



The Holidays – A Time of Stress for Problem Gamblers

Confidential help is just a phone call away

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(Green Bay, WI) – “Happy Holidays!” It’s a common greeting that will be repeated over and over during the next few weeks. Families and friends will gather throughout the holidays; gifts will be exchanged; voices will ring out with the “sounds of the season.”

But for some, including problem and compulsive gamblers, the stress of the holidays can be troublesome.

“We’ve heard from many problem gamblers through the years who say they have a difficult time dealing with holiday stress,” said Rose Gruber, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling. “The stress of family gatherings and sometimes mounting debt from gift-giving can lead the addict to want to get away. For problem gamblers, the escape route is often through the Internet, a casino visit or another game of poker.”

Gruber notes that for most people, visiting the casino or a gambling website isn’t a problem. “But for those facing a gambling addiction, the gambling 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 stick to it
- Don’t borrow money to gamble
- Don’t wager more money than you feel you can comfortably lose
- Don’t view gambling as a way to make money
- Make gambling a social activity – don’t gamble alone
- Don’t reinvest your winnings

“If you find that you’re gambling to escape the stress of the holidays, consider an alternative for getting way – take in a movie, go to dinner or start a new exercise routine,” Gruber said. “But if all you can think about is gambling, make the call to the Wisconsin’s Problem Gambling Helpline for confidential help.” The Helpline number is 1-800-GAMBLE-5 (1-800-426-2535).

(more)

The 24-hour, statewide Helpline is a place for problem and compulsive gamblers to seek assistance and referrals. The Helpline is answered 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.

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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 www.wi-problemgamblers.org. WCPG is now on [Facebook](#). Log on to Facebook, search for “Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling,” and then click “like.”*

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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