



Problem Gambling

City of Milwaukee Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
Gambling Awareness Week: March 3-9, 2013

SINGS OF TROUBLE

- Always thinking about gambling
- Secretive about gambling
- Spending work or family time gambling
- Feeling bad after you gamble, but not quitting
- Gambling with money you need for other things

MYTHS AND FACTS

- **MYTH:** You have to gamble every day to be a problem gambler.
FACT: A problem gambler may gamble frequently or infrequently. Gambling is a problem if it causes problems.
- **MYTH:** Problem gambling is not really a problem if the gambler can afford it.
FACT: Too much time spent on gambling can lead to relationship breakdown and loss of important friendships.
- **MYTH:** Partners of problem gamblers often drive problem gamblers to gamble.
FACT: Rationalizing and blaming others is one way to avoid taking responsibility.
- **MYTH:** If a problem gambler builds up a debt, you should help them take care of it.
FACT: Bailing the gambler out of debt may actually make matters worse.



When is gambling a problem?

Betting on sports, playing cards, slot machines or simply buying lottery tickets becomes problematic when it gets in the way of family, financial and/or work responsibilities. Typically, there is an increase need to gamble more frequently and some anxiety or restlessness when attempting to cut back or stop.

Why do people gamble?

There is no one reason why people gamble but some are:

- * The excitement and adrenaline rush
- * To overcome isolation and be more social
- * To cope with unpleasant feelings or situations
- * As a way to de-stress
- * An attempt to solve money problems

Anyone who gambles has the potential to encounter serious problems if they are not aware of the risks.

How do I deal with gambling urges?

- * *Reach out for support*
Call a trusted family member, meet a friend for coffee, or go to a Gamblers Anonymous meeting.
- * *Do something else*
Distract yourself with another (healthy) activity, such as cleaning your house, going to the gym, or watching a movie.
- * *Postpone gambling*
Tell yourself that you'll wait five minutes, fifteen minutes, or an hour. The urge to gamble will pass or become weak enough to resist.
- * *Give yourself a reality check*
Think about how you'll feel after all your money is gone and disappointing yourself and family.

Compulsive gambling is often referred to as the "hidden addiction" because its effects are not easily seen like in alcohol or substance use. However, when faced with the consequences of gambling, a gambler can easily tumble into deep despair, which places them at a very high risk for suicide. Therefore, early intervention and treatment is critical.

For further information, contact the EAP Coordinator at: 414-286-3145.

24 HOUR HELPLINE
♦ **1-800-426-2535**

