

Introduction: Types of Gambling Addictions

It is important to pay attention to any changes in behavior, as many people can be in the problem stage of a gambling addiction, where intervening can help avoid a full-on gambling addiction.

Source: <https://www.addictions.com/news/9-warning-signs-of-a-gambling-addiction/>

Problem Gambling

Gamblers who are not completely under the control of their addiction, but who still engage in gambling habits that disrupt their life (such as frequently lying to loved ones about how much money they lose) are referred to as problem gamblers. Some people exist at this low level of behavioral disorder for extended periods of time, even forever, but for many, problematic gambling will rapidly progress to a more dangerous level of addiction.

Binge Gambling

This type of gambling addict may go through long phases where they don't gamble at all and appear to be in complete control. They may even refrain from gambling most of the time. On the rare occasions that the binge gambler does gamble, however, the addiction will surface through behaviors such as gambling for long stretches without sleep as they chase losses, unable to stop now that they've started

Compulsive Gambling

This type of gambler is the most extreme form of the addiction. Compulsive, or pathological, gamblers are consistently unable to control their gambling behavior, no matter how high the risk or how severe the consequences. Their lives continue to revolve around gambling, no matter how much they've already lost, financially, emotionally or psychologically.

Common Gambling Addictions



Kinds of Treatments Available

There are many gambling addiction treatment options available, and many levels of care to choose from. Compulsive gamblers can check into an inpatient treatment program, take part in an outpatient program, or get the bulk of their therapy through support groups such as Gamblers Anonymous, a program based on the 12-steps that originated with Alcoholics Anonymous.

Medication

Early results from studies done on medications to treat gambling addiction seem to show that antidepressants and opioid antagonists like naltrexone can be very helpful to some compulsive gamblers.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

CBT is a form of therapy that helps patients free themselves from negative and destructive beliefs and behaviors, while learning healthier thought patterns and beneficial coping techniques to help them deal with triggers that would have previously led them to gamble.