



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL CORPORATION



ADVISORY PERIOD  
ON THE TOPIC:

# **GAMBLING ADDICTION -**

a thrill that destroys

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**Ludomania, gambling addiction, or gambling disorder** (a pathological inclination toward gambling) “consists of frequent, repeated episodes of participation in gambling, which come to dominate a person’s life and lead to a decline in social, professional, material, and family values, while proper attention is no longer given to responsibilities in these areas.”



# GAMBLING ADDICTION



Gambling addiction belongs to a serious class of mental disorders in humans: **dependence on gambling.**

**Characteristic features of gambling addiction include:**

- renunciation of everyday life concerns and complete immersion in the gambling process;
- seeking money for a new game at any cost, whether through credit, theft of others' property, or deceiving relatives;
- a decrease in social and work activity, immersion into an inner world with dreams of a new game and a big win.



**Gambling causes certain chemical reactions in the body. A person, as they say, catches a high without using intoxicating substances. The gambler is constantly at risk of experiencing euphoria and stress.**

**At the moment of a huge loss or even a small win, there is a powerful release of adrenaline into the blood.**

**With each new dose of adrenaline, the need for a new dose arises.**







The only thing people with gambling addiction can think about is the next game and how they will win it.

It should be noted that men suffer from gambling addiction three times more often than women. At the same time, women are much harder to treat for this condition. Even professional help from a psychotherapist does not guarantee that a gambling addict will not return to their harmful habit.

In recent years, the problem of gambling has become especially significant due to the widespread presence of money slot machines and the opening of numerous casinos. All of them are attractively designed, which enhances the illusion of an easy opportunity to win a large sum in a short time.





THE CASINO WILL NOT GIVE YOU MONEY!!!



# SLOT MACHINES HAVE LONG BEEN WIDESPREAD THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.



- Back in the 1970s in England, the problem of low cinema attendance arose, even leading to the need to close some theaters, due to the growing popularity of slot machine halls.
- In the United States, according to R. Volberg, the number of “problem gamblers” — addicted players so dependent on slot machines that their lives become completely subordinated to this passion — reaches 5% of the population.
- Data from other researchers indicate that in Canada alone, during the first half of the 1990s, the number of problem gamblers increased by more than 75%.





In this regard, many foreign researchers consider gambling a serious social problem that poses a threat to part of the population. The problem is aggravated by the fact that during the game, in some cases, relaxation occurs, emotional tension is relieved, and attention is diverted from unpleasant problems, so gambling is perceived as a pleasant pastime. Based on this mechanism, gradual involvement occurs and addiction develops.



# Signs characteristic of gambling as one of the forms of deviant behavior.



- Constant involvement and increasing time spent on gambling.
- Changes in the range of interests, displacement of previous motivations by gambling, constant thoughts about the game, and the dominance in imagination of situations related to gambling combinations.
- “Loss of control,” expressed in the inability to stop gambling both after a big win and after repeated losses.
- States of psychological discomfort, irritation, and anxiety that develop after relatively short periods following participation in gambling, accompanied by a strong desire to start playing again. These may be accompanied by headaches, sleep disturbances, restlessness, low mood, and impaired concentration.
- A rapidly increasing decline in the ability to resist temptation. This is expressed in the fact that, having decided to “quit once and for all,” gambling resumes at the slightest provocation (meeting old acquaintances, conversations about gambling, the presence of a gambling establishment nearby, etc.)

# SIGNS OF GAMBLING ADDICTION



## Signs of Gambling Addiction:

- The person is completely absorbed in thoughts about the game, upcoming bets, and finding money to gamble.
- The person experiences euphoria during the game, and their bets increase.
- It is difficult for the person to stop, cease betting, or even control the size and number of bets.
- When required to stop, interrupt the game, or control bets, the person experiences negative emotions (irritation, anxiety).
- Gambling becomes a way to “escape” existing problems, divert attention from anxiety, guilt, or depressive feelings.
- After a losing bet, the person strives to recover the loss.
- When discussing the problem with relatives or a doctor, the person tries to hide the extent of their gambling dependence.
- For the sake of gambling, the person may commit illegal actions (up to serious financial crimes). Gambling becomes the dominant goal in life, leading to the risk of losing social contacts (friendships break down, family relationships are threatened, work is affected).
- Due to systematic losses, the person goes into debt, and to repay it, they either try to win back the losses or borrow again, taking out new loans or credits.

