## COLLEGE STUDENTS AT RISK

Gambling in Oregon has changed dramatically over the past several years. It is more accessible, more accepted, and more glamorized than ever before.

Reality TV shows portray gambling as stylish, as an easy way to get rich, and as a harmless activity for anyone with a sense of excitement.

The truth is, gambling is a fun and entertaining activity for most college students that play for social or recreational reasons. However, it can cause problems and for some those problems are harsh.

About 1 in every 20 college students will develop a gambling problem. They usually start out gambling for fun and with friends. Then they get sucked in by either believing they can make money gambling or by gambling as a means to cope with loneliness, stress or depression.

Every semester students drop-out because of their gambling problem. They find themselves in a financial mess, they are stressed-out, they miss class, and they often feel angry, shameful, and depressed.

Fortunately, many college problem gamblers do get past their gambling problem and back on track. It often takes a friend's intervention or their own reality check. When that is not enough, skilled help can be found at the campus counseling center and/or health center. Oregon also has a statewide toll-free gambling help line (1-877-2-STOP-NOW). Counselors can offer assistance and help people make changes.

## IS IT JUST A GAME?

For most college students, gambling is a social or recreational activity. It is fun and entertaining. It does not cause problems.

For college students who choose to gamble recreationally, the following tips will help insure that gambling does not lead to problems:

- Don't use your credit card to gamble
- Create balance in your life
- Don't increase your bets to recoup lost money
- Don't gamble as a way to cope with stress, loneliness, or depression
- Become educated about problem gambling

## RISKS?

Gambling can be risky for those who spend a lot of time gambling and do not stay involved in other activities.

The following are some signs of a possible gambling problem:

- Gambling more often
- Gambling for more money
- Gambling for longer periods of time
- Gambling in spite of negative consequences, such as large losses or poor grades
- Gambling as a means to cope

## RECOGNIZING GAMBLING PROBLEMS AMONG YOUR FRIENDS

- Unexplained absences/sudden drop in grades
- Change of personality/visible changes in behavior
- Possession of a large amount of money; brags about winnings
- An unusual interest in sports scores or stats
- An intense interest in gambling conversations
- Unexplained financial problems or clues about financial problems (borrowing money)

## QUOTES:

"Gambling among students on and off campus are at record levels because of the popularity of Texas Hold'em poker and sports betting on and off the Internet."
– **Sol Boxenbaum, Responsible Gambling Expert**

"The scholarship I received for school is gone from gambling." – **20-year-old college student Help Line caller**

"I'm concerned about my roommate. She pawned her personal belongings for money to gamble."
– **College student Help Line caller**

"A guy in my fraternity, who gambled a lot, took this semester off to work full-time and pay off his debt."
– **College student at gambling lecture**

## HOW YOU CAN HELP FRIENDS

- Tell the person what he or she has done that has raised your concern and how you feel
- Tell the person what you'd like to see him or her do including talking to another trusted person and/or getting professional help
- Tell the person what you are willing to do. This may include: being available to talk again or assisting in finding help
- Do not lend money or in any way support continued gambling as a solution

## GETTING HELP

Counselors at the help line or on campus can offer assistance and help people make changes.

Additional treatment options include telephone counseling, in-person individual counseling, and group counseling. Call the confidential, 24-hour phone number below for information or help:

1-877-2-STOP-NOW (1-877-278-6766)

Department of Human Services
Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services:
www.dhs.state.or.us/addiction

Oregon Lottery Problem Gambling:
www.oregonlotteryhelp.com

Gambler's Anonymous:
www.gamblersanonymous.org/mtgdirOR.html

Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation:
www.gamblingaddiction.org

Responsible Gambling:
www.responsiblegambling.org/index.cfms

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# Gambling Too Much? Get Back In Control.