

Problem Gambling Script- For Calls & Chats

(as of February 2026)

OPENING:

Thank you for calling the Problem Gambling Helpline, this is _____. How may I help you?

OPENING FOR CALL BACKS:

This is your call back from the Problem Gambling Helpline. Thank you for your patience. This is _____. How may I help you?

IF THE CONTACT DOES NOT PERTAIN TO PG:

{You still must record the call. Make sure you open the Lethality Assessment and select if the call relates to Lottery, Casino or Sports Betting.}

IF THE CALLER ASKS WHAT WE DO:

You have reached the Problem Gambling Helpline, a 24-hour telephone line that connects problem gamblers and their families to a variety of specialized addiction recovery services, such as counselors and support groups.

IF THE CONTACT RELATES TO PG:

I am glad you reached out and I am happy to locate some resources that provide support and treatment for those with a gambling problem. I would like to ask you some questions first so that I have a better understanding of your situation. Is that okay?

CONTACT DATA QUESTIONS:

Did something happen recently that made you decide to call right now?

{If they have already shared this information with you, paraphrase what they told you to ensure clarity. Many callers will lead by talking about financial issues. Make sure to probe to see if gambling is affecting any other area of their life; respond, react and refer as appropriate.}

{The following questions must be asked but do NOT have to be asked in this order. Keep the interaction as conversational as possible.}

Do you mind if I ask what types of gambling you do?

{If they have already told you that they engage in a specific type(s) of gambling, probe to see if there are additional types of gambling they participate in.}

How long has gambling been a problem for you?

{This is not how long that the person has been gambling, rather how long it has been a problem.}

There is a high rate of problem gambling among veterans and active military members. There are also specialized treatment options for this population. Do you mind if I ask if you are a veteran or active military?

{Wait to record the Inquiry Type (level 2 vs level 3) and Contact Outcome (PG Treatment Intake, Gambling Specialist, Suicide Prevention Hotline, Caller Declined Transfer, Call does not relate to PG). At this point, you will not know if the caller will want a warm transfer and if so, to what program.}

I'm glad you called us today, do you mind if I ask how you heard about the Problem Gambling Helpline?

LETHALITY & SAFETY:

Based on everything you have shared; it sounds like your gambling is causing you a lot of stress. Sometimes when people are stressed, they think about suicide. Have you ever thought about suicide? {Continue through the Lethality Assessment until the caller answers "no." Follow the standard suicide protocol when necessary. If the caller is calling on behalf of a loved one, ask the Lethality Assessment questions as they relate to the gambler.}

{If the caller is the problem gambler or if their partner is the problem gambler}

Sometimes problematic gambling can lead to violence. May I ask if you feel safe at home?

{If they do not feel safe, provide contact information for the National DV hotline and if they want additional local services, provide their local 211/ Comprehensive I&R.}

Thank you for telling me a little bit about your situation. I am glad that you called today because there is help available. If you like, I could search for counseling options, support groups or both. Are you familiar with the difference between counseling and support groups? {If they are unfamiliar, use the definition button (the blue circle with the ? inside) in Navigate to help define} **Do you have a preference?**

Since programs serve different areas and ages, may I ask for your ZIP code and age? Okay, that's _____. Is that in ___ or ___? Thank you.

REFERRAL:

I found some options that may work. Would you like to write this down or would you prefer for me to email or text this information after we have discussed available options?

{You may need to reassure the caller that we will not save their phone number or email address, and we will only send them information this one time on the referrals that they have specifically requested.}

{If the caller is a partner/loved one of a person with a gambling problem, don't forget to offer them a support group as well.}

IF THE CALLER HAS NEEDS BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THE PG HELPLINE:

It sounds like you might benefit from some other community resources that are beyond the scope of what the Problem Gambling Helpline has information about. I want to tell you about a service that is available in most of Ohio called 211. Have you ever heard of 211?

211 is a phone number you can call to get information about programs in your community that can help with various health and human service needs. Some of our callers have found 211 to

be helpful with locating help for basic needs- such as food and housing assistance, relationship counseling, help for domestic violence survivors, credit counseling or treatment for a co-occurring addiction, just to name a few. Does that sound like something you might want to try?

{Use the taxonomy “Comprehensive Information and Referral” to find their local 211 or similar program.}

{If during the Lethality Assessment, the caller said that they have thought about suicide before- even if they are not thinking about suicide now- make sure to offer information about a suicide prevention hotline before ending the call. The caller may not need the information now, but they may need it later.}

POST-REFERRAL:

{Summarize next steps for the caller}. **We talked about** {name and briefly describe each program discussed} **Do you have any questions about any of those resources?** {Answer any questions they have.} **Do you feel you have enough information to get started?**

