

For those with serious gambling problems, life can be consumed by gambling.

Here is how one problem gambler described his situation:

"I couldn't think of one day of life without gambling. Even when I didn't gamble that day, my world revolved around it. And I got so tired and so depressed and so emotionally drained. Everything else had long since disappeared from my life – relationships, friends, everything." ★★



by Andrew Link
Winona Daily News



PROBLEM GAMBLING

The National Council on Problem Gambling estimates about two percent of American adults (6-9 million) and 500,000 teens have problems with gambling. Spending a lot of money on gambling does not, by itself, make one a problem or compulsive gambler. The term "problem gambling" refers to a broad range of inappropriate gambling behaviors, while "compulsive" or "pathological gambling" refers to the inability, over a period of time, to resist the impulse to gamble.

A COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

Just as a bartender might offer to help someone who is obviously a problem drinker, there are also ways to help a problem gambler. You're not being asked to be a counselor or to make a diagnosis; you're simply being asked to be alert for those whose gambling has gone a level beyond.

If you identify someone whom you think may be a problem gambler, the best thing you can do is suggest they call the Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline at 800-333-HOPE (4673). It's an action that demonstrates you care as a fellow human being, and want the best for the members of your community, who also happen to be your customers.

THE WARNING SIGNS OF A GAMBLING PROBLEM

Given the subtle nature of gambling problems, how can you identify someone who is at risk for compulsive gambling? Here are eight warning signs of a gambling problem:

- Increased frequency of gambling activity
- Increased amount of money gambled
- Gambling for longer periods of time than originally planned
- Bragging about wins, but not talking about losses
- Pressuring others for money as financial problems arise
- Lying about how money is spent
- Escaping to other excesses (alcohol, drugs, sleep, etc.)
- Denying there is a problem

It's important to realize that problem gambling can affect anyone. Problem gamblers are equally likely to be male or female, or of any race. They can play the horses, slots, the lottery, pull-tabs, cards, bingo and more.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you recognize signs of a gambling problem in a customer, employee, friend or family member, there are steps you can take to help them.*

1. Assure the person that you care about them
2. Describe the behavior that is troubling you
3. Describe how you feel when you see these behaviors
4. Assure them that you'll listen to what they have to say
5. Tell them what you want them to do about it
6. Tell them what you are willing to do to help

* From the Minnesota Institute of Public Health

YOUR ROLE AS A CHARITABLE GAMBLING OPERATOR

Simple actions can be very beneficial. Make the Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline phone number clearly visible in your establishment. Display the educational brochure "Whether, When and How Much" available from the Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance (info@northstarproblemgambling.org). This informational brochure helps people explore their own gambling choices.

Working together, everyone in the state of Minnesota can help prevent the negative impacts of problem gambling while supporting the charitable work in our communities.

There's help for problem gamblers • 1-800-333-HOPE



AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Treatment is available and funded by the state for Minnesotans in trouble. A phone call to the Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline could change someone's life. **1-800-333-HOPE**. Available 24 hours a day and seven days a week, the helpline offers free, confidential help from counselors trained in crisis intervention. Anyone can call the helpline about their own gambling or their concern for someone else.

Minnesota Problem Gambling Treatment Program. Managed by the Department of Human Services, treatment is available at a number of locations. Funding is available for treatment, regardless of income level. Call 1-800-333-HOPE.

Gamblers Anonymous (GA). Gamblers Anonymous is a twelve-step support program that holds meetings in approximately 70 communities around Minnesota. www.minnesotaga.com and www.gamblersanonymous.org. Call 1-888-GA-HELPS (1-888-424-3577).

Gam-Anon, an organization for families and close friends of problem gamblers has meetings in nearly 20 cities around the state. www.gamanonmn.com. Toll free hotline 1-888-HELP1MN (1-888-435-7166).



WEBSITES

www.nojudgment.com – details problem gambling information and treatment in Minnesota.

www.treatmentdoeswork.com – addresses how treatment happens and why it helps.

www.ncpgambling.org – the National Council on Problem Gambling website has extensive information on the topic of problem gambling.

www.NorthstarProblemGambling.org – the Northstar Alliance is the Minnesota Affiliate to the National Council on Problem Gambling. The website has information and numerous links to resources for gamblers, their families, friends and employers.

www.collegegambling.org from the National Center for Responsible Gaming.



Charitable gambling, consisting of pull-tabs, bingo, raffles, paddlewheels and tip boards, plays an important role in many Minnesota communities. In addition to the social benefits of bringing people together, the proceeds of charitable gambling benefit community organizations such as sports and recreational clubs, local charities and other nonprofit organizations.

Those who work on the front lines of charitable gambling – such as **waitresses, bartenders, bingo callers and pull-tab sellers** – are in a unique position to observe the behavior of those who participate in gambling. They can vicariously enjoy the thrill of someone winning, but they can also see certain players for whom gambling is no longer a fun game. For these gamblers, who represent a small percentage of players, severe problems may develop due to their gambling.



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Can You Pick Out the Problem Gambler?



AN EDUCATIONAL GUIDE FOR CHARITABLE GAMBLING STAFF

