

## Why do older adults gamble?

- To escape from loneliness/depression
- To be active with friends
- To increase fixed incomes
- To provide entertainment and fun
- To forget the past



## Responsible Gambling Guidelines

- Know the risks involved
- Plan ahead and set a dollar limit
- Set a time limit
- Expect to lose
- Do not gamble on credit
- Create balance in your life
- Avoid chasing money

Many calls to the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling's 24-Hour Helpline come from family members or friends who have discovered their loved one's gambling problem and question how they might help them.

If gambling is becoming a problem for you or someone you care about, help is available.

**We Can Help  
24-hours a day**

**1-800-426-2535**

**Chat [wi-problemgamblers.org](https://www.wi-problemgamblers.org)**

**Text 850-888-4673**



The Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling, Inc. provides resources, public awareness and education on gambling disorders while maintaining strict neutrality on the issue of legalized gambling.



## Older Adult Problem Gambling



**WISCONSIN COUNCIL  
ON PROBLEM GAMBLING**

It is important to recognize the difference between social and problem gambling. Not all gambling is problem gambling. It may be merely an occasional social activity.

However, social gambling may lead to problem gambling.

Gambling becomes a problem when it has a negative effect on one's life and the lives of people close to them.

Gambling may also be used as a coping mechanism or as a way to supplement a limited income.

Older adults are often widowed and frequently suffer losses of lifelong friends, may be geographically separated from loved ones, or may be simply bored or unhappy with retirement. These losses and stressors may exacerbate the gambler's problem.

Family and friends often view unusual gambling activities as a "temporary phase" and they may refuse to accept that a problem exists. Some family members may be reluctant to confront an elder out of respect or fear.

Problem gambling affects all ages, male and female. It is a hidden illness and can be difficult to address, especially with older adults.

## Signs of Problem Gambling:

- Gambling with increased amounts of money
- Lying to family and friends about the extent of gambling
- Hiding gambling losses
- Unsuccessfully attempting to cut back or stop gambling
- Borrowing from family or friends
- Gambling as a means to cope
- Gambling in spite of consequences
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Chasing losses
- Considering gambling to be the only form of recreation and socialization

**If any of these statements sound like someone you know, that person may have a problem with gambling. Help is confidential and it works.**

