



When Gambling Becomes an Addiction, the Impact Goes Far Beyond the Gambler

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(Green Bay, WI) – For someone addicted to gambling, the impact can be devastating. Mounting losses create difficult financial situations which can lead to other problems and concerns. That’s usually also the case for the problem gambler’s family.

“Problem gambling usually adversely affects family member in a number of ways because of the gambler’s altered behavior, dishonesty and manipulation,” said Rose Gruber, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling. “Very often we hear from family members who are concerned about a relative who is addicted to gambling and the impact is being felt by others.”

Gruber says there’s a lot that can be lost or damaged when a family member is a problem gambler:

- Trust is often the first thing to be lost. Changing behavior is often attributed to many other possible problems before gambling is identified as the real cause.
- Respect for the problem gambler is usually lost once the issue comes to light.
- Relationships that are built on trust and respect can be weakened or destroyed.
- Employment can be impacted in a number of ways. The gambler may neglect responsibilities at work and/or develop an attendance problem as the need to gamble takes over. In some instances, the gambler may turn to stealing from his or her workplace to support the gambling addiction.
- Financial security for the family is often lost as family resources are depleted by the gambler.
- Reputations are difficult to protect as the gambling problem affects more and more aspects of his or her life and it becomes known to those outside the family.

“The result is often a great deal of stress and distrust for many family members,” Gruber said.

“The deeper the addiction, the more the gambler can become isolated and that can lead to neglect

of others in the family. As with other addictions, it's not uncommon for there to be domestic violence as well.”

Gruber stresses the importance of seeking help if there are signs of problem gambling, including:

- Talking only about wins, not losses
- Lying to family and friends about the extent of gambling
- Hiding gambling losses
- Chasing losses
- Unsuccessfully attempting to stop or reduce the amount of gambling
- Borrowing from family and friends
- Gambling alone
- Gambling as a means to cope
- Selling items to get money for gambling
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Depleting financial reserves

If this sounds like you or someone you know, there may be a gambling problem.

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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*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-on-problem-gambling.com) or visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/WisconsinCouncilonProblemGambling.

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