PROBLEM GAMBLING & SUICIDE FACT SHEET 2018

Overview

- Pathological gambling (also known as “problem” gambling) is an impulse-control disorder characterized by persistent and recurrent maladaptive gambling that disrupts personal, family, or vocational pursuits.¹

- In the United States, 60% of adults gamble in a given year. ix
  - Problem gambling is present in 1-3% of the adult population. i

- The lifetime prevalence of problem gambling in the United States is 2.5% for women and 6.8% for men. vii

- Problem gambling is most common among Blacks (8.3 %), Hispanics (6.7 %) and Native Americans (6.6 %), and least common among Whites (2.8 %) and Asians (4.8 %). vii

- Game type is irrelevant to the acquisition, development, and maintenance of problem gambling. viii

- Problem gamblers are 3.4 times more likely to attempt suicide compared to the general population. ii

- 17-24% of problem gamblers attempt suicide. iii

- 5% of gambling related suicidal thoughts resulted in attempts. iv

- Higher rates of social support were associated with longer periods of abstinence from problem gambling. vii

Resources and Other Information

National Council on Problem Gambling:
https://www.ncpgambling.org/

Gambler Therapy: online help for problem gamblers:
https://www.gamblertherapy.org/

Gamblers Anonymous: 12 step program for problem gamblers:
http://www.gamblersanonymous.org/ga/

Gamblock: blocks access to online gambling:
https://www.gamblock.com/

Williamsville Wellness addiction recovery center:
http://mongambler.com/

Treatment of Problem Gambling ix

- “Every gambler is unique and so needs a recovery program tailored specifically to him or her. What works for one gambler will not necessarily work for you. The biggest step in treatment is realizing you have a problem with gambling. It takes tremendous strength and courage to own up to this, especially if you have lost a lot of money and strained or broken relationships along the way. Do not despair and do not try to go it alone. Many others have been in your shoes and have been able to break the habit.”
  - Gamblers Anonymous – A 12 step recovery program modeled after Alcoholics Anonymous
  - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) – focuses on changing unhealthy gambling thoughts and behaviors, such as false beliefs and rationalizations. It also teaches problem gamblers how to resist gambling urges, deal with uncomfortable emotions rather than escapes through gambling, and solve financial, work, and relationship problems caused by the addiction.

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