



The Massachusetts Council
ON GAMING AND HEALTH

Gambling & Women FACT SHEET

What is gambling?

Gambling is risking something of value on the outcome of an event when the probability of winning is less than certain.¹⁰

What is problem gambling?

Problem gambling is characterized by gambling behavior which leads to adverse consequences for the person who gambles, others, and the community.¹¹

What constitutes social gambling?

Social gamblers gamble for entertainment, typically will not risk more than they can afford, often gamble with friends, chase losses briefly, gamble for limited periods of time, and are not preoccupied with gambling.¹²

See DSM-5 for clinical definitions

The Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health: A Resource For Help

The Council's Helpline provides live, confidential, and compassionate support 24-hours a day, 7-days a week:

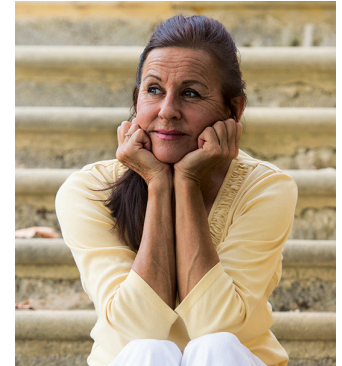
800-426-1234.

Helpline workers provide:

- Information about problem gambling
- Referrals to self-help groups, treatment providers, and other community resources.

For more information, visit macgh.org or contact us at info@macgh.org or 617-426-4554.

Historically, gambling has been a predominantly male pastime; however, as legalized gambling has expanded, female participation has increased.¹ This increase has largely been attributed to the expansion of electronic gaming "slot" machines since the 1990s, thus fueling a feminization of gambling.² This feminization of gambling has led to more women gambling, developing gambling-related problems, and seeking help for these problems.² Men and women differ in their motivation for gambling, their interest in gambling, and how and in what form gambling takes place.³ This fact sheet provides an overview of the gambling characteristics of women, and how they differ from men.



Women and Gambling Preferences

- Research suggests that men gravitate towards casino table games, track betting, and cards, which are strategic or "face-to-face" forms of gambling.^{1,4}
- Women are attracted to games such as bingo, casino slots, lotteries, and gambling machines, which are nonstrategic, less interpersonally interactive forms of gambling.^{1,4}

Women Gambling Prevalence Rate

Research indicates important gender differences in the prevalence of subclinical gambling disorder and gambling disorder.⁵

PAST YEAR RATES OF:

Problem Gambling⁶



0.7%



2.7%

PAST YEAR RATES OF:

At-Risk Gambling⁶



5.6%



9.6%

**WOMEN PROGRESS
to a gambling disorder
FASTER THAN MEN
after beginning to gamble^{7,8,9}**

2x

This faster progression is called the **TELESCOPING EFFECT** and is also observed in previous gender comparisons in chemical dependencies, particularly in **ALCOHOL** and **OPIATE** addictions.

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Women and Problem Gambling

- Females tend to endorse stronger beliefs regarding illusions of control and luck than do male gamblers.¹³
- Women report that their gambling behavior is most often triggered by feeling lonely or sad, having thoughts of winning, being bored, to relieve feelings of depression and anxiety and to escape dysphoria.^{8, 14}
- Women use gambling to regulate negative emotional states associated with life events.¹⁴
- Women are more likely to experience Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) as a result of their own disordered gambling.¹⁸
- Women are more likely to experience severe physical injury from a male partner with disordered gambling.
- Women who are experiencing IPV (or have experienced IPV in the past) are more likely to develop problematic gambling as a way to escape.¹⁸
- Dependent children in families with disordered gambling behavior are more likely to experience abuse and neglect.¹⁸
- Research suggests that when the mother is the one experiencing problematic gambling, children may fare worse than when the father has the gambling problem.¹⁸

Women Gamblers and Treatment

- Women develop gambling problems more quickly than men, however they also seek treatment more readily than men.¹⁶
- A study in 2006 analyzed results from the United States National Epidemiological Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions and found that the prevalence of treatment seeking for gambling problems was 15.7% for women and 6.8% for men.²
- This suggests that the model of service delivery which is community based counseling on a non-residential basis may be better able to attract female clients than treatment centers where males predominate (such as veterans centers).¹⁷

Signs of a Gambling Disorder

A person shows signs of gambling disorder if he/she:

- Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money to achieve the desired excitement.
- Exhibits restless or irritable behavior when attempting to cut down or stop gambling.
- Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back or stop gambling.
- Is preoccupied with thoughts about gambling.
- Gambles when feeling distress (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed).
- Chases one's losses/returns another day to get even.
- Lies to conceal the extent of gambling.
- Jeopardizes a significant relationship, job, or opportunity because of gambling.
- Relies on others to provide money to relieve desperate financial situations caused by gambling.

For more information about gambling disorder, please refer to evaluation tools provided by the DSM-5.



Endnotes

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