

Problem Gambling Awareness Month



WISCONSIN COUNCIL
ON PROBLEM GAMBLING



**PROBLEM GAMBLING
AWARENESS MONTH**

→ **HAVE THE CONVERSATION**

Date: March 2019

During the month of March, communities nationwide are working to raise awareness of the consequences of problem gambling and the resources available for individuals whose gambling is causing disruption in their lives.

**Contact: The Wisconsin
Council on Problem
Gambling at
1-800-Gamble-5
(426-2535)**



February 4, 2019

Dear Friend,

The Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling has joined with the National Council on Problem Gambling in their efforts to increase public awareness of the availability and benefits of gambling disorder treatment. One of our goals this year is to provide information to all professionals working with people who are at risk to become problem gamblers throughout the state of Wisconsin. An estimated 5-7% of the adult population may experience some kind of problem with gambling activities. We want to provide information about gambling disorder, how it impacts loved ones, how to have a conversation with someone about gambling disorder, where to find resources, and where to find help. We have enclosed a poster with information regarding Problem Gambling Awareness Month. We would appreciate it if you would make copies of it and distribute in prominent areas. A study estimated that between 17 and 24 percent of problem gamblers attempt suicide.

During the month of March, 2019, communities nationwide will be working to raise awareness of the consequences of gambling disorders and the resources available for individuals whose gambling is causing disruption in their lives. Treatment for problem gambling is not only available, but is also effective in improving the lives of problem gamblers and their families. This initiative is also a celebration of the men and women who are overcoming problems associated with their gambling behavior.

The efforts of this month are geared toward creating a society where those affected by problem gambling are able to identify the problem and access professional services that help minimize the consequences of problem gambling. It envisions an environment in which treatment of gambling problems is recognized as a specialized field of expertise and professionals trained to assist problem gamblers are recognized for their unique knowledge, skills and abilities.

We would like to offer you free wallet cards for you to use as a resource and hand out. If you are interested in quantities of these free wallet cards please contact us using the contact information listed below.

The enclosed poster provides information on encouraging people to play responsibly. We are hoping you will display the poster throughout the month of March, 2019. For more information or to obtain free literature, posters, promo items, or specific brochures including high-risk populations, please contact the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling at (920) 437-8888, or e-mail wcpbg@wi-problemgamblers.org. We also conduct trainings and presentations for professionals who are interested in learning more about problem gambling. We also have a "Just the Basics" free online training available on our website at www.wi-problemgamblers.org.

Our 20th Annual Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Statewide Conference will be held on **March 14-15, 2019**, at the **Blue Harbor Resort and Conference Center** in **Sheboygan, Wisconsin**. This event will bring together national and Wisconsin experts in the compulsive gambling addiction field. Please consider attending. For more information or a brochure, contact the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling at 920-437-8888 or visit our website at www.wi-problemgamblers.org. Scholarships are available.

Sincerely,

Rose Blozinski

Rose Blozinski
Executive Director
Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling
1585 Allouez Avenue
Green Bay, WI 54311



March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month! The purpose of this event is to raise awareness about problem gambling and promote the availability of treatment.

Why is Problem Gambling Awareness Month Important?

Most adults gamble, and therefore would benefit from programs to prevent gambling addiction. March has become one of the biggest gambling occasions because of the popularity of the NCAA "March Madness" Basketball Tournament. Between six and nine million people meet criteria for gambling problems, yet only a fraction seek help. We believe many who suffer in silence do so because they don't know they developed a problem, what gambling addiction is, or where to get help.

Have the Conversation about Problem Gambling

Problem Gambling is a public health issue affecting all aspects of physical, social, and mental health. It can affect families, work performance and general well-being. It is important to know the signs of a gambling problem, that treatment is available, and that it works. Use this document to learn about problem gambling, how to recognize the signs of gambling addiction and where to go for help.

March is a great time to Have the Conversation about Problem Gambling.

Problem Gambling – General Overview

What is gambling? What is problem gambling?

- Gambling is defined as risking something of value on an unknown outcome that depends on chance or skill.
- Gambling becomes a problem when it affects any major area of life.
- Problem gambling is characterized by the inability to resist the impulse to gamble, even when there are negative consequences.
- Loss of control is at the heart of problem gambling.
- The DSM-5 classifies gambling disorder as a behavioral addiction. It is similar to substance-related disorders in many ways.

How do I know if a loved one has a gambling problem?

Problem gambling is known as a hidden addiction. There is no physical test that indicates gambling behavior, but there are some signs to look for:

- Frequently borrowing money to gamble.
- Gambling to escape boredom, pain or loneliness.
- Lying to loved ones about gambling.
- Trying to win back money lost.
- Preoccupation with gambling.

Who is at risk for a gambling problem?

- Problem gambling does not discriminate based on age, gender, religion, social status or education. Anyone can develop a gambling problem.
- Gambling problems may develop with any form of gambling activity.
- Groups at high risk include seniors, adolescents, college students, athletes, veterans, and racial and ethnic minorities, including Asian-Americans.

Impact of Problem Gambling

Why do I need to know about problem gambling?

