

*Maryland State Bar Association's Lawyer Assistance Program  
Wellness Tip Sheet*

**Gambling: The Hidden Addiction**

A gambling addiction, also known as compulsive gambling, has been referred to as the “silent” or “hidden” addiction because, unlike alcoholism and drug addiction, it does not present with as many outward signs and there are no physical symptoms. Compulsive gambling can cause problems with your relationships, work, and your financial security; as well as legal problems. Gambling is an obsession, and it can consume a compulsive gambler. They cannot control the impulse to gamble, regardless of the negative impact it is having on their life.

**Facts about Compulsive Gamblers**

- You do not need to gamble daily to have a problem. If your gambling is causing problems in your life, you have a problem.
- Financially bailing out a gambler just enables the gambler to continue gambling. It does not help. If you financially bail out a gambler, they won't feel the consequences of their behavior and are not likely to seek help for their problem.
- Compulsive gamblers do not take responsibility for their behavior, and they often blame others for their gambling.
- If you think you have a problem, you probably do.

**You may have a gambling problem if:**

- You are unable to stop thinking about gambling.
- You are always chasing the win to be able to pay back your debts.
- You are unable to walk away once you have started gambling.
- You hide or lie about how much money you are gambling or how often you gamble.
- You gamble when you do not have the money. This is a red flag, and compulsive gamblers often resort to using credit cards, using money set aside for bills or family, or even stealing. Compulsive gamblers often continue to gamble more money to try to win back what has been lost.
- Your family and friends have expressed concern.
- You are unable to stop regardless of the consequences.
- You have trouble controlling the impulse to gamble.

*If you are concerned about your own or someone else's gambling please  
call the Lawyer Assistance Program for free, confidential assistance and speak to a counselor at  
410-685 7878 x 3041 or toll free at 800-492-1964*

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