



FACT SHEET:

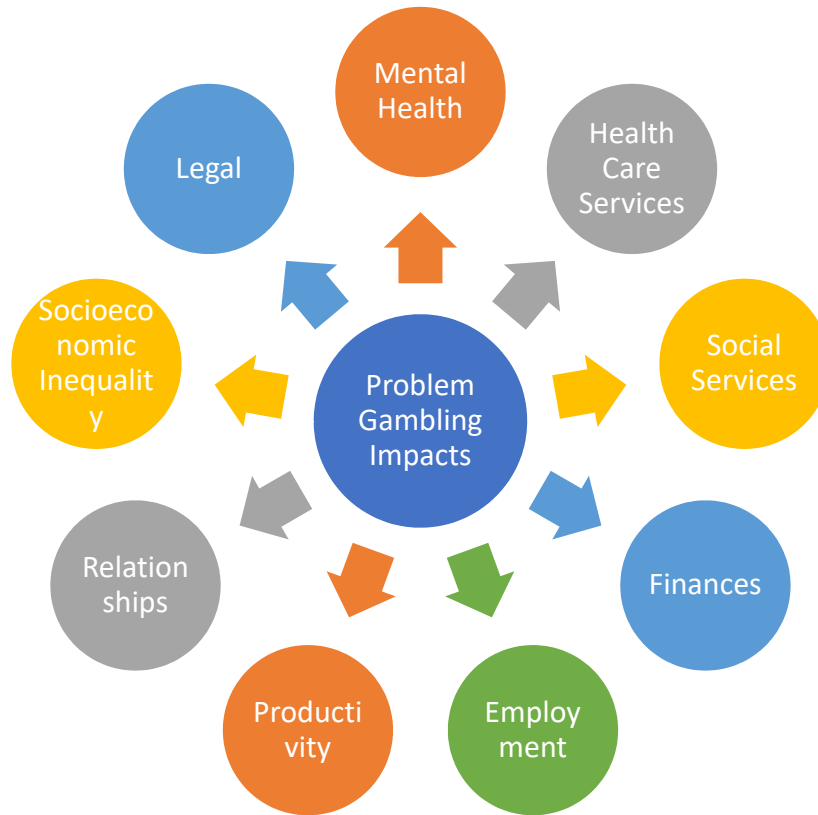
Problem Gambling is a Public Health Issue

Gambling Disorder is a Mental Health Diagnosis in the DSM-5

Substance Use Disorders are widely accepted as public health issues because of the wide-spread community impact. Did you know that Gambling Disorder is listed right alongside Substance Use Disorders in the DSM-5 (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*)? (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

Gambling and Problem Gambling

Gambling and gambling establishments can have community benefits, such as bringing in tourism, creating jobs, providing entertainment, and acting as economic engines in communities. These community benefits may also be enhanced by public health benefits, such as providing funding for much-needed health and wellness services. While most people can enjoy gambling socially and responsibly for recreation and entertainment, for some, it can start to cause problems in their lives and even become addicting. When gambling starts to cause problems for one person, it will affect many other people closely connected to them. Gambling Disorders occur in about 1%-4% of the general population. When problem gambling (those not yet meeting criteria for gambling disorder but are experiencing some level of problems) is included, those numbers can increase to 3%-6%.



Public Health and Social costs of Problem and Disordered Gambling can include:

- **Suicide** – Suicide rates for the general population can range from 1%-2%, it goes up to around 7%-9% for those with substance use disorders and can increase to more than 20% for those with gambling disorders. (Petry, 2005) That number can increase to 40% suicide attempt rates for veterans seeking treatment, and as high as 66% for suicidal thoughts. (HR, 1998) (Northstar Alliance, 2013)





- **Increased utilization of health care services** – Use of primary and emergency care due to health impacts caused by stress of gambling losses, relationship issues, and other health concerns attributable to stress and sedentary gambling for extended periods of time.
- **Increased utilization of social services** – Mental health and addiction treatment services at times are not covered by insurance and are paid for by state funding, grants, donations, or other community and tribal funding sources. Also, child welfare services may get involved because of gambling problems. (Williams, Rehm, & Stevens, 2011)
- **Bankruptcy** – Approximately 20%-30% of those with gambling disorders file for bankruptcy, compared to 4.2% of non-gamblers and low-risk gamblers. (Georgia State University, 2020) (Grinols, 2004) (National Opinion Research Center, 1999)
- **Debt** – Some have debt of hundreds of dollars, some thousands, some tens or hundreds of thousands, it's possible to accrue enough gambling debt that it cannot be paid back in their lifetime.
- **Employment and productivity costs** – Reduced time at work due to gambling or loss of job. Reduced productivity at work due to lack of concentration or harassment by collection agencies.
- **Family costs** – Family loss of economic lifestyle, savings, college fund, mortgage, property, mental health issues, and relationship costs. Rates of intimate partner violence and child abuse increase where problem gambling is present, especially when substance use is co-occurring. Children may act out or perform less well in school. Children may be left unattended at home or in vehicles due to long hours of care-giver's gambling.
- **Divorce** – Divorce rates for those with problem gambling and gambling disorder are higher than for the general population or low-risk gamblers. Broken homes leave a legacy of negative impacts on families. (Georgia State University, 2020) (Grinols, 2004) (National Opinion Research Center, 1999)
- **Socioeconomic Inequality** – Lower income people consistently contribute proportionately more of their income to gambling than do middle- and high-income groups. (Williams, Rehm, & Stevens, 2011)
- **Property loss** – For stolen, sold, or pawned property, costs of property crimes related to gambling are in the millions. (Georgia State University, 2020)
- **Lost and abused dollars** – May include non-reported theft crimes or "borrowed" money that is not returned. (Georgia State University, 2020)
- **Crime and correctional costs** – Crimes often associated with problem gambling are embezzlement, forgery, theft, insurance fraud, and domestic violence. Monetary costs spent on these crimes include policing, prosecution, incarceration, and probation. There is rarely ever treatment or recovery services offered. (Williams, Rehm, & Stevens, 2011)



Public Health Action Plan – Let's do this together! (Rugle, unknown)

- Increase public awareness of problem gambling.
- Identify problems early.
- Promote informed and balanced attitudes and behaviors toward gambling and gamblers.
- Make responsible gaming choices.
- Protect those most vulnerable from gambling-related harms.



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CALL. TEXT. CHAT. 24/7 WA State Problem Gambling Helpline:
1-800-547-6133 or chat at www.evergreencpg.org



**NATIONAL
PUBLIC
HEALTH
WEEK**

**Be informed, be involved.
National Public Health week occurs in
April each year.**

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