

The Problem

Compulsive gambling is an illness that causes us to experience irresistible urges to gamble. We often build a fantasy life filled with dreams of what we will buy with our winnings. We may even daydream of buying elaborate gifts for those we love. However, there never seems to be enough winnings to make even our smallest dream come true and gambling therefore, compounds our frustrations. For us, money earned through gambling may be considered almost sacred and to be use only to place more bets with in hopes of greater winnings.

In spite of mounting financial losses and escalating emotional turmoil, we continue to believe we can control or restrain our gambling activities. However, our personal experience confirms that we are incapable of controlling the impulse to gamble through either internet gambling sites &/or casinos, racetracks, sports, scratch cards, poker &/or roulette games and a myriad of other gambling outlets available to us today.

It is important to note that we can have a problem without being totally out of control. *Problem gambling* is any gambling behavior that disrupts our lives. If we are preoccupied with gambling, spending more and more time and money on it, chasing losses, or gambling despite serious consequences, we have a gambling problem.

Ask yourself these questions to see if you are at risk:

Do you think about gambling every day?

Do you chase your losses?

Do you feel depressed because of your gambling?

Do you hide your gambling from people close to you?

Do you borrow money so you can gamble?

Do you argue with family or friends over money &/or gambling?

Do you often gamble until your last dollar is gone?

Do you let bills go unpaid because you use the money for gambling?

Do you find you are not talking honestly about how often you gamble?

Do you find you are not honest about how much you spend gambling?

Do you gamble to escape problems at home, emotional pain or reality?

If the answer is “yes” to any of these questions, chances are you have a gambling problem or addiction.

In deciding whether or not to get help, you may also wish to consider with what you are truly gambling:

Are you gambling with the feelings of those you love most?

Are you gambling with your family's security and happiness?

Are you gambling with the roof over your children's heads?

Are you gambling with money that you can't afford to lose?

Are you gambling with the trust others have in you?

Are you gambling with your future?

The Solution

Many of us have no problem quitting gambling but the problem is making a permanent commitment to stay away from all things related to gambling. Maintaining recovery for problem gambling and gambling addiction is possible! When we admit we are out of control and our lives have become unmanageable we are ready to accept help.

For Those of Us Who Struggle, Help May Be Found in The Following Ways:

- Commit to weekly Recovery meetings & Step Studies through Celebrate Recovery &/or Gambling Anonymous. (See gam-anon.org).
- Form an Accountability TEAM that includes a Sponsor and Accountability Partners. When experiencing the urge to gamble: *stop* and call someone, *think* about the consequences, and *find* something else to do immediately.
- Give over control of the finances (at least early in our recovery) to someone trustworthy. Gambling cannot occur without money. Get rid of all credit cards, let someone else be in charge of the money, have the bank make automatic payments, and keep a limited amount of cash on hand at all times.
- Read and learn about gambling addiction.
- Commit to understanding the root of the compulsion to gamble and be willing to experience grief, forgiveness, and acceptance.
- Commit to seeking God through daily prayer and Scripture reading.
- Avoid tempting environments and learn what triggers our compulsions. Without a game or activity to bet on there is no opportunity to gamble. Tell the gambling establishments we frequent that we have a gambling problem and ask them to restrict us from betting at their casinos and establishments. Block online gambling sites on our computers, iPads and cell phones.
- Gambling cannot occur if we don't have the time; schedule enjoyable recreational time that has nothing to do with gambling.

**If these approaches do not prevent relapse we may need to seek out an intensive inpatient treatment facility that specializes in compulsive gambling.*

Small Group Guidelines:

1. Please keep your sharing focused on your own thoughts and feelings. Limit your sharing to 3 to 5 minutes.
2. No cross talk please. Cross talk is when two individuals engage in conversation, excluding all others. Each person is free to express his or her feelings without interruptions.
3. We are here to support one another, not 'fix' one another.
4. Anonymity and confidentiality are basic requirements. What is shared in the group stays in the group. The only exception is when someone threatens to injure themselves or others.
5. Offensive language has no place in a Christ-centered recovery group.

~ There is Always HOPE for Healing from all of life's Hurts, Habits & Hang-ups ~

We Meet Every Monday

5:30-6:15 pm	Dinner in Hillside Café
6:30-7:30 pm	Large Group Meeting (Worship, Lesson or Personal testimony)
7:30-8:20 pm	Open Share Small Groups
8:30-9:00 pm	Cross Talk Café (Fellowship, coffee, dessert)

GAMBLING

The Problem and Solution



CELEBRATE RECOVERY

EVERY MONDAY NIGHT
HENDERSON HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH
1100 E. I-35 Frontage Rd., Edmond
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