

What accounts for the trend in youth gambling?



College students today are amongst the first generation of youth to grow up in a culture of widespread legalized gambling. The increased prevalence rate among our youth is the product of four major elements coming together to create an environment conducive to gambling related problems:

- Greater accessibility to gambling venues due to changes in U.S. laws
- Major advancements in technology have allowed Internet gambling to come right into the home
- Greater accessibility to money: easier access to credit cards and increased methods of payment
- Culture influences: Faster is now viewed as better, we want fast food, faster Internet, faster wealth etc.

Financial Health



- On average, college students spend about \$8,000 annually on discretionary items.
- Most undergraduate students graduate with close to \$22,000 in debt.
- It is estimated that at age 18 only 53% of college students have a credit card compared to 93% at age 22. The average number of credit cards at age 18 is two and that jumps to five at age 22.



The Bluff Factor



Problem gambling is known as a silent addiction and gamblers can be very secretive and skilled at cloaking their actions and troubles. Don't be fooled and remember to keep the following in your back pocket...

Most Observable Warning Signs for Campus Professionals to Watch for



- Frequent unexplained absences from school or work
- Sudden drop in grades/pattern of poor test results
- Withdrawn from friends or family and other typical obligations
- Noticeable changes in behavior (e.g. mood swings, behavior problems etc.)
- Decline in health: increased symptoms of depression/neglecting personal hygiene
- Unusual interest in newspapers and magazines about stocks, sport scores and point spreads.
- Borrowing money or pawning personal/stolen items
- Increasing difficulty in paying bills/unexplained debt/need for emergency loans

Visit gambling.missouri.edu for more warning signs

A few questions to ask if you suspect a problem



- Are your financial concerns related to any gambling debt?
- Do you ever feel depressed, anxious or lose sleep over money you have lost?
- Do you ever prevent friends/family from knowing how much or how long you have gambled?
- For more in depth screening tools... please visit gambling.missouri.edu

Who is Most at Risk?



Male college students, who are achievement oriented, risk takers, weekly or daily user of alcohol or drugs, have relatively high disposable incomes and were raised by a parent who frequently gambles. However, not every student in danger will match the profile above. Women are now being aggressively targeted by the gaming industry. Become aware of the warning signs so you can assist any student in need.

Understanding the Problem



Action vs. Escape: The action seeker is drawn to the adrenaline rush that gambling can produce and tends to gravitate more toward 'skilled like' games, such as poker.

The escape seeker is drawn to 'mindless' types of games (e.g. slot machines), where they can become absorbed and lost in the process, temporarily forgetting about their problems. The line between action and escape can easily be blurred and people can use gambling for both purposes at different times and with different games.

Process of Addiction

Winning phase: the gambler experiences a big win or a series of wins that leaves him/her with unreasonable optimism that their winning will continue.

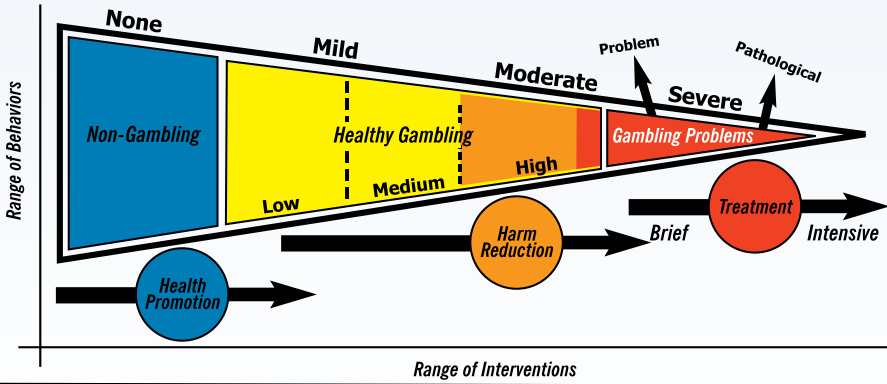
Losing phase: the gambler typically begins gambling alone, thinking more about gambling and borrowing money, legally or illegally. They tend to start lying to family & friends, becoming increasingly irritable and restless as well as chasing their losses.

Desperation phase: there is a significant increase in time spent gambling, accompanied by remorse, guilt, blaming and alienation from friends and family. Problem gambling often leads to serious consequences such as severe debt, criminal behavior to pay for gambling habits and suicidal thoughts as a way to escape the turmoil.

Co-morbidity and Suicide



- About 50% of problem gamblers also experience problems with alcohol or drugs during the same stage in their life.
- People coping with addictive problems frequently substitute one addiction for another and should be educated in ways to avoid cross addiction and evaluated for suicidal ideation.
- It is estimated that 25% of problem/compulsive gamblers attempt suicide in the U.S.



Ideas and information above are color coded and correspond with the diagram to the left.

For more details, see gambling.missouri.edu!

Ideas to Help



Encourage Students, Faculty and Staff to set personal guidelines...