# STAGES OF GAMBLING ADDICTION



## Types of Gambling Addiction:

- **Episodic:** Symptoms appear for a certain period but gradually weaken or disappear over time.
- **Persistent:** Symptoms are observed over a long period.

## Stages of Gambling Addiction:

1. The person has no interest in gambling.
2. The person plays games only for personal enjoyment.
3. Gambling is accompanied by problems in the family and physical health.
4. Gambling causes problems in all aspects of life, with pronounced symptoms of addiction.
5. Severe gambling addiction, leading to negative consequences and destructive stress.



# PHASES OF GAMBLING ADDICTION:



## Phases of Gambling Addiction

**Winning Phase:** This phase occurs with each success and is accompanied by pleasurable feelings, anticipation of big earnings, and increased social status. It reinforces the person's desire to continue gambling and motivates them to study gambling theory, strategies, and schemes to win. Over time, gambling begins to displace all other interests.

**Losing Phase:** Early success is followed by unexpected failure. The person refuses to accept it and desperately wants to recover the loss. In their effort, they may resort to deception and even theft. The desire to regain the feeling of success becomes overwhelming, leading the individual to take various immoral actions.

**Desperation Phase:** The gambler, trying to recover losses at all costs, exhausts all financial and moral resources of the family, which, repeatedly disappointed by broken promises, begins to reject them. The same occurs at work. This phase is accompanied by depression, suicidal thoughts, and somatic disorders, such as digestive problems or panic attacks.

# American Classification of Gambling Addiction



- Makes repeated but unsuccessful attempts to control their gambling, to play less, or to stop entirely.
- Exhibits anxiety and irritability when trying to reduce or stop gambling.
- Gambles to escape problems or relieve dysphoria (e.g., feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety, or depression).
- Returns to gambling the day after a loss to try to win back (preoccupation with the loss prevents rest).
- Lies to family, doctors, or others to conceal the extent of involvement in gambling.
- Risks or is willing to completely sever relationships with close people, quit work or studies, or forgo career prospects.
- When out of money due to gambling, shifts the responsibility for solving problems onto others.



- Australian researchers A. Blaszczynski and L. Nower (Blaszczynski, Nower, 1997) identify three subgroups of problem gamblers:
  - Behaviorally conditioned gamblers
  - Emotionally vulnerable gamblers
  - Antisocial impulsive gamblers, emphasizing the heterogeneity of this group of deviants.





- Although a pathological passion for gambling is more often observed in men, it takes more severe forms in women. Women become involved in this dangerous habit three times faster and are more resistant to psychotherapy.
- Unlike men, women develop gambling addiction at a more mature age and for different reasons. The most common reason is personal problems, from which they try to escape into gambling. This most often occurs between the ages of 21 and 55, and in 1–4% of cases, the addiction reaches a level requiring psychiatric help. Every third pathological gambler is a woman.
- It should be noted that people who gamble often also abuse alcohol and other psychoactive substances, participating in combined forms of deviant behavior. Gamblers typically experience difficulties in interpersonal relationships, frequent divorces, violations of work discipline, and frequent job changes.

# Factors Predisposing to Gambling

- Improper upbringing in the family
- Participation of parents or acquaintances in gambling
- Early interest in games from childhood (dominoes, cards, Monopoly, etc.)
- Materialism
- Overestimation of the importance of material values
- Fixed attention on financial possibilities
- Envy of wealthier relatives and acquaintances
- Belief that all problems can be solved with money
- Depression





# Stages of Gambling Development

- The driving force of pathological gambling is the need to experience the intense tension that arises during the game. A win enhances the sense of power, while a loss reduces self-esteem, weakens conscious control, and increases the urge to recover losses, stimulating “chasing” behavior and creating a vicious cycle.
- **There are four stages in the development of the disorder:**
- **Winning Stage** – Gambling is episodic, with a belief in consistent wins and taking risks with large sums of money.
- **Losing Stage** – Large debts accumulate, leading to repeated attempts to recover losses; the person begins to hide their addiction.
- **Desperation Stage** – Isolation from family and friends, loss of employment, debts causing panic; pressure from creditors often leads to criminal actions, mental exhaustion, guilt, and depression.
- **Hopelessness Stage** – Divorce, feelings of hopelessness, suicidal thoughts, and suicide attempts.

