



NOVA SCOTIA

TogetherWeCanWin.ca

Older Adults and Problem Gambling



*Unless otherwise indicated, all information on older adults and problem gambling is from www.gamblinghelp.org

Problem Gambling Warning Signs Among Older Adults

- Gambling to calm nerves, forget worries, or reduce depression.
- Withdrawal from family, friends, or regular activities.
- Mood swings based upon wins and losses.
- Neglecting personal needs or health.
- Using retirement funds or cashing in an insurance policy.
- Sudden need for money or loans.
- Missing possessions or assets.

Concern for Older Adults*

- Gambling often starts as a social activity.
- Gambling can become a coping mechanism after a life change (death of spouse, loss of friends, etc.).
- Seniors may hide gambling problems because of stigma.
- Cognitive impairments can affect the decision making of some older adults.
- Older adults do not have working years to recover losses.

Enticements for Older Adults*

- Access to Gambling Opportunities
- Lack of Alternative Leisure Options
- Design of Gambling Venues
- Social Isolation

Gambling Addiction and Health Impacts

- Sleep Disorders
- Mood Disorders
- Alcohol and Tobacco Use and Gambling
- High Blood Pressure and Heart Disease

Medication Causing Older Adults to Gamble?



Findings from “Seniors and Gambling: A Hidden Problem?”*

- Gambling is a ‘hidden problem’ for seniors. Many more seniors are either at risk for having a gambling problem or are experiencing gambling problems than is indicated in prevalence studies and most research.
- People who work with or for seniors and seniors themselves are concerned about the growing number of seniors involved in gambling activities and the growing number of gambling activities promoted to seniors.
- Peer support is indicated as the best way to reach and help seniors who are at risk for or who have gambling problems.
- Strategies and methodologies used in prevalence studies do not always suit the senior population. Seniors are very reluctant to admit to having gambling problems, particularly in a survey.