

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF A GAMBLING PROBLEM

- Gambling more often and for larger amounts of money
- Gambling for longer periods of time
- Gambling despite negative consequences, such as large losses and family problems
- Gambling as a means to cope with loneliness, anxiety or depression
- Committing illegal acts or lying in order to keep gambling

“Many recovering alcoholics are not aware that they might be at risk of crossing over to a gambling addiction.”

- A chemical dependency and gambling counselor

“I didn’t think I could get addicted to gambling. I’m an alcoholic, and thought I would recognize the signs.”

- a 38-year-old helpline caller

“The biggest danger of going to the casino for someone in recovery is that they’ll get a “big win” that can trigger their alcohol or drug addiction.”

- 54-year-old man in recovery



1935 West County Road B2
Suite 420
Roseville, MN 55113-2795
Office 612.424.8595
Fax 651.636.6757
info@northstarproblemgambling.org
www.NorthstarProblemGambling.org

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Minnesota Gambling Helpline: 800-333-4673 (HOPE)

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Gambling Among Those in Recovery RECREATION WITH RISK?



Gambling has changed significantly over the past several years. It's more accessible than ever, including online, and comes in an almost limitless number of forms. It continues to be extensively marketed and attracts a wide range of participants.

GAMBLING AS RECREATION

It's a proven fact that addiction causes a rewiring of the neural circuits of the brain. This occurs whether the addiction is related to alcohol, drugs, gambling or something else. Because each of these addictions creates a similar effect on the brain, it's not uncommon for one in recovery to "switch" addictions. For this reason, people recovering from an alcohol or drug addiction are at great risk for developing an addiction to gambling.

Therefore, if you choose to gamble recreationally, you should be watchful that it doesn't become another addiction. By considering the following guidelines,

you'll significantly reduce your risk of developing a gambling addiction.

1. **Always gamble with others rather than alone.** Recreational gambling is most often combined with other activities and done socially with family, friends or colleagues.
2. **Set parameters on how often and how long you gamble.** Recreational gambling should be done for limited amounts of time.
3. **Think of money spent on gambling as an entertainment expense.** Set predetermined limits for losses that are acceptable, considering what's appropriate for your overall budget.
4. **Remember that nearly everyone who gambles loses money over time.** Gambling should be thought of as a recreational activity and not as a source of financial gain or sustainable income.

WHEN GAMBLING BECOMES AN ADDICTION

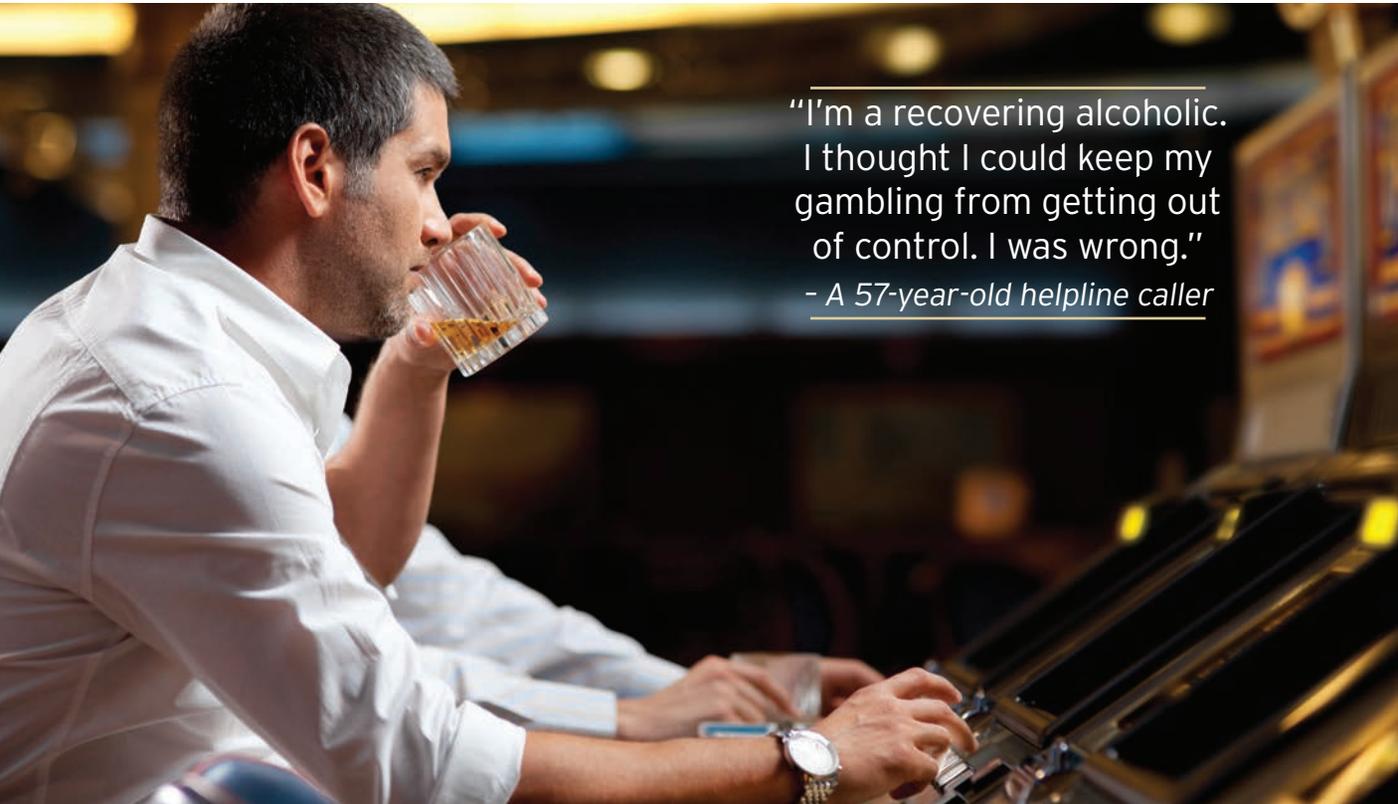
While gambling provides a source of enjoyable entertainment for many people in recovery, *one in three*

experience problems that significantly affect their lives. Problem gambling, or addictive gambling, is similar to other addictions in that:

- it is a preoccupation with obtaining money or experiencing the "high" of winning
- withdrawal, restlessness or irritability are characteristics of someone attempting to stop
- repeated efforts to cut down or stop are unsuccessful, and
- it continues despite social, legal or occupational consequences

Problem gambling is different from other addictions in that:

- it is much more difficult to detect than alcoholism or drug use
- the addiction progresses very quickly after a big win
- gamblers tend to feel significantly more shame, guilt or depression, and are more likely to attempt suicide than those with other addictions



*"I'm a recovering alcoholic. I thought I could keep my gambling from getting out of control. I was wrong."
- A 57-year-old helpline caller*

HELP IS AVAILABLE

Confidential help is available for Minnesotans with gambling problems at no cost. If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call the Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline at 800-333-4673 (HOPE), available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



*"We have been retired for two years and I found out my husband has gambled away all of our retirement savings."
- A 68-year-old helpline caller*