IOWA GAMBLING TREATMENT PROGRAM

Q&A

QUESTION AND ANSWER GUIDE.

IDPH Iowa Department of Public Health

No judging. Just helping.

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1-800-BETS OFF

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WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PERSON WHO GAMBLES RECREATIONALLY AND SOMEONE WHO HAS A GAMBLING PROBLEM?

Recreational gamblers gamble for fun and as a form of entertainment. Those affected by problem gambling can't stop gambling— even when they lose all their money, lose their jobs, their families and often the lives they once led. Unlike recreational gambling, **problem gambling can lead to addiction**— like alcoholism or drug addiction.

WHAT TYPES OF GAMBLING MAY PRESENT PROBLEMS FOR CERTAIN PEOPLE?

Casino games, horse racing, cards, sports betting, internet gambling, dog racing, bingo, lottery games, and stocks and commodities all hold the potential to cause severe problems.

WHAT KIND OF PERSON TYPICALLY IS AFFECTED BY PROBLEM GAMBLING?

Problem gambling can affect anyone. It has an impact on people of every race, sex, age, religion and socio-economic group in the city or country.

WHAT ARE SOME WARNING SIGNS THAT INDICATE SOMEONE MIGHT HAVE A GAMBLING PROBLEM?

- ☐ Thinks continually of gambling
- ☐ Relies on others to get out of debt
- ☐ Is absent or late for work or school
- ☐ Has unexplained money or new possessions
- ☐ Is impatient with or ignores friends and family
- ☐ Delays payment of household bills
- ☐ Uses credit cards for cash advances
- ☐ Sells possessions
- ☐ Steals money to gamble

WHAT ARE THE PHASES OF PROBLEM GAMBLING?

PHASE 1 WINNING

Problem gambling can start as a fun, social activity. People sometimes win large amounts, but it's not always about winning money. Sometimes problem gamblers are rewarded by the excitement, the dreams of winning or the escape from everyday problems and stresses.

PHASE 2 LOSING

Trouble may begin when problem gamblers think their behavior is under control but actually it is not. They seek more action, lose, and then gamble in an attempt to win it back. They hide their losses and borrow money to continue gambling. Concerned others begin to notice.

PHASE 3 DESPERATION

People with a gambling problem become desperate. They know they're in trouble, but they still can't quit. Everything has gone bad. They've lost all their money, lost their jobs and lost their families. They have hit rock bottom. At this phase they may steal or commit illegal activities to finance their gambling.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WHEN A FRIEND, FAMILY MEMBER OR CO-WORKER HAS A GAMBLING PROBLEM?

+ Do confront the situation
+ Do encourage them to get help
+ Do offer to attend meetings with them
+ Do take over finances

WHAT SHOULD YOU NOT DO?

- Don't bail them out
- Don't deny the problem
- Don't make excuses for them
- Don't blame yourself

PROBLEM GAMBLING CAN BE TREATED. WHAT CAN THE GAMBLER DO TO HELP HIMSELF OR HERSELF?

- Call 1-800-BETS OFF to get help in your area
- Acknowledge problem exists
- Learn to manage financial pressures
- Work on personal goals
- Find activities to replace gambling
- Enroll in Iowa's Voluntary Self-Exclusion program