

PROBLEM GAMBLING: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Frequently Asked Questions



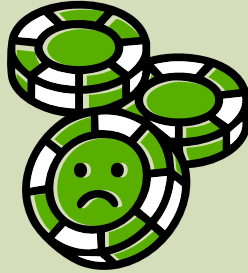
WHAT IS PROBLEM GAMBLING?

Problem gambling — or gambling disorder — includes all gambling behavior patterns that compromise, disrupt or damage personal, family or vocational pursuits.

The essential features are:

- Increasing preoccupation with gambling
- A need to bet more money more frequently
- Restlessness or irritability when attempting to stop "chasing" losses
- Loss of control manifested by continuation of the gambling behavior despite mounting, serious, negative consequences

In extreme cases, problem gambling can result in financial ruin, legal problems, loss of career and family, or even suicide.



Isn't problem gambling just a financial problem?

No. Problem gambling is an emotional problem that has financial consequences. If you pay all of a problem gambler's debts, the person will still be a problem gambler. The real problem is that they have an uncontrollable problem with gambling.

What kinds of people become problem gamblers?

Anyone who gambles can develop problems if they are not aware of the risks and do not gamble responsibly. When gambling behavior interferes with finances, relationships and the workplace, a serious problem already exists.

How can a person be addicted to something that isn't a substance?

Although no substance is ingested, **people with gambling disorder get the same effect from gambling as someone else might get from taking a drug or having a drink.** It alters the person's mood and the gambler keeps repeating the behavior attempting to achieve that same effect. But just as tolerance develops to drugs or alcohol, the gambler finds that it takes more and more of the gambling experience to achieve the same emotional effect as before. This creates an increased craving for the activity and the gambler finds they have less and less ability to resist as the craving grows in intensity and frequency.

How much money do you have to lose before gambling becomes a problem?

The amount of money lost or won does not determine when gambling becomes a problem. **Gambling becomes a problem when it harms any area of the individual's life.**

How widespread is problem gambling in the U.S.?

Two million (1%) U.S. adults are estimated to meet the criteria for gambling disorder in a given year. Another 4 million to 6 million (2% to 3%) would be considered problem gamblers; that is, they do not meet the full diagnostic criteria for gambling disorder but meet one or more of the criteria and are experiencing problems due to their gambling behavior. Research also indicates that most adults who gamble can do so responsibly.

Where can I go for help?

Gambling prevention, treatment and recovery support services are free to Louisiana residents!

Text or call 877-770-STOP for free, confidential help, 24/7 or visit GamblingSignsLA.org



The Center of Recovery (CORE) is a publicly-funded residential treatment center in Shreveport specifically dedicated to individuals seeking treatment for problem gambling. **Learn more at centerofrecovery.org.**