

Problem Gambling & the Military

Our country's military members are often faced with unimaginable stress – whether they are currently serving active duty or have been retired for years. Active service members and veterans are considered a high risk group for mental health disorders and addiction, including problem gambling.

Gambling is not an unusual pastime while serving. The Department of Defense maintains more than 3,000 slot machines at overseas military bases. Our service men and women often play bingo, visit nearby casinos and participate in social gambling across the United States and overseas. So when is it considered a problem, and why should we be particularly concerned about this group?

Risk factors for gambling addiction include those who are prone to risk taking or sensation seeking, using or misusing substances, stress, depression and PTSD – all factors known to be more likely among military personnel. Of particular concern is that 40% of veterans seeking treatment for a gambling problem report a past suicide attempt.



**Council on
Compulsive Gambling
of Pennsylvania**

Help is available.

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Several factors contribute to active duty military and veterans developing gambling related issues.

For many active duty military personnel, gambling is used as an escape, brought on by the following:

- Changes in physical or mental health
- Increase of unstructured time after retirement
- Loss of a spouse or other loved one
- A limited social network upon returning home
- Boredom & Isolation

Warning Signs of a Gambling Problem

- Increased gambling frequency & preoccupation
- Gambling for longer than intended
- Lying about where lost money has gone
- Borrowing in order to fund gambling/pay debts
- Distancing or isolating from friends/family
- Unable to pay bills or cover expenses
- Efforts to stop/cut back are unsuccessful

Getting Help for Active Duty Military

Several counseling options exist in Pennsylvania for those whose lives are impacted by gambling. Also, support groups, such as Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon, welcome people of all backgrounds.

What Help Is Available?

If you think you, or someone you know, may have an issue related to gambling, please call the 24/7 toll-free Pennsylvania Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLER®.

Help is just a phone call away.

For information about ways to access help, please call 1-800-GAMBLER® or visit www.pacouncil.com



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