

Problem Gambling Services

Oregon has a long history of addressing the risks associated with gambling through research, prevention and education, guidelines for a healthier relationship with gambling, treatment, strong partnerships and collaborations.

In Oregon, it is estimated 2.6 percent of the adult population experience moderate or serious problems with gambling. It is estimated that 88,000 Oregon adults and adolescents meet the clinical diagnosis for gambling disorder, with another 180,000 (5.4 percent) at risk of developing a problem with gambling. For each person with a serious problem, many others are affected (e.g., spouse, children).

One percent of Oregon Lottery revenues fund problem gambling services. The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Problem Gambling Services (PGS) administers the funds that provide approximately \$7.5 million annually for prevention and treatment programs and services. Though Oregon is fortunate to receive funding for these important services the funding level results in both sides of the problem gambling prevention and treatment professionals wearing multiple hats providing other services other than problem gambling within their communities.

Problem Gambling Prevention – Overview

Problem gambling prevention is available in almost every county in Oregon. Problem gambling community-based prevention and education programs are directed at avoiding or reducing the emotional, physical, social, legal and financial consequences of problem gambling for the individual, family and community across the lifespan. Community-based prevention services, also known as population-based prevention, include any kind of planned strategy or group of strategies (including programs, policies, and laws) designed to delay age of first engagement in gambling behaviors, prevent gambling related harms, and promote health and wellness.

Problem gambling prevention efforts can stand alone or be infused into alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention systems, or other prevention efforts such as suicide prevention that increases awareness that problem gambling is a serious public health concern.

Problem gambling and gambling disorders have life-long effects that include high cost to individuals, families, healthcare systems, and communities. There are clear windows of opportunity to prevent gambling disorder and gambling related harms before they occur.

Problem Gambling Treatment – Overview

Problem gambling treatment includes individual, group, and family therapy as well as peer services in outpatient and residential settings. All Oregonians can access services virtually through telehealth or in-person in almost every county. Services are no-cost for those who gamble and their important others for up to a year. Concerned others can receive services independently of their person who gambles, as they may be needing and ready for support before the person gambling is ready for help.

Clients access treatment through their local agency, through the statewide problem gambling helpline (1-877-MY-LIMIT / 1-844-TU-VALES), or through the Oregon Problem Gambling Resource website (www.opgr.org) which provides information on warning signs of problem gambling, a list of Gamblers Anonymous 12-step meetings by area, and contact information for all treatment programs across the state. A no-cost, 60-day residential option is available at Bridgeway Santiam House in Salem for those who need a higher level of care. Culturally specific services are available statewide for Latine, Asian, Black, Native American, and LGBTQIA2S+ populations.

Asking for help and entering treatment services can be daunting and scary, so programs are encouraged to provide an appointment with a problem gambling trained counselor within 5 days of client contact. Minimal paperwork is required in the first 30 days as clients may be in crisis or need more information about services before deciding whether to enroll in treatment.

