

## Teens and Problem Gambling

### What's the big deal?... teens and problem gambling

Playing cards or video games for money, buying raffle tickets, betting on who's going to win the next game of pool, or wagering a favorite item on the outcome of a sports event – it's all gambling and most of today's teens have engaged in gambling behaviors.

#### What is gambling?

Gambling is — the act of risking money or something else of value on an activity with an uncertain outcome.

For most, it's just for fun. It's a way of making the game more challenging, more exciting. But for some, gambling becomes a serious problem.

#### What is problem gambling?

Problem gambling is any gambling behavior that has a harmful effect on your life, or the lives of people close to you – parents, brothers and sisters, your friends.

If your gambling is causing you to fall behind on your schoolwork, have arguments with family or friends, or worry about money you have lost, it is considered to be “problem gambling.”

#### What are the signs of problem gambling?

People don't usually start out with a problem with gambling. Somewhere along the way, though, the casual bets stop being —just for fun and begin causing problems.

#### Who is at risk for developing a problem with gambling?

Anyone who gambles can develop a gambling problem. If you begin at a young age and if gambling is a frequent activity in your home or among your friends, you are at greater risk for developing a problem. You may not experience any problems at first, but problems may develop later on.

#### How would you know if your betting was becoming a problem?

It may be a problem if you:

- Spend more time or money gambling than you intend;
- Go back another day to try to win back your losses;
- Feel bad about the way you gamble or about what happens when you gamble;
- Tell others you've been winning money from betting when you really haven't;
- Want to stop betting money, or gambling, but don't think you can;
- Hide signs of betting or gambling from your parents, friends or others;
- Are being criticized for your gambling or told you have a gambling problem;
- Argue about money and gambling
- Skip school or work to gamble;
- Borrow gambling money from someone and don't pay them back.

#### Are there other risky behaviors linked with gambling?

Teens who gamble are more likely to....

- Have depression & anxiety issues
- Have damaged relationships
- Drink & use illegal drugs
- Get into fights or criminal activity
- Have low self-esteem
- Think about suicide

## Questions to ask?

If you answer “yes” to any of the questions below you may be developing a gambling problem. Talk to your parents, a school counselor or someone you can trust.

1. Do you often think about gambling when you are at school or with friends?
2. Are you spending more on gambling now than you were when you first started?
3. When you try to cut back on how often you gamble do you become angry, stressed, or easily irritated?
4. When you lose money gambling, do you try to win it back?
5. When you have problem with your friends, family or school do you gamble to temporarily forget the problem?
6. Do you lie to your family and friends about how often you gamble or how much you have won or lost?
7. Do you spend money on gambling that is intended for other things like lunch, clothing, or transportation?
8. Have you stolen money from friends or family members and used it to gamble?
9. Do you get into trouble with your parents or other family members because of your gambling?
10. Do you sometimes miss school or work because you would rather gamble?

## Where can you go for help?

If you are worried that you or someone you know may have problems related to gambling, call the Oregon Gambling Helpline at **877-MYLIMIT** or go to **OPGR.org** or contact your counseling office. You will be able to talk to someone who can answer your questions and help you decide if you need further counseling.



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