



Gambling and Health in the Workplace

A Research-based Guide
about Gambling Disorders
for **Human Resources** and
Employee Assistance Professionals



NATIONAL CENTER FOR RESPONSIBLE GAMING

Advancing Research, Education and Awareness

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Chief Operating Officer

Bensinger, DuPont and Associates

Jason Gardner

Director, Training and Development

MGM Resorts International

Marina London, LCSW, CEAP

Manager of Web Services

Employee Assistance Professionals Association

Sammui Nichols

Human Resources Assistant

Iowa Department of Public Health

Christine Reilly

Senior Research Director

National Center for Responsible Gaming

Christopher Smith, SPHR

Director of Corporate Human Resources

Caesars Entertainment Corporation

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The purpose of this guide is to help human resources and employee assistance professionals learn about gambling disorders, practical ways to assist employees with gambling problems and the types of resources available to help those who need them.

While pathological gambling only affects about 1 percent of the adult population, it affects those individuals in a serious way. If left unchecked or untreated, individuals suffering from pathological gambling can face serious health, social and financial consequences.

This guide is based on the latest research on gambling disorders published in peer-reviewed journals.

INTRODUCTION

Helping employees with addiction is an important part of health promotion in the workplace. The purpose of this guide is to help human resources (HR) and employee assistance (EA) professionals learn about gambling disorders and obtain practical resources to assist employees. The guide was developed with the assistance of the advisory committee of HR and EA professionals listed on the front cover.

In contrast to the study of substance use disorders, research on gambling addiction is relatively new. Consequently, public awareness of pathological gambling as a mental health disorder is low. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) did not include pathological gambling in its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* until 1980. Thus, it's not surprising that many health care providers, EA professionals and HR managers are not as familiar with gambling disorders as they are with alcohol and drug problems.

While pathological gambling only affects about 1 percent of the adult population, it affects those individuals in a serious way. If left unchecked or untreated, individuals suffering from pathological gambling can face serious health, social and financial consequences.

The National Center for Responsible Gaming (NCRG) produced this guide to bridge the gap between research and practice, equipping HR and EA professionals with the tools to help employees who have a gambling problem. For HR professionals, it is important to have a solid knowledge and awareness of how the issue can

impact individuals in their workplace, and they should be equipped with resources to give to concerned employees. Because EA professionals are often counseling and referring employees to seek additional treatment for their mental health, it is vital for them to understand the screening instruments, assessments and resources specific to pathological gambling.

This guide is based on the latest research on gambling disorders published in peer-reviewed journals. It is the NCRG's view that only peer-reviewed studies should be used as the basis for practical applications in order to ensure that the information is scientifically accurate and the research is methodologically sound. The guide is just one of many science-based educational resources from the NCRG, a nonprofit organization devoted to funding scientific research on gambling disorders and translating research findings into practical applications for the public. Established in 1996, the NCRG's mission is to help individuals and families affected by gambling disorders by supporting the finest peer-reviewed, scientific research into pathological and youth gambling; encouraging the application of new research findings to improve prevention, diagnostic, intervention and treatment strategies; and advancing public education about gambling disorders and responsible gaming.

FACTS ABOUT GAMBLING DISORDERS

Changing Views of Addiction

Gambling disorders cannot be fully understood apart from other addictive behaviors. Consequently, it's important to be aware of the changing understanding of addiction resulting from the latest trends in research and clinical practice. Previously, conventional wisdom assumed that addiction was a sign of moral failing, weakness or lack of willpower. Today, thanks to science, we recognize that addiction is a complex mental health disorder that deserves our understanding and compassion.

Another change is the broadening of the term “addiction” to include behavior such as gambling in addition to the

Key Takeaways

- Gambling is an activity in which something of value — usually money — is risked on the outcome of an event where the probability of winning or losing is less than certain.
- A gambling addiction is a persistent and recurrent maladaptive gambling behavior that disrupts personal, family or vocational opportunities.
- Individuals who continue to gamble despite these adverse consequences, lose control over their gambling, and crave opportunities to gamble likely are experiencing the clinical disorder known as pathological gambling.
- Approximately 1 percent of the general adult population in the United States has or has had a pathological gambling disorder in their lifetime.
- An additional 2.3 percent have had some problems with gambling in their lifetime but have not met diagnostic criteria for pathological gambling.
- Groups that are potentially vulnerable to developing a gambling disorder include adolescents, college students, casino employees and some minority populations.

more widely understood addictions to tobacco, drugs and alcohol. At one time, scientists and treatment providers assumed that a behavior or activity like gambling could not become addictive. However, research now demonstrates that people with gambling problems have many of the same experiences as people with alcohol and drug addiction, such as tolerance and withdrawal symptoms. These changes will be reflected in the APA's newest manual to diagnose mental health disorders, which is scheduled for publication in 2013.¹

What is Gambling?