# Cognitive Distortions (Thinking Errors) in Gambling



- Belief that money can solve everything, including emotional problems and relationships with others.
- Insecurity in the present and expectation of success through winning, imagining that a successful game can erase life's failures.
- Replacing fantasies of control over one's life with fantasies of winning.
- Belief in a "lucky" day to win.
- Expectation that a turning point in the game must inevitably occur.
- Belief that debts can only be repaid through gambling, i.e., by chasing losses.
- Perceiving money during gambling as mere chips or numbers on a display.



# GAMBLING – AN EPIDEMIC

- Due to the widespread presence of slot machines and the lack of control—particularly age restrictions—a kind of gambling epidemic has begun among almost all age groups in Russia. Adolescents have not been spared, and they show specific features of gambling addiction. Research on gambling among the adolescent population has shown that teenagers play almost the same games as adults.
- At the same time, adolescents prefer slot machines and National Lottery tickets. According to Australian researchers, more than 5% of teenagers can be classified as problem gamblers.
- Regarding factors that help prevent adolescent gambling, researchers highlight the importance of family upbringing that teaches skills such as managing one's money and creating and maintaining a budget.





# EPIDEMIC

# EPIDEMIC



**DESTROYS THOUSANDS OF  
PEOPLE!**



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SINCE 1980



## Other Consequences of Gambling Addiction:

- 1. Destroyed career and loss of professional reputation:** The gambler may skip work, perform poorly, miss project deadlines, or even quit entirely.
- 2. Serious financial problems:** The gambler spends all savings, sells property, borrows money, accumulates debt, and sometimes loses movable and immovable assets.
- 3. Destruction of family and social relationships:** The gambler stops communicating with close people and friends, neglects family, and fails to repay debts to acquaintances, damaging relationships.
- 4. Criminal offenses:** This can include harm to property or others' lives, potentially leading to severe consequences.
- 5. Development of mental disorders:** These include depression, bipolar and anxiety disorders, hyperactivity, attention deficit, and more. Some disorders may exist before gambling addiction but are exacerbated as the disease progresses.



6. **Suicidal Behavior:** When faced with a loss, a person may begin to feel guilt, especially if they are experiencing financial difficulties or owe a large sum of money. Depression and subsequent thoughts of suicide may seem like an escape from the situation.

It is important to consult a specialized addiction clinic at the first signs of emerging gambling addiction—for example, when a person reacts painfully to a loss, wants to “chase” the next game, or starts gambling for money.

Intervening early, at the onset of the disorder, is the only way to stop its development and prevent the negative complications of gambling addiction. It is important not to insist, raise one’s voice, or create conflict. The best approach is to talk with the person in a calm, supportive environment, when they are not irritated or stressed.

# Advice and Support for Those Struggling with Gambling Addiction



- **Support:** Seek help from a friend or family member. Talk about the type of support you need and how best to organize it.
- **Access to Money:** Reduce access to cash. Without money, gambling is impossible. For example, you can lower the daily withdrawal limit at your bank.
- **Honesty:** Be honest with yourself, family, and friends. Acknowledge that you are in a difficult situation and share it with someone you trust.
- **Self-Challenging Beliefs:** Reflect on your beliefs and question them. For instance, many gamblers believe they can predict when a slot machine will pay out. Continuously challenge the accuracy of such beliefs.
- **Alternatives:** Find an alternative activity that you enjoy and turn to it when you feel the urge to gamble. Consider hobbies or interests that can replace the gambling habit.





# GAMBLING ADDICTION

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ADVICE FOR RELATIVES OF GAMBLERS

# Advice for Family and Friends of a Gambler



You cannot change the behavior of a person suffering from gambling addiction—they must want to change themselves.

If you are not addicted to gambling, it is difficult to understand why a person with this addiction simply cannot stop playing.

They are like a train running without a conductor. No matter how hard you try to stop an uncontrolled train, you cannot do it. Similarly, it is impossible to control the behavior of someone addicted to gambling.

You need to shift your focus from their behavior to your own feelings. This will help you see the person as someone in crisis, unable to control their actions.

Only then can you provide support and understand their feelings, while avoiding pressure or attempts to force them to change.

# **GAMBLING ADDICT**

**I CAN'T HANDLE THIS!  
I DON'T WANT TO LIVE -  
PLEASE HELP!**



**DSO**

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# Do You Want to Overcome Your Addiction?



Find what makes you want to wake up.

When you have a purpose, there is no room for gambling.  
When you have an interest in life, there is no urge for self-destruction.

Energy can be wasted...  
Or it can be invested in yourself.

**The choice is always yours.**



**AVOID GAMBLING – IT DESTROYS LIVES.**



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