WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS MONTH

- **Milwaukee woman embezzled over a million dollars to feed gambling addiction**
- **Former Dells Bookkeeper tells court $350K embezzlement supported gambling addiction**
- **Gambling addiction blamed in Thrivent theft**
- **Falls woman gets 15 months for embezzling to cover gambling debts**

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NEVADA'S FIRST GAMBLING TREATMENT DIVERSION COURT:

A Judge ' s Historical and Personal Perspective on Problem Gambling in the Courtroom By Honorable Cheryl Moss – Find the entire article at https://www.nvbar.org/wp-content/uploads/16-Diversion-Court.pdf

In criminal law, Assembly Bill 102 was enacted into law on October 1, 2009, codified in Nevada Revised Statute Chapter 458A. The statute authorizes the criminal court to determine if an individual is eligible for diversion treatment due to a gambling addiction. The judge must make findings that a person committed a felonious crime, and that the crime was committed in furtherance of their gambling addiction. Further, the judge must determine "whether or not the person should receive treatment under the supervision of a qualified mental health professional." If all requirements under the statute have been met, then the defendant may elect to receive treatment in lieu of incarceration. The defendant's case is then transferred to the Gambling Treatment Diversion Court (GTDC). In addition to treatment and court monitoring, the defendant must also pay restitution. Restitution payments are an integral part of recovery for an individual with a gambling addiction. It would take a thousand pages to write about the consequences of a person suffering from a gambling addiction. These included failed marriages, lying and stealing to feed their addiction, and the total loss of control over their lives. A gambling disorder does not discriminate as it affects all persons from varied socioeconomic status, celebrities, professionals, casino employees, and persons as young as adolescents to retired senior citizens.

I submit that persons who go through GTDC will always be in lifetime recovery just as with any other persons who are in recovery from other addictions. No matter how small or large the amount of the money that was gambled away, one must understand that this often does not register in a gambler's cognitive thinking processes when they are deep into their addiction. Getting them into treatment and recovery benefits the individual and the community.

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?

VA, R. Nora, MD The Wager

Frequently Asked Questions

Problem Gambling

WHAT IS PROBLEM GAMBLING?

Problem gambling or gambling addiction includes all gambling behavior patterns that compromise, disrupt or damage personal, family or vocational pursuits. The symptoms include:

- increasing preoccupation with gambling
- a need to bet more money more frequently
- "chasing" losses (betting even more to try to recoup previous losses)
- restlessness/irritability when trying to stop
- loss of control manifested by continuation of gambling despite mounting, serious, negative consequences
- in extreme cases, problem gambling can result in financial ruin, legal problems, loss of career and family, or even suicide ($7 billion social cost in America alone!)

ISN'T PROBLEM GAMBLING JUST A FINANCIAL PROBLEM?

No. Problem gambling is an emotional problem that has financial consequences. If you pay all the debts of a person affected by problem gambling, the person still has a gambling problem or gambling disorder. The real issue is that they have an uncontrollable obsession with gambling.

WHO IS AT RISK FOR PROBLEM GAMBLING?

Anyone who gambles can develop problems. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the risks and to gamble in a responsible way, if you choose to gamble. When gambling behavior interferes with finances, relationships and the workplace, a serious problem already exists.

HOW CAN A PERSON BE ADDICTED TO SOMETHING THAT ISN'T A SUBSTANCE?

Although no substance is ingested, someone with a gambling problem gets the same effect from gambling as one might get from taking a drug or drinking alcohol. But just as tolerance develops to drugs or alcohol, a person with gambling problems finds that it takes more and more of the gambling experience to achieve the same effect as before. This creates an increased urge for the activity and the person finds that they have less and less ability to resist as the craving grows in intensity and frequency.

HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU HAVE TO LOSE BEFORE GAMBLING BECOMES AN ISSUE?

The amount of money lost or won does not determine when gambling becomes problematic. Gambling becomes an issue when it causes a negative impact on any area of the person's life.

HOW WIDESPREAD IS PROBLEM GAMBLING IN THE U.S.?

2 million U.S. adults (1%) are estimated to meet criteria for severe gambling problems each year. Another 4-6 million (2-3%) would be considered to have mild or moderate gambling problems; that is, they do not meet the full diagnostic criteria for gambling addiction but meet one of more of the criteria and are experiencing problems due to their gambling behavior. Research also indicates that most adults who choose to gamble can do so responsibly.

