



EPIC
RISK MANAGEMENT

Gambling Awareness and Problem Gambling

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Gambling: An overview

On May 14 2018, the United States Supreme Court struck down the federal sports betting ban known as PASPA. Short for the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act, PASPA was passed in 1992 at the behest of former Senator Bill Bradley – who contended that legal betting represented an existential threat to the integrity of sports. It was the law of the land for 26 years, limiting legal sportsbooks to the state of Nevada, while prohibiting them everywhere else. In 2018, New Jersey joined Nevada and became the second state to legalize sports wagering; following their lead as of July 2020 another 17 states have since legalized sports wagering and many more are set to follow in suit.



Problem gambling, defined as gambling that disrupts or damages personal, family or recreational pursuits, is a growing issue; research suggests that for every 1 problem gambler, a further 10 people are directly affected.

The impact of problem gambling can be measured by harm; gambling related harms are the 'adverse impacts from gambling on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and society'.

APPROXIMATELY

7 MILLION

Americans suffer from

**PROBLEMATIC
GAMBLING**

BEHAVIOURS

(NCPG)



PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES

ARE 9x

more likely to become

PROBLEM GAMBLERS

THAN THE GENERAL PUBLIC

(Gambling prevalence research conducted in association with UCFB University)





Gambling related harm can be considered in the following ways:



Relationships

Affected relationships with family and friends; lack of trust, relationship breakdowns, emotional and social isolation.



Resources

Limited resources; economic instability (e.g. debt, bankruptcy), housing instability, work life impacted (reduced productivity, loss of employment), loss of opportunities.



Health

Poor mental health (e.g. anxiety, depression and suicide), physical ill-health (stress related physical symptoms e.g. migraines, IBS and insomnia).

The gambling cycle

Regular gambling can get out of hand and quickly change from an occasional harmless flutter, to something more serious which affects every part of your life.

We make 35,000 decisions each day. As an Athlete, some of those decisions have huge implications. Gambling is a source of distraction, making even the everyday decisions more complex.

Making the wrong decisions can lead to stress, especially if you make the wrong financial decision leading to debt or missed payments.

Stress can cause friction in relationships and all these issues lower self-esteem and confidence.

These issues will affect your performance in training and on the field. When you gamble, you may be risking much more than your financial stake, you could be putting selection at risk.



Gambling addiction and problem gambling



‘Addiction is the repeated involvement with a substance or activity, despite the substantial harm it now causes, because that involvement was (and may continue to be) pleasurable and/or valuable’

Reclassified as a full addiction in 2013, gambling addiction is a recognized behavioral addiction, akin to heroin misuse in its seriousness.

During gambling, the striatum – a part of the brain associated with reward – is stimulated, this is the same area of the brain that is stimulated by use of drugs, i.e. Cocaine, and sex. Research indicated that problem gamblers and drug addicts share similar predispositions for impulsivity and reward-seeking behaviors.

Research suggests that problem gamblers process reward and risk and current/long-term consequence differently to non-gamblers.

Leading addiction experts describe gambling addiction as the entraining of the brain to the desires of gambling; gambling addicts will perceive risk in a different way to non-gamblers.

Problem gambling

- ‘An urge to gamble continuously despite harmful negative consequences or a desire to stop’.
- Genetics: family history of problem gambling.
- Sportsperson/athlete: fuelled by victory.
- Poor mental health: anxiety, depression .
- Social wellbeing: employment, relationships, housing.
- Other addictions: e.g. dependency on alcohol or drugs.

Responsible gambling



A person may be at risk of developing a gambling problem if they answer yes to any of these questions:

1. Have you ever tried to stop, cut down or control your gambling?
2. Have you ever lied to your family, friends, or others about your gambling or how much you spend on gambling?
3. Do you spend a lot of time thinking about your gambling or future gambling?

Responsible gambling - exercising control and informed choice to ensure that gambling is kept within affordable limits of money and time, is enjoyable, in balance with other activities and responsibilities, and avoids gambling-related harm.

Affordability - Gambling within an individual's affordable limits of time, money and other resources.

Balance - Keeping gambling in balance with other activities, responsibilities and priorities.

Informed choice - Exercising informed choice over gambling, which includes understanding the associated risk and knowing the likelihood of losing and winning.

Control - Staying in control of gambling through self-regulating one's own gambling and knowing when to stop.

Enjoyment - Being motivated by gambling only for pleasure, entertainment and fun and not to win money.

Harm-free - The absence of gambling-related harm to self and others.



Harm minimization tips

Harm minimization tips - tips for responsible gambling if choosing to gamble.

