

The Gambler's Significant Other

Experiences financial, mental, emotional and spiritual distress
Over 50% aware of spouse's gambling before marriage
Rarely knew the gambling was pathological
Craves security
Attracted to macho, aggressive and dominating mates
Affected family of origin (at least one parent alcoholic, addict, pathological gambler, abusive, emotionally ill or absent)
Unhappy childhood
Married first person who showed any promise of security (childhood sweethearts)
Low self-esteem
Poor self-confidence
Equates love with material things (no gifts=doesn't love me)
Excellent money manager
Shame based
Accepts responsibility for other's shortcomings
Over-responsible
Caretaker
"Parenting"
Self-sacrificing – Martyr
Self-effacing
Depressed
Dysfunctional
Enabler
Fear-based
Feels "insane" – unsure what is true
Stressed
Poor physical health
Self-doubt
Intimidated
Carries the blame
Bitter, nagging and miserable
Sexually deprived
Lives with constant lies
Controlling
Socially isolated
Unaware of mate's emotional illness
Sees mate as fearless
Fears abandonment
Lives in isolation within the marriage

Within the marriage the gambler lives with feelings of inadequacy and fears criticism, rejection and conflict. Greatest fear of all is the fear of intimacy – has never experienced it and pulls away (even lies) when another begins to get close. Thus, feels comfortable again – in isolation.

Because of this dynamic, the rate of suicide attempts among compulsive gamblers is six times the national average – the highest of all those with mental illness.