



Gambling with Your Life: Suicide and Gambling Disorder



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What You Should Know

- Gambling is the act of risking something of value, including money and property, on an activity that has an uncertain outcome. It is a leisure activity.
- Whether you or someone you know chooses to gamble, it's important to understand that gambling comes with potentially serious risks.
- The fact is most people lose when they play the lottery, play a casino game, or place a bet.
- You, your family, and your friends should know how to protect yourselves when it comes to problem gambling.

Common Signs for Problem Gambling

- Guilt
- Shame
- Debt: Financial Problems
- Gambling Related Relationship Problems
- Impulsivity after significant gambling loss (Chasing)
- Desperation
- Hopelessness
- Fear of Incarceration
- Threat of Job Loss
- Pain caused to Family
- Isolation

Gambling and Suicidality

- Understudied
- Estimates for attempted suicides range from 4% to 40% or higher for individuals diagnosed with a gambling disorder
- Individuals diagnosed with gambling disorder have a suicide rate 5 to 10 times greater than the general population
- Spouses of the gamblers have suicide attempt rates 3 times higher than the general population
- National Council on Problem Gambling through earlier studies determined that 1 out of every 5 individuals with a gambling disorder have attempted suicide

Research

- A UK study by GambleAware (2019) has revealed that problem gamblers have a six times greater chance of having suicidal thoughts, or attempts to kill themselves. They are also 15 times more likely to actually die by suicide.
- The World Health Organization estimates that, of approximately **one million** suicides each year, five percent are related to compulsive gambling.

Examples of Suicide Risk and its Relationship to Gambling Behavior

Gambler's Story

As a gambler, I initially experienced a win and this became a favorable event that stuck in my mind and I didn't remember the overwhelming majority of unfavorable events of losses. I tended to chase my losses, and promised myself that once I "get even", or at least regain some of my losses back, I would forever stop gambling. I rationalized my gambling due to the pressure that I received from my creditors wanting to be paid back, but gambling always got me deeper and deeper into more dept. Sometimes I had suicidal thoughts and other times I ended up committing fraud and consistently lied to my family, friends and associates. Is gambling worth these kinds of outcomes?!

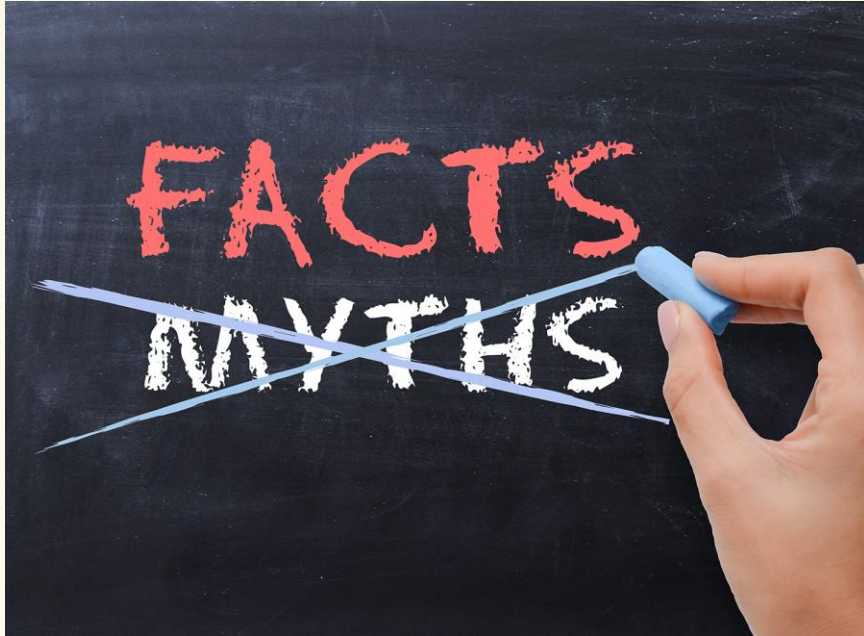
Gambling Debt and Suicide

A member of Gamblers Anonymous, shares his recent brush with suicide:

- Gambling losses, about \$90,000 and climbing quickly
- Losses pushed him to the point of desperation
- Personal relationships were falling apart
- His job was at jeopardy.

“I kept thinking: ‘Am I worth more dead than alive? If I just go away my family is better off’”

Understanding and Helping When a Potential Suicide Risk is Identified



The myths and stigmas of suicide have historically silenced us

Myths and stigmas have convinced us that talking about suicide carries more risks than not talking about it

Without accurate information we have been scared into silence

Your Thoughts

What myths have you heard relating to suicide intervention that may have impacted how you deal with a client who may be suicidal?

Please enter your answers in the *Questions* box.

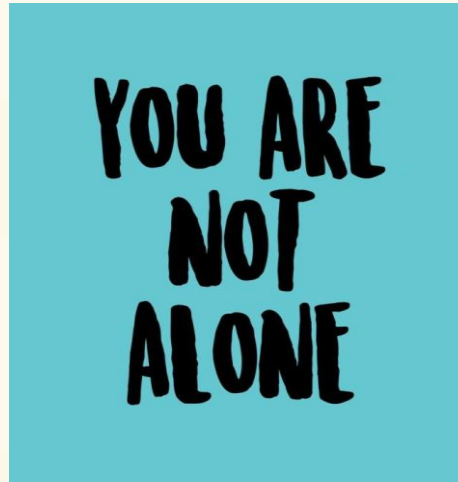


Although there are many warning signs, every situation is unique.

The key is to understand how an individual feels about their life and how they see their current situation.

Common Signs for Suicide Risk

- No reason for living, no sense of **purpose** in life
- **Anxiety**, agitation
- Feeling **trapped**, like there's no way out
- **Hopelessness**
- **Isolation**



- **Loss** (relationships, job, etc.)
- Acting **reckless** or engaging in risky activities, seemingly without thinking (desperation)
- Dramatic **mood changes**

What Can I Do?



Remember...

- ANYONE can be at risk for suicide
- Take every threat seriously
- Listen, Ask, Get Help!
- Take care of yourself



Resources for Problem Gambling

- MD Problem Gambling Helpline Number: **1-800-GAMBLER**
- National Problem Gambling Helpline Number: **1-800-GAMBLER**
- Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling - www.helpmygamblingproblem.org
- Gamblers Anonymous - www.gamblersanonymous.org
- Gam-Anon - www.gamanon.org

Resources for Suicide

- American Association of Suicidology: www.suicidology.org
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center: www.sprc.org

Questions?





Never give up! There's
always hope because
there's always help.

Susan Ford

 quote fancy

Thank You!