

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.

KNOW! the Statistics

- 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 Warning Signs

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 Negative Effects

Research shows that kids who gamble are more likely to:

- Have depression & anxiety issues
- Have damaged relationships
- Drink & use illegal drugs

- 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

Ohio Problem Gambling Helpline: 1-800-589-9966
National Problem Gambling Helpline: 1-800-522-4700
[Problem Gambling Network of Ohio](#)
[Gambling Help Ohio](#)

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](#)

The Know! Tips newsletter is made possible through partnership with the [Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#)

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