

Brief Problem Gambling Screen

From Volberg & Williams, 2011

Maryhaven – One More Chance

www.maryhaven.com/onemorechance



If a person responds “yes” to any of the following five questions, he/she should be assessed for gambling disorder.

1. In the past 12 months, would you say you have been preoccupied with gambling?
2. In the past 12 months, have you needed to gamble with larger amounts of money to get the same feeling of excitement?
3. In the past 12 months, have you often gambled longer, with more money or more frequently than you intended to?
4. In the past 12 months, have you made attempts to either cut down, control or stop gambling?
5. In the past 12 months, have you borrowed money or sold anything to get money to gamble?

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Reference Guide on Gambling Addiction

From Maryhaven – One More Chance
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Produced for Loved Ones, Community Leaders, Mental Health and Social Service Professionals by Maryhaven

What is gambling addiction?

Gambling addiction is the persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behavior, leading to clinically significant impairment or distress. It was officially classified as an addiction disorder in 2013.

Like chemical addiction, problem gamblers suffer from chemical imbalances in the brain related to their addictive behavior. Specialized cognitive behavioral therapy and peer-support efforts like Gamblers Anonymous can be effective in achieving and maintaining abstinence.

How will you find it?

Gambling addiction, often called the invisible addiction, can be difficult to identify. There are few to no obvious physical symptoms. However, families and communities clearly witness and suffer from its often devastating impacts, in the form of deception, theft, divorce, foreclosure, bankruptcy, even death.

Nearly half of all problem gamblers commit crimes to support their addiction. For example, two of Maryhaven’s recent clients were public officials who were convicted of theft in office.

Other facts about those addicted to gambling include:

- About one in five attempt suicide.
- Thirty percent of those addicted to drugs or alcohol are also gambling addicts, termed a “dual disorder.”
- Rates of domestic violence appear much higher in marriages struggling with gambling addiction. Between one quarter and one half of spouses of problem gamblers have been abused.
- Some develop the disorder due to depression and loneliness, for example older, divorced or widowed individuals seem at higher risk.
- Some gambling addictions result from the use of therapeutic drugs, such as those prescribed for restless leg syndrome or Parkinson’s disease (including Mirapex and Requip) and aripiprazole, commonly sold as Abilify and prescribed for bi-polar disorder, schizophrenia, depression, Tourette syndrome and, in some cases, autism.

No matter the cause, you will likely see the outcomes if the disease remains untreated.

How frequently does it occur?

A 2012 statewide study found approximately 550,000 Ohioans at risk, with 124,381 at moderate to high risk. In Franklin County, this translated into more than 150,000 at risk with nearly 54,000 at moderate to high risk. However, with the new flood of casinos, racinos and online gambling sites, the prevalence of gambling addiction may be rising.

How can Maryhaven help?

One of six evidenced-based agencies designated for gambling addiction treatment by the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, Maryhaven is the only provider to receive ADAMH Board of Franklin County funding for these services.

Our treatment includes cognitive behavioral therapy and motivational interviewing by certified gambling addiction counselors, along with referrals to Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon.

We also can treat family members negatively impacted by a loved one's gambling in individual and group settings. *ADAMH Board of Franklin County recently approved funding for family treatment, making us the only county in Ohio to offer services to both the gambling addict and his/her spouse or primary caregiver. All services are without cost to Franklin County residents who qualify.*

We also provide community education and prevention. Please contact us about briefings or training sessions for you and your professional team.

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Problem Gambling Warning Signs

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Are you concerned that you or someone you know has been or is currently a problem gambler? Here are some warning signs.

Do you:

- Find yourself reliving past gambling experiences, planning the next venture, or thinking of ways to get money to gamble?
- Need to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to feel the excitement?
- Become restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling?
- Gamble as a way of escaping from problems or relieving guilt, anxiety or depression?
- Often return another day in order to get even or chase your losses after gambling?
- Lie to family members, friends, therapist or others to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling?
- Participate in illegal activities (e.g. forgery, fraud or theft) in order to finance your gambling?
- Jeopardize or lose a significant relationship, job or educational or career opportunity because of gambling?
- Rely on others to provide money to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by gambling?
- Attempt to control, cut back or stop gambling but are unable to do so?

If you answer “yes” to:

1-2: You are at-risk.

3-4: You are a problem gambler.

5+: You are a compulsive gambler. Please consider seeking help by calling 614/324-5425.

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