

National Problem Gambling Awareness

March 2019

WHAT IS PROBLEM GAMBLING?

Problem gambling is any gambling behavior that disrupts your life. If you are preoccupied with gambling, spending more and more time and money on it, obsessed about "winning back" your losses, or gambling despite serious consequences, you likely have a gambling problem and should seek help.

Do you have a gambling problem?

- ✓ Bragging about gambling, **exaggerating wins, minimizing losses?**
- ✓ **Spending most of your time gambling, thinking about or planning to gamble?**
- ✓ **Restless and irritable when not gambling?**
- ✓ **Borrowing money for gambling?**
- ✓ **Hiding the time spent gambling or hiding bills and unpaid debts?**
- ✓ **Lying** about how much time or money you have spent or lost gambling?
- ✓ **Frequent unexplained absences from work or school?**

If you answer "yes" to even 2 or 3 of the above questions, you may be at risk for a gambling problem.

The Ohio Lottery offers these suggestions for responsible gambling:

- ❖ **NEVER gamble with borrowed money.**
- ❖ **Work out your weekly or monthly recreation spending budget and do not go over it.**
- ❖ **Only spend what you can afford to lose.**

Does my loved one have a gambling problem?

- ✓ **Increasingly defensive about his or her gambling.** The more a problem gambler is in the hole, the more they need to defend gambling as a way to get money. Your loved one may get secretive, defensive or even blame you for the need to gamble, telling you that it is all to you and you need to trust in the "big win someday."
- ✓ **Suddenly become secretive over money and finances.** Your loved one might show a new desire to control household finances, or there might increasingly be a lack of money despite the same income and expenses. Savings and assets might mysteriously dwindle, or there may be unexplained loans or cash advances.
- ✓ **Become increasingly desperate for money to fund the gambling.** Credit card bills may increase, or your loved one may ask friends and family for money. Jewelry or other items easily pawned for money may mysteriously disappear.

There is help available for problem gambling. Different types of therapy exist but most aim to improve self-control, identify ways to deal with risky situations, provide an outlet to address guilt/shame and teach ways to deal with gambling urges and cravings. Family therapy is helpful by providing support and education and eliminating enabling behaviors.

Isn't problem gambling really the result of irresponsible or weak-willed people?

No, many people who develop problems have been seen as responsible and strong by those who care about them.

If you, or someone you know has a gambling problem, help is available by calling:

- **The Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-589-9966**
- **Toledo Gamblers Anonymous at 419-327-9514**
- **National Problem Gambling Hotline at 1-800-522-4700**

To speak with a counselor confidentially, call:

StressCare Behavioral Health EAP
419-531-3500