

When Gambling Becomes a Problem

While most people enjoy casino gambling, sports betting, lottery and bingo playing for the fun and excitement it provides, others may experience gambling as an addictive and distractive habit. Statistics show that while 85 percent of the adult population in the US enjoys some type of gambling every year, between 2 and 3 percent of will develop a gambling problem and 1 percent of them are diagnosed as pathological gamblers.

Where can you draw the line between harmless gambling to problem gambling? How can you tell if you or your friend are compulsive gamblers? Here you can find answers to these questions and other questions regarding problem gambling and gambling addiction.

What is the Meaning of Problem Gambling?

Problem gambling or compulsive gambling is defined as an uncontrollable urge to gamble despite the destructive effect of gambling on the gamblers life and despite feelings of guilt and remorse. Problem gambling tends to have a negative effect on the gamblers financial state, relationships and daily life. Severe cases of problem gambling can be defined as pathological gambling.

Am I a Compulsive Gambler?

- 1) Do you gamble until your last penny runs out?
- 2) Do you gamble to win back your former losses or debts?
- 3) Did you ever had to borrow money to continue gamble?
- 4) Did your gambling habit ever made you lie to your friends or family?
- 5) Did you ever skip work or other obligation to gamble?
- 6) Do you tend to gamble to forget about your personal problems or to celebrate happy occasions?
- 7) Does gambling have a negative affect on your daily life or relationships?

If you have answered yes on at least one of the questions listed above, then you have a problem.

Can Anyone Become a Compulsive Gambler?

Theoretically, yes. Any gambler can develop gambling problem regardless to the type of gambling he is occupied with, the amount of money and time he is spending on gambling. Researches show that slot machines that can be found in bars and convenient stores are the most addictive type of gambling activity, while lottery draws and bingo games are located on the other end of the scale. Gambling addiction is an emotional problem; its symptoms, causes and treatments are similar to any other form of addiction.

How Can I treat Gambling Addiction?

1) Group Therapy:

Gamblers Anonymous offers a 12 step self help program similar to the one offered to alcohol addicts in Alcoholics Anonymous. Group therapy also offers gambling addicts advice and support from professional counselors and other gambling addicts in different phases of their recovery process. Gambler Anonymous centers are available in more than 1,200 locations statewide.

2) Individual Therapy:

Cognitive or behavior therapy can help gambling addicts to identify their unaware thinking and acting patterns, which led them to gamble compulsively, and to replace them with controllable and healthier ways of thinking.

3) Psychiatric Medication:

It has recently been proven that antidepressant medications from the family of SSRIs, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors can be affective in treatment of gambling addicts.

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About the Author

As the editor of a guide to [online casinos](#) Jack Reider has had to deal with gambling addictions in all forms. He has helped users and Gamblers Anonymous organizations connect.