

When Gambling Negatively Impacts your Life

There is a difference between recreational gambling and having a gambling disorder (also referred to as problem or compulsive gambling). People who gamble recreationally, can gamble occasionally, then stop. A person with a gambling disorder is not able to stop and may continue gambling even when they start losing all their money, jobs, family, and sometimes their lives.

It may be difficult for people who struggle with gambling, or their family and friends to know when recreational gambling turns into a problem. Some warning signs include:

- Always thinking about gambling
- Tardy for work or school, may be completely absent
- Skips payments on necessary bills
- Gets cash advances with credit cards
- Becomes distant with friends and family

If you are experiencing one or more signs, a [20 question survey](#) on the [Gamblers Anonymous website](#) can help you see if you may struggle with a gambling disorder. If you are, there is help and treatment available.

Steps to recovery include:

- Admitting there is a problem
- Setting goals and finding hobbies to replace gambling
- Getting help from support groups or treatment centers
- Relying on others to assist you through your journey

Tips for family and friends of somebody with a Gambling Disorder Do:

- Encourage them to seek help as recovery is possible
- Offer to attend meetings with them
- Take over financial responsibilities
- Confront the person about the situation
- Seek help and support for yourself

Do Not:

- Bail them out of jail
- Blame yourself for their habits
- Make excuses for the behavior
- Deny the problem

For information, referrals or support for gambling issues, call 211 or search our online database:

- [helplinecenter.org/211database](https://www.helplinecenter.org/211database)
 - Use the following keyword search terms:
 - Gambling Addiction Counseling
 - Gambling Addiction Support Groups
 - Gambling Addiction Hotlines
 - Gambling Self Exclusion Programs

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- [Gamblers Anonymous](#)
 - [Gam-Anon](#)
 - [National Council on Problem Gambling](#)
 - [South Dakota Lottery](#)
 - [Self-Transaction Exclusion Program \(STeP\)](#)

Disclaimer: This HelpSheet is developed by the Helpline Center. HelpSheets provide a brief overview of the designated topic. For more information, call 211 or text your zip code to 898211.

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