

## Some Quick Facts About Gambling/Gamblers

- **What is Pathological Gambling?** Pathological gambling is being unable to resist impulses to gamble, which can lead to severe personal or social consequences.
- **What is Problem Gambling?** Problem Gambling is the increasing preoccupation with gambling, loss of control, restlessness or irritability when attempting to stop and continuation of the gambling behavior in spite of mounting, serious, negative consequences.
- **Are Pathological and Problem Gambling similar to other addictive disorders?** They are similar, but not the same as, other addictive disorders. Problem gambling counseling requires a unique set of clinical skills. Much of this difference revolves around the specific crises faced by pathological gamblers and their families – the depression and suicide danger found in many consumers, the financial issues that require immediate and skillful handling, and the difficulty of engaging and retaining these consumers in treatment.
- **Is recovery from problem gambling possible?** Absolutely – treatment success rates for problem gambling are generally 50-60%, exceeding even the treatment success rate for heart disease. Unfortunately, due to stigma, only about 3% of problem gamblers will seek treatment in any given year.
- The estimated national social cost to families and communities from bankruptcy, divorce, job loss, and criminal justice costs associated with problem gambling is **\$6.7 billion**, according to the National Council on Problem Gambling.
- Problem gamblers can be of either gender and from any ethnic, social, or economic group. Over 80% of adults nationally have gambled in the past year, at least 15% in the past week.
- An individual who has had a problem with any substance is at a higher risk for developing a gambling problem. Literature consistently reports that 30% of persons being treated for substance disorders have a co-occurring diagnosis of compulsive gambling, yet the compulsive gambler is often more difficult to identify than the substance abuser.
- People with serious mental/emotional disorders (especially depression) have a higher risk for compulsive gambling.
- High school and college students have a higher rate of compulsive gambling than the general adult population.
- Compulsive gamblers wager on any form of legal and/or illegal gambling, including the area of business and the financial markets.

- Compulsive gamblers usually deny they have a problem and wait until the situation is desperate before seeking help. Family and friends are encouraged to seek assistance for themselves and information regarding how to increase the likelihood the compulsive gambler will seek help.
- Studies of Gambler's Anonymous members report that approximately 50% of the participants had stolen to gamble and more than one-third had been arrested. Embezzlement, check forgery, stealing credit cards, fencing stolen goods, tax evasion, insurance fraud, employee theft, and fraud are common gambling related crimes.