



## ❖ A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER WHO PLAYS TOO MUCH?

Excessive gambling, participation in games of chance or online video gaming often causes complex problems for those close to an individual. Difficulties can commonly affect the player's spouse, children, parents, employer, friends, colleagues and neighbours.

Those who are close to an excessive player can pass through many phases, from suspicions of problematic gaming to feelings of exhaustion, distress or helplessness.

Friends or relatives may also experience many consequences from playing including: financial difficulties, social problems, loss of confidence, a decline in their physical and emotional health.

## ❖ WHAT ARE THE MOST LIKELY PROBLEMS?

Like the player themselves, those close to a gambler or online gamer are often negatively affected by playing behaviour. However, the player participates for mainly positive reasons, and has the option to remove themselves from the game.

For those close to a player, a number of responses may increase the difficulties:

- Feeling obliged to solve any problems
- Wanting to control events and relationships with others
- Giving advice, blaming, trying to meet others' needs
- Being tempted to believe repeated lies, feeling guilty
- Acting as if the problem does not exist

## ❖ THE FIRST STEPS TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM?

To cope with painful feelings such as helplessness, guilt or distress, which may be experienced by those close to a player, it is essential to:

- Ensure your financial security (check your cash flow, avoid taking out loans, put in place a system of protection)
- Consider your psychological wellbeing (avoid isolation, speak with others, undertake pleasant activities)
- Fix certain limits (learn to say no, clearly express your expectations)
- Break the cycle of playing (do not lie to protect the player, do not justify their habit, offer them help and support but within firm limits)