- Although most people gamble for fun and recreation, some can develop a problem that can lead to severe negative consequences.
- Gambling addiction affects 6-9 million Americans (2-3% of population).
- Anyone who gambles can develop problems if not aware of the risks.
- Gambling is more readily available in the U.S. than at any point in our history; 48 states allow some form of gambling.

How does problem gambling impact me?

- It is estimated that 8-10 people are affected by one individual's gambling problem.
- If you gamble it is important to recognize that what was once fun and recreation can become a serious issue.
- Your awareness may help a loved one seek the necessary help.
- Problem gambling is a public health issue that impacts relationships, families, businesses and communities.

What are the consequences of a gambling addiction?

- If untreated, gambling addiction can lead to serious health issues including suicide, co-occurring disorders, domestic violence, and work issues.
- Children of a person with a gambling problem show higher rates of gambling disorder and higher levels of tobacco, alcohol, drug use and overeating than children of people without gambling problems.
- It can ruin relationships and families.
- It can cause financial devastation.
- It can result in depression and other mental health concerns.

Help and Hope

What is a Helpline and what does it do?

- Most states have established confidential toll-free helplines to help problem gamblers and their families obtain information about counseling, Gamblers Anonymous and other supportive resources.
- A helpline gives a caller an opportunity to share what is on his mind and be heard by someone who cares and can listen in a non-judgemental fashion.
- A helpline provides assistance, information and referrals.

How can a trained counselor help someone with a gambling problem?

- Certified professionals are trained to understand and treat the unique circumstances and experiences of problem gamblers.
- A counselor can help the gambler sort out options when coping with difficulties.
- A professional can offer hope and present evidence that change is possible.
- A counselor's office is a safe place for discussion of uncomfortable thoughts such as suicide.
- A counselor is aware of specialized levels of treatment and offer native therapies.

What is Gamblers Anonymous and why is it beneficial?

- Gamblers Anonymous is a confidential fellowship of men and women from diverse social, economic, racial and religious backgrounds, who meet to share their experiences, strength and hope as it relates to stopping gambling and living a happy and productive life.
- Gamblers Anonymous is based on 12 guiding principles and 12 steps of recovery.

What resources are available?

- Call the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Helpline (1-800-GAMBLE-5)
- Gamblers Anonymous – www.gamblersanonymous.org
- Gam-Anon – www.gamanon.org

How do I have the conversation with a loved one?

Talking with someone you know about a potential gambling problem can be difficult. Remember, you can't stop the person from playing; only he or she can make the decision to stop. Choose the right moment, speak in a caring and understanding tone and hear what he or she is saying. To start the conversation:

- Tell him you care about him and you're concerned about how he is acting.
- Tell her exactly what she has done that concerns you.
- Tell him how his behavior is affecting other people. Be specific.
- Be clear about what you expect from her ("I want you to talk to someone about your gambling.") and what she can expect from you ("I won't cover for you anymore.").
- After you've told him what you've seen and how you feel, allow him to respond. Listen with a non-judgemental attitude.
- Let her know you are willing to help, but don't try to counsel her yourself.
- Give her information, not advice.
- Encourage him to call the toll-free helpline (1-800-GAMBLE-5). For more information about Problem Gambling Awareness Month visit: www.npgam.org

March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month

Why is Problem Gambling Awareness Month Important?

Most adults gamble, and therefore would benefit from programs to prevent gambling addiction. March has become one of the biggest gambling occasions because of the popularity of the NCAA “March Madness” Basketball Tournament. Between six and nine million people meet criteria for gambling problems, yet only a fraction seek help. We believe many who suffer in silence do so because they don’t know they developed a problem, what gambling addiction is, or where to get help.

Have the Conversation about Problem Gambling

Problem Gambling is a public health issue affecting all aspects of physical, social, and mental health. It can affect families, work performance and general well-being. It is important to know the signs of a gambling problem, that treatment is available, and that it works. Use this document to learn about problem gambling, how to recognize the signs of gambling addiction and where to go for help.

What is gambling? What is problem gambling?

- Gambling is defined as risking something of value on an unknown outcome that depends on chance or skill.
- Gambling becomes a problem when it affects any major area of life.
- Problem gambling is characterized by the inability to resist the impulse to gamble, even when there are negative consequences.
- Loss of control is at the heart of problem gambling.
- The DSM-5 classifies gambling disorder as a behavioral addiction. It is similar to substance-related disorders in many ways.

Who is at risk for a gambling problem?

- Problem gambling does not discriminate based on age, gender, religion, social status or education. Anyone can develop a gambling problem.
- Gambling problems may develop with any form of gambling activity.
- Groups at high risk include seniors, adolescents, college students, athletes, veterans, and racial and ethnic minorities, including Asian-Americans.

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 more money than originally planned.

Lie-Bet: 2-Question Screening Tool

These two questions aid in identifying gambling problems. No single question is adequate in capturing the majority of those experiencing gambling problems. Answering “yes” to one or both of these questions is suggestive of a problem deserving further assessment.

1. Have you ever felt the need to bet more and more money?
2. Have you ever had to lie to people important to you about how much you gamble?