

What is Gambling Disorder?

Gambling disorder, also known as compulsive or addictive gambling, includes gambling behavior patterns that negatively impact personal, family or vocational pursuits. The essential features are increasing preoccupation with gambling, a need to bet more money more frequently, restlessness or irritability when trying to stop, the "chasing" of losses, and the loss of control when one continues to gamble in spite of the mounting serious and negative consequences. Problem gambling/gambling disorder can result in financial ruin, legal problems, loss of career and family, or even suicide. Gamblers have the highest rate of suicide and suicide ideation of all addictions.

How Prevalent is Problem Gambling?

About 56,000 Minnesotan adults who gamble meet the diagnostic criteria for gambling disorder. Another two to four percent experience problems related to their gambling behavior. This means that over 250,000 Minnesotans struggle with problem gambling. Additionally, thousands of Minnesota high school students also show signs of gambling disorder.

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Warning Signs of Problem Gambling

A diagnosis of gambling disorder (DSM-V) requires at least meeting four of the following during the last 12 months. Often referred as the "hidden addiction," it can take some time before anyone notices that someone has a gambling problem. Gamblers by nature know how to bluff. Know the signs.

-  **Increased frequency of gambling activity**
-  **Increased amount of money gambled**
-  **Gambling for longer periods of time than originally planned**
-  **Bragging about wins, but not talking about losses**
-  **Pressuring others for money when financial problems arise**
-  **Lying about how money is spent**
-  **Escaping to other excesses (alcohol, drugs, sleep, video games, etc.)**
-  **Denying there is a problem**



Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling
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Follow us on
Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter

As the state advocate for problem gambling, we are available for community presentations.

Minnesota gambling helpline
1-800-333-HOPE (4673)

Made possible by a grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services.



Be Part of the Solution

Important information for therapists, counselors and helping professionals about gambling disorder.





Be Part of the Solution

Gambling Disorder Training

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) has designated funds for problem gambling treatment. In addition to reimbursing providers for treatment, DHS provides a certain number of scholarships to licensed behavioral health professionals who seek to learn more about gambling disorder. Scholarships are offered annually. Check the DHS website for further information. www.mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/seniors/services/gambling-problems.

Comorbidity of Gambling Disorder

In many cases gambling disorder does not occur in isolation but rather in the company of other co-presenting and co-morbid issues. For example, gambling disorder and substance use disorders are frequently part of a dual diagnosis. Gambling issues may arise as part of other health concerns related to:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Alcohol/drug use
- Bad health
- Domestic violence
- Homelessness
- Financial hardship
- Legal problems
- Unemployment
- Relationship breakdowns

What Can You Do?

Look Beyond the Surface

While some individuals may appear to present with depression, anxiety or related mental and physical health disorders, it's also possible there's an underlying issue with gambling. This is often something that's not easily recognized nor easily shared by the client.

If you suspect that one of your clients may have a gambling problem, there are several things you can do. Formal assessment and diagnostic tools exist to determine if someone has a gambling disorder. If their responses indicate a potential problem, make a referral to a certified problem gambling treatment provider. Treatment is free if your client sees an approved Minnesota provider. Go to www.mnapg.org/professionals for the provider list and many other resources.

Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBGS)

If you can only do a short assessment, we recommend asking these three questions.

- During the past 12 months, have you become restless, irritable or anxious when trying to cut down or stop gambling?
- During the past 12 months, have you tried to keep your family or friends from knowing how much you gambled?
- During the past 12 months, did you have such financial trouble as a result of your gambling that you had to get help with living expenses from family, friends or welfare?

A "yes" to any one of these three questions should encourage a more detailed assessment, if the client is willing.



Compare One's Gambling To Other Minnesotans

Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling has developed a self-administered survey that will enable any individual to compare their gambling with other Minnesotans. This could be another way to broach the topic with your client. The survey asks questions about the types of gambling, frequency and attitudes towards gambling. The survey will also measure one's activity passed on the PGSI (Problem Gambling Severity Index) and provide some helpful information to the survey taker as they consider their situation. The survey can be found at www.mnapg.evolutionhealth.care/cyg-u.

Minnesota Problem Gambling Resources

If you suspect your client has a gambling issue, you can refer them to a state-approved treatment provider for help. This includes outpatient and residential treatment programs. Minnesota has one residential treatment facility for gambling disorder at Vanguard Center for Gambling Recovery at Project Turnabout in Granite Falls, Minnesota. Treatment is available at no cost to Minnesotans without insurance coverage or who have a high deductible. Treatment works.

Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline

The Minnesota problem gambling helpline, 1-800-333-HOPE (4673), provides referrals to treatment providers. The state will pay for treatment when your client sees a state-certified provider. Treatment is available for the gambler and their families. Family members may initiate counseling even if the gambler isn't ready to seek help.

Gamblers Anonymous (GA) is a 12-step peer support program which holds meetings around the state. Visit www.minnesotaga.com for the most current meeting listings or call 1-855-222-5542.

Gam-Anon is for families and consists of meetings in communities around the state. www.gamanonmn.com or call 888-435-7166.

Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling (MNAPG) provides a wide range of educational resources and trainings for professionals, gamblers and their families. MNAPG is available to present to community groups, treatment staff and professional associations. Visit www.mnapg.org or through Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram.

Minnesota Department of Human Services Problem Gambling Program

- www.getgamblinghelp.com
- www.facebook.com/NoJudgment

National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) www.ncpgambling.org

Smart Recovery – an online peer support recovery group. www.smartrecovery.org