



Talking to Your Teens About the Risk of Gambling

SPOKESPERSON: *Available for comment*

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(Green Bay, WI) – With another school year having recently begun, the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling (WCPG) is urging parents to take some time and talk to their children about the risk factors of gambling.

“Parents and others should be aware that teens and young adults are among the highest risk groups for developing gambling problems,” said Rose Blozinski, WCPG Executive Director. “Youth rates of being at risk for problem gambling are 2 to 3 times higher than adult rates,” Blozinski says parents should be talking to their middle school and high school age kids, as well as those in college.

“The independence of campus living may be an inducement to gamble for some college students,” Blozinski says. “But the seeds are often sown at a much earlier age. Awareness is an important part of heading off problems before they get too far. Athletes are at high risk for sports gambling because of their competitive personalities, need for action and excitement, perception of social norms, and sense of entitlement.”

As families prepared for the start of the school year, the WCPG staff also geared up for another year of reaching out to students across Wisconsin. WCPG has an Outreach Speaker who will go in to schools/collages to provide an interactive, age appropriate presentation on the topics such as: understanding odds and randomness, definition of gambling, skill vs. chance, signs of problem gambling, and harm reduction strategies. “Our Outreach Speaker has presented at several schools throughout the state,” Blozinski said. “It’s more important than ever that people of all ages understand that gambling can become a problem and what signs to look for if there are concerns about someone’s gambling.”

Blozinski says there are some key questions to address to determine if gambling has become a problem for a young person or anyone else:

- Is gambling the most exciting activity in your life?
- Are you preoccupied with thoughts of gambling?
- Do you miss school, activities, work or other events due to gambling?
- Do you borrow money to gamble?
- Has your gambling ever caused problems at home?
- Have you stolen from your family, roommate, friends or others to gamble or to pay back a gambling debt?
- Have you sold personal belongings to finance your gambling?
- After losing, do you gamble more to try to win your money back?

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If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-426-2535, Text at 1-850-888-4673 or Live Chat through the WCPG website at www.wi-problemgamblers.org.

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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 1-800-426-2535, 1-850-888-4673 Textline, and Chat available on www.wi-problemgamblers.org, 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-on-problem-gambling.org) website, visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/WisconsinCouncilonProblemGambling or follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/wcpqambling>