Gambling is an activity in which something of value — usually money — is risked on the outcome of an event where the probability of winning or losing is less than certain.² According to this definition, a wide range of activities may be classified as gambling, including the following:

- Lottery
- Casino games, such as poker and roulette
- Slot machines
- Bingo
- Race track betting on horses and dogs
- Card playing
- Office pools on sports
- Informal bets between friends on games of skill, such as golf
- Internet gambling on poker, casino games and sports

What is Gambling Addiction?

The APA currently classifies pathological gambling as an impulse control disorder and defines it as “persistent and recurrent maladaptive gambling behavior ... that disrupts personal, family or vocational pursuits.”³ As with other addictive disorders, the betting increases as players need to wager increasingly large amounts in order to achieve the desired mood or level of excitement. Additionally, those with a gambling disorder often experience a range of negative consequences such as debt, depression, shame and guilt, as well as professional and relationship problems. “Individuals who continue to gamble despite these adverse consequences, lose control over their gambling and crave opportunities to gamble are likely experiencing the clinical disorder known as pathological gambling.”⁴

How Many People Have a Gambling Disorder?

The most recent national survey estimates that 0.6 percent of the general adult population in the United States has or has had a pathological gambling disorder in their lifetime.⁵ An additional 2.3 percent have had some problems with gambling in their lifetime but have not met diagnostic criteria for pathological gambling. This group is considered “subclinical” or “problem gamblers.”

Some maintain that individuals in this subclinical population are at risk of becoming pathological gamblers, and that these types of gambling problems will likely develop into full-blown disorders. In other words, the assumption is that having several symptoms indicates the person is on the slippery slope to a serious gambling addiction. However, other investigators have discovered that gambling disorders are more dynamic than static and have concluded that many people may recover fully even if they have had a gambling problem.^{6, 7}

Diagnosis of Pathological Gambling

The APA's *DSM-IV* includes 10 criteria to determine if someone can be diagnosed with pathological gambling.³ The person's behavior must meet at least five of the following criteria for this classification:

1. A preoccupation with gambling (e.g., preoccupation with reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble)
2. A need to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired level of excitement
3. Repeated, unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back or stop gambling
4. Feels restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling (withdrawal symptoms)
5. Uses gambling as a way of escaping from problems or of relieving a dysphoric mood (e.g., feelings of hopelessness, guilt, anxiety and depression)
6. After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even ("chasing" one's losses)
7. Lies to family members, therapist or others to conceal the extent of one's involvement with gambling
8. Has committed illegal acts such as forgery, fraud, theft or embezzlement to finance gambling
9. Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job or educational or career opportunity because of gambling
10. Relies on others to provide money to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by gambling

Note that the next edition of the *DSM* will be published in 2013. As of the date of this guidebook's publication, the APA's proposed changes include reducing the number of symptoms to nine, reducing the number of symptoms required for a diagnosis to four and reclassifying the disorder as part of a new Addiction category.¹

Key Takeaways

- Research shows that neither mere exposure to gambling nor a certain type of game can lead to greater rates of gambling disorders.
- Gambling addiction is a relationship between a vulnerable person and a gambling activity.

Who is Potentially Vulnerable?

Researchers find higher rates of gambling problems among particular groups because of age, social circumstances or psychological problems. Even youth, who are not of legal age to gamble, have a higher risk of gambling and developing problematic behaviors. For

example, a recent national study estimated that nearly 70 percent of Americans aged 14 to 19 years gambled in the past year.⁸ They wagered money on poker, sports, the lottery and a variety of other games. About 75 percent of college students gambled in the past year.⁹ Estimates of gambling disorders among young people range from 2 to 7 percent, and approximately 6 percent of college students have a severe gambling problem.^{9,10}

Some minorities also seem to have more gambling problems than the general adult population. A national survey found higher rates of gambling disorders among African Americans (2.2 percent) and Native Americans (2.3 percent) than among Caucasians. However, the rate for Hispanics mirrored that of whites.¹¹ More research is needed to explain why certain minorities have higher rates of gambling problems.

