

RESOURCES FOR PROBLEM GAMBLERS

Problem gambling is treated as an impulse disorder, and there are resources available for help. Individual counseling with a trained gambling counselor is a one-on-one resource.

There are internet sites such as:

- **www.gamblersanonymous.org.**
Official Gamblers Anonymous Web Site
- **www.gam-anon.org.**
For spouse, family, or close friends of the problem gambler
- **www.ncpgambling.org.**
National Council on Problem Gambling can assist in locating help in specific areas.

Or you may call these organizations:

- **Problem Gambling Help Line.**
Call 1-800-522-4700
- **Gamblers Anonymous.**
A 12-Step Program of Recovery. Local phone books
- **Gam-Anon.**
A support for spouses and family of problem gamblers. Local phone books.

If one suspects that a loved one has a gambling problem or gambles excessively in a repeated fashion, they should seek competent help and counsel immediately for the purpose of evaluating the situation. Initiating a recovery program may cause greater conflict and suffering initially, but in the long run this is far less painful than helping a gambler continue to gamble.

There are 10 million problem gamblers in the U.S. today

GAMBLING ADDICTION DOES NOT HAVE TO BE HOPELESS... THERE IS HELP, HOPE, AND LIFE

This brochure is designed to help you begin to understand gambling addiction in our culture. The person who is addicted to gambling needs your help. Addiction destroys lives. But addiction is not a hopeless disease. Education, intervention, treatment, Gamblers Anonymous and other resources offer hope, help, and health to the addict. Recovery Ministries of the Episcopal Church, Inc. is committed to helping the addicted and the people who love them.

RECOVERY MINISTRIES: WHAT?

Recovery Ministries of the Episcopal Church is a national membership organization with a mission to those who, through addiction, have lost their health and freedom. Our ministry seeks to:

- Help the addicted, and those who love them, connect with spiritual resources and find lasting recovery,
- Witness to Christ's unfailing mercy by welcoming unchurched members of Alcoholics Anonymous and other twelve-step programs into the Episcopal faith community,
- Raise the awareness of Bishops, other clergy and leaders about the disease of addiction and the redemption and grace found in recovery,
- Strengthen recovering Episcopalians in the work of their recovery and help proclaim the Gospel in the world and carry their recovery into the Church.

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Problem Gambling

DEFINITION
SIGNS
PHASES
TYPES
RESOURCES FOR HELP

COMPILED BY
ANN HOMER COOK, PH.D., C.E.A.P.
Nationally Certified Gambling Addiction Counselor

Recovery Ministries of the
Episcopal Church, Inc.



Toll Free 866-306-1542

info@episcopalrecovery.org

www.episcopalrecovery.org

And they cast lots to divide his clothing
Luke 23:34-NRSV

THE HISTORY OF GAMBLING

Gambling has been around since the beginning of time. Dice have been found in the burial tombs of ancient Chinese, and there was gaming for Jesus' robes at the Crucifixion. Today gambling (both legal and illegal such as bookmaking) has become an integral part of American society. Increasingly our society condones many forms of legal gambling: casinos, state lotteries, internet gaming and even church bingo.

DEFINITION OF A PROBLEM GAMBLER

A problem gambler is anyone whose gambling is causing psychological, financial, emotional, marital, legal, or other difficulties for themselves or the people around them.

Problem gambling may be an isolated case of overspending, or a pattern of excessive gambling when upset, or it may be an ongoing problem with continual losses and mounting debts. At the extreme end of this range is pathological gambling, where people are unable to control their gambling much as those addicted to alcohol are unable to control their drinking. Over 35% of problem gamblers have a history of chemical dependency.

Clinical evidence suggests problem gambling is rapidly increasing among seniors and may even occur at higher rates there than with the general population. There are factors which put the elderly at higher risk: isolation, reduced financial reserves, increased free time, and life changes. Some cognitive impairment may include a reduction in their ability to reason clearly and control impulses.

SIGNS OF A GAMBLING PROBLEM

- Work performance deteriorates. The person is preoccupied, has trouble concentrating, family time becomes non-existent.
- They complain of mounting debts, and request money as gifts.
- Excessive use of telephone.
- Credit card or loan bills are mailed to work rather than at home.
- They frequently borrow money from family and friends and argue about money owed them.
- They increasingly spend more time and money on gambling activities.
- They increasingly have more unaccounted absences at work.

Financial Problems are the Symptom– Not the Cause

PHASES OF THE PROBLEM GAMBLER

The problem gambler begins in a **Winning Phase** where wins are celebrated and shared with others. Time and money spent are increased. This may last different lengths of time for different gamblers. After this phase comes the **Losing Phase** which is where the problem gambler begins to lose but continues to gamble. Instead of stopping the gambling, the gambler increases the gambling in hopes of winning back what has been lost or *chasing* the lost money. Last is the **Desperation Phase** where major life problems develop such as divorce, financial bankruptcy, depression, theft, legal issues and risk of suicide.

TYPES OF PROBLEM GAMBLERS

The **Action Gambler** is one addicted to the “high” of gambling, what gamblers call “the fever”, and games which may require some skill such as poker, craps, and other table games. The **Escape Gambler** is one who can “zone out” at a slot machine. Both types of problem gamblers often display low problem-solving skills as well as and low self esteem. However, there is a grandiosity in the gambler also.