



A Program of Wheeler Clinic

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www.ctclearinghouse.org



If You Choose to Gamble: Things to Keep in Mind

A Library and Resource Center on Alcohol, Tobacco, Other Drugs, Mental Health and Wellness

This fact sheet offers information and guidelines to help you avoid problems should you choose to gamble. Most people are able to gamble safely; however, about 6 percent of adults are considered problem gamblers, and a larger number are considered to be “at-risk.”

To Increase Your Chances of Avoiding Problems, Remember These Two Important Pieces of Information:

- The decision to gamble is a personal choice, similar to the decision to smoke, drink, or engage in any potentially risky behavior. Just as with alcohol and tobacco, gambling is not essential to having a good time.
- Gambling is not a risk-free activity. In fact, it’s the combination of risk and potential wins that makes it pleasurable. The “risk” of gambling is not just the possibility of losing something of value; it is also the potential for developing a habit, or an addiction, that may have severe consequences to finances, family life, job, self-esteem, mental health, and other aspects of life.

Setting Personal Guidelines

- Before you gamble, determine how much you plan to spend. Remember: Gambling is entertainment. Like all forms of commercial entertainment, it has a cost that you should be financially and emotionally prepared to pay.
- Know the odds and how the game works so that you don’t fall prey to false hopes and expectations.
- Keep your superstitions in check. They won’t influence the outcome in your favor.
- Avoid borrowing money to gamble.
- There are situations during which gambling may be especially risky:
 - When feeling lonely, angry, depressed, or under stress
 - When coping with the death or loss of a loved one
 - When trying to solve any personal or family problems
 - When trying to impress others
 - When using alcohol or any other drug
- There are times when gambling should be avoided:
 - When the gambling activity is illegal
 - When the gambling interferes with one’s school, work, or family responsibilities
 - When in recovery from problem gambling
 - When in recovery from another addiction
 - When gambling is prohibited by work or school policy
 - When trying to make up for a gambling loss

Adapted from *Gambling: Choices and Guidelines* by Roger Svendsen and Tom Griffin, Minnesota Department of Public Health

(continued)

The Four Question Assessment

If you are concerned about your gambling, or the gambling of someone you care about, here are four questions to aid in identifying gambling problems:

1. Have you ever borrowed money in order to gamble or cover lost money?
2. Have you ever thought you might have a gambling problem or been told that you might?
3. Have you ever been untruthful about the extent of your gambling or hidden it from others?
4. Have you ever tried to stop or cut back on how much or how often you gamble?

Answering “yes” to one or more of these questions is cause for concern.

**What to do if you are concerned about your gambling
or the gambling of someone you care about:**



Call the toll-free, 24-hour, confidential Helpline:

800-346-6238

Call Problem Gambling Services Bettor Choice Treatment Program:

860-344-2244

You will be directed to one of 15 Bettor Choice Treatment Program sites throughout the state of Connecticut. Remember: There is hope and help. Together we can make a difference in the lives of those affected by problem gambling.

*“Our purpose is to reduce the impact of problem gambling
on individuals, families, and communities
by developing community capacity
to provide treatment, intervention and prevention services.”*

Connecticut State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Problem Gambling Services

Information provided by:
Problem Gambling Services
Connecticut State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
www.gamblingrecovery.org
Phone: 860-344-2244

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