Problem Gambling Prevention In Older Adults

9th Annual Minnesota Conference on Problem Gambling

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“IT’S TIME TO TALK, AGAIN!”

GUIDELINES FOR OLDER ADULTS GAMBLING

www.talkagain.org
IT’S TIME TO TALK, AGAIN- GOALS

Participants will be able to………

1) Understand the magnitude and severity of gambling problems in older adults.

2) Understand the unique and important role of family members, friends, caregivers and service providers in preventing gambling problems.

3) Help older adults enhance protective factors and minimize risk factors for gambling problems.

4) Develop personal guidelines for gambling.

5) Initiate a discussion about safe and responsible gambling with older adults.

6) Effectively talk to someone whose gambling is a concern to them.
GAMBLING.....

...TO RISK MONEY OR ANYTHING OF VALUE ON THE OUTCOME OF SOMETHING INVOLVING CHANCE.
AGREE / DISAGREE
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
GAMBLING HAS RAPIDLY BECOME AN ACCEPTABLE AND REGULAR PART OF OUR SOCIETY

I CAN’T GET AWAY FROM THIS STUFF!

Bingo and raffles everywhere

Lottery numbers, on billboards, drawn on TV, printed in paper

Free bus rides to casinos

Sports betting with odds in paper and on radio
GAMBLING APPEARS TO BE A NORMATIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG BOTH ADULTS AND ADOLESCENTS

AND MORE.....

- GAMBLING ON A CELL PHONE
- CASINOS, MARCH MADNESS, OFFICE POLLS
- PLAYING PULL TABS
- HORSE, HARNES AND DOG RACING
- TEXAS HOLD’EM TOURNAMENTS ON TV
- GAMBLING ON THE INTERNET
LOW-RISK GAMBLING

• DONE FOR FUN OR RECREATION- NOT FINANCIAL GAIN
• WITH FRIENDS OR COLLEAGUES- NOT ALONE
• FOR LIMITED TIME PERIODS- BOTH FREQUENCY AND DURATION
• WITH PREDETERMINED LIMITS FOR LOSSES THAT ARE ACCEPTABLE
MANY SENIORS PARTICIPATE IN GAMBLING IN MINNESOTA

IN 2011………..

➢ 78% of people aged 55-64 years
➢ 74% of people aged 65-74 years
➢ 56% of people over the age of 75 years

Estimates of Problem Gambling in the U.S. Last Year

➢ 2 million (1%) of U.S. adults are estimated to meet the criteria for pathological gambling.
➢ Another 4-8 million (2-3%) would be considered problem gamblers.


Problem Gambling can be caused or complicated by Mental Health Issues
PROBLEM GAMBLING

IS GAMBLING BEHAVIOR WHICH CAUSES DISRUPTIONS IN ANY MAJOR AREA OF LIFE: PSYCHOLOGICAL, SPIRITUAL, PHYSICAL, SOCIAL OR VOCATIONAL.

Source: National Council on Problem Gambling
GAMBLING 101

PROBLEM VS. PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING

**PROBLEM GAMBLING - aka. Relief or Escape Gambling**

Gambling behavior which causes disruptions in any major area of life: psychological, physical, social or vocational. The term “Problem Gambling” includes, but is not limited to, the condition known as “Pathological” or “Compulsive” gambling.

**PATHOLOGICAL/COMPULSIVE GAMBLING**

This gambling is a progressive disorder characterized by preoccupation with gambling, a need to bet more money more frequently, restlessness or irritability when attempting to stop, “chasing” losses, and loss of control manifested by continuation of the gambling behavior in spite of mounting and serious negative consequences.

National Council on Problem Gambling
Unlike alcohol or drug addiction, problem gambling has few outward signs.

Problem gamblers are more likely to have issues with drinking, drugs, smoking and depression.

A strong link exists between pathological gambling and suicide.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF PROBLEM GAMBLING.....