{YOU MUST OFFER REFERRALS TO THE CALLER BEFORE TRANSFERRING CALLERS TO THE OHIO GAMBLING TELEHEALTH NETWORK. IT IS YOUR ROLE TO PROVIDE REFERRALS AND ENCOURAGEMENT. IT IS THEIR ROLE TO SHARE MORE INDEPTH INFORMATION ABOUT GAMBLING ADDICTION, WHAT THEY CAN EXPECT IF THEY CHOOSE TO ENTER A TREATMENT PROGRAM AND PROVIDE GUIDANCE FOR FAMILIES/FRIENDS ON HOW TO HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH A LOVED ONE REGARDING THEIR PROBLEM WITH GAMBLING. THE GAMBLING SPECIALIST WILL ALSO OFFER THE CALLER AN OPTION TO BEGIN FREE COUNSELING WITH A TELEHEALTH CLINICIAN.}

*****IF THE CONTACT IS A CHAT, WE ARE STILL REQUIRED TO OFFER TO CONNECT THEM TO THE OHIO GAMBLING TELEHEALTH NETWORK OR THE INTAKE DEPARTMENT OF THEIR PREFERRED TREATMENT PROGRAM.**

IF THE CHATTER ACCEPTS THE OFFER TO BE TRANSFERRED TO AN AGENCY’S INTAKE, YOU MUST GET THEIR FIRST NAME AND A CALL BACK NUMBER, WRAP-UP THE CHAT, DISCONNECT THE CHAT AND MAKE AN OUTBOUND CALL TO THE CHATTER AND ENGAGE WITH THE AGENCY OF THEIR CHOICE THEN FOLLOW PROPER STEPS TO COMPLETE THE WARM TRANSFER.

IF THE CHATTER ACCEPTS THE OFFER TO BE CONNECTED TO THE OHIO GAMBLING TELEHEALTH NETWORK’S GAMBLING SPECIALIST, GET THEIR FIRST NAME AND A CALL BACK NUMBER, WRAP-UP THE CHAT, DISCONNECT THE CHAT AND MAKE AN OUTBOUND CALL TO THE CHATTER AND THEN ENGAGE WITH THE OHIO GAMBLING TELEHEALTH NETWORK, FOLLOW PROPER STEPS TO COMPLETE THE WARM TRANSFER.

IF CHATTERS GIVE PERMISSION, YOU CAN CALL THE OHIO GAMBLING TELEHEALTH NETWORK’S GAMBLING SPECIALIST AND LEAVE THE CHATTERS NAME AND CALL BACK NUMBER.

PRO TIP: DON’T FORGET TO USE QUICK REPLIES.***

MONDAY-FRIDAY 9-5:

I would like to offer you a couple of other options. I can transfer you to one of the programs we talked about, or I can transfer you to a Gambling Specialist with the Ohio Gambling Telehealth

Network. The Gambling Specialist can have a more in-depth conversation with you about problem gambling and how treatment can help. Would you be interested in either of those options?

{If the caller would like to be transferred to intake with a treatment program, conference the caller with the intake department of their preferred option. Explain that you are calling from the PG Helpline and you would like to connect a caller to begin the intake process. Ask the caller's permission before exiting the call. If you get a VM, allow the caller to leave a message before disconnecting with the agency. Once the VM is disconnected ask the caller if they would instead like to be connected to a Gambling Specialist with the Ohio Gambling Telehealth Network, or if they are okay with waiting for a call back from the PG treatment program.}

{If the caller would like to be transferred to the Gambling Specialist with the Ohio Gambling Telehealth Network.}

We may get a voicemail if the Gambling Specialist is assisting another caller. If that happens, is it okay to leave your first name and phone number for them to call you back? Is there a certain time you would prefer for them to call you back?

IF THE GAMBLING SPECIALIST ANSWERS:

{Provide them with the caller's name, phone number, results of lethality assessment and any referrals provided. Conference in the caller, introduce the caller to the Gambling Specialist, encourage them to call back if needed, then complete the transfer.}

IF YOU GET A VOICEMAIL:

{Leave the caller's name, phone number, results of the lethality assessment, any referrals provided and a preferred call back time. End the outbound call and return to the caller. Let the caller know that the Gambling Specialist is currently assisting another caller and they should receive a call back around their requested time.}

AFTERHOURS:

If you would like, I could transfer you to a Gambling Specialist with the Ohio Gambling Telehealth Network. They can have a more in-depth conversation with you about problem gambling and how treatment can help. Is that something you would be interested in?

We may get a voicemail if the Gambling Specialist is assisting another caller. If that happens, is it okay to leave your first name and phone number for them to call you back? Is there a certain time you would prefer for them to call you back?

IF THE TELEHEALTH SPECIALIST ANSWERS:

{Provide them with the caller's name, phone number, results of lethality assessment and any referrals provided. Conference in the caller, introduce the caller to the Telehealth Specialist, encourage them to call back if needed, then complete the transfer.}

IF YOU GET A VOICEMAIL:

{Leave the caller's name, phone number, results of the lethality assessment, any referrals provided and a preferred call back time. End the outbound call and return to the caller. Let the caller know that the Gambling Specialist is currently assisting another caller and they should receive a call back around their requested time.}

CLOSE:

Thank you for calling the Problem Gambling Helpline. If you need further assistance, or this information does not work out, please call us back. We're here 24 hours a day.

{Before closing transaction, record Inquiry Type and Contact Outcome in Contact Data tab.}