SUPPORTING A LOVED ONE WITH SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

Rates of suicide attempts are higher for people who have gambling problems. They are more likely to attempt suicide if they also have an untreated or unresolved mental health issue (such as depression) or use alcohol or other drugs. People who have threatened suicide or have hurt themselves in the past are also more at risk. For people who have made repeated unsuccessful attempts to change or quit gambling or for people who are in serious financial crisis due to the impact of gambling, suicide can feel like a way to end this painful cycle.

Some common suicide risk factors for people with problem gambling issues include:

- previous suicide plans or attempts
- being male, especially if young
- co-occurring substance use issues
- unemployment
- acute financial stress
- co-occurring mental illness
- adverse life events.

What are suicidal feelings?

Your loved one's suicidal feelings can range from being preoccupied by abstract thoughts about ending his or her life or feeling that people would be better off without him or her to thinking about methods of suicide or making clear plans.

What should I do if a family member is considering suicide?

A family member may have thoughts of suicide if he or she:

- changes behaviour, appearance or mood
- seems depressed, sad or withdrawn
- gives away prized possessions
- talks about suicide and indicates a plan
- makes a will or talks about final wishes.

If this happens, you should:

- take all suicide threats seriously
- let the person talk about his or her feelings
- accept what he or she says—don’t pass judgment or try to solve the problem
- ask if the person feels suicidal and has a plan
- remove any means for self-harm (e.g., firearms, medications)
- support the person in getting professional help (e.g., crisis centre, counsellor, doctor, emergency room or clergy)
- let your doctor know what is going on
- not agree to keep the person’s suicidal thoughts a secret
- tell someone who can help.

Take care of yourself

Providing support to a person who is considering suicide can take a significant emotional toll. Taking steps to take care of yourself after helping someone who is considering suicide is important. Make sure you have supportive people you can talk to, and try to participate in activities that promote your own wellness.