FINANCIAL: stealing, fraud, bankruptcy

SPIRITUAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL: depression, suicide

SOCIAL: isolation, withdrawal

FAMILY: neglect and abuse

VOCATIONAL: decline in work performance, loss of job
SIGNS OF A GAMBLING PROBLEM AMONG OLDER ADULTS

$. GAMBLING AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MONTH WHEN SOCIAL SECURITY AND PERSONAL CHECKS ARRIVE

$. LACK OF INTEREST IN FAMILY EVENTS OR CELEBRATIONS

$. NEGLECTING MINOR HOME OR CAR REPAIRS (if out of the ordinary)

$. NEGLECTING BILLS SUCH AS TELEPHONE, UTILITIES AND RENT
SIGNS OF A GAMBLING PROBLEM AMONG OLDER ADULTS

$. LACK OF INTEREST IN OLD FRIENDSHIPS

$. SECRECY OR DOUBLE TALK ABOUT THE EXTENT OF THE TRIPS TO THE CASINO OR BINGO PARLORS

$. ASSETS DISAPPEARING (SUCH AS JEWELRY, HEIRLOOMS OR SILVERWARE)

$. UNACCOUNTED FOR TIME AWAY FROM HOME
SIGNS OF A GAMBLING PROBLEM AMONG OLDER ADULTS

$. UNEXPECTED MOODINESS, DEPRESSION, PREOCCUPATIONS, STRESSES OR WORRIES

$. UNWILLINGNESS TO ATTEND TO BASIC PERSONAL NEEDS SUCH AS DENTAL CARE

Source: Behind the 8-Ball: A Recovery Guide for the Families of Gamblers
Minnesota Institute of Public Health

MODULE 1
Enhancing Protective Factors / Minimizing Risks
For Gambling Problems

“IT’S TIME TO TALK... AGAIN!”
WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES THE DIFFERENCE?
Discussion Questions
How will your family remember you:

You can try to hide a gambling problem, but eventually the truth will come out. Call for free, confidential help.
Risk Factors for PROBLEM GAMBLING

- Death of a spouse, friends, and other family members. **Depression or Anxiety**
- Separation from children (under normal or abnormal circumstances), possible loss of a home and relocation. **Loneliness**
- Loss of social support and stimulating activities. **Boredom**
- Loss of job or retirement, loss of related income, social status and possibly self esteem. **Feelings of Purposeless**
- With loss of job and family grown, loss of purpose and passion for life. **Feelings of Hopelessness**

- **Poor Diet and Inactivity**- can lead to **Depression or Anxiety**

MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS ARE A KEY RISK FACTOR IN PROBLEM GAMBLING

Many people gamble to find relief from depression, anxiety, anger and other mental health issues. These issues must be dealt with in order to successfully solve the gambling addiction.
Protective Factors

- Availability of support networks and social bonds
- Support family relationships
- Involvement in community activities and social bonds
- Sense of purpose and identity
- Ability to live independently and feel useful
- Access to resources, such as housing and healthcare
- Education (e.g., solid guidelines for health, including gambling)
- Better diet and movement (exercise at any level)

NOTE: These protective factors for gambling are also protective factors for Good Mental Health
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**MODULE 2**

*Establishing Firm Personal and Family Guidelines for Gambling*

“IT’S TIME TO TALK... AGAIN!”
WHY DO WE NEED GUIDELINES?

“AFTER ALL.. WE ARE SENIORS”

We all need refreshers on the rules and guidelines for

Gambling (the focus of these modules)
Why Might Seniors (and their Families) Need To Reinforce Their Gambling Shield of Protection?

More time, which leaves more opportunity to participate in activities (both healthy & unhealthy).

More time alone time can lead to boredom, depression and need for unhealthy gratifications.

Age-related changes both physically and possibly mentally can prevent us from doing a lot of the activities we used to enjoy. Not being able to do these activities can have negative impact on mental health, leading to unhealthy compensations.

