


VIDEO LOTTERIES and CHANCE



Gaming Should Remain a Game.
.....





This pamphlet has been designed to provide important information about the behaviours and actions of people who indulge in games of chance and gambling. For most, playing video lotteries represents a positive recreational experience. For others, it is not as simple.

A special self-assessment questionnaire has been prepared to help you gain valuable insight into your gaming behaviour or that of someone you care about. In completing this brief questionnaire, you will discover all you need to know to be able to ensure that gaming remains a game.

For the vast majority of people, games of chance constitute a source of pleasure and entertainment. For others, however, the pleasure may unfortunately turn into abuse, or even compulsion. That is why it is important to evaluate your own behaviour, with the help of this pamphlet, so that you can be assured that your gaming does indeed remain a game!

A Pure Question of Chance

Have you ever been unable to pry yourself away from a video lottery terminal . . . or started your day at a terminal . . . or reserved a particular terminal because you're convinced it's "payout time"?

Of course, the truth is, there is no such thing as "payout time" because winning or losing at video lotteries is determined strictly by chance. Similarly, no one can develop any particular skills or strategies that will influence the outcome of a game. For example, stopping the rollers by touching the screen at a certain point will have absolutely no impact on whether you win or lose.

In fact, your chances of winning or losing are identical for each game you play because the outcome of every game is totally independent of any previous game.

In order to better understand this idea, imagine flipping a coin. The coin has absolutely no memory of how it landed in previous flips. Each time you flip, the probability of coming up either heads or tails is always one in two — whether you flip once or one hundred times.

The same natural phenomenon applies to video lotteries. No matter how much money you spend or how much time you play at a particular terminal, the probability of winning always remains the same — from one game to the next.

Gaming Should Remain a Game

Take advantage of this opportunity to discover your personal gaming profile. For each question below, fill in the number of points that best corresponds to your own behaviour or attitude.

0 POINTS

Always or almost always

3 POINTS

Sometimes

5 POINTS

Never or almost never



1. Do you set spending limits before playing? _____
2. Do you find it easy to decline an invitation to play? _____
3. Do you have any other sources of recreation to ease stress or help take your mind off your problems? _____
4. While playing, do you keep track of how much money you've won or lost? _____
5. Do you feel comfortable talking about your gaming behaviour and the amount of money you've spent? _____
6. Are you able to play without needing to borrow money? _____
7. Do you stop playing when you've reached your pre-set spending limit? _____
8. When you play, are you aware of the fact that your wins and losses depend solely on chance? _____

TOTAL _____

(Evaluate your results on Page 6)

Gaming Should Remain a Game

Call to Action?

Setting Limits (Question 1): The money we use to wager on games should be nothing more than an entertainment expense. As such, we should always set a limit in advance on the amount we intend to spend in accordance with our budget, and this pre-set limit should never be exceeded.

Knowing How to Say No (Question 2): When an opportunity or the desire to play arises, it is important to know how to say no sometimes. If we are unable to resist the urge, gaming may be exerting undue control.

Seeking Refuge in Gaming (Question 3): Gaming should always remain a source of recreation and entertainment. When it becomes a means of combating anxiety or escaping from the problems of daily life, it is no longer a game. That's why other activities and resources are so important to help relieve stress.

Remaining Rational and Level-headed (Question 4): We wager . . . we win . . . we lose A good way of knowing where we stand is to take a bit of a break from the game to take stock of our resources and decide realistically whether we have the means to keep on playing.

Nothing to Hide (Question 5): Playing within our means means avoiding getting ourselves into debt. And that, in turn, means never using credit cards or borrowing money to play. If we feel the need to hide the amount of money or time we've spent playing from others, it's probably an indication that we've exceeded our limit and the game is no longer a game.

Playing Within Our Means (Question 6): By avoiding borrowing money or using credit cards to play, we are ensuring that we are playing within our means, without putting ourselves into debt.

ould Remain a Game.

Knowing How to Lose (Question 7): Knowing how to lose is critical and an essential aspect of gaming. If we play with the idea that we can always regain what we've lost, we will only add to our losses . . . while aggravating our problems.

