KNOW! About Video Games and Problem Gambling

Gambling is any act that involves risking money or valuables on the outcome of a game or contest that is mostly determined by chance. Being exposed to gambling at a young age increases the risk of developing a gambling problem in adulthood. Gaming can introduce young people to aspects of gambling through coins, gems, loot boxes, and skins, which replicate real-life gambling situations. Anyone who gambles is at risk of developing a gambling disorder. Problem gambling is gambling that continues despite disrupting or damaging health, responsibilities, or relationships. Problem gambling is not a bad habit or bad behavior -- it is a serious condition that affects the brain in the same way as drug and alcohol addiction. According to the American Psychiatric Association, 10% to 15% of adolescents (age 12-17) are at-risk for developing a gambling problem and 6% of adolescents have a gambling problem.

- Problem gambling rates among teens and young adults have been shown to be 2-3 times that of adults.
- Of U.S. residents ages 14-21, 2.1% struggle with problem gambling and another 6.5% are at risk.
- Children introduced to gambling by age 12 are four times more likely to develop a gambling problem.
- 15% of youth ages 12-17 have reported lying about or hiding how much they gamble.

**KNOW! the Statistics**

**KNOW! the Negative Effects**

Research shows that kids who gamble are more likely to:
- Have depression & anxiety issues
- Have damaged relationships
- Drink & use illegal drugs

Like other diseases, gambling addiction has symptoms that can be observed. While everyone’s addiction may appear differently, here are common signs of problem gambling in young people:
- Drop in grades; change in friends and groups whom they associate; disinterest in extracurricular activities; getting into fights; and detentions
- Spending significant amounts of time on gambling related activities: video gaming (many video games have links to on-line gambling); engaging in fantasy sports and sports pools; card games; lottery or scratch tickets; and dice playing
- Need to borrow money from family, friends and peers
- Changes in personality, mood or relationships resulting in agitation, angry outbursts, increased anxiety, stress or isolation from others
- Lying about time spent alone or on social media sites
- Money they should have (such as lunch money) goes missing
- Bragging about gambling activities
- Unusual interest in sports scores
- Questionable explanation for new items or loss of valuable possessions
- Uncharacteristically forgetting appointments or other important dates
- Unexplained credit card charges

**KNOW! the Warning Signs**

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• Get into fights or criminal activity
• Have low self-esteem
• Think about suicide

**KNOW! How You Can Help**

Starting a conversation about gaming, gambling, and problem gambling is important to lowering risk for the young people in your life. Here are a few points you can use to start a conversation:

• Explain that gambling results in losses more often than wins. Spending money on things they want is better than losing it all on a bet.
• Explain that underage gambling is illegal.
• Talk to them about the consequences of problem gambling – depression, financial problems, lower self-esteem, lower grades, and damaged friendships.
• Encourage healthy spending. Talk with them about how they plan to spend money they have from after-school jobs or allowance.
• Speak to students about the risks of gambling just as you would about the dangers of vaping, drug, and alcohol abuse.
• Teach them to speak up if they suspect problem gambling is affecting a friend or classmate.
• Publicly express your support for gambling-free youth events.
• Ask questions about their experiences with gambling – and listen to their answers.

**KNOW! What Resources are Available**

Take Change The Game Ohio’s quiz to test your knowledge of youth problem gambling and gaming.

For students ages 18-25, Prevention Action Alliance offers CampusCENTS, a financial literacy course that promotes financial wellness by offering information, support, and guidance. This online, self-paced course take approximately two hours to complete but is broken into small, easy to complete modules. The interactive course uses real-life scenarios to help students:

• Become intrigued with concepts around money and financial affairs that can lead to behavior change
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• Increase awareness of the personal responsibility aspect of personal finance
• Develop confidence in dealing with personal finances
• Determine how (and if) gambling fits into a personal budget
• Learn low-risk guidelines for gambling

**Sources:**

• PGNO
• A Guide To Having the Conversation: Families and Gambling
• Change the Game Ohio
• Problematic Play: Video Games and the Path to Problem Gambling
• National Council on Problem Gambling
• NYCPG Youth Gambling EBook

**Ohio Problem Gambling Helpline:** 1-800-589-9966
**National Problem Gambling Helpline:** 1-800-522-4700
**Problem Gambling Network of Ohio**
**Gambling Help Ohio**

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**Prevention Tips for Everyone**

**SHARE WITH A FRIEND!**