

information

DEPARTMENT OF GAMING AND RACING

G-line (NSW)

Problem Gambling Help Line

1800 633 635



GAMBLING HELP

G-line
(NSW)

1800 633 635

G-line TTY 1 800 633 649

WHAT IS G-LINE (NSW)?

G-line (NSW) is a 24-hour, 7 days a week, statewide telephone helpline offering crisis counselling for problem gamblers, their families, friends and others. It is available to anyone in NSW who wants to talk to a trained counsellor about their own, or someone else's, gambling problem.

G-line (NSW) was established in NSW in 1997, and by 30 June 2004 more than \$3.3 million in funding from the Casino Community Benefit Fund had been directed to the service.

HOW MANY PEOPLE CALL G-LINE (NSW)?

During the period 1 August 2003 to 31 July 2004, some 11,886 people who had a gambling problem, who were concerned about family members or friends, or who wanted information called *G-line (NSW)*.

January 2005

What is a

Problem Gambler?

Some indicators are:

- Gambling more than you can afford to lose
- Borrowing money from friends, family, banks and loan sharks to gamble
- Selling family or personal assets to gamble
- Losing time from work or study to gamble
- Arguing with family over your gambling habits
- Feeling guilty about the amount of money gambled
- Chasing losses to win back money



WHAT SERVICES DOES G-LINE (NSW) PROVIDE?

Qualified and experienced counsellors answer calls to *G-line (NSW)*, and offer telephone counselling to assist callers who may be in crisis as well as callers who are unsure about whether they have a problem with gambling. Families and friends of problem gamblers can also receive assistance by calling *G-line (NSW)*.

G-line (NSW) can also assist callers to access face to face counseling through referrals to local services. The service has access to a range of gambling and financial counselling and treatment support services across NSW.

In addition to telephone counselling, *G-line (NSW)* can provide callers with

printed information - including fact sheets on problem gambling, and a self-help booklet.

The *G-line (NSW)* service caters for callers from non-English speaking backgrounds via the use of a 24-hour professional interpreter service. Referrals can also be made to face to face ethno-specific problem gambling treatment services, and to the Multicultural Problem Gambling Service which also offers telephone counselling. This service can be contacted on 1800 856 800.

Hearing impaired callers can access the service by contacting a TTY number - **1800 633 649**. All calls received at *G-line (NSW)* are treated with confidence.

HOW IS THE 1800 633 635 NUMBER PROMOTED?

G-line (NSW) is promoted via signage and information brochures in hotels and registered clubs throughout NSW and the Sydney casino, on TAB tickets and through printed material distributed by the Department of Gaming and Racing. Face to face gambling treatment services also promote the 24 hour *G-line (NSW)* service to their clients.

A statewide mass media campaign was conducted in 2002-03 and 2003-04 to increase community awareness about the *G-line (NSW)* service. The 'Unscrambling Problem Gambling' campaign included TV, radio and press advertisements and posters that drew attention to problem gambling and its impact on the problem gambler and his or her family. Radio and press advertisements were also translated into a range of community languages.

The clear 'call to action' in the advertisements encouraged people who have a problem with their gambling to call the 24 hour *G-line (NSW)* service. An evaluation undertaken for both stages of this campaign found it had generated an extremely positive response.

Stage 1 of the campaign (conducted between November 2002 and March 2003) resulted in an unprecedented increase in calls to the helpline. In November 2002 (the campaign launch month) *G-line (NSW)* recorded the highest number of calls since the current service provider took over in August 1999. This trend continued in the following months with a higher than usual number of calls to the service. Overall, 6,149 calls were received from problem

gamblers, their friends and families between November 2002 and March 2003 (compared to 4,539 in the corresponding period the previous year). An independent telephone survey also identified a significant increase in general community awareness about the helpline.



Stage 2 of the campaign (conducted between December 2003 and May 2004) built on the success of stage 1. A telephone survey at the end of this stage identified a significant 25% increase in awareness when compared to results from a 2001 survey prior to the start of the campaign. In total, 6,466 problem gamblers, friends and families contacted *G-line (NSW)* during stage 2. This is an impressive 17% increase when compared to the same period in 2001-02 (ie. before the start of the campaign).

The majority of callers to *G-line (NSW)* made specific reference to the campaign, with many indicating the advertisements had motivated them to call:

- "I've been gambling for 19 years and haven't asked for help before. I was always reluctant – I wanted to get help, but I kept putting it off. When I saw the TV ad I knew I couldn't put it off any longer."
- "I gamble daily and am probably on the verge of having a problem. After seeing the TV ad, I know I have to do something."
- "I didn't really think about it until I heard the radio ad."

Consideration is being given to further awareness raising strategies for the *G-line (NSW)* service.

HOW IS G-LINE (NSW) FUNDED?

G-line (NSW) is funded by the Casino Community Benefit Fund - a statutory fund established by the Casino Control Act 1992. The Fund operates from a 2% community benefit levy applying to all gaming revenue from the Sydney casino.

The Fund is administered by up to 11 Trustees appointed by the Minister for Gaming and Racing under the Act.

Currently, Trustees include representatives of:

- the Uniting Church of Australia;
- the Society of St Vincent de Paul;
- the NSW Department of Education and Training;
- NSW Health;
- the NSW Department of Community Services;
- the NSW Department of Gaming and Racing;
- and ethnic communities.

The Trustees can recommend to the Minister funding for projects and activities (including *G-line (NSW)*) which fall within the Fund's objective of minimising the negative impact of problem gambling.

Further information about the Casino Community Benefit Fund is available from the Information Sheet *Casino Community Benefit Fund*; from the Department of Gaming and Racing's website; or by calling the Fund on (02) 9995 0992 or 0379.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

- Contact the Department of Gaming and Racing - 02 9995 0333
- Website - www.dgr.nsw.gov.au - go to Help for Problem Gamblers
- Email - info@dgr.nsw.gov.au

