

# Youth Gambling

***"The rite of passage has gone from starting drinking to starting gambling" (Dr. Marvin Steinberg)***

***"This is the first generation of youth to be exposed to relatively easy access to a variety of gambling venues, widespread gambling advertising, and to pervasive social approval for an inherently risky activity. (Dr. Ken Winters)***

## **What Is Gambling?**

Any act that involves the risking of money or valuables on the outcome of a game, contest, or any other risk-taking event.

## **Motives For Adolescent Gambling**

Relaxation - Enjoyment, excitement, entertainment – Adventure – Attention – Opportunity - Escape Negative feelings

## **Teens Commonly:**

- **Live in the moment** and enjoy games that keep them attentive and engaged. The teen is accustomed to immediate communication via cell phone, internet and mobile device
- **Are technologically literate** and can navigate the internet at the speed of light compared to older generations
- **Are high risk takers** developmentally. This is a normal part of the teenage experience to challenge the norm and take risks, both physically and emotionally.
- **Have poor control** over impulsive behaviors.
- Are accustomed to play games where physical presence, beauty, strength, or acceptance are irrelevant. Skill is all important

## **Major Types of Teen Betting**

- Sports betting
- Lottery
- Cards (often poker)
- Games of skill

## **Signs Of Problem Gambling In Teens:**

- Unexplained absences from school
- Dropping grades
- Increased family conflict
- The family suspects alcohol or other drug abuse
- Asking/taking/stealing money from family friends and strangers
- Large amounts of money in teen's possession
- Gambling language and gambling an important conversational topic
- Showing off money, clothing, and other possessions

- Spending an unusual amount of time on the computer (out of parents sight), closing down programs when adults walk into the room, reading newspapers (sports page and stats), magazines, an/or periodicals having to do with sports or online poker sites.
- Selling personal belongings (theirs and families)
- Bragging about winnings
- Lying, cheating, or stealing in school
- Exhaustion from lack of sleep
- Playing on a team but not performing to normal abilities (shaving points)
- Overtly interested in how other teams at school are performing
- Overly invested in performance of certain athletes (fantasy football/basketball/etc)

**Teen rates for problem gambling are higher than for adults. Approximately 4%–8% of kids between 12 and 17 years of age meet criteria for a gambling problem, and another 10%–15% are at risk of developing a problem**

If you suspect a teen has a gambling problem, call

**1-800-522-4700**

for confidential help. Don't wait for the problem to go away, it will only get worse!