



Teen Gambling: It's a **Bad Bet!**

Fact Sheet for Educators & Others Who Work with Youth

Opportunities for gambling and social acceptance of gambling have increased dramatically in recent years. For most, gambling is not a problem. But for 6 to 9 million Americans each year, it becomes an issue that leads to serious financial and legal problems, loss of personal relationships, and damage to physical and mental health.

Teens are especially susceptible to becoming problem gamblers. Approximately 4%-8% of young people between the ages of 12 and 17 years of age meet the criteria for a gambling problem and another 10%-15% are at risk of developing a problem. When a person starts gambling at a young age, the likelihood that they will become a problem or eventual pathological gambler increases.

Problem gambling can be difficult to spot and only those closest to teens might see the warning signs.



Signs of a Possible Gambling Problem in Students

- ◆ Unexplained absences from school or programs
- ◆ Dropping grades
- ◆ Asking for or borrowing money from peers
- ◆ Large amounts of money in student's possession
- ◆ Intense interest in gambling conversations
- ◆ Displaying money or other material possessions (cars, clothes, jewelry, etc.)
- ◆ Behavior changes (seems tired or less participatory in class, distracted, nervous, worried, moody, etc.)
- ◆ Using gambling language in his/her conversation (bookie, loan shark, point spread, underdog, favorite, exaggerated use of the word "bet")
- ◆ Unusual amount of time spent watching sports on television or reading about sports in newspapers, magazines, or on line
- ◆ Selling personal belongings
- ◆ Bragging about winnings
- ◆ Lying, cheating, or stealing

If you suspect a gambling problem call 1-877-8-HOPENY for confidential help. Early intervention is extremely important. Don't wait for the problem to get worse!



Prevention
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