

FACT SHEET ON GAMBLING ADDICTIONS



2000 House of Delegates:

In Support of Public Awareness for Pathological Gambling as an Addiction and Healthcare Issue.

- Historically, gambling has existed in almost every known culture and all levels of society in the United States.
- There are 75% to 90% of Americans that report gambling to some extent.
- Pathological gambling is recognized as a disorder of impulse control in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual and those in the gambling field recognize it as an addiction.
- Four categories of gamblers are identified:
 - **Social gambler:** bets occasionally such as wagering on a horse race, or playing bingo.
 - **Problem gambler:** incurs financial losses as well as psychological and social stresses, but is able to exert some degree of control over time and money spent.
 - **Pathologic Gambler:** engages in progressive gambling pursuits that disrupt personal, family, and work life and results in extensive debt.
 - **Compulsive gambler:** problem and/or pathologic gambling.
- Problem or pathological gambling is twice as common in men than women and more prevalent among nonwhites, those under 30 years of age, the unmarried those with less than a high school education and individuals with yearly incomes less than \$25,000.
- there are four phases of gambling addiction:
 - **Phase 1** begins with casual or social gambling, there is usually a big win, and the gambler becomes convinced that success can continue.
 - **Phase 2** occurs when losses exceed winnings, gambling continues to recoup losses.
 - **Phase 3** finds the gambler in desperate straits, illegal activities increase, personal health is ignored. Suicide thoughts and actions may be seen as the ultimate solution to the desperation.
 - **Phase 4** the giving up or hopeless phase. Gamblers realize they can not win, but they cannot resist the impulse to gamble, and continue for the excitement of the activity.
- Problem and pathological gambling affect the physical and psychological health of the individual gambler as well as the family and other social contacts.
- The Nevada Gaming Commission adopted the NGC Regulation 5.170 that requires all gaming licensees to post or provide written material concerning the nature and symptoms of problem gambling and also the toll free number for Gamblers Help line.
- NGC Regulation also requires approved training for all employees who are in direct contact with gaming customers.

WHAT CAN STUDENT NURSES DO?

- Support public awareness education, treatment, prevention and research for pathological gambling.
- Encourage constituents in states with legalized gambling to explore strategies and to support development of guidelines similar to those in Nevada.
- Teach others about gambling as an addiction, focusing on factors associated with problem and pathological gambling along with the physical and psychological health effects of this problem.
- Increase public awareness which is the first step in prevention and early detection of gambling problems.

RESOURCES

1. Problem Gamblers Help Line
1-800-522-4700
2. South Oaks Gambling Screen
Dr. Sheila B. Blume
South Oaks Foundation
400 Sunrise Highway
Amityville, NY 11701
3. Gamblers Anonymous
1-213-386-8789
4. Gam-Anon
1-718-352-1671