



HORIZON
HEALTH SERVICES

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What are
the odds
you or
someone
you know
has a
gambling
problem?



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Nearly 90 percent of Western New Yorkers have participated in some form of gambling. Gambling is defined as any activity (e.g. a game of chance or skill) where an item of value is placed at risk in an attempt to gain something of greater value. If you or someone you know exhibits any or all of the following symptoms, a gambling disorder may exist:

- Lost time from work or school because of gambling
- Gambling making your home life unhappy
- Guilt, remorse or trouble sleeping due to gambling
- Gambling until your last dollar is gone
- Gambling to get money to pay debts
- Borrowing money or selling things to finance your gambling
- Gambling for longer than planned
- Gambling to escape worry, troubles, frustrations or disappointments
- A strong urge to gamble more after winning

Fortunately, programs for problem gamblers and their families are available at Horizon Health Services.

For most people, gambling is an occasional recreational pursuit and does not cause a problem. For some, however, it is a debilitating compulsion affecting every area of their lives. In 1980 the American Psychiatric Association incorporated "pathological gambling" into its diagnostic and statistical manual, legitimizing disordered gambling as a psychiatric illness, a "disease of impulse control."

Pathological gambling, or compulsive gambling, is a progressive behavior disorder in which a person has an uncontrollable preoccupation and urge to gamble. This results in excessive gambling and the loss of both time and money. Pathological gambling can disrupt and destroy the gambler's interpersonal and family life, financial security, work and/or educational pursuits.

The addition of several gambling facilities in Western New York has made the problem more apparent; however, the lottery, bingo games, sports and even the Internet have provided opportunities for people to get seriously involved in gambling.

The "hidden illness:"

There are no observable symptoms with compulsive gambling. There is no telltale smell on the breath, no stumbling when walking or slurring of speech. Yet, the effects of compulsive gambling can be just as devastating as alcohol or drug addiction.

As losses increase and negative consequences occur, the gambler borrows money to "invest" in gambling in the hope of breaking even. The need arises to hide new losses and borrow more money to make up the difference. At this point, lies, loan fraud, absenteeism, family disputes and job changes become common signs of desperation.

The end result is the eventual destruction of the gambler's personal life, family relationships and career.



Treating the addiction.

The process of treating someone for a gambling addiction is very similar to treatment for a drug addiction. Many of the same techniques are used.

Horizon provides individual, group and family/significant other gambling recovery services for persons presenting with pathological gambling and co-occurring substance abuse. Our services meet the needs of these consumers and their families/significant others by interrupting the cycle of compulsive gambling.



If you are or a family member is in need of Horizon's gambling recovery services, please call us today at 716.831.1800 or visit www.horizon-health.org.