

Some Problem Gambling Warning Signs

Do You...

- gamble more often, or with more money, than you intend?
- chase losses?
- neglect family, friends, self or work in order to gamble?
- gamble to escape worries or troubles?
- constantly think of gambling?
- hope for a "big win" to resolve financial or other problems?
- borrow money or juggle funds to gamble or pay debts?
- have conflicts with others over money or gambling?
- have mood swings because of your gambling, or experience anger, depression, suicidal thoughts or anxiety?
- continue to gamble despite negative consequences and efforts at control?

If you would like support to cut down, or to stop gambling, contact the Problem Gambling Service.

Our services are free and confidential.

Our women's program aims to be accessible and responsive to the unique needs and concerns of women.

We strive to maintain a climate of safety and respect.

We offer:

- Individual counselling (in person or by phone)
- Group workshops
- Support and information in such areas as:
 - Finances and credit counselling
 - Relapse prevention
 - Life enrichment · Rebuilding relationships
 - Coping with stress · Leisure and nutrition
 - Self-esteem · Dealing with guilt and shame.

We are funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to offer help to all gamblers and/or family members who are concerned about gambling.

For more information please contact:

Problem Gambling Service
175 College Street
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1P7
Tel.: 416-599-1322
Toll-Free: 1-888-647-4414
Fax: 416-599-1324
E-mail: gambling@camh.net

For information on addiction and mental health issues or other resources, please contact the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's 24-hour Information Line:
Ontario toll-free: 1-800-463-6273
Toronto: 416-595-6111

To make a donation, please contact:
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Foundation
Tel.: 416-979-6909
E-mail: foundation@camh.net

Web site: www.camh.net



Centre
for Addiction and
Mental Health
Centre
pour l'addiction et
de santé mentale

Addiction Research Foundation
Clarke Institute of Psychiatry
Donwood Institute
Queen Street Mental Health Centre

A World Health Organization Centre of Excellence
Affiliated with the University of Toronto

2141REV / 02-01 / 10,000

Women & Problem Gambling

*When
Dreams
Become
Nightmares*



Centre
for Addiction and
Mental Health
Centre
pour l'addiction et
de santé mentale

When Dreams Become Nightmares

I used to feel good about myself. I had a successful career. I was good with money, honest and dependable. All that has changed. The roulette wheel has spun my world into chaos. I hate lying to my boss, cheating the bank, scrambling to pay bills, living in fear.

— Kate

It started as fun, buying a few scratch tickets. I felt lucky when I won \$1000. I thought it was an easy way to get extra money to treat the kids. Soon I was buying tickets every day. I was spending the little money we had. The kids want to know why we never have any food or fun anymore.

— Rosa

After my husband died, friends took me to the casino for a night out. I loved the slots, the noise, the special treatment. It helped me forget my grief and fill the lonely hours. I started going on my own, and moved from the quarter to the dollar slots. How can I tell my kids I've lost all the money their father worked so hard to save? I'm so ashamed. I'm glad my husband isn't here to see what I've done.

— Gladys

These women have run into trouble with gambling. Like many people who begin gambling for money, fun or time out from everyday worries, they have become trapped. Winning can create an urge to play more and create hopes of even bigger wins. Losing leads to desperate efforts to win back the money. The spiral is downward as the gambler moves through cycles of despair and hope. Over time, the debts mount as self-esteem plummets. The dreams become nightmares.

Women and Problem Gambling

With increased acceptance of gambling, and easy access to it, women have been swept into the gambling current. For some, the high of the action, or the escape of gambling, becomes addictive. Ultimately it can threaten relationships, disrupt work, damage values, create financial and legal problems and impact on moods.

Problem gambling can affect any woman. It affects as many women as men. Sometimes it is related to other life issues such as troubled relationships, a history of trauma, abuse, loss, mental health concerns or addiction to drugs or alcohol.

Problem gambling tends to be invisible. A woman struggling with urges to gamble, and the pain of losing control, may be secretive – silenced by shame, guilt and fear. She may feel isolated and overwhelmed by mounting financial, spiritual and emotional losses. She often lacks the support to make changes. Family and friends may be judgmental or rejecting.

**Too often women
suffer alone,
even when help
is available.**

Turning on the Lights

For years my friends and I played bingo every week. When I was laid off I started to play more often. The kids were grown and I was bored. My husband worried about the money and the changes in our relationship. It was hard to cut back, but with his help, and the support of my women's group, I'm enjoying life without going crazy at bingo.

— June

My whole family gambled. When I was young my mom took me to the track every day. My dad played poker with my uncles. I met my husband in Vegas. He went to jail for gambling related crimes... I went for help. I'm learning about balance, about being gentle but assertive, about honouring my needs and feelings, about self-respect. I feel so much more in control of my life and my future.

— Fiona

I gave everything I had to be the perfect wife. Gambling was my only break. Eventually it broke me. I collapsed in exhaustion trying to keep the secret. It's been a journey of discovery to share my struggles with others, to have someone to listen and care.

— Suelyn

Women often nurture and care for others while neglecting their own needs. These women have found the support of a treatment program critical to re-establishing a healthy, balanced lifestyle that promotes a sense of well-being.

