

Compulsive Gambling



An inability to resist impulses to gamble, leading to severe personal or social consequences. Pathological gambling affects 1-3% of adults, men more often than women. It usually begins in adolescence in men and later in women.

This behavior usually progresses from occasional gambling to habitual gambling. The urge to gamble becomes so great that the tension can only be relieved by more gambling. Higher stakes and personal risks become involved, as well as neglect of other interests, family, and work. Severe family problems, financial ruin, and criminal behavior to support the gambling habit may result. The cause for this behavior is not known. One risk factor may be excessive alcohol use which lowers inhibitions and impairs judgment.

Prevention of the urge to develop addictive behavior is challenging and may not always be possible. Counseling may benefit people who are prone to compulsive gambling or other addictive behavior. People who are aware that compulsive gambling affects close relatives might be at higher risk and should be especially careful.

Symptoms:

- occasional gambling becomes habitual loss of control over time spent gambling
- gambling continues, whether winning or losing, until all money is lost or the game is terminated
- gambling until large debts are accumulated
- lack of concern for society's expectations and laws
- unlawful behavior may occur to support the habit and pay debts
- A psychological evaluation and history reveals compulsive gambling behavior.

Treatment for the person with compulsive gambling begins with the recognition of the problem. It is often associated with denial, allowing the person to believe there is no need for treatment. Most people affected by compulsive gambling enter a self-help support groups such as Gamblers Anonymous. This is probably the most effective treatment. It is a 12-step program similar to Alcoholics Anonymous. Abstinence principles that apply to other types of addiction, such as substance abuse and alcohol dependence, are also relevant in

the treatment of compulsive gambling behavior.

Recently, medications such as antidepressants have been shown to be beneficial in combination with psychotherapy.

Many people are able to gain control over their lives after undergoing treatment for compulsive gambling.

If not detected and treated early, compulsive gambling might lead to estrangement from family and friends as well as financial and legal difficulties. Compulsive gambling is a chronic condition: relapse after treatment is a real risk

Call us, Human Behavior Associates, 1 800 937-7770, if symptoms of compulsive gambling are present.

--AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Dreams

Dreams come in the language of images, and it is of great importance to pay attention to the art of our mind. Art inspired by dreams can reveal personal myths and also the transpersonal aspects of the psyche. Dream inspired art often begins with a dream, however in the act of creation one enters into the Creative Mind where both worlds of dreaming and waking meet. In this lucid state of being, creation becomes a message from the deep source of knowledge where the heart of the artist meets the vision of the dreamer.

--FARIBA BOGZARAN, ASD CHARI OF THE ARTS 1996



FROM THE DREAM PAGE/ARTIST, PAM JOHNSON

Resources for preventing suicide:

National Suicide Hot Line: 1-800 SUICIDE(1-800-784-2433), puts callers directly in touch with local help lines.

National Strategy for Suicide Prevention:

A coalition of federal government mental health agencies.
www.mentalhealth.org/suicideprevention.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention:

Private nonprofit foundation that has many resources for survivors of suicide as well as for suicide prevention:
www.afsp.org

Suicide Prevention Action Network:

Includes links to many other helpful organizations:
www.spanusa.org

Listing of suicide prevention hot lines in California:

www.suicidehotlines.com/california.html

For Teens & Parents of Teens: - SuicidalTeens.com

Teen Depression - Teen Suicide-The Life & Death Feelings

The Warning Signs of Suicide

Suicide is rarely a spur of the moment decision. In the days and hours before people kill themselves, there are usually clues and warning signs.

The strongest and most disturbing signs are **verbal** - "I can't go on," "Nothing matters any more" or even "I'm thinking of ending it all." Such remarks should **always** be taken seriously.

Other Common warning signs include:

- Becoming depressed or withdrawn
- Behaving recklessly
- Getting affairs in order and giving away valued possessions
- Showing a marked change in behavior, attitudes or appearance
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Suffering a major loss or life change

When Someone Feels Suicidal

For many people who feel suicidal, there seems to be no other way out. Death describes their world at that moment and the strength of their suicidal feelings should not be underestimated—they are real and powerful and immediate. There are no magic cures.

But it is also true that:

- Suicide is often a permanent solution to a temporary problem.
- When we are depressed, we tend to see things through the very narrow perspective of the present moment. A week or a month later, things may look completely different.
- Most people who once thought about killing themselves are now glad to be alive. They say they didn't want to end their lives—they just wanted to stop the pain.

The most important step is to talk to someone. People who feel suicidal should not try to cope alone. They should seek help NOW.

- **Talk to friends or family.** Just talking can bring huge relief.
- **Talk to a doctor.** If someone is going through a longer period of feeling low or suicidal, he or she may be suffering from clinical depression. This is a medical condition caused by a chemical imbalance, and can usually be treated by a doctor through the prescription of drugs and/or a referral to therapy.

Time is an important factor in 'moving on,' but what happens in that time also matters. **When someone is feeling suicidal, they should talk about their feelings immediately.**

Human Behavior Associates, Inc.

HBA is the provider of your Employee Assistance Program. Employees and their family members can call 1-800-937-7770 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to request assistance with personal or family problems.

Help Card

To help you tell someone what you can't say.
PRINT THIS HELP CARD

& Give to your Parent(s) or Other Responsible Adult
Mother, Father _____, Help Me.

I am afraid I am going to kill myself.

I have felt this way for _____
months / years.

If you don't believe me, I could die.

Maybe you don't believe me cause I'm just a kid...

Maybe because I'm your kid.

But others do believe me

Adults believe me

And they think you should believe me too.

Please, if you love me,

Help me.

BY MEADOW LARK PRESS