

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.



This brochure is provided
by the Wisconsin Lottery.



THERE'S LIFE BEYOND THE GAMES

WE'RE HERE TO HELP



**Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling
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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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