

Promoting Community Awareness

Source: The Centre for Addictions and Mental Health

Signs and Symptoms of Problem Gambling of a Family Member

Financial Signs:

1. Have you noticed money missing from a bank account or wallet, including those of children?
2. Have valuables mysteriously disappeared?
3. Has our family member started a second job with no change in finances?
4. Has there been a change in spending priorities and habits?
5. Has your family member cashed in RRSPs, insurance plans, etc. or allowed them to lapse?
6. Have you received past due bills that were supposed to be paid by the family member who you suspect is gambling?
7. Is this person responsible for bank loan payments that have not been made?
8. Is your family member taking out loans or borrowing money from friends and family?
9. Is your family member requesting cash advances on credit cards?
10. Is your family member secretive about family finances?

Emotional Signs:

1. Has the family member withdrawn from friends and/or family-missing family functions or other social events he/she previously enjoyed?
2. Is this person preoccupied by unexplained worry?
3. Does this person complain of feelings of emptiness or loss when not gambling?
4. Is the person feeling hopeless, depressed, suicidal and/or angry?
5. Does the family member get bored easily, defensive, reactive, on edge, or tense?
6. Is this person having suicidal ideation?

Behavioural Signs:

Behavioural signs apply to both the gambler and his/her family members.

1. Is this person being secretive about absences?
2. Is the family member talking a lot about gambling?
3. Is the person exhibiting a lot of mood swings?
4. Has there been a change in the sexual relationship?
5. Has there been a change in sleep and eating patterns?
6. Is the person neglecting his/her responsibilities?
7. Is the family member always talking about money?
8. For those who are attending school, is the person falling behind in their work and starting to get poor grades?

Time Signs:

1. Is the person missing work or arriving late?
2. Are there large periods of time unaccounted for?
3. Does the family member claim not having enough time for ordinary responsibilities?

Health Signs:

1. Is this person suffering from stress-related ailments such as headaches, gastrointestinal ailments, insomnia, unsatisfactory sexual relations, or depression?
2. Is the family member exhibiting poor self-care?

*** The existence of any of these items does not mean that a gambling problem definitely exists. However, the more items that apply the more likely it is the person may be gambling problematically.**

Promoting Community Awareness: The Three Phases of Gambling

Source: The Compulsive Gambling Website @ <http://cghub.homestead.com>

Phase 1- Winning

Gambling begins as a social activity. It seems fun, normal. During this phase, people: Sometimes win large amounts of money; feel invincible, so they bet bigger amounts because they believe they will win even more; bet even more to maintain the excitement level. But gambling isn't always about money. Problem gamblers like the excitement of gambling the dream of winning big, or the escape from everyday problems or stresses.

Phase II- Losing

This is where the real trouble begins. During this phase, gamblers feel like their activity is under control. In reality, it is not. They seek more action; believe they can quit whenever they want to, but see no need to quit; gamble to win back what they've lost (Chasing); gamble and then lie about it; hide their losses; take out loans so they can continue; break their promises to quit; borrow from family and friends; have relationships that begin to suffer. Some problem gamblers attempt suicide before they seek treatment.

Phase III- Desperation

Problem gamblers go through this stage just before they hit rock bottom. They feel desperation and hopelessness as losses continue to mount; cling to their fantasy of winning ~hoping to make everything well again; finally realize that they can't win, but they keep gambling anyway; have little concern for the people around them; steal, write bad checks, or commit illegal activities to finance their gambling; sometimes have winning episodes, but simply a means of gambling longer; money is like Monopoly money.