



## As gaming increases, so do gambling disorders

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For some just the sound of getting change will trigger a thought to gamble. An activity that is fun and pleasurable for most can be devastating for others.

Just how many families have a gut wrenching feeling at the sound of any gambling related activity, be it Bingo, sports or ‘let’s go to the boat’?

Statistics about gambling show:

- From 1974-2008: The amount of money spent on legal gambling increased 2300%, from three billion to 90 billion.
- From 1975-1999: U.S. adults who gamble increased from 68% to 86%.
- Americans spend more money on gambling than on movies, recorded music, theme parks, spectator sports and video games combined. (American Gambling Association, June 2009)

There are four types of gamblers:

1. Social Gamblers – individuals who gamble occasionally, do it for fun and stick to limits.
2. Serious Social Gamblers – individuals who gamble regularly, have it as a hobby, and do not spend more than they can afford.
3. Professional Gamblers – individuals who do it as a way of earning a living (and are very rare).
4. Problem and Pathological Gamblers – individuals whose gambling results in major life problems.

A National Prevalence Study in 1999 stated approximately 5.5 million Americans were either Pathological or Problem Gamblers and an additional 15 million were ‘at risk’. Last year Indiana identified 1 – 2% of Indiana’s adult population as being Problem or Pathological Gamblers.

There are two of problem and pathological gamblers: the action gambler and the escape gambler. The action gambler is easily identifiable as the ‘high roller’. The escape gambler is a little more subtle. This individual tends to be one who is a new divorcee or lonely housewife or a member of the ever growing retired population who is bored, lonely and looking for a way to occupy their time.

The largest growth was seen in those over 65 years of age which doubled this past year.

Many gamblers present with other symptoms which can include depression, anxiety, substance abuse or other disorders.

According to the National Organization for Research at the University of Chicago, a study identified that gamblers in the past year had reported these problems: poorer health, more mental health treatment, increased depression, more manic symptoms, more alcohol/drug dependence, more family arguments and higher divorce rate, more arrests, more filed bankruptcies and a higher job loss and unemployment.

Do you or someone you love identify with any of the following symptoms?

- Preoccupation - Reliving past experiences/thinking of ways to get money to gamble.
- Tolerance - Needing to spend more to achieve the same level of excitement.
- Withdrawal - Becoming restless or irritable when trying to stop gambling.
- Escape - Using gambling to decrease anxiety or depressed mood.
- Chasing - Returning the next day to

win back what you lost.

- Lying - Concealing the extent of your gambling).
- Loss of Control - Spending more time or money than you intended.
- Illegal Acts - Committing forgery, fraud, theft, to fund your gambling.
- Risked Significant Relationship - jeopardized family, job, or spouse because of gambling.
- Bailout - Relying on others to provide money due to your gambling losses.

If you said yes to 1 – 2 you are ‘at risk’; 3 – 4 “Problem Gambler”; 5 or more “Pathological Gambler.”

For help or more information on gambling addiction visit

[www.ncpgambling.org](http://www.ncpgambling.org).

Funds are available for treatment regardless of income for Indiana residents and/or their families through Access To Recovery.

To learn more about eligibility and services provide by Access to Recovery visit <http://www.in.gov/fssa/dmha/6942.htm>.

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This column was written by Vikki Adams, Licensed Clinical Social Worker for Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare, Inc. Contact the organization at 812.436.4221 or [comments@southwestern.org](mailto:comments@southwestern.org).