspect gambling is affecting their friends; highlight that it can be a serious problem.
- ⚡ Take an interest in what they do, whether it be observing interactions with their friends or learning about the video games they are playing - get them to talk about how the game works, and how they progress in the game.



In partnership with:



**Around 4 in 10 (38%) young people who have gambled in the last seven days have seen their parents gamble.<sup>1</sup>**

By having these conversations you can help them become aware of the harms gambling could cause.

As they get older it will help them understand the difference between gambling on occasion and harmful gambling that can negatively impact other areas of their life.

**WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT**

[www.BigDeal.org.uk](http://www.BigDeal.org.uk)  
GamCare support - more information at [www.gamcare.org.uk](http://www.gamcare.org.uk)

1. Young People and Gambling, IPSOS MORI 2019