Possible loss of independence which can have a potential emotional/mental impact leading for a need for immediate gratification. Many times this can play out in unhealthy ways.

Loss of purpose and passion in life. For years work and/or family was our driving force. Without a new purpose, “floundering” may occur leading to a need for unhealthy compensations.
ESTABLISHING CLEAR GUIDELINES FOR GAMBLING CAN

- Provide direction for making a clear decision whether to abstain from gambling or to gamble legally, socially, recreationally, occasionally and appropriately.

- Answer: Whether, When and How Much?

- Provide direction for intervening with someone whose use concerns you

HELP IN PROTECTING YOURSELF

HELP IN PROTECTING OTHERS
RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING ....

Why is it called a “Gray Area”?

First of all- WHAT IS THE GRAY AREA IN GAMBLING?

• The GRAY area is the “middle ground” when it comes to gambling or the view of gambling.

• It is at neither extreme, one end being abstinence (which is complete denunciation and practice of gambling) and the other extreme, problem or pathological gambling.

* It is the middle ground where gambling is done legally and responsibly.
Strong Opinions on Gambling Have Created Confusion in this Gray Area

Am I disqualified from discussing a gambling if I occasionally buy a lottery ticket?
Is even responsible gambling a bad thing? Can I play the slots twice a month?

Why do I feel judged when I occasionally go to the casino?
Are people who don’t gamble at all better than me, or have greater will power? Why do I feel like a loser when I buy one lottery ticket every now and then?
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THESE SITUATIONS?

Discussion Questions
1. The decision to gamble is a personal choice.
2. Gambling is not essential for having a good time.

3. What constitutes an acceptable loss needs to be established before starting to gamble.

4. Borrowing money to gamble should be avoided and discouraged.

5. There are times when people should not gamble.

6. There are certain high risk situations during which gambling should be avoided.

7. Use of alcohol or other drugs when gambling is risky.
Do you really want to spend your golden years hooked up to a machine?

For most seniors, gambling is not a problem. But for others, it becomes a way to cope with the loss of loved ones, retirement, or loneliness. Call for free, confidential help.
SOLID GAMBLING GUIDELINES CAN HELP REMOVE THE GRAY AREA

WHETHER WHEN HOW MUCH
WHETHER?

ASK YOURSELF……

- Do you understand that you will probably lose, and do you accept this as part of the game?
- Do you know that you cannot control chance?
- Do you avoid borrowing money to gamble?
- Do you make gambling a social activity with friends?
- Do you know that gambling should not be the only form of recreation in your life?
- Do you know the warning signs of problem gambling?
- Do you know there are times when people should not gamble?
- Do know that gambling to relief anxiety, depression, boredom can be a sign of problem gambling?
WHEN- And When Not?

ASK YOURSELF....

➢ Are you letting gambling interfere with or become a substitute for family, friends or work?

➢ Are you using gambling as a way to cope with emotional or physical pain?

➢ Are you setting a time limit and sticking to it, whether you’re winning or losing?

➢ Would you reexamine your decision to gamble if it becomes difficult to resist the urge to gamble?

ARE YOU GAMBLING WHEN YOU ARE...

LONELY, ANGRY, DEPRESSED OR STRESSED?

TRYING TO SOLVE PERSONAL PROBLEMS?

By engaging in gambling?
HOW MUCH?

ASK YOURSELF….

➢ Do you borrow money to gamble?
➢ Are you hiding your losses?

➢ Do you avoid setting acceptable spending and time limits prior to beginning to gamble and sticking to them?
➢ Are you gambling money you need for your day to day expenses?
➢ Are you chasing losses or trying to recoup/make up for a loss?
➢ Do you gamble on credit or debit cards or misuse your checking account?

