

SOURCE LINES

GAMBLING: IS SOMEONE IMPORTANT TO YOU AT RISK?

In this second newsletter devoted to the problem of gambling we take a look at some of the warning signs that may indicate a gambling problem for an individual important to you. They could be a family member, friend, or co-worker or colleague.



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In the previous newsletter it was pointed out

that people with addiction problems notoriously lie to themselves and to others. They are also adept at making those who care for them feel guilty about confronting them, or doubt their instincts when things don't seem to add up. Initially, their explanations may seem reasonable, but don't hold up to evidence. As a respected colleague often says: *"once is a mistake, twice may be a coincidence, three times is a problem"*

The **Centre for Addictions and Mental Health** highlights some possible warning signs to spot a gambling problem in an individual close to you.

How the person gambling handles money:

- There is less money available, although income has not changed, and no other explanation at hand
- Debts are building up
- Money has gone missing from a bank account or wallet, or valuables have disappeared
- Spending priorities or habits have changed
- A person holds a second job, but there is no change in their finances
- RRSPs, insurance plans, etc., have been cashed in or allowed to lapse
- A person commits criminal acts to obtain money



Other behaviours:

- Avoids family functions or other social events
- Neglects responsibilities or makes excuses
- Arrives late for work or other commitments
- Disappears for large blocks of time
- Spends a lot of time on sports statistics, racing forms, or phone calls
- Appears deceptive or secretive about their behaviour, particularly around money
- Appears to be edgy, reactive or defensive
- Changes their sleep, eating or sexual relationship patterns

If concerned about your adolescents having a gambling problem, watch for the following:

- Missing money without an explanation
- Skips school
- Borrows or steals money from friends or family
- Sometimes has large amounts of unexplained cash
- Is preoccupied with video arcades, computer internet gambling sites,
- Has left a trail of internet visits or credit card charges to gambling sites
- Has a fake ID, casino entry card, race track or ProLine receipts among belongings

If concerned about gambling related problems contact your E.A.P. at 1-800-394-8015 or 416-234-1316 or the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health at 416-535-8501.

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