- Set limits on how long and how often they play
- Set spending limits before gambling and avoid chasing losses
- Expect to lose: treat the money gambled with as a cost of entertainment and winnings as a bonus.
- Keep gambling just a game by creating balance. Gambling should be one of many social activities individuals engage in.
- Avoid gambling as a way to cope with emotional or physical pain.
- Become educated about the warning signs of an addiction.

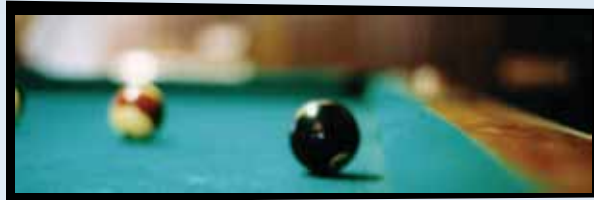
Recommendations for Prevention on Campuses



- Introduce gambling concerns at new student and parent orientations such as summer or fall orientations.
- Provide educational materials to students, residential hall coordinators, financial aid workers, advisors, counselors and other professional staff on campus.
- Review/create institutional policies and publish them in staff and student handbooks.
- Consider curtailing campus sponsored casino nights and poker tournaments
- Involve counseling service professionals and consider creating recovery policies
- Use health screening surveys to gauge gambling behavior in the student population.

Any gambling behavior that causes disruption in major areas of life such as vocational, personal, social or psychological is considered problematic.

This brochure provides educators, counselors and student support professionals with basic information about gambling and college students including risks, prevalence rates and prevention ideas.



Why You and Your Campus Should be Concerned

- It has been estimated that between 2-6% of adolescents presently have a serious gambling problem and another 10-14% are at risk of developing one.
- 42% of college students in the U.S. report having been involved in some form of gambling in the past year and 5-10% report being involved on a weekly basis.

● Studies suggest that between 3-8% of college students met criteria for problem or pathological gambling.

● It is estimated that each problem gambler negatively impacts 10 to 17 people around them, including family, friends, employers, professors, mentors and the government.

Among Missouri college student gamblers, it was found that...

- As gambling frequency increases, rates of regular alcohol use, binge drinking and risky sexual behavior also significantly increase.
- Suicidal thoughts significantly increased as frequency of gambling behavior also increased.

What is Gambling?

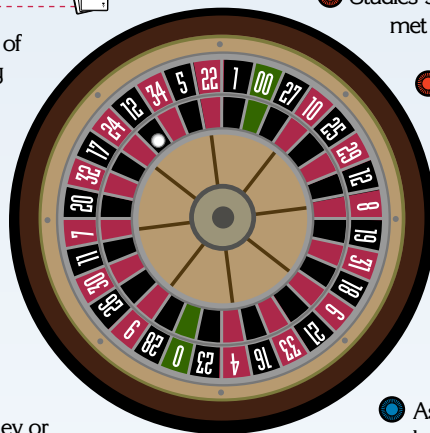
Gambling is the act of wagering (risking money or personal belongings) on a game's outcome that is uncertain or depends on chance or 'skill'. Some examples include lottery, at home poker, office pools, betting with friends, bingo, casino gaming and Internet gaming.

Low Risk Gambling...

Represents informed choice on the probability of winning, wagering in sensible amounts, setting limits on time and spending and an overall pleasurable experience in a legal and safe environment.

Problem Gambling...

Is a progressive behavioral addiction where an individual has an uncontrollable preoccupation and urge to gamble and an emotional dependence on it. It is characterized by increased preoccupation, a need to wager more money or more often, chasing losses, restlessness or irritability and a continuation of gambling behavior despite negative consequences. It can also resemble and/or produce anxiety, depression and sleep disturbances.



Do you know what % of your student population falls in each section below?



Only 82% of college campuses in the U.S. conducted health surveys and out of that only 5% ask about gambling behavior.

Information & Help for Missouri Residents

Partners In Prevention gambling resources:
<http://gambling.missouri.edu>

Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling:
www.888betsoff.com, 1-888-BETSOFF (1-888-238-7633)
 Free counseling available

Other Websites & Contacts

Friends 4 Friends
<http://www.friends4friends.ca>

National Center for Responsible Gaming
<http://www.ncrg.org>

National Council on Problem Gambling
<http://www.ncpgambling.org>

Minnesota Problems Resource Center
<http://www.miph.org/gambling>

Gamblers Anonymous
<http://www.gamblersanonymous.org>



For content references, please visit gambling.missouri.edu

The University of Missouri has received a grant from the National Center for Responsible Gaming.

For further information on this and other wellness issues facing college students contact:

Partners in Prevention
<http://pip.missouri.edu>
 (573) 882-4634



Partners in Prevention



<http://gambling.missouri.edu>

Keeping the Score presents...



Information every educator, counselor and student support professional should know about college gambling.

This publication is brought to you by Partners in Prevention, a coalition of the thirteen public universities in Missouri.



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