KEEP IN MIND

If you are the spouse, family member, or friend of a problem gambler, it is important for you to take care of yourself and realize that you are not responsible for the gambler's behavior. A problem gambler doesn't necessarily need to "hit bottom" to decide to get help. Problem gambling is not a bad habit or a moral weakness. It is a serious condition, but with treatment, problem gamblers can put the game in perspective and make decisions to improve their lives.

IF PLAYING ISN'T FUN ANYMORE, CALL, TEXT, OR VISIT FOR HELP.

Call 800-GAMBLE-5 (800-426-2535)
Text 850-888-HOPE (850-888-4673)
Visit wi-problemgamblers.org
Free. Confidential. Always there.

NCPG
National Council on Problem Gambling

WISCONSINCOUNCIL
ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

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RESPONSIBLE GAMING

THERE'S LIFE BEYOND THE GAMES

WE'RE HERE TO HELP



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HOW TO PLAY RESPONSIBLY

If you're concerned that gambling is becoming more than a game for you, try using these guidelines to moderate your play.

- Think of the money you spend on lottery as the cost of entertainment and not as an investment. Consider any money you win a bonus.
- Set a dollar and time limit in advance, then stick to it. Leave when you reach your limit, whether you're winning or not.
- Understand that you'll likely lose your wager, and accept the loss as part of the game.
- Never spend outside your means, and don't borrow money to play the lottery.
- Don't let gambling of any type interfere with or become a substitute for family, friends, or work.
- Don't chase losses; chances are you'll lose even more trying to recoup your losses.
- Don't use playing the lottery as a way to cope with emotional or physical pain.
- Know the warning signs of problem gambling, and know it is ok to seek help if gambling has become a problem.

HOW TO SPOT THE SIGNS

Would you know a gambling problem if you saw it in a friend, loved one, coworker, patient, or student? Problem gambling can affect all ages, genders, and races, regardless of economic status.

Here are some warning signs:

- Preoccupied with gambling and unable to stop, trying to win back what was lost. Constantly researching or obsessing over gambling content via the internet or apps.
- Bragging about gambling, exaggerating wins, and minimizing losses.
- Restless and irritable when not gambling. Uninterested in previous hobbies or interests.
- Borrowing money from friends and family, taking out a quick loan or cash advances from credit cards for gambling.
- Participating in illegal activities to earn money for gambling.
- Lying about frequent unexplained absences, unpaid debts, or time spent gambling.
- Jeopardizing a significant relationship or job by gambling.
- Financial hardship, unable to afford basic needs, defaulting on loans, or losing personal possessions.
- Visiting lottery retailers, gambling facilities, or vending machines multiple times in one day.
- Hiding lottery tickets or receipts from family and friends.
- Physical and mental health worsens, experiencing anxiety, depression, or even suicidal thoughts.

HOW TO REACH OUT TO A FRIEND OR RELATIVE

If someone you know is gambling for more than fun, they may have a problem. Talking to them can seem scary, but they need you to have courage. Here are some ways to begin the conversation:

- Find a comfortable place to talk where you won't be disturbed.
- Keep it simple and straightforward.
- Tell the person you care about them and you're concerned about how they are acting.
- Tell the person exactly what they've done that concerns you.
- Tell the person how their behavior is affecting other people. Be specific.
- Be clear about what you expect from them, ("I want you to talk to someone about your gambling") and what they can expect from you, ("I won't cover for you anymore").
- After you've told the person what you've seen and how you feel, allow them to respond.
- Listen with a non-judgmental attitude.
- Let the person know you are willing to help, but don't try to counsel them yourself.
- Give the person information, not advice.
- Encourage them to call, text, or chat with someone at wi-problemgamblers.org. It's free and confidential.

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