

# Overview Of Gambling Disorder



- 1.8% of CT residents meet the criteria for a gambling disorder, which is approximately 50,000 people.
- Other names for gambling disorder are problem gambling, compulsive gambling, or pathological gambling.
- Sports betting and online gambling have become increasingly more popular among youth and young adults, as it is now legal in the State of Connecticut.

## What is Gambling Disorder?

An addictive disorder marked by persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behavior leading to clinically significant impairment or distress.

## Types of Popular Gambling

- Sports Betting (online/in person)
- Casinos (online/in person)
- Lottery (online/in person)
- Off Track Betting (horse racing, dog racing, Jai alai)
- Charitable Gaming (ex. raffles, bingo, money wheel)

## Signs and Symptoms that Someone May be At-Risk for Gambling Disorder

- The need to gamble with increasing amounts of money to achieve excitement
- Uncontrollable thoughts of next gambling activity
- Lying to others about the extent of gambling involvement
- Dependency on others for gambling money
- Gambling to escape or when stressed, anxious, or depressed
- Irritability when trying to quit
- Jeopardizing relationships, career, or opportunities to gamble
- Chasing losses - gambling with more money or more frequently to "even out" money lost

## Brain Chemistry and Tolerance of Gambling

The reward system in the brain is often affected due to the pleasure chemical, dopamine, being released. This creates the urge to seek experiences to obtain that similar euphoric feeling. This desire overtime builds tolerance, potentially leading to an increase in gambling behaviors. It is important to differentiate healthy and unhealthy ways of releasing dopamine.

## Main Reasons Gambling Becomes a Problem

### Habitual Gambling

- Behavior consisting of chasing losses
- Continuously wanting more from each win

### Trauma Escape

- Using the action of gambling as an escape
- Escaping personal distress

### Impulsive Personality Traits

- Risk taking behavior

## Those Most at Risk

- Men are more susceptible than women
- Low-income populations
- College age adolescents
- Marginally disenfranchised groups



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Clearinghouse**  
a program of the Connecticut Center  
for Prevention, Wellness and Recovery

800.232.4424 (phone)  
[www.ctclearinghouse.org](http://www.ctclearinghouse.org)

A Library and Resource Center on Alcohol, Tobacco, Other Drugs, Mental Health and Wellness

## Impacts of Problem Gambling

- Financial problems (bankruptcy)
- Relationship instability
- Disengagement in career, hobbies, or other interests
- Imprisonment
- Suicidal thoughts and ideations potentially leading to suicide attempts
- Excessive drinking

## Tips to Keep the Problem Out of Gambling

- Taking breaks between games
- Setting a budget
- Only playing with cash (no credit cards)
- Understanding the odds of the games
- Setting a time limit

## How to Help Yourself

- Join a support group
- Avoid isolation
- Get involved in other activities to keep yourself busy
- Contact the problem gambling helpline for resources and other information 1-888-789-7777

## Withdrawal Symptoms

Withdrawal symptoms are common and can occur during the recovery process due to the brains reward system build up. Eventually as time goes on, symptoms will subside while the brain reconstructs itself. A few of the symptoms are listed below:

- Irritability
- Obsessive thoughts
- Restlessness
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Difficulty Sleeping

## Where to Find Help

The Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling (CCPG) is a nonprofit agency whose mission is to reduce the effects of problem gambling on individuals and their families. CCPG has a 24/7 Helpline: 1-888-789-7777 and 24/7 online chat on their website.

Bettor Choice is a gambling specific treatment program that is funded by the State of Connecticut and offers services for both inpatient and outpatient programs, in various locations across the state.

## Connecticut Resources

### CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

[Problem Gambling Services](#)

[www.ct.gov/dmhas/pgs](http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/pgs)

### Problem Gambling 24/7 Telephone Helpline

1-888-789-7777

### CT Council for Problem Gambling

CCPG has a 24/7 Online Chat in addition to the 24/7 Helpline

[www.ccpg.org](http://www.ccpg.org)

### Region 4 Bettor Choice

<https://www.wheelerclinic.org/services/wheeler-services/bettor-choice-gambling-treatment-program>

Bettor Choice

### Statewide Contact List

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/dmhas/pgs/bettorchoiceprogramspdf.pdf>

## National Resources

### National Council on Problem Gambling

24/7 Helpline 1-800-GAMBLER

<https://www.ncpgambling.org/help-treatment/>



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