DO YOU AGREE THAT THE MONEY YOU SPEND ON GAMBLING IS AN ENTERTAINMENT EXPENSE, NOT AN ESSENTIAL EXPENSE?
Most people don’t talk about gambling. They either do it or they don’t.

Many Minnesotans enjoy gambling; it’s one of the state’s most popular pastimes. The slots at a casino, Bingo at church, Lottery tickets at the gas station, Cards with friends, Pull-tabs at the bar. The occasional office pool. For most of us, these are fun, leisure-time activities. But for some, gambling can become more than fun and games. It can become a serious problem.

When it comes to gambling, there are two options:
1. Not to gamble at all.
OR
2. To gamble legally, socially, recreationally, occasionally and appropriately.

In 2007, approximately 30 percent of adults in Minnesota and over 50 percent of high school seniors reported participating in some form of gambling. Of adults who choose to gamble, many have not examined the questions of whether to gamble, when to gamble and how much to gamble. Most people don’t talk about gambling; they either do it or they don’t. There are many reasons for this silence: For many adults, gambling was not discussed when they were growing up; the topic of gambling is not included in school curricula; family discussions most often do not include gambling; it also wasn’t as visible or available as it is today.

If you are concerned that gambling is becoming more than a game for you or someone you know, please contact the free, confidential, 24/7 Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline: 1-800-333-HOPE.
The Smith Family Personal & Family Guidelines on Gambling

Our family agrees to the following in regards to gambling:

- Article I: Whether
- Article II: When
- Article III: How much
- Article IV: 
- Article V: 

Signatures of Family Members

The Smith Family Pact
WHEN YOU SEE SOMEONE YOU LOVE GOING DOWN THE RISKY PATH OF PROBLEM GAMBLING ......

**WHAT** is your role?

*What* do you say?  *What* do you do?

*What* are the risks if you say something?

*What* are the risks if you say nothing?

**HOW** do you say what needs to be said?

*How* do you keep the relationship strong?

**WHY** SHOULD YOU SAY ANYTHING AT ALL??
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MODULE 3

What Do I Do? What Do I Say?
When Gambling Becomes a Problem

THE SIX STEP PROGRAM

“IT’S TIME TO TALK… AGAIN!”
THE CONFLICT BETWEEN

What Society Tells Us and
What We Believe

SOCIETY tells us to keep quiet when we see behaviors that concern us.

“If you can’t say something nice, then don’t say anything at all”.

“If you are going to live in a glass house than you better not start throwing stones.”

“Judge not less we be judged” or “Mind your own business”.

WHAT WE BELIEVE – a Gallup survey found that 94 percent of Americans feel it is their responsibility to speak to a family or friend who has problems with alcohol or drugs. Only 38 percent felt very confident and comfortable in speaking up to the person about it.
We need to be clear on where we stand on gambling.

We need to have the utmost concern for the relationship.

We need to know what to say and how to say it.

THE 6-STEP PROCESS

1) I CARE......
2) I SEE....
3) I FEEL......
4) I’M LISTENING....
5) I WANT.....
6) I WILL.....
Tell the person that you care about him/her. Establish a personal connection to reduce defensive feelings.

“I love and care about you very much.”

“You’ve been a super dad all of my life.”

“I care about you and want you to be able to live life to the fullest as long as you can.”
I SEE….

Tell the person exactly what he or she has done that concerns you. Present clear facts, not impressions based on what you have seen.

“I notice that you have only a six pack of beer in the refrigerator and no food.”

“It seems like every time I call you, you are out at the casino.”

“I’m seeing a lot of old lottery tickets laying around your house.”

NOTE: Making “I see” observations helps you if you are unsure if there is a problem. When you state what you see, you aren’t making a judgment call, just stating the facts.
I FEEL….

“I get really scared……”
“I get really angry…..”
“I feel really sad……”
“I am worried……..”

Tell the person how you feel about the way you see him/her acting. Remove blame from the interaction. Simply state the facts of how you are “feeling”.
LISTEN….

