

Did You Know?

March 2020

Problem Gambling: Nothing can compare to the rush of winning a bet or having a game of chance work out in your favor. Finding yourself in the winner's circle creates a sense of pleasure that, for some, can be problematic. Issues can arise when simply winning isn't enough and continued compulsions to gamble lead to negative, sometimes dangerous consequences. March is National Gambling Awareness month, and according to the North American Foundation for Gambling Awareness, 2.9 percent of Americans suffer from a gambling addiction.

What You Should Know:

- One obstacle those experiencing a gambling disorder may face is that their addiction isn't as easy to see when compared to other use disorders. Signs and symptoms can sometimes be much harder to identify, and those suffering can more easily find excuses to continue their behavior. Often society views this type of addiction as less dangerous and easily managed.
- The National Institutes of Health identifies signs and symptoms of problem gambling to include:
 - Always thinking about gambling
 - Lying about gambling
 - Spending work or family time gambling
 - Feeling bad after you gamble, but not quitting
 - Gambling with money you need for other things
- Just as with other use disorders, those suffering from problem gambling feel a sense of euphoria or "high" when participating in gambling behavior. This is because there is a chemical change in the brain similar to changes we see with drug related addictions.
- As with other addictions, problem gamblers can develop a tolerance. For example, a substance abuser may need to increase the amount of a drug they are using to feel the same effects. In turn, a gambler may need to increase the risks they are taking in order to feel as satisfied with their winnings.

What You Can Do:

- **Set Boundaries:** If you or someone you know plans on gambling or betting, set restrictions. Before setting limits, consider safety, monetary funds, and allotted time for the behavior. Basically, make a plan to ensure that any risk involved is not a dangerous one. If there is difficulty maintaining such guidelines, consider talking with a counselor or getting an assessment to identify any underlying issue that could benefit from treatment.
- **Know Who To Turn To:** Regardless of the use disorder or addiction, a person suffering is never alone. Confide in a friend, family member, co-worker, doctor, or anyone that will listen. If your first confidant is unable to help, keep reaching out and tell someone else. There is always hope and help available. If in need of any linkages to outside resources, please contact **ECCPASA: (716)831-2289**. For gambling related needs, you can seek help from the **Western NY Problem Gambling Resource Center by contacting them via phone at: (716)833-4274**. Although, if you are ever in a state of emergency be sure to contact Crisis Services or 911.



Information obtained from: <https://nafgah.org/>; www.nih.gov; <https://nyproblemgamblinghelp.org/western/>