

GAMBLING

Connecticut youth are growing up in a society where legalized gambling is a socially acceptable, widely promoted, and a highly visible recreational activity. Therefore it is not surprising that many young people in Connecticut under the age of 18 are gambling even though the legal age for casino gambling in Connecticut is 21 and 18 to purchase a lottery ticket. Youth gambling often starts with betting on sports games or scratching off lottery tickets and on-line gambling.

Gambling, like the use of drugs and alcohol is often an attempt to deal with the pain of other problems and may lead to addictions. Gambling disorders are significantly more prevalent among young people than among the general population. Gambling is more common among boys than girls.

Concerned teens and their parents can call the Helpline at 1.800.346.6238, (1-800-NOBET) a free, confidential information and referral service that has counselors available 24 hours a day. The Helpline is provided by The Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling. Their web site is: www.ccpbg.org

The following warning signs should serve as “red flags” if a young person exhibits the described behaviors. These could indicate signs of problem gambling. Does your youth:

- Have gambling related items at home such as lottery tickets, betting sheets, casino chips, souvenirs from gambling locations?
- Borrow from friends or family and not pay back loans?
- Sell personal belongings?
- Lie, cheat or steal?
- Have unexplained debts or large amounts of cash?
- Receive numerous phone calls from strangers?
- Make many calls to “900” gambling numbers as indicated on your phone bill?
- Seem moody, distracted, sad, worried, or nervous?
- Credit card bills from on-line gambling sites.

The following information is from the 1996 study by the CT Council on Problem Gambling:

- 87 % of teens gambled for money at some time
- 20 % were identified as problem gamblers or at-risk

- 14% of problem gamblers placed bets on school grounds daily
- 12% of problem gamblers placed bets on school grounds weekly
- 20% of the gamblers bet more than \$200 at one time

A 1997 Harvard University study estimated up to 10% of adolescents are problem gamblers.

This is more than twice the rate for adults.

Other resources for concerned parents are:

Gambling Services, Better Choice Treatment Program at the Connecticut Valley Hospital
in Middletown (860-344-2244)
Wheeler Clinic (860-793-3588)
Gamblers Anonymous (800-266-1908) or isomain@gamblersanonymous.org
Gam-Anon (1-718-352-1671) for family impacted by the gambler's problem.
CT Clearing House at: www.ctclearinghouse.com