

Problem Gambling Impacts Individual and Families

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INCREASING AWARENESS

What is Gambling?

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Webster says:

To stake or risk money on anything of value on the outcome of something involving chance

Any matter of thing involving risk

Five Types of Gamblers

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- Social Gambler
- Problem Gambler
- Pathological (Compulsive) Gambler
- Organized Crime Gambler
- Professional Gambler

What might problem/ pathological gambling really look like?

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MOVIE: BET THE HOUSE

[HTTP://VIMEO.COM/63661594](http://vimeo.com/63661594)

Gambling in the US

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- Approximately 85% of U.S. adults have gambled at least once in their lives; 60% in the past year.
- 2 million (1%) of U.S. adults are estimated to meet criteria for pathological gambling in a given year.
- Another 4-6 million (2-3%) would be considered problem gamblers.

Source: National Council on Problem Gambling , Retrieved from
<http://www.ncpgambling.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3314#widespread>

Problem Gambling and Special Populations

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- Adolescents
- College Students
- Senior Citizens

Adolescents

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Adolescents are 2-4x more likely to develop a problem with gambling than adults (Gupta and Derevensky, 2000)



Why is gambling a problem for youth?

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- Societal influences have normalized gambling
- Parents, family members, schools, and the community are not aware of the risks of youth gambling
- The media is bombarding youth with pro-gambling messages
- Inadvertent promotion of gambling involvement by schools who host casino nights, 50/50 raffles and by parents who put scratch-offs in as stocking stuffers or encourage family poker nights, etc.

Adolescent Prevalence

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- Approximately 4%-8% of kids between 12 and 17 years of age meet criteria for a gambling problem, and another 10%-15% are at risk of developing a problem
- Research also shows that a majority of kids have gambled before their 18th birthday.
- Adolescent involvement in gambling is believed to be greater than their use of tobacco, hard liquor, and marijuana.

Sources: Youth Gambling, NPGAW website, 2007 & National Council on Problem Gambling

What makes adolescents more at-risk?

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- Impulsivity
- Developmental nature
- Susceptibility to peer influence
- Emerging egos
- The attraction of winning
- Their belief that nothing negative can happen to them
- Their lack of understanding that there can be a downside to gambling

Adolescent Brain Development

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- Adolescence is a period of profound brain maturation.
- It was once believed that brain development was complete during childhood.
- The maturation process is not complete until about age 25.

Does normal brain development contribute to adolescent susceptibility to gambling?

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INDIRECT SUPPORT:

1. Greater risk taking (particularly in groups)
2. Greater propensity toward low effort-high excitement activities
3. Lower capacity for good judgment and weighing consequences
4. Greater sensitivity to novel stimuli

Forms of Gambling Associated w/ Problem Gambling in NYS Youth

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- Playing Cards for Money
- Playing Lottery or Scratch Off Games
- Playing Pool, Basketball or other games of skill for Money
- Betting on Sports for Money
- Playing Dice for Money

Reports show students that reported gambling were:

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- Over 50% more likely to drink alcohol
- More than twice as likely to binge drink
- More than three times as likely to use marijuana
- Three times as likely to use other illegal drugs
- Almost three times as likely to get in trouble with the police
- Almost three times as likely to steal or shoplift

(New York Council on Problem Gambling, Gambling and Problem Gambling Among Adolescents in New York, 1998)

College Age Youth

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- Similar statistics and risk involved as for adolescents
- Less supervision and more access to gambling activities (i.e. poker tournaments, online gambling)
- School and Greek sponsorship of Texas Hold'em/ Casino Nights, excursions to casinos, etc.

Sports Illustrated 2005

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- “In college you live wired...The number of hands you can play, the amount of thinking and studying you can do about those hands-**EVERYTHING’S ACCELERATED**”-
Strausser
- Students are at the **HIGHEST-RISK AGE**...They think they’re smarter than anyone else-**invulnerable.**”-
Derevensky

Aging Adults and Problem Gambling

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- Affected by environmental factors different from those experienced by youth.
- Due to stage of life and emotional factors are often primed to develop a problem.
- Face similar and different consequences than other populations.

Factors Affecting Senior Gambling

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- Senior centers and churches regularly sponsor trips to casinos, bingo nights, etc.
- Many seniors have more disposable income or
- Many seniors have limited financial resources and are looking for a big win to compensate
- Many seniors are retired and have lots of time on their hands and/ or are looking for social interaction
- Perception is that they deserve to have some fun now
- Gambling can be a way to experience that “fun” as well as foster a sense of independence
- Gambling can be a form of emotional escape

Problem Gambling Impacts

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Impact on Quality of Life

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- Mood swings
- Problem with loved ones
- Eating less or willingness to go without food, medications, household supplies, etc. to have money to gamble
- Cashing in insurance policies and/or spending retirement funds, college savings, etc.

Effects on the Family

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- Lack of trust
- Financial difficulties
- Anticipation of loved one's mood
- Concern over physical well-being of loved one
- Frustration with PG's inability to stop and related consequences
- Anxiety, Depression

The Impact of Gambling on Communities

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- 20% of addicted gamblers have filed for bankruptcy.
- 20% of the homeless are gambling addicts
- 60% of those addicted to gambling will commit crimes
- Up to 50% of spouses of addicted gamblers are abused.

April 14, 2008 **Casino Watch Policy Briefs by Joseph Day,**
[Expanded Gambling: Casinos' impact on a new community](#)

The Impact of Gambling on Communities

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- When casinos opened in South Dakota child abuse rose by 42%.
- 20% of gambling addicts commit or attempt suicide.
- The cost of problem and pathological gambling does not only affect individuals and their families. Society also bears the brunt of gambling, with the overall cost to taxpayers estimated at \$56,000 for each problem gambler, including cost of treatment, health-related costs, absenteeism at work and time spent in courts

Warning Signs

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- Spending more time on gambling activities
- Continues to gamble despite consequences
- Preoccupied with gambling
- Grades dropping/poor work performance
- Stealing money to gamble
- Time spent gamble interrupts previous engaged activities

What Can You Do to Help Prevent Adolescent Problem Gambling?

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- Incorporate gambling lessons in already existing ATOD prevention programs.
- Analyze gifts, prizes and events to ensure they do not promote a pro-gambling message.
- Help parents and schools create policies about gambling.
- Raise awareness that gambling can be problematic.
- Challenge youth misconceptions about gambling and the odds.
- Educate youth about the potential dangers.
- Inform youth about how to get help.

If You or Someone You Know has a Problem with Gambling...

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KNOW
— THE —
ODDS.ORG

Help is Available

National Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug
Dependencies/Putnam

845-225-4646

<http://putnamncadd.org/html/gambling.html>

New York Council on Problem Gambling

518-867-4084

www.nyproblemgambling.org

NYS Office of Alcoholism and
Substance Abuse Services

www.oasas.ny.gov/gambling

1-877-8-HOPENY

Gambler's Anonymous

213-386-8789

www.gamblersanonymous.org

Questions

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