

If you are the spouse or family member 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 for help.**

Problem Gambling Helpline:

1-800-GAMBLE-5 (1-800-426-2535).

www.wi-problemgamblers.org

Free. Confidential. Always there.



WISCONSIN LOTTERY

**RESPONSIBLE
GAMBLING**



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HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE GAMBLER

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 lose as the cost of your entertainment
- Consider any money you win a bonus
- Set a dollar and time limit and stick to it
- Leave when you reach your limit, whether you're winning or losing
- Understand that you'll probably lose, and accept the loss as part of the game
- Don't borrow money to gamble
- Don't let gambling 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 gambling as a way to cope with emotional or physical pain
- Know the warning signs of problem gambling

HOW TO SPOT THE SIGNS

Would you know a gambling problem if you saw it in a friend, loved one, coworker, patient or student? It's important to know the signs because 3 percent of the population may have a problem, which puts them and their families at financial and emotional risk. Here are some warning signs:

- Preoccupied with gambling and unable to stop
- Bragging about gambling, exaggerating wins and minimizing losses
- Restless and irritable when not gambling
- Gambling to win back what was lost
- Borrowing money for gambling
- Lying to hide time spent gambling or unpaid debts
- Frequent unexplained absences

- Losing work time because of gambling
- Doing something illegal to get money for gambling
- Jeopardizing a significant relationship or job by gambling

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—and 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 nonjudgmental 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 the Problem Gambling Helpline

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