



GAMBLING AWARENESS



Americans spend more on gambling than all other recreation combined. For most, it's a fun diversion but for a few, gambling can become a serious, life altering problem.

Problem gambling is behavior that causes disruptions in any major area of a person's life. It affects as many as six to nine million Americans.

Would you recognize a gambling problem in someone you know? It may be easier if you know the signs. Here are some questions from the National Council on Problem Gambling. If you or someone you know answers yes to any of the following questions, it is likely that gambling has become problematic.

- **Have you gambled until your last dollar is gone?**
- **Have you often gambled longer than you had planned?**
- **Have you lied about your gambling to friends or family?**
- **Have you used your income or savings to gamble while letting bills go unpaid?**
- **Have you made repeated attempts to stop gambling?**
- **Have you broken the law or considered breaking the law to get money to gamble?**
- **Have you borrowed money to finance your gambling?**
- **Have you felt depressed or suicidal because of your gambling losses?**
- **Have you been remorseful after gambling?**
- **Have you gambled to try to get money to meet your financial obligations?**

Risk Factors

- A stressful life event such as the death of a loved one, divorce, job loss, injury/disability
- An early big win

- Pre-existing mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, alcoholism
- Family history of addictions such as alcoholism, compulsive gambling and drug addiction.
- There is hope and help for problem gamblers and their loved ones—and many people who seek help do recover.

Gambling Myths

You have to gamble everyday to be a problem gambler.

Fact: A problem gambler may gamble frequently or infrequently. If a person's gambling is causing psychological, financial, emotional, marital, legal or other difficulties for themselves and the people around them, then they have a gambling problem.

Problem gamblers gamble at any opportunity on any form of gambling.

Fact: Most have a favorite form of gambling that causes them problems, some may have a secondary form as well, but they are not as problematic.

Problem gambling is not a problem if the gambler can afford it.

Fact: Problems are not just financial. Some gambling may interfere with a person's ability to act in accordance with their values, lead to relationship breakdown and loss of important friendships.

Problem gamblers are irresponsible.

Fact: Many hold, or have held, responsible community positions. In addition, even people with a long history of responsible behavior are vulnerable to developing a gambling problem. When a person is having a problem gambling episode, that person is unable to control their gambling and in this compromised state their actions look like irresponsible behavior.

Source: www.NPGAW.org

Courtesy of Wellness Proposals