

Coping with urges

Try these coping techniques if you have the urge to gamble.

Delay - Put off gambling for five minutes, then 20 minutes, then one hour, then another hour and so on. Urges rarely last long. They are like waves: they build to a peak but subside and fade. Each urge you beat is another step in reducing the intensity and number of future urges.

Deep breathing - Take three deep breaths and concentrate on how it feels as you breathe in and breathe out. Notice how you are feeling – sad? Bored? Lonely? Frustrated? Find and use healthy ways to process these feelings.

Distract – think about something pleasant; create words from letters on number plates; devise limericks about people you know.

Discuss your urges – telephone someone; visit a friend. Ring the Gambling Helpline on 1800 858 858; visit www.gamblinghelponline.org.au or call Gamblers Anonymous (GA) on 1800 002 210

Do something else – go to the movies; write in your journal; take a relaxing bath; visit the library; do some exercise; walk in the park and smell the flowers; get a massage; write a letter; do some cooking; do some gardening.

Detour – around the gambling venue; discover alternative routes. Keep driving past. Instead of turning left into the venue, turn right and keep going.