CAN CHILDREN OR TEENAGERS DEVELOP GAMBLING ISSUES?

A few states allow children under 18 to gamble, and youth also participate in illegal forms of gambling, such as gambling on the internet or betting on sports in states where it is not legal. Thus, it is not surprising that research shows that a vast majority of kids have gambled before their 18th birthdays, and that children may be more likely to develop issues related to gambling than adults. While debate continues, there appears to be several factors influencing this finding. Parental attitudes and behavior play a role. Age of exposure also plays a part – research shows that adults who seek treatment for problem gambling report having started gambling at an early age.

Gambling Disorder Screening Day

About the Event

The National Council on Problem Gambling is partnering with the Cambridge Health Alliance Division on Addiction, which has developed a free Gambling Disorder Screening Day Toolkit.

The Gambling Disorder Screening Day Toolkit as well as current information can be accessed on our website at www.wi-problemgamblers.org under the events tab.

Materials include information on:

- What is Gambling Disorder?
- Why Screen for Gambling?
- About the Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen
- The Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen
- An electronic version of the Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (only users see their results)
- Gambling Resources & Referrals
- Your First Step to Change (2nd Edition), a self-help toolkit

…and more

WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

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.

Services Provided by the WCPG:

- Promote public education and awareness of gambling disorders
- Maintain a toll-free statewide Helpline
- Provide Resources:
  - Gamblers Anonymous Meetings,
  - Treatment Providers,
  - Credit counseling referrals
- Expert training to professional counselors in the treatment of gambling disorders
- Public speaking
- Exhibits
- Social Media presence – Find us on:
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - Instagram
  - LinkedIn

Problem Gambling and Crime and its Costs

Gambling is often perceived as a leisure activity. For some people, however, it has serious negative consequences, notably criminal behavior. The more severe a gambling problem is, the more likely it is to lead to crime. Problem gambling rates range from 0.4% to 7.5% in the general population. About one half of the individuals experiencing problem gambling commit a crime. U.S. studies estimate that justice system costs, in form of arrests and corrections, range from $2,200 to $3000 per individual with problem gambling. One study estimates life-time costs of arrests to be upward of $10,000 for individuals with severe gambling problems. Other societal and personal consequences of problem gambling and crime include financial, employment-related (e.g., job loss), legal and mental and physical illness. Understanding why problem gambling and crime are linked and which groups are most vulnerable can help policy makers allocate resources to prevention and treatment.

Problem Gambling and Incarceration

Involvement in problem gambling and crime may lead to incarceration. With appropriate re-allocation of resources, the correctional and justice system could take a role in prevention and treatment of these behaviors and reduce their costs. Rates of problem gambling in populations experiencing incarceration range anywhere from 5.2% to 38%, a rate 19 times higher compared to the general population. Canadian studies estimate rates of 6.3% to 13% among primarily adult incarcerated males. A cycle of gambling, debt, and criminal activity to alleviate losses may increase recidivism. For example, one study interviewed Canadians experiencing federal incarceration and problem gambling and found that just under half reported they committed crimes so they could gamble. Another study showed that people who experience incarceration and problem gambling are more likely to be involved in future crime than people who experience incarceration and do not have gambling problems. Devoting resources to the screening and treatment of problem gambling in the justice system and correction facilities may help to break this cycle.

Recommendations for Prevention and Treatment of Problem Gambling and Crime

Increase Resources towards:

- Developing stronger connections between problem gambling treatment services and credit counselling services.
- Improving awareness of program-gambling specific treatment and prevention programs that include money management training.
- The development and awareness of programs that target multiple risky behaviors, including substance use and problem gambling.
- Screening for problem gambling and referring to problem gambling treatment services in substance abuse programs. And screening for substance abuse and referring to substance abuse treatment programs in problem gambling programs.
- Screening for problem gambling in correctional facilities and providing options for treatment.
- Development of a Gambling Treatment Court and the evaluation its effectiveness in reducing crime related to gambling.
- Improving awareness and education about problem gambling within the criminal justice system.
- Targeting adolescents in and outside of the juvenile justice system for problem gambling screening, prevention and treatment.

Above excerpts taken from Gambling Research Exchange Ontario:
https://www.greo.ca/Modules/EvidenceCentre/files/Kryszajtys%20and%20Matheson%20(2017)%20Problem%20gambling%20and%20crime%20and%20its%20costs.pdf