



The Holidays – A Time of Stress for Problem Gamblers

Confidential help is just a phone call away

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(Green Bay, WI) – The holiday season is just around the corner. It’s a special time of year for many, with family celebrations, get-togethers with friends and more. But the holidays can also be a time of stress, particularly for those facing a gambling addiction.

“For the problem gambler, spending more time with family and friends can actually be a trigger that leads to more gambling,” said Rose Gruber, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling (WCPG), the statewide organization that provides resources, public awareness and education on problem and pathological gambling disorders. “Family gatherings may include card games, scratch-off tickets can be given as gifts, and there are many sporting events that provide opportunities for betting. For a problem gambler or someone recovering from a gambling addiction, it’s important to try to avoid those gambling triggers.”

Gruber notes that the vast majority of people can enjoy gambling as a form of entertainment. “But for those with a gambling problem, the wagering provides a sense of control and escape,” she says. “The holidays often include stressful situations that lead to more time and money spent on gambling.” The added financial pressures of the holiday season can also be seen by some as a reason to gamble more, as they try for more money to spend

For those who do plan to gamble during the holidays, or any time of year, Gruber says there are some guidelines to keep in mind:

- Set specific money and time limits and stick to them
- Don’t gamble alone; make it a social activity
- Don’t view gambling as a way to make money
- Don’t reinvest your winnings
- Never bet with borrowed money
- If you feel the need to gamble to escape the stress of the holidays, look for an alternative; take in a movie, go out for dinner or start a new exercise program

“If the only thing you are thinking about during the holidays is how to get away to gamble, please make the call to our Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLE-5,” Gruber adds. “The Helpline is a valuable tool that can put you in touch with resources in your area to help you deal with your addiction.”

The Problem Gambling Helpline is answered by volunteers and professional staff who work with a statewide network of qualified treatment providers, as well as Gamblers Anonymous and GamAnon chapters throughout Wisconsin.

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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 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 or Live Chat through the WCPG website at www.wi-problemgamblers.org.

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