

Some warning signs of a gathering storm

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 stop gambling, contact the Problem Gambling Service.

We are funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to offer help to people with gambling-related problems and/or concerned family members.

We offer:

- free and confidential services
- limited individual counselling (on-site or by phone)
- group counselling and skill building.

Our women’s program provides a climate of safety and respect. It is tailored to the unique needs and concerns of women from diverse cultures, of all ages and all sexual orientations.

Services are available in a range of languages on-site or off-site.

For more information please contact:

Problem Gambling Service

33 Russell Street, 3rd floor north

Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S1

Tel.: 416 599-1322 • Toll-free: 1 888 647-4414

Fax: 416 599-1324

E-mail: gambling@camh.net

Website: problemgambling.ca

For information on addiction and mental health issues or other resources, please contact the CAMH McLaughlin Information Centre:
Ontario toll-free: 1 800 463-6273 • Toronto: 416 595-6111

To make a donation, please contact the CAMH Foundation:
Tel.: 416 979-6909 • E-mail: foundation@camh.net

If you have questions, concerns or compliments about services at CAMH, please call the Client Relations Service at:
Tel.: 416 535-8501 ext. 2028 or 2078

Website: www.camh.net

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Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale

A Pan American Health Organization /
World Health Organization
Collaborating Centre

Fully affiliated with the University
of Toronto

Women, gambling and stormy weather



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When storm clouds block the sun

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. Losing leads to desperate efforts to win back the money. In a downward spiral these women move through cycles of despair and hope. Over time, the debts mount as self-esteem plummets. The sun disappears behind dark clouds.

Women and problematic 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 affect moods.

Problematic 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 addictions.

Excessive 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.

Clearing the storm clouds from the skies

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

Too often women struggle alone, even when help is available.



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.