



NOVA SCOTIA

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# Understanding Problem Gambling



# **What is Gambling?**

Gambling is defined as risking something of value on an event that is determined by chance.

# What is Problem Gambling?

Gambling is a problem when it disrupts or damages any of the following:

- Work, school or other activities
- Mental or physical health
- Finances
- Relationships with family or friends
- Reputation

# Continuum of Problem Gambling

No  
Gambling

Casual  
Social

Serious  
Social

Harmful  
Involvement

Pathological  
Gambling



# Myths & Facts about Gambling Addiction and Problem Gambling

- **FACT or MYTH:** You have to gamble every day to be a problem gambler.
- **FACT or MYTH:** Problem gambling is not really a problem if the gambler can afford it.
- **FACT or MYTH:** If a problem gambler builds up a debt, family and friends should help him or her take care of it.

# 10 Warning Signs of Problem Gambling

1. Spending more time or money on gambling than a person can afford or had planned.
2. Borrowing money to gamble.
3. Gambling with money meant for essentials, such as food, rent, etc.
4. Neglecting important responsibilities, such as work, school or family, to gamble.
5. Lying about or covering up the extent of gambling.

# 10 Warning Signs for Problem Gambling

6. Chasing losses to try and get money back.
7. Arguing with friends and family, especially about money issues.
8. Having unpaid bills and increasing debts due to gambling.
9. Feeling regret about gambling behaviour.
10. Thinking about gambling a lot.

# Sample Risk Factors for Problem Gambling

- Misunderstanding the way gambling works, especially the misunderstanding that gambling is based on random events and that persistence in gambling pays off
- Early big wins
- Mood disorders
- Alcohol and/or substance abuse disorders
- Parental problem gambling
- Tendency for impulsivity

# Sample Risk Factors for Problem Gambling

- Competitiveness
- Being a young adult male
- Being in a lower income group
- Easily bored
- Use of gambling to escape from life problems
- Stressful life circumstances with a lack of support