

Below are some examples of beliefs and attitudes blocking the road to recovery

‘The only reason I play is because I really enjoy gambling. I can quit anytime I want.’

‘The problem is I am broke; otherwise this would be harmless fun’

‘I don’t have to quit, I can control my gambling’

‘I’m getting professional help to make my family/employer happy; Otherwise I don’t have a gambling problem’

‘Wow, I can’t think of life without gambling’

‘There’s no way I can quit’

ADDICTION

WHEN YOU HAVE AN OVERWHELMING URGE TO GAMBLE

ENGAGE IN ANOTHER ACTIVITY

DELAY GAMBLING

REMEMBER HOW MUCH YOU HAVE LOST BECAUSE OF GAMBLING

Recovery from Gambling Addiction is an arduous process. Road to recovery and wellbeing is possible with strong determination and professional help!



GAMBLING

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ADDICTION: GAMBLING

For many people in society, different forms of gambling (buying lottery tickets, going to a casino, playing a few rounds of poker with friends, betting) are seen as a harmless and entertaining pastime. However, gambling becomes a problem when people exhibit addictive behaviors which result in the deterioration of psychological and physical wellbeing, social and professional life. Consequently, without professional help, problem behavior may turn into compulsive behavior.

DEFINITION OF GAMBLING ADDICTION

- a. **Problem Gambling Behavior:** The gambling behavior of the individual is not totally out of control but rather is a cause of constant problems in his/her life, impeding their personal, social and professional development. The individual is more and more preoccupied with gambling behavior, spending time and money on the activity and continuing gambling even after negative consequences.
- b. **Gambling Addiction:** Gambling Addiction is a type of impulse control disorder. Gambling addicts are aware of the harm gambling causes to their lives and the lives of their loved ones but despite this, they are unable to control the impulse to gamble. They want to play regardless of the consequences. Gambling becomes an activity done under any condition and any circumstance.

The Vicious Cycle of Gambling Behavior

The 1st phase of the vicious cycle: Winning

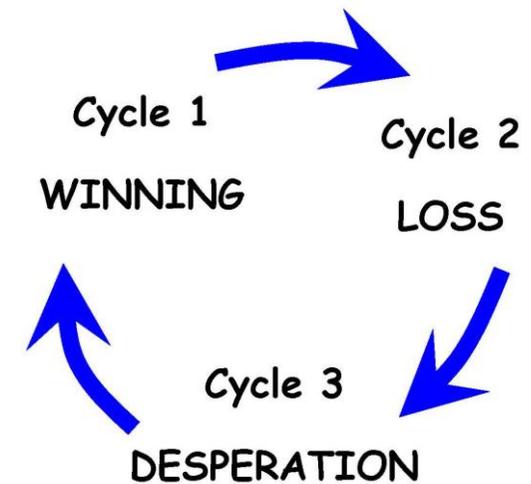
The individual enjoys some small and occasionally big winnings. His/her self image is positively influenced as a result of the new social connections he cultivates through gambling behavior. These occasional wins encourage the individual to gamble more frequently and in bigger amounts by taking risks and borrowing money.

The 2nd phase of the vicious cycle: Loss

During the beginning of this phase, some individuals take control of their losses. Yet some others develop an uncontrollable urge to get back the heavy losses that resulted from their risky behavior. Money lost gambling is borrowed money and the individual tries even harder to find new resources to continue gambling. He/she becomes socially isolated and loses self confidence. As a result, what starts out as an enjoyable activity turns into a compulsion and a means of escape from problems and anxiety.

The 3rd phase of the vicious cycle: Desperation

During this stage the individual experiences irritability, he/she is edgy and sleep deprived and is usually hyperactive. There is a loss of interest in food and in life in general. There is a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness.



What Are The Signs Of Gambling Addiction?

Unlike drug addiction, gambling does not have observable physical signs. However, there are certain signs that may alert the individual and his/her close relatives or friends:

- Giving priority to gambling and finding resource to gamble.
- An increase in the frequency of gambling.
- An urgency in the need to continue gambling, a gradual increase in the amount of bets and the risks taken.
- Spending less time with family and friends and spending this time on gambling.
- Continuing to gamble despite of the negative consequences (emotional distress, monetary losses, skipping school/work, and family problems).
- Experiencing intense pleasure in gambling; losing oneself in greed and feelings of superiority during this game of chance.
- Plunging into declared or hidden debts, cashing in of the life insurance, and taking cash advances on credit cards.
- Bragging about winnings while being secretive about losses.
- Mood swings (elation resulting from winnings, pensiveness resulting from losses)
- Hiding evidence of gambling debts. e.g.: changing mailing address, renting a post office box.
- Using gambling as a means of dealing with loneliness, anger and stress.