After you tell the person that you care, what you have seen and how you feel, it’s important to be willing to listen to what he/she says. A variety of responses can be expected since they will probably be unprepared for this discussion.

- Some may thank you and will be ready to share the problem (and maybe even share a deeper problem).
- Some may get angry (“it’s none of your business”).
- Many will be “stone” silent.
Tell the person what you would like them to do.

“I want you to call me when you are lonely rather than heading out to the casino.”

“I want you to limit going to Joe’s nightly poker game to one time a week.”

“I want you to set a firm limit on what you are going to be gambling and stick to it.”
Tell the person what you would like them to do.

“I want you to call me when you are lonely rather than having a couple of drinks.”

“I want you to avoid going to Joe’s until around dinner time when you can also get something to eat.”

“I want you to decide what is a safe limit for you to drink and stick to it.”
"I WILL....

Tell the person what you are willing and able to do to help. Our responses can range from simply being available to be a “good listener” to helping arrange a meeting with someone who can help. If the person chooses not to say anything, let him/her know that the door is open to discuss this at any time.

“I will always be just a phone call away if you are lonely or feeling down.”

“I will go with you anywhere to help sort out these problems.”

“I will go shopping with you one day a week to help get some good food in your refrigerator.”
SHARING CONCERNS

Discussion Questions
PRACTICING THE 6 STEPS - take out your index cards

THE 6 STEPS

I care.....
I see...
I feel...
LISTEN
I want...
I will...
TIMING IS EVERYTHING

THE BEST TIME TO TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT AN IMPORTANT TOPIC IS……

- when you feel comfortable and private
- when you’re not likely to be disturbed
- when you have time to talk things through
- when neither of you have been inappropriately drinking
REMEMBER........

- To make the relationship the priority.

- You are not in charge of the outcome, you are merely the messenger.

- You are not making a judgment. You are simply stating what you see and how you feel.

- No matter what the initial outcome of this discussion, keep the lines of communication open and caring.

- If struggling with initiating the discussion, contemplate the potential consequences of staying silent. Either you “risk” the relationship by having a discussion, or you say nothing when there may be a serious problem and “risk” serious consequences.
TREATMENT FOR COMPULSIVE GAMBLING IS AVAILABLE FOR ALL

THE GOOD NEWS:

- In Minnesota, state funds are available for treatment services for compulsive gamblers, their families and/or significant others.

- Minnesota residents who meet the clinical diagnosis for compulsive gambling and demonstrate a financial need may have all or part of the cost of treatment paid.

- The State will also pay for up twelve (12) hours of intervention services for a family member or significant other, who is a Minnesota resident and is negatively impacted by problem or compulsive gambling.

- A family member or concerned significant other may be seen even if the gambler is not in treatment.

CHECK YOUR STATE TO SEE WHAT PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE
TOPICS FOR “IT’S TIME TO TALK...AGAIN!”

- Alcohol Use and Non Use
- Substance Abuse
- Gambling
- Mental Health
DIFFERENT VERSIONS TO FIT THE GROUP’S NEEDS

- The 20-30 minute “Civic” Group luncheon overview.
- The 60-120 minute condensed training
- The half to full day trainings, all 3 modules, each 75-90 minutes
  - One topic can be focused on or all four can be done (this is a full day training)
  - 1 module covered, 3 different days
TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

- PARTICIPANT GUIDE
- CLASS BOOKLET (for purchase)
- DVD (scenarios demonstrating the 6-step process)
- WEBSITE FOR RESOURCES (in development)

- FACILITATOR GUIDE WITH APPENDIX
- MARKETING BROCHURES
- MARKETING DISPLAY
“IT’S TIME TO TALK...AGAIN!”

For More Information on the “IT’S TIME TO TALK...AGAIN” training
Call MIPH (Minnesota Institute of Public Health)
1-800-782-1878

www.talkagain.org