



PROBLEM GAMBLING
FACTS
FOR
NYS LAW MAKERS



Adolescent Problem Gambling

Prevalence (2006 OASAS Problem Gambling School Survey)

- **72% of students in grades 7-12 engaged in at least one gambling activity within the past year**
- **Males were about 4x's as likely to have experienced a problem compared to females**
- **20% of Adolescents are at risk for or currently have a gambling problem**

Adolescent Problem Gambling Prevalence Continued

- **Most frequent problems:**

- **Cards for money**

- **Games of skill (basketball, pool, etc)**

- **Sports betting**

Adolescent Problem Gambling Risk Factors

Adolescents who exhibit the following risk factors are more likely to have a gambling problem:

- ▣ Early Initiation of Antisocial Behavior**
- ▣ Depressive Symptoms**
- ▣ Rebelliousness**

Adolescent Problem Gambling Protective Factors

- Students who perceived strong Parental Disapproval of gambling are less than half as likely as other students to experience a gambling problem
- Students who are protected by Belief in Moral Order are less than half as likely as other students to experience a gambling problem

Adult Problem Gambling Prevalence

2006 OASAS Household Survey

- **5% of Adults ages 18+ currently have a gambling problem**
- **Black and Hispanic Males ages 18-29 are at highest risk**

Adult Problem Gambling Prevalence

- **Males are 3 x's as likely as females to have a gambling problem**
- **Most frequent problems:**
 - **Lottery**
 - **Sports**
 - **Cards**

Co-Occurring With Substance Abuse

- 45% of students in grades 7-12 who have a substance abuse problem also are at risk for or have a current gambling problem**
- 28% of adults ages 18+ who have a current gambling problem also have a substance abuse disorder**

Real Stories of Recovery

Until I hit bottom, I had nowhere to go. I gambled, predominantly on sports, but in a pinch anything would do. What I thought of as my second job, escape or refuge became a prison. I was an attorney licensed to practice law in New York. That was the facade. I never believed I had earned or was worthy of my achievements.

I spent over ten years throwing away accomplishments. I felt like an imposter and that one day someone was going to tap me on the shoulder and tell me that. I beat them to the punch. I was disbarred as a result of my addiction.

My drug of choice was compulsive gambling. All that mattered was my next bet. The chaos that I created enabled me to avoid responsibilities to my family, friends and clients. Gambling caused destruction and misery to myself and those who loved me.

One day, I made a life choice that I would no longer allow gambling to define who I was. With the support of my family, Gamblers Anonymous and private therapy, I have not found it necessary to make a bet for twenty years and six months. I was reinstated to the Bar in 2004.



Peter Citrin

I can do anything a "normal" person can do except gamble. I consider myself fortunate and am grateful for my second chance. There is hope. All you have to do is want it bad enough.

Real Stories of Recovery



Joyce Barrett, Western, NY

Today I am a mother of three lovely children, and a grandmother of eight. I will be celebrating 24 years of marriage to a wonderful man. I have a full-time job and try to manage a household the best I can. I am a sister, aunt, cousin, mother, wife, grandmother and friend to many people in my life. I am also a recovering compulsive gambler. I have been abstinent from gambling for a little over 19 years. When I was told 19 years ago that there was life without gambling - I laughed!

I was nine years old when I started gambling. My family used to get together and play Pokeno. We played for pennies. I even had my own special good luck card that I used. I was taught the game 21, blackjack. I was introduced to poker when I was in high school. Poker was always my favorite form of gambling. I would play lottery, once in awhile go to the race track with friends and continued playing poker with friends all throughout my early years.

When Joker Poker was introduced at a place where I used to work, the machine had my attention instantly. What started out as playing with quarters each day, ended up as playing with hundreds of dollars. I could not stop. I spent eight to 12 hours in front of this machine. People knew I gambled but not one single person knew the extent of my gambling. Winning or losing did not matter to me anymore - I was out of control and did not realize it. I needed my fix. I was one day away from prostitution and one day away from dealing drugs. I would have done whatever it took to get the money to gamble. I was a liar, cheat, thief and not one single person knew. I would get the mail first and most of the time the phone calls too.

Finally, things started coming down around me. I was writing bad checks and cashing insurance checks that had to pay doctors or hospitals. The grocery store was going to take legal action against me and finally someone was going to tell my husband about the money I had borrowed from them. I had no choice but to tell my husband. That was the hardest thing I ever had to do. I never tried to kill myself, but I didn't care if I lived or died. It would have been alright with me if I did not wake up in the morning.

I will never forget the look on my husband's face. He was angry at the person I had become. He was angry at the \$80,000 debt that I had. All of a sudden, he became angry at himself for not seeing anything. He started to feel that it was his fault for not seeing any of the signs but I would not allow him to see anything! I kept it hidden for more than two years. In order to save my marriage, I had to go for help. I did not believe I had a gambling problem - my problem was that I was running out of money with which to gamble. I HAD DENIAL BIG TIME! My husband and I sought help in the Twelve Step programs of Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon.

We are still married today and he has been part of my support net for 19 plus years. It feels wonderful to know that today none of my grandchildren know the gambler. My children and family are still very supportive of me and realize that at times I will struggle, but there is not one person who knows me that does not know what I have done or who I am. I am not alone anymore and today I like myself. It feels great to have "Joyce and a Choice!" Today, I choose not to gamble. I will deal with tomorrow when it gets here.

Inadequate Funding for Services

The New York State funding for problem gambling services is approximately \$1 Million.

This is insufficient to meeting the existing needs of New Yorkers, and does not adequately address public awareness, prevention, research, recovery, education and treatment needs.

Lack of Services for Every County in NYS

- 22 counties with a problem gambling treatment program
 - 6 stand alone outpatient programs
 - 15 in outpatient facilities that primarily treat chemical dependency
 - 1 inpatient treatment program
- 40 counties without problem any gambling treatment services
- 62 counties without problem gambling outreach or prevention programs

New York State is the Only State
Without Designated Funding
from the Gambling Industry for
Problem Gambling Services

1 877 8HOPE NY