

## Clinicians

Problem gambling is often accompanied by substance abuse. Research shows that about 50% of all problem gamblers have had problems with alcohol or other drugs.\*

If you are a clinician, remember to ask these simple questions:

### Lie-Bet Screening Instrument (Johnson et al., 1988)

1. Have you ever felt the need to bet more and more money?
2. Have you ever had to lie to people important to you about how much you gambled?

*In the event that a client responds “yes” to these questions, the screening/assessment process needs to continue.*

\*Statistical information taken from the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling Website.

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.wi-problemgamblers.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.



**Gambling Disorders &  
Substance Abuse**

**Similarities  
&  
Differences**



## Similarities

- Acquired tolerance
- Inability to stop
- Denial and rationalization
- Progression (phases/stages)
- Depression, anxiety/mood swings
- Chasing the first win/high
- First drink/first win remembered
- Blackouts/brownouts
- Substance use and gambling used to escape from pain
- Preoccupation
- Low self-esteem/high ego
- Dysfunctional families
- High of gambling not unlike cocaine rush
- Use of rituals
- Immediate gratification
- Chronicity
- Withdrawal
- Loss of spirituality and life management skills
- Continuation of use, despite consequences

## Differences

- Progression is rapid with problem gambling.
- There is secrecy with problem gamblers.
- Gambling is a “hidden addiction” which allows for less detection.
- There is no saturation point; you cannot overdose on gambling.
- “Double or nothing” attempts to chase, control or win.
- Severe financial problems requiring immediate attention.
- No “biological test” can detect problem gambling.
- No ingestion is required for the high.
- There are minimal resources available for gamblers and their families.
- Gambling is considered by many to be a moral weakness, reflecting poor judgment, irresponsibility and/or greed.
- Prevention message is not easily accepted by communities.
- Substance abuse is accepted as treatable by society.
- Treatment is often not reimbursable.

## What can family members and significant others do?

Get support for yourself. Join a family support group and attend self-help groups.

Support your loved one's efforts in his/her recovery process.

Have patience.

Listen. Be positive. Do not criticize.

Be clear that you care about your loved one, but set limits around disruptive behaviors.

Understand that relapse can be part of the recovery process.

Recognize that your loved one's self-esteem and understanding about the effects of substance use will improve with the recovery process.

Get information for yourself. The more you know, the more you will understand recovery and the more helpful you can be.