

# Fact Sheet: Why are pokies so harmful?



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## When a person experiences harm from their own gambling, six people around them are also affected.

Gambling problems inflict harm on whānau (e.g. partners, children, parents, siblings), friends, and colleagues. There is also consistent evidence linking harmful gambling and family violence.

Pokies give players unrealistic impressions of the odds of winning, confuse people about how much money they have lost, and encourage sustained periods of gambling – often in the hope of recovering losses.

### Solitude



Unlike card games, with pokies it is just you and the machine.

People often talk about a mental state called 'the zone', where you lose all sense of self and time when playing the pokies.

It is the uninterrupted play and solitude that keeps you in the zone.

### Continuity



Pokies are considered the most harmful form of gambling, because it is a continuous activity.

With card games you usually have to wait for the next game to start, but with pokies you can immediately continue from one game to another, just press a button and play again.

### Speed



There are a limited number of card games you can play in an hour, but with pokies you can play up to 1200 unique games.

In addiction research this is called 'event frequency', where the number of events are so frequent that it doesn't really leave you any room to think; you're just drawn into the next game and the next game, and so on.

#### Sources:

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Oakes, J., Pols, R., Lawn, S., & Battersby, M. (2018). The "zone": A qualitative exploratory study of an altered state of awareness in electronic gaming machine problem gambling. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 18(1),177-94.

Goodwin, B. C., Browne, M., Rockloff, M., & Rose, J. (2017). A typical problem gambler affects six others. *International Gambling Studies*, 17(2), 276-289.

## Whai Āwhina? Need help?

We provide free and confidential counselling and support services throughout Aotearoa New Zealand for anyone impacted by gambling harm. No judgement, only support.

## 0800 664 262

## www.pgfnz