



## Problem Gambling Fact Sheet

- Problem Gambling is a **serious health issue** affecting between 80,000 and 160,000 Washington residents, or between 2 and 4 percent of adults and up to 8 percent of adolescents and young adults.
- Problem Gambling is a **behavior which causes disruption in any major area of life:** psychological, physical, social, or vocational.
- Like any progressive addiction, **symptoms can range from mild to severe.** The most serious form of the condition is called “pathological” or “compulsive” gambling.
- On average, problem gamblers say they began gambling at about **10 years of age.**
- **1 in 7** kids that gamble develop serious gambling-related problems.
- It is estimated that for every problem gambler at least **seven people** – wives, husbands, children, other family members, friends, employers, etc.-**are harmed** by gambling addiction (in Washington, between 560,000 and 1.12 million people).
- **One in 17 gamblers** has serious gambling-related problems. Problems can include losing more money than one can afford to, giving up or selling objects to pay for bets, being unable to stop betting and committing crimes to get money to pay off debts.
- Research has shown that problem gamblers have a **higher rate of suicide** than people struggling with alcohol or drug addiction.
- **Symptoms** of problem gambling include severe debt, hiding gambling activity, lying, borrowing, stealing, stress, broken relationships, depression, aggression, and more.
- Problem gambling has been called the “**hidden addiction,**” as there are few outward signs until it is too late.
- At some point in your lifetime, you **may know a problem gambler.**
- In 2008, Washington’s net gambling receipts **exceeded \$2 BILLION.**
- Comprehensive studies conducted in the late 1990s have shown that 96 to 98 percent of adults who gamble in Washington State **never develop** a gambling problem.  
*(Facts and statistics compiled from Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling, National Council on Problem Gambling, notagame.org)*





### **What are the odds:**

- Of a college player becoming a pro football player: **3,000 to 1**
- Struck by lightning: **280,000 to 1**
- Winning a Powerball jackpot: **140,000,000 to 1**

### **Adolescents gamble frequently on sports (Annenberg)**

- 26.4% males bet on sports monthly in 2008, 20.7% in 2007
- Male adolescent weekly sports betters increased from 5% in 2007 to 9.7% in 2008
- Youth have 2 – 3 times higher compulsive gambling rates than adults
- According to an ESPN survey, about 118 million Americans gambled on sports in some manner in 2008.

### **College athletes gamble on sporting events (NCAA)**

- 30% of male athletes bet on sports last year
- 26% of male athletes reported that they started gambling prior to High School, 66% began in High school.
- About 67% of all college students bet on sports.

### **College students and gambling**

- Researchers estimate that 75% of college students gambled during the past year.
- 6% percent of college students in the U.S have a serious gambling problem.
- The most frequently chosen gambling activity for college students is the lottery at 43% followed by 38% playing card games, and 23% at sport betting.

### **Student Athletes who met at least one criterion for gambling addiction were much more likely to:**

- Receive traffic tickets
- Buy on impulse
- Steal
- Have apparent with a gambling problem
- Have 5 or more drinks in one sitting
- Have multiple sex partners
- Engage in risky sexual behaviors
- Have friends who gamble

### **Athletes are at high risk for sports gambling**

- High levels of energy
- Unreasonable expectations of winning

### ***Signs & Symptoms of a Compulsive Gambler***

- Preoccupation with thoughts about gambling
- Asking for larger amounts of money or gambling more frequently
- Personality changes, such as irritability, restlessness and withdrawal
- Alienation from family and friends
- Inability to cut back or stop gambling
- Lying to friends and family about how much you gamble
- Borrowing to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by your gambling
- Thinking about or committing an illegal act to finance your gambling
- Suicidal thoughts