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Where Can I Get Support?

Although you may feel powerless to quit gambling, there are resources that can help you regain control of your life.

Gamblers Anonymous

To locate a meeting near you, visit:
www.gamblersanonymous.org

GAM-ANON

GAM-ANON provides support specifically to family members of problem gamblers.
718-352-1671 | gamanonoffice@gam-anon.org

National Council on Problem Gambling

1-800-GAMBLER (426-2537)

www.1800gamblerchat.org

800GAM

When faced with the realities of gambling addiction, problem gamblers may suffer from feelings of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts.

If you or someone you love is struggling, call the **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** at: **988**

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

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Treatment

While some problem gamblers can stop on their own, many people need help to address their addiction. Talk to your doctor or a mental health professional to learn about treatment options that can be tailored specifically for you.

- **Inpatient treatment and rehab programs:** These facilities help those with severe gambling addiction who need round-the-clock support.
- **Treatment for underlying conditions:** Some problem gamblers also struggle with substance abuse or mental health issues (anxiety, OCD, ADHD, etc.) and this contributes to their compulsive gambling. Treating these factors with therapy, medication, or lifestyle changes can get you a step closer to recovery.
- **Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT):** CBT aims to help problem gamblers change their thoughts and behaviors about gambling. It can also teach you how to fight cravings and deal with real-life issues caused by problem gambling.
- **Family and marriage therapy or credit/career counseling:** These help problem gamblers work through the unique issues created by their addiction and help to repair damage that their addiction has caused in their relationships, career, and finances.

QuickStat

Only **one in 10** people seek treatment for their gambling problem.

How to Handle Cravings

The following tips can help you resist the urge when a gambling craving strikes.

- **Reach out for help.** Call on family or friends to help distract you or attend a Gamblers Anonymous meeting.
- **Visualize what will happen if you give in.** Think about how you will feel if you gamble and how you will disappoint yourself and your loved ones.
- **Postpone gambling.** Wait five minutes, 15 minutes, or an hour to allow the craving to weaken or pass.
- **Engage in another activity.** Take a walk, watch a movie, or practice a relaxation technique (e.g., guided meditation, deep breathing, yoga).

Find Alternatives

Reason for Gambling	Substitute Behavior
To provide a rush of adrenaline	Find an exhilarating sport or hobby (rock climbing, mountain biking, etc.).
To socialize or overcome shyness	Join classes, volunteer, find new friends, or connect with old ones.
To numb negative emotions and avoid thinking about your problems	Try therapy to help you better understand your feelings and develop coping strategies.
To avoid boredom or loneliness	Do something you are passionate about (music, reading, sports, etc.) and find people who share the same interests.
To solve financial problems	Seek help from a credit counselor.
To relax	Try exercise, meditation, massage, or deep breathing.

QUICK SERIES

GAMBLING ADDICTION

IT'S NOT WORTH THE RISK



Are you or a loved one dealing with a gambling problem? Learn the warning signs so you can get help and stop for good.

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What Is a Gambling Addiction?

Gambling can quickly go from a fun, harmless pastime to an unhealthy obsession with very serious consequences.

Gambling addiction, also known as compulsive gambling, problem gambling, or gambling disorder, is an impulse-control disorder. Gambling stimulates your brain's reward system just like alcohol or drugs, making it very addictive.

Most casual gamblers can stop when they lose or reach a set limit, but compulsive gamblers are compelled to keep betting to win back their money.

Complications

Compulsive gambling can have long-lasting effects on your life, such as:

- Financial devastation, including bankruptcy.
- Legal problems or going to prison.
- Poor work performance or job loss.
- Health problems.
- Relationship issues.
- Suicide or suicidal thoughts/attempts.

QuickFact

A compulsive gambler cannot control the impulse to gamble. They will gamble whether they are up or down, broke or flush, without any regard for the negative impact on themselves or their loved ones.

Myths vs. Facts

You have to gamble every day to be a problem gambler.	A problem gambler may do it every day or infrequently. If a person's gambling is causing issues (physical, psychological, emotional, marital, financial, etc.) for them or their loved ones, then they have a gambling problem.
Problem gambling isn't a problem if you can afford it.	Problem gambling affects more than just your bank account. Too much time spent on gambling means less time for your family and friends, your marriage/partner, career, and other priorities.
Gambling disorder is easy to recognize.	Problem gambling is often called a "hidden" addiction. A gambling addict can easily hide symptoms, unlike someone who abuses alcohol or drugs. Many problem gamblers are also in denial that a problem even exists.

Risk Factors

Many people can place a bet, go to the track, or play cards for money and never develop an addiction to gambling. However, there are some factors that are common among those addicted to gambling.

Age: Problem gambling is more common in younger people and middle-aged people.

Gender: More men than women are compulsive gamblers.

Family/friend influence: Gambling addiction is more common among those who have family members who are also addicted to gambling.

Mental health issues: Compulsive gamblers often suffer from substance abuse issues, depression, or anxiety. Gambling disorder may also be associated with attention-deficit/hyper-activity disorder (ADHD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and bipolar disorder.

Personality traits: Workaholics and people who are highly competitive, easily bored, and impulsive are more likely to become addicted to gambling.

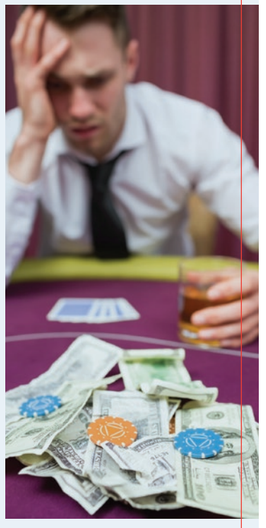
QuickNote

Are family members, friends, or colleagues concerned about your gambling? Denial is almost always a sign of addiction. **It's time to get help.**

Am I Addicted to Gambling?

Do you:

- Spend a lot of time thinking about gambling?
- Lie about your gambling habits to family members, friends, colleagues, etc.?
- Gamble to escape your problems or ease negative feelings?
- Gamble while your bills go unpaid?
- Borrow money so you can keep gambling?
- Miss work or family obligations/events because you are gambling?
- Gamble more money to get the same thrill?
- Feel depressed, anxious, sad, guilty, or suicidal after you gamble, but don't stop?



QuickStat

2 million adult Americans are estimated to meet the criteria for severe gambling problems in a given year.

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