

Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime

"The *Anyone. Anywhere. Anytime.* theme reflects the important message that anyone can suffer from gambling problems," said Keith Whyte, Executive Director of the National Council on Problem Gambling in Washington, D.C. "No gambler is immune, and unfortunately, it is truly an equal opportunity issue."

Gambling is often thought of as an invisible addiction because its outward signs may not be readily observable. Yet it is estimated that there are 6-8 million Americans who are compulsive gamblers, and each of them affects the lives of many others: family, friends, employers, community.

Many recent stories illustrate the negative consequences that can stem from gambling problems. In each case, the illegal activity took place in order to provide money to fuel gambling addictions.

- A nun was accused of embezzling money from a college
- A former college quarterback committed a sports ticket fraud scheme
- A mother gambled away donations received to treat her son's cancer
- A former college president lied to school trustees to tap into bonus funds
- A federal judge was impeached for corruption
- A pastor stole hundreds of thousand of dollars from his church
- A package delivery driver was accused of stealing 70 computers and selling them to cover a gambling debt
- A former symphony orchestra manager was accused of embezzling \$190,000 from the orchestra.

These are just the stories that made the newspapers. Many additional problem gamblers and their families suffer in silence. But there is hope and help available. There are treatment centers, individual therapists, Gamblers Anonymous meetings and more. Gambling addiction can be treated effectively, and people can move on to productive lives. **If you or a loved one has a gambling problem call the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Helpline at 800-426-2535.**

For more information about NPGAW, please visit www.npgaw.org.



SOURCE National Council on Problem Gambling

WHAT IS COMPULSIVE GAMBLING?

Compulsive gambling is a progressive disorder causing a psychologically uncontrollable preoccupation and urge to gamble. Individuals eventually lose the ability to control the impulse to gamble. This results in excessive gambling which can compromise, disrupt or damage personal, family or employment pursuits. It is recognized by the American Psychiatric Association as an Impulse Control Disorder.

Problem Gambling Warning Signs

- Increasing the frequency and the amount of money gambled.
- Spending an excessive amount of time gambling at the expense of job or family time.
- Being pre-occupied with gambling or with obtaining money with which to gamble.
- Gambling creates a special and intense pleasure, an aroused sense of being in "action".
- Continuing to gamble despite negative consequences such as large losses, or work or family problems caused by gambling.
- Gambling as a means to cope with loneliness, anger, stress, depression, etc.
- "Chasing" or the urgent need to keep gambling often with larger bets – or the taking of greater risks in order to make up for a loss or series of losses.
- Borrowing money to gamble, taking out secret loans, or maximizing credit cards.
- Bragging about wins but not talking about losses.
- Frequent mood swings, higher when winning, lower when losing.
- Gambling for longer periods of time or with more money than originally planned.
- Secretive behavior such as hiding lottery tickets and betting slips, having mail, bills, etc., sent to work, a P.O. Box or other address.