

From Female Gamblers . . .

"I couldn't think of one day of life without gambling. Even when I didn't gamble that day, my world revolved around it. And I got so tired and depressed and so emotionally drained. Everything had long since just disappeared from my life. Relationships, friendships, everything. I had no friends except the people I knew who gambled."

— Kathy

"In all honesty, I went out gambling when my husband was drunk so we wouldn't fight."

— Susan

"I lost my job, and I am facing possible prosecution for embezzling over four million dollars to finance my addiction to stock options."

— Karen

"I started out on the nickel slot machines and progressed to the dollar machines . . . Then I went to a casino where you could write checks . . . And that's where I did most of my damage, writing checks."

— Helen

The Council on Compulsive Gambling of Pennsylvania maintains

24-hour Gambling Helplines: 1-800-848-1880 or 1-800-GAMBLER

This resource provides confidential information and support to people with gambling problems, or to those who are concerned about a friend or colleague or family member.

Remember, you are not alone. More women are gambling than ever before, many are experiencing gambling problems, and some find help for their gambling problems.

Don't hesitate. Help is only a phone call away.

**In Pennsylvania:
1-800-848-1880 or 1-800-GAMBLER**



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Compulsive Gambling
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Women Who

GAMBLE

A Growing Concern in Pennsylvania



Women Who Gamble

Why Is Female Gambling a Growing Concern in Pennsylvania?

Historically, compulsive gamblers were male. However, with traditional role and lifestyle changes, women have the time, money, and inclination to gamble. Gambling now holds the same attraction for women as for men and can be an equally powerful compulsion.

Typically, women turn to gambling for one of two reasons:

- First, as a means of escape — gambling provides a way to escape overwhelming problems, childhood disturbances, troubled relationships, loneliness and boredom.
- Secondly, for excitement — gambling creates an aroused state similar to the “high” produced by cocaine or other drugs. In this excited state, women are focused on the game and ignore all other concerns in their lives.

Women represent one-third of all problem gamblers, but only one-tenth participate in self-help groups and treatment programs. Women are reluctant to seek help. They tend to feel ashamed of their gambling and often create elaborate stories to camouflage their activities.

How Do I Know If I Gamble Too Much?

Many women ask this question, and the warning signs vary.

- ✓ *Do you think of gambling as an escape from your life?*
- ✓ *Do you feel hypnotized by the action of the game?*
- ✓ *Is your personal life falling apart — are your relationships crumbling?*
- ✓ *Are you experiencing financial difficulties because of your gambling?*
- ✓ *Do you lie about or conceal your gambling?*
- ✓ *Do you borrow or steal money from friends and family to support your gambling?*
- ✓ *Do you feel guilty about gambling?*
- ✓ *Are you neglecting your family or friends?*
- ✓ *Do you lose time at work due to gambling?*
- ✓ *Do you feel that your need to gamble is uncontrollable?*

What Is the Profile of a Female Gambler?

- ✓ **Looking for an escape from life**
- ✓ **Looking for excitement — an emotional high**
- ✓ **And for some — the empty nest syndrome**

Typically, gambling begins as a recreational activity, often encouraged by family members. Feelings of euphoria come with winning, and the desire for these euphoric feelings begins the three-stage gambling cycle.

In the first stage, women conceal minor financial troubles by borrowing from relatives and household expense accounts, or by overstating expenses and understating income.

During the second stage, lying becomes a way of life. Women camouflage their gambling by telling lies about their activities. To cover their tracks, they may say they are working late on the job or visiting friends for long talks.

Disaster hits during the third stage — an eviction notice is served for unpaid rent, the electricity is turned off, a job is lost, or checks begin to bounce.
