



# RECOVERY RESOURCES

Partners in Health. Partners in Hope.

## PROBLEM GAMBLING

### WHAT IS “PROBLEM GAMBLING?”

“Problem gambling is gambling behavior which causes disruptions in any major area of life: psychological, physical, social or vocational... A progressive addiction characterized by increasing preoccupation with gambling, a need to bet more money more frequently, restlessness or irritability when attempting to stop, ‘chasing’ losses and loss of control manifested by continuation of the gambling behavior in spite of mounting, serious, negative consequences.”

### RISK FACTORS

**Other behavior or mood disorders.** People who gamble compulsively often have substance abuse problems, mood or personality disorders, or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Many compulsive gamblers abuse alcohol, and many experience major depression.

**Age.** Compulsive gambling is more common in younger and middle-aged people.

**Sex.** Compulsive gambling is more common in men than in women. Women who gamble typically start later in life, are more apt to have depression, anxiety or bipolar disorders, and may become addicted more quickly. But gambling patterns among men and women have become increasingly similar.

**Family influence.** If one of your parents had a gambling problem, the chances are greater that you will, too.

**Medications used to treat Parkinson’s disease and restless legs syndrome.** Medications called dopamine agonists have a rare side effect that results in compulsive behaviors, including gambling, in some people.

**Certain personality characteristics.** Being highly competitive, a workaholic, restless or easily bored may increase your risk.

### SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF A COMPULSIVE GAMBLER

- Preoccupation with thoughts about gambling
- Gambling with increasingly larger amounts of money or more frequently
- Personality changes, such as irritability, restlessness and withdrawal
- Alienation from family and friends
- Inability to cut back or stop gambling
- Lying to friends and family about how often one gambles
- Borrowing to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by gambling
- Thinking about or committing an illegal act to finance gambling
- Suicidal thoughts

If you need help with problem gambling,  
call Johni Fiber at Recovery Resources at 216-431-4140 x 1130