

## According to the National Council on Problem Gambling

- Crimes by compulsive gamblers place an increased stress on the legal and court system.
- 65% of compulsive gamblers commit crimes to finance their gambling.
- Suicide rates are 20 times higher among pathological gamblers.
- 6-20% of adolescents develop gambling problems.
- People who have other addictions are at a higher risk of becoming addicted to gambling.
- Senior citizens and adolescents are at high risk to become addicted to gambling.
- 2 million U.S. adults (1%) are estimated to meet the criteria for severe gambling problems in a given year. Another 4-6 million (2-3%) would be considered to have mild or moderate gambling problems; that is, they do not meet the full diagnostic criteria for gambling addiction but meet one or more of the criteria and are experiencing problems due to their gambling behavior. Research also indicates that most adults who choose to gamble are able to do it responsibly.

Many calls to the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling's 24-Hour Helpline come from family members or friends who have discovered their loved one's gambling problem and question how they might help them.

If gambling is becoming a problem for you or someone you care about, help is available.

**We Can Help  
24-hours a day**

**1-800-426-2535**

**Chat [wi-problemgamblers.org](https://www.wisconsin-council.org)**

**Text 850-888-4673**



**The Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling, Inc. provides resources, public awareness and education on gambling disorders while maintaining strict neutrality on the issue of legalized gambling.**



## Judicial System and Problem Gambling



**WISCONSIN COUNCIL  
ON PROBLEM GAMBLING**

## A Gambling Problem is More than Financial Hardship...

People who have a gambling problem, or have loved ones that do, bring their addiction to work with them every day. Compulsive gambling is described as a “hidden illness” since there is no breath odor, stumbling of steps or impaired speech. The negative effects are just as elusive; lost productivity, time off, even the health of employees suffer from the stress that compulsive gambling causes. When problem gamblers become desperate, they may turn to workplace crimes like embezzlement or fraud to finance their addiction. Stressed gamblers have a high risk of becoming suicidal as the only way out of their financial or legal problems.

White-collar crimes of fraud, embezzlement, forgery and tax evasion are predominate among those whose employment and economic status enable them the opportunity for such crimes. Some employees are fearful their jobs will be at stake if their supervisor knows they are a problem gambler, regardless of criminal activity. Employers may be the first to discover a gambling problem and can be the first source of information to help out the employee.

Employees who are recovering from other addictions may be more susceptible to becoming hooked on gambling.

Many problem gamblers are homeless, hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt, may have filed bankruptcy, committed illegal acts or attempted suicide. They are not the only ones affected by their addiction. The gambling addiction affects families, friends and employers.



## Gambling Affects Everyone

- Approximately 333,000 Wisconsin residents have a gambling problem.
- Problem gamblers are more likely not to pay their taxes.
- Each person struggling with gambling problems affects at least 10 people closest to them. In one study, over 90% of those affected by someone’s gambling behavior reported feeling emotional distress. (Nash et al, 2018)
- NCPG estimates the annual national social cost of problem gambling is \$7 billion. These costs include gambling-related criminal justice and healthcare spending as well as job loss, bankruptcy and other consequences.

(This estimate was based on research from the 1999 National Gambling Impact Study Commission updated to account for inflation and current rates of problem gambling.)



## What can you do?

The next time some of the “facts” just don’t add up, take a closer look at the patterns of your client's life.

- Make the referral to the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling’s 24-hour Helpline.
- Encourage gamblers and their family/friends to attend a GA or Gam-Anon meeting.
- Have patience.
- Listen.
- Be positive.
- Do not criticize.
- Understand that relapse can be part of the recovery process.

*Calls have increased over 300% to the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling’s 24-hour Helpline.*