

STUDENTS KNOW THE LIMIT



A 16-year old was spending all of his lunch money and allowance to play poker. He told his mother that he wanted to stop, but he didn't feel he could. She called the Council Helpline for advice.

SETTING GAMBLING LIMITS

The vast majority of people can gamble without problems. They understand that gambling is about chance and don't go to extremes to try to "beat the system." People who gamble for fun set limits on how much time and money they will spend and stick to their plan.

However, some people, even after setting limits, are unable to control their gambling. When losing, they become emotionally caught up in trying to win back losses. When ahead, they become overconfident and try to win even more.

- Studies show that students have a problem gambling rate of 10-17%, or two to three times higher than the general population.
- At least 78% of all Massachusetts youth have placed a bet by age 18. This does not take into account the tens of thousands of children who are negatively impacted by their parent's gambling.

Gambling is glamorized through advertising, publicity about large jackpots and payoffs, and the popularity of televised poker games. While it's understood that young people enjoy participating in risk-taking activities like gambling, there are many reasons why gambling can be problematic for students including the fact that most students have limited incomes, and a win can create the illusion that gambling is an easy and safe way to make money.

Society is not educated about the risks of gambling to the same extent as the risks of alcohol and drug use.

EXCEEDING THE LIMIT

Problem gambling has been called the "invisible addiction" because it has no easily noticeable signs, which can enable someone to cover up the extent of a very serious problem. By the time the problem surfaces, the impact on both the individual and the family can be devastating.

Experience demonstrates that people who have gambling problems are not just risking money. They risk losing relationships with family and friends, and can jeopardize their schooling, jobs, freedom and emotional wellbeing. Gambling is not risk-free.

"I just didn't know a kid could get into so much trouble with gambling," said a father who called the Council Helpline. He expressed that he was considering taking out a second mortgage on his home to cover his son's debts.

STAYING WITHIN THE LIMIT

It is possible to lessen the risk of developing a gambling problem by becoming aware of how to recognize signs and symptoms.

Signs of Problem Gambling in Students

- Frequent talk about gambling
- Spending more time or money on gambling than can be afforded
- Borrowing money to gamble
- Encouraging or challenging others to gamble
- Selling sports betting cards or organizing sports pools
- Possession of gambling paraphernalia such as lottery tickets or poker items
- Missing or being late for school, work or family activities due to gambling
- Feeling sad, anxious, fearful or angry about gambling losses

An 18-year old college freshman was arrested for breaking into a dwelling to steal money to finance his gambling. He called the Council and said,

“The worst part of the whole thing is that I got kicked out of school and lost my football scholarship.”

Eight Things That Students, Parents, Teachers and Coaches Can Do:

- 1 Include problem gambling prevention in your school's health or math curricula
- 2 Establish school and team policies to include gambling guidelines
- 3 Reconsider giving lottery tickets as gifts to students
- 4 Reconsider gambling as a fundraising activity
- 5 During discussions or presentations about tobacco, alcohol or drug addiction, include problem gambling
- 6 Make posters or literature available that demonstrate the risks of student gambling
- 7 Recognize problem gambling as a disorder that affects the whole family
- 8 If you are a student with a gambling problem or know someone with a gambling problem, talk to someone you trust or call the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling's 24-Hour, confidential, Helpline at 800-426-1234

800-426-1234
www.masscompulsivegambling.org

RESOURCES FOR HELP

The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling is a private, non-profit health agency dedicated to reducing the social, financial and emotional costs of problem gambling. The Council provides information, education, advocacy and referral services for problem gamblers, their loved ones and the greater community.

The Council offers several resources for people interested in student gambling including:

- Trainings for your school •
- The Council Helpline – (800-426-1234) •
- The Council Website – www.masscompulsivegambling.org •
- Resource Library •
- Curriculum on math and problem gambling prevention •

 Massachusetts Council on
Compulsive Gambling
We understand the problem. We can help.

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