FREE WORKBOOK · 7 PAGES · 20–30 MINUTES

BEYOND *the Bet*

Discovering Your Emotional Triggers

Most people think they gamble to win. Look closer and the bet is usually doing another job: easing stress, numbing pain, killing boredom or chasing a rush. This workbook helps you find out which job gambling does for you, and how to meet that need in a healthier way.

INSIDE

1. Why we gamble: the 4 emotional triggers
2. Your trigger cycle, step by step
3. A 7-day trigger log
4. What gambling gives you, and what it costs
5. Your personal emotional regulation plan

Take care of yourself as you work. Some pages ask about painful feelings or memories. If it becomes too much, stop, breathe slowly and come back later. If you are in crisis, call or text 988.

THE 4 EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS

Researchers have found that people reach gambling problems by different paths (Blaszczynski & Nower, 2002). Rate how much each trigger sounds like you: 0 = not at all, 3 = a lot.

STRESS RELIEF

Betting feels like a break from pressure, bills or a hard day.

SOUNDS LIKE:

"I just need to unwind." "One bet and I'll stop thinking about work."

How much is this me?

0 1 2 3

NUMBING PAIN

Gambling helps you not feel: grief, loneliness, shame or memories of trauma.

SOUNDS LIKE:

"When I'm playing I don't think about anything." "It's the only time I don't feel bad."

How much is this me?

0 1 2 3

BOREDOM

Betting fills empty time and gives you something to look forward to.

SOUNDS LIKE:

"There's nothing else to do." "The game is more fun with money on it."

How much is this me?

0 1 2 3

CHASING THE HIGH

Winning, or almost winning, gives a rush the brain keeps wanting more of.

SOUNDS LIKE:

"I was so close." "I'm due for a big one."

How much is this me?

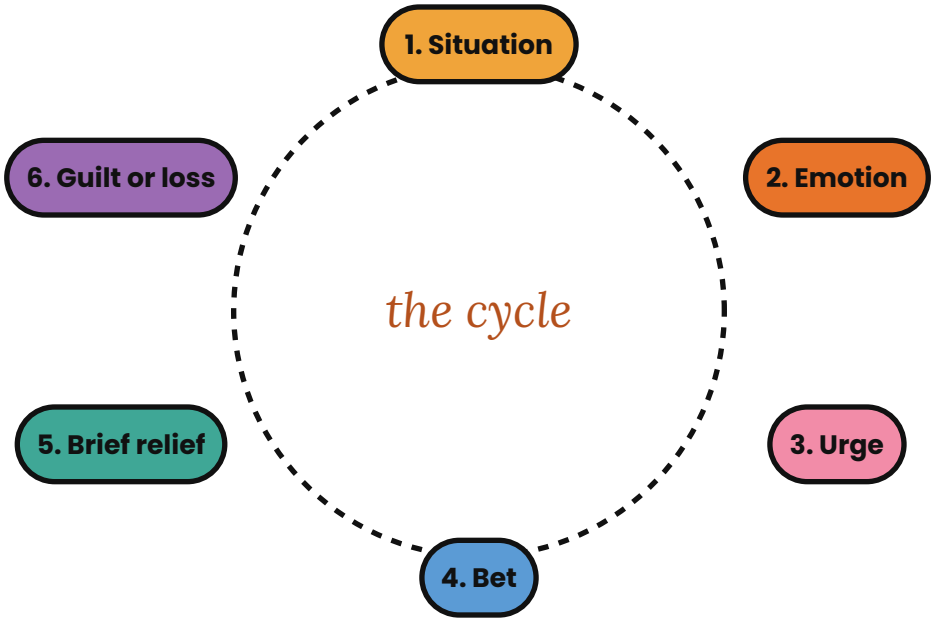
0 1 2 3

My strongest trigger is: _____ The second one is: _____

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YOUR TRIGGER CYCLE

Gambling usually follows the same chain. It's easiest to break in the first links, before the urge arrives.



Think about your last bet and walk through it:

1. **Situation: where was I, what time was it, who was I with?**

2. **Emotion: what was I feeling right before? Where did I feel it in my body?**

3. **Urge: what did I tell myself? ("Just one," "I'll win it back")**

4. **Bet: what did I do, and how much did I spend?**

5. **Brief relief: what did I feel while I was betting?**

6. **After: how did I feel an hour later? The next morning?**

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7-DAY TRIGGER LOG

Every time you feel the urge to gamble, whether you bet or not, fill in one row. Patterns show up within a week.

DAY / TIME	SITUATION	FEELING	URGE 0–10	WHAT I DID	BET? Y/N

The pattern I notice: _____

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WHAT GAMBLING GIVES ME, AND WHAT IT COSTS

Every trigger points to a real need. Write what gambling gives you, what it costs, and a healthier way to meet the same need. Ideas are in gray.

TRIGGER	WHAT IT GIVES ME	WHAT IT COSTS ME	A HEALTHIER WAY
Stress relief			*Walk 15 min, slow breathing, talk to someone*
Numbing pain			*Name the feeling, write it down, therapy*
Boredom			*Plan high-risk hours: sports, family, a class*
Chasing the high			*Hard exercise, a pickup game, learn something new*

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MY EMOTIONAL REGULATION PLAN

MY TOP TRIGGERS

MY EARLY WARNING SIGNS (THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, PLACES, TIMES)

3 THINGS I'LL DO IN THE FIRST 10 MINUTES OF AN URGE

1.
2.
3.

BARRIERS I'LL PUT IN PLACE

- [ ] Delete betting apps
- [ ] Self-exclude from apps or casinos
- [ ] Turn off promo notifications
- [ ] Set deposit limits
- [ ] Let someone help with money for a while
- [ ] Leave cards at home on payday

PEOPLE I CAN CALL

HOW I'LL REWARD MYSELF FOR PROGRESS (NOT WITH MONEY FOR BETTING)

Quick skills: breathe 4 in · 4 hold · 6 out · surf the urge for 20 minutes · HALT check: hungry, angry, lonely, tired?

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YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS ALONE

Noticing your triggers is a big step. The next one is having support. In Oregon, gambling treatment is free and confidential, for you and your family.

OREGON PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE · 24/7

1-877-695-4648

Spanish: 1-844-888-2537 · Text: 503-713-6000

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FIND A LATINO THERAPIST

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REFERENCES

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