



Problem Gambling – The Hidden Addiction

March is National Problem Gambling Awareness Month

For Immediate Release

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(Green Bay, WI) – As basketball teams and fans get ready for tournament time, problem gambling organizations are also preparing for a busy month. It should come as no surprise then that National Problem Gambling Awareness Month coincides with March Madness.

“March is usually a busy month for our Helpline as college basketball tournament time arrives,” said Rose Gruber, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling. “It’s really the culmination of a stretch that can be difficult for problem gamblers. There’s the stress of the holidays and holiday bills coming due, followed by the Super Bowl and now all the hype that goes with tournament time.”

The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) describes the month-long campaign as a grassroots public awareness and outreach effort with a goal of educating the general public, and health care professionals, about the warning signs of problem gambling. The campaign was previously held during the first week of March to coincide with March Madness, one of the most widely bet upon events in the U.S. Now, the campaign takes place during the entire month of March!

“Unlike other addictions, like drugs or alcohol, a gambling addiction doesn’t have any outward signs,” Gruber adds. “Family and friends usually don’t recognize there’s a problem until it’s taken a heavy financial toll. Our hope is that more people become aware of the signs of problem gambling and understand that there are counselors and programs available to help.”

The warning signs of problem or compulsive gambling include...

- Constantly thinking or talking about gambling
- Spending more time or money on gambling than you can afford
- Repeated attempts to control, cut back or stop gambling
- Gambling to escape stress or other problems
- Gambling to win back your previous losses
- Gambling until all of your money is gone
- Lying to family members and others to conceal your gambling activity
- Borrowing money from family or friends to gamble
- Stealing money or committing other illegal acts to get more cash to wager
- Neglecting work, family, household responsibilities or personal needs because of gambling

WCPG's statewide Helpline is a place for problem and compulsive gamblers to seek assistance and referrals. The Helpline is answered 24-hours-a-day by trained volunteers and professional staff who work with a statewide network of qualified treatment providers, Gamblers Anonymous and GamAnon (for family members) chapters where callers can be referred. The Helpline received 13,935 calls in 2013.

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*The **Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling** is funded by a public awareness grant from the State of Wisconsin and additional funding from donors, including Wisconsin Native American Tribes. The Council operates a 24-hour Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLE-5, distributes informational brochures, organizes an annual statewide conference, makes presentations on problem gambling and conducts training sessions for treatment providers interested in the special requirements for working with compulsive gamblers and their families.*

For more information, visit [Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling](http://www.wisconsin-council.org) or visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/WisconsinCouncilonProblemGambling.

If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLE-5 for confidential help.

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