

# Momentum

Recognizing behavior addiction



**Federal Aviation Administration**

WorkLife Solutions

**1-800-234-1327**

For TTY Users: 1-800-456-4006

## Don't go it alone!

- ☑ Talking about and acknowledging a gambling problem in yourself or a loved one is an important first step in recovery. People with the illness often deny needing help.
- ☑ Many people have gambling problems; sharing experiences with others (via local or online support groups) can teach valuable coping skills.
- ☑ It's very important to seek help. Your program can provide you with confidential advice and counseling support for the serious problem of gambling/gaming addiction.

## Struggling with gambling, gaming addiction

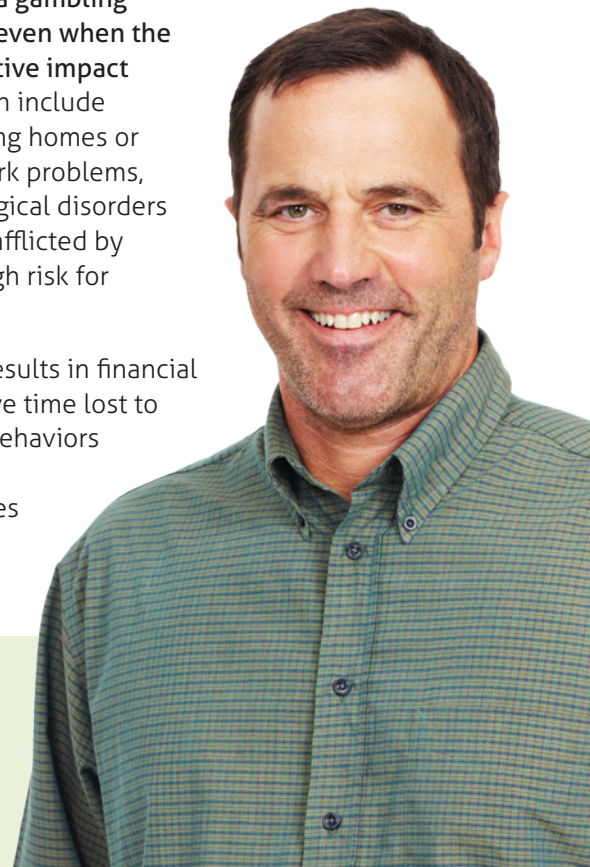
For most people, the activity of betting a little money on a sports team or the lottery or a hand of cards isn't more than an occasional, idle pastime. However, for some, the need to gamble or play video games becomes compulsive.

Today there are more ways to gamble than ever. Some of these include lotteries, sports wagering, countless online gaming sites, and the growing number of casinos throughout the nation. Problem gambling has a widespread and often destructive impact on Americans from all walks of life.

Most typically, an individual with a gambling problem continues to bet money even when the gambling is having a clearly negative impact on his or her life. Such impacts can include extensive financial losses (including homes or businesses), severe family and work problems, and the development of psychological disorders and other addictions. Individuals afflicted by problem gambling also are at a high risk for suicide.

Whether the behavior addiction results in financial distress from gambling or excessive time lost to compulsive video gaming, these behaviors can be successfully treated and controlled. This newsletter provides helpful resources.

A helpful resource is the National Council on Problem Gambling ([www.ncpgambling.org](http://www.ncpgambling.org)), which offers a confidential 24/7 free helpline, screening tools, local treatment locators and other gambling-focused assistance.



Log on to [MagellanHealth.com/member](http://MagellanHealth.com/member) today!

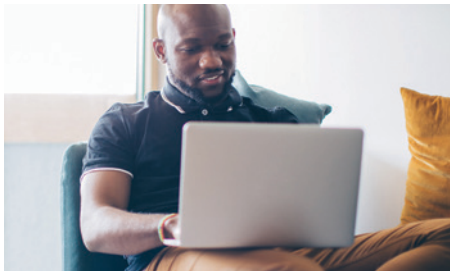
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# Symptoms of a problem

It's vital to recognize the warning signs of someone's problem gambling or gaming. Someone may have a problem if he or she:

- Becomes defensive if asked about excessive gambling or gaming—denying having a problem despite observable behaviors such as withdrawal, dishonesty and/or increasing secrecy.
- Seems preoccupied with gambling or gaming; has lost interest in other activities.
- Seems more restless, irritable, moody, angry or anxious when unable to gamble or play games.
- Is often short on money despite unchanged income and expenses; overdue bills may accumulate along with unexplained loans or cash advances.
- Becomes increasingly desperate for money to fund gambling, such as asking friends and family for money, or taking valuables that can be sold.
- After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even ("chasing" one's losses).
- Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money or spend more time gaming to achieve excitement.
- Continues gambling despite obvious, mounting problems with relationships, finances, career, education and/or health.

## Treatment works!



### Therapy

Problem gambling is now diagnosed and treated as a type of addiction like drug or alcohol dependence. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) focuses on changing unhealthy thoughts and beliefs about gambling. Through therapy, people learn how to fight gambling urges and solve the financial, work, and relationship problems the addiction can cause.



### Support

Participation in support groups such as Gamblers Anonymous helps gamblers and their families (via Gam-Anon Family Groups). Modeled after Alcoholics Anonymous, G.A. uses a 12-step model and a mutual-support approach to quitting and avoiding gambling impulses. Online self-help groups such as Smart Recovery® provide an alternative to 12-step programs.



### Medications

A doctor may prescribe medication as part of treatment, depending on the individual's psychological and medical status. Certain antidepressants and similar drugs have been used to treat the symptoms of problem gambling. However, studies are as yet few, and no medications have been specifically approved by the FDA for gambling addiction treatment.



**Webinar**—Join us Wednesday, March 8 to gain skills for bouncing back, via *Resiliency: Learn to Recover from Adversity, Grief and Trauma*. Register [here](#).