Limit spending - Decide before you play how much you can afford to lose before quitting, and much you want to spend.

Limit time - Decide how much of your time you want to allow for gambling and stop when you reach that limit.

Make it a rule not to gamble on credit - Don't borrow to gamble, including writing I.O.U.s or getting cash advances on a credit card.

Consider any losses the cost of playing - Expect to lose and treat any winnings as a bonus.

Do not gamble if you are feeling angry, upset or lonely - Gambling is meant to be entertainment and should not replace coping skills.

Keep a balance in your life - Gambling should never stop you spending time with friends, family, work, or other positive activities.

Avoid trying to win back lost money - Chances are, the more you try to win back your losses, the bigger your losses will be.

Become educated about the warning signs of problem gambling - The more you know, the better (more informed) choices you can make.



Common fallacies

False beliefs and wrong ideas of problem gamblers – signs of irresponsible gambling

Normalizing behaviour – most problem gamblers overestimate the number of people who behave as they do, thinking ‘lots of other people gamble just as much as I do’.

Confusing often with memorable – wins are memorable as they are larger and less frequent than smaller, more regular losses.

Mistakenly feeling ahead – many gamblers remember their wins more keenly than their losses.

Superstitions – believing luck can be improved by repeating superstitious habits used to achieve wins previously, e.g. playing ‘lucky numbers’.

Ignoring the odds - forgetting the laws of averages.

Short winning streaks are common - long winning streaks are not.

Believing other people are luckier than them – people who appear to win more frequently will play more often and therefore lose more frequently, though they won’t brag about these!.

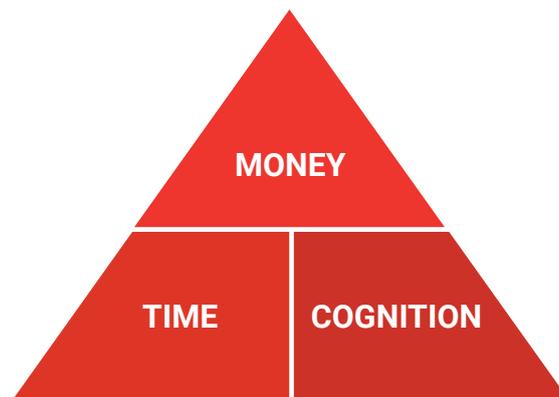
Predicting outcomes – random events are not influenced by past history, outcomes of dice, roulette wheels, slot machines and bingos cannot be predicted.

Early wins and rewards can encourage false hope – operators use these techniques to encourage play, offering frequent, but smaller wins to keep the player engaged, most problem gamblers will have experienced a significant win when they first start to gamble.

Claiming success and failure – people can take credit or attribute blame on things beyond their control.

Money doesn’t solve all problems.

The gambling triangle



If these three elements (money, time and cognition) occur at once, the problematic gambler will gamble and if you lose control of one it becomes a problem. When eliminating one of the three points, the gambler, even if willing to gamble, will not be able to do so.

For example you could:

Use a blocking software – limiting internet access, general blocking software allows you to block sites, set permissions and parental controls, gambling-specific blocking software blocks gambling sites.

Self-exclude – requesting a gambling operator excludes you from gambling with them for a set length of time, meaning you will be refused play with that operator/venue.

Change behaviors – engage in practical activities to occupy time (e.g. Housework, find positive motivators, things to look forward to – meals, family days out), plan your week (know how you're going to spend your time).

Manage your finances – set yourself spending limits to regain control of your spending.

Monitor your disposable income, e.g. pocket money/allowances, young people with higher levels of disposable income are more likely to gamble.

Support



If requiring sign-posting to other specialised services, please consider the following options:

National Council on Problem Gambling

A single national access point to local resources for those seeking help for a gambling problem, providing resources and referrals for all 50 states. Text and chat services available.
Website: <https://www.ncpgambling.org/>

Gamban

A self-exclusion tool that takes a multi-layered approach to blocking access to online gambling on all of your devices.
Website: <https://gamban.com/>

Gamblers Anonymous

Gamblers Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from a gambling problem.
Website: <http://www.gamblersanonymous.org/ga/locations>

A list of organizations that provide help directed at managing the consequences of problem gambling can be found at: <https://www.begambleaware.org/confidential-help/confidential-help-and-support-services/>



EPIC RISK MANAGEMENT

EPIC Risk Management is the world's leading independent gambling harm minimization consultancy. EPIC raises awareness of gambling-related harm in order to identify and mitigate the human, financial, brand and reputational risks that problem gambling can create.

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