



## *Holiday Stress – A Bad Bet for Problem Gamblers*

Confidential help is just a call away

**For Immediate Release**

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(Green Bay, WI) – “Happy Holidays!” It’s common to hear that greeting often during the Holiday season. It’s a time of year when families and friends gather together, gifts are exchanged and voices ring out with the “sounds of the season.”

The Holiday season can also be a time of stress for many people, including those who are addicted to gambling.

“This is the time of year when we hear from problem gamblers who have difficulty dealing with the Holidays,” said Rose Gruber, Executive Director of the [Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling](#). “Some of them just have a tough time with family gatherings, particularly if debt is mounting from gift-giving and gambling. In situations like that, the problem gambler may look to get away and the escape route is often more gambling.”

Gruber says visiting the casino, playing poker or gambling on a sporting event is not a problem for most people who choose to gamble. “But for those who are problem or compulsive gamblers, the ‘action’ provides a sense of control and escape which can make it harder and harder to return to the real world,” Gruber said.

For those looking to gamble during the holidays, Gruber offers this advice:

- Establish a specific spending limit and a time limit and stick to it
- Don’t bet more money than you feel you can comfortably lose
- Do not borrow money to gamble
- Make gambling a social activity – don’t gamble alone
- Take your winnings home – don’t use your winnings for additional gambling

“If you find yourself in a situation where you are gambling to escape the stress of the holidays, consider an alternative for getting away – take in a movie, go out to dinner or consider a new exercise routine,” Gruber said. “But if all you can think about is gambling, it’s probably time to make the call to the Wisconsin Problem Gambling Helpline for confidential help.”

The Helpline, at 1-800-GAMBLE-5, is answered 24/7 by professional staff and trained volunteers. Call responders work with a statewide network of qualified treatment providers, Gamblers Anonymous chapters and GamAnon (for family members) chapters where callers can be referred.

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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 the [Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling](http://www.wisconsin-council.org) website, visit us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/WisconsinCouncilonProblemGambling](https://www.facebook.com/WisconsinCouncilonProblemGambling) or follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/wcpgambling>*

***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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