Influencing Chance — An Impossible Feat! (Question 8): There's absolutely no way to control chance. Believing otherwise means living an illusion!

Your Results

NOTE: *This pamphlet is not intended to diagnose a compulsive gambling problem. Rather, it has been designed to serve as an effective tool to allow you to evaluate your gaming behaviour and better understand the manifestations of the problem.*

12 Points or Less — CONGRATULATIONS!

You exhibit healthy gaming behaviour and seem to be in control when playing.

13-29 Points — TIME OUT FOR REFLECTION!

Perhaps it's time to pause for a moment and take a hard look at your gaming behaviour.

30 Points or More — LOOK OUT!

You seem to be in trouble. Better ask yourself if video lotteries are really for you!

If you've scored the maximum of **5 points** for certain questions, these behaviours must definitely be modified. Wherever you've scored **3 points**, you've raised a red flag and special caution is in order.

When Gaming Becomes a Disorder



The Winning Stage

The problems associated with gaming tend to develop in stages. At first, we win; in some cases, we may win big. Of course, everyone is overjoyed when that happens, but for certain people, this happy event incites an irresistible urge to play again in order to recapture the feeling of elation.

The Losing Stage

Then come the losses. Inevitably, when we play excessively, we cannot always come out a winner and losses begin to mount. Compulsive players do not accept losing easily. In fact, they begin to play more and more in an attempt to recoup their losses. They convince themselves that good fortune lies in the next game . . . or in the next . . . or *certainly* in the next. Their losses begin to accumulate and the vicious circle becomes seemingly impossible to escape.

The Desperation Stage

At this point, virtually every aspect of a player's life is gradually affected by the growing dependence on gaming. Relations with loved ones deteriorate, and, totally drained, the player falls into a state of desperate isolation.

When Gaming Becomes a Disorder

It is imperative to remain constantly on the alert for signs that could indicate a compulsive gambling problem. Here are a few key signals to watch for*:

- ◆ Constant preoccupation with gaming
- ◆ Progressively increasing wagers and amounts spent on gaming
- ◆ Making efforts to cut down on gaming to no avail
- ◆ Becoming irritable when unable to play
- ◆ Playing to escape problems
- ◆ Continuing to play to recoup losses
- ◆ Lying to conceal actual gaming behaviour
- ◆ Stealing or committing fraud to sustain gaming activity
- ◆ Borrowing money to pay off gaming debts
- ◆ Jeopardizing a job or family for the sake of gaming

* These criteria have been drawn from DMS-IV, 4th Edition (1994). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. American Psychiatric Association

Help

An estimated 2% of adult players in Québec consider themselves to be compulsive gamblers. Another 2-3% are at risk of developing a dependence on gaming if they are not extremely careful.

Need Help?

Break Out of the Isolation!

By talking about your compulsive behaviour or gaming-related problems, you are already taking a major step in the right direction. However, if you constantly find yourself among compulsive gamblers, you may require some outside help.

That's why a special **GAMING HELP AND REFERRAL** telephone hotline has been established under the auspices of the Greater Montréal Referral Bureau. Available free of charge, this fully bilingual, strictly confidential and anonymous service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The hotline is designed to lend an attentive ear and provide valuable information in order to help eradicate dependence on games of chance. It also offers referrals to the appropriate resources available throughout Québec.

To talk to a **GAMING HELP AND REFERRAL** hotline counsellor, please call:

(514) 527-0140 (in Montréal)

1 800 461-0140 (outside Montréal)



GAMING HELP AND REFERRAL HOTLINE
Call. You've got nothing to lose.

CONFIDENTIAL
ANONYMOUS
FREE
24 HOURS A DAY
7 DAYS A WEEK
BILINGUAL

(514) 527-0140 (in Montréal)

1 800 461-0140
(outside Montréal)



loto-québec

This pamphlet was produced by the *Société des loteries vidéo du Québec* and the ACTI-MENU Health Program in conjunction with *Université Laval's Centre québécois d'excellence pour la prévention et le traitement du jeu.*