Casino employees represent another subpopulation that appears to have more gambling problems than the general adult population. A study of employees in three states found that 2.1 percent of the workers in the sample had a serious gambling problem. However, this study also discovered a lower rate of subclinical gambling problems when compared to the general adult population.

Researchers theorized that the lower rate could be an illustration of adaptation, in that casino employees who are exposed to gambling on a daily basis may see the downside of gambling among people who may have a problem and may adjust their own gambling behavior in response.¹² Another interesting finding was that over a three-year period, more employees became healthier in terms of their gambling — another possible example of adaptation.¹³

This research on exposure and adaptation has implications for the general adult population as well. It appears that although the introduction of new gambling opportunities into a community might initially increase gambling problems due to the novelty of the new opportunity, over time people adjust their behavior and move back toward health.⁴

What Causes Gambling Disorders?

Researchers are just beginning to understand the transition from healthy, recreational gambling to pathological gambling and, in the process, have overturned ideas about why some people gamble excessively. For example, a common assumption is that mere exposure to gambling is sufficient to stimulate the development of gambling disorders. However, prevalence studies conducted over the past 30 years contradict this assumption. In the late 1970s, the prevalence rate for pathological gambling was estimated to be 0.7 percent — very similar to the rate found in the 2008 survey of more than 10,000 individuals in the U.S.^{5,14} The fact that this rate has remained stable despite the incredible growth of casinos, lotteries, Internet gambling and other forms of gambling indicates that the population has adapted to the presence of new gambling opportunities.¹⁵



If exposure to gambling is not the answer, there is also a question of whether certain games are riskier than others. For example, scientists have wondered if faster games, such as slot machines, are more addictive than other forms of gambling. However, new research shows that the intensity of gambling involvement is a better predictor of gambling disorders than is participation in a particular game.^{16,17} The evidence shows that people can get into trouble with all types of games — even seemingly harmless ones, such as bingo and the lottery.

Instead, scientists now see addiction as a relationship between a vulnerable person and the object of addiction. Typical vulnerabilities might include co-occurring disorders such as depression, bipolar disorder and other addictive disorders. One study found that 96 percent of people with gambling disorders also suffered from some other psychiatric or addictive disorder.⁵ Research also indicates a clear relationship between biological factors and the development of a gambling disorder. For example, one such vulnerability might be insufficient levels of chemicals — or neurotransmitters — in the brain that regulates mood and judgment. If one's low mood is elevated by an activity like gambling, that person could develop a gambling problem.



WAYS TO IDENTIFY AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A GAMBLING DISORDER

Even though HR and EA professionals approach mental health issues in the workplace from different perspectives, both have a role to play when understanding the best ways to assist or refer employees to resources or treatment for gambling disorders. For HR professionals, it consists of increasing employees' understanding of gambling disorders and knowing where to refer an employee if they may need more information or help. EA professionals need to be equipped to potentially screen employees and refer them to treatment options as appropriate.

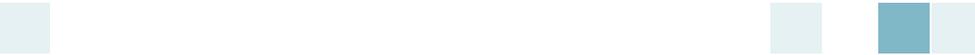
Screening and Intervention Tools

HR and EA professionals should know various screening instruments and be able to refer employees to them if that individual may want to learn more about gambling disorders. The screening instruments located on page 26 of this guidebook include:

- Lie-Bet Screen
- NODS-CLiP
- Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBGS)

Brief Screens

Although most people who suffer from pathological gambling do not seek professional treatment for the disorder, they may seek help for other problems. Research has shown that individuals who are diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder are 17.4 times more likely to develop pathological gambling.⁵ Mental health care providers need to be able to accurately screen for and diagnose gambling problems in order to provide appropriate referral and treatment services. Consequently, it is vital for clinicians to be able to assess a potential pathological gambling problem with a quick and easy tool.



For example, EA professionals who are counseling an employee for alcohol or drug problems should consider screening for gambling problems using a brief screening instrument. An example of this type of resource is the Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBGS), recently developed by researchers at Harvard Medical School from the results of a national survey of more than 43,000 households in the U.S.^{18, 19} The BBGS and its questions are outlined below.

Additional screening tools are easily accessible online for self-evaluation and, therefore, EA and HR professionals can direct concerned employees to those websites. More information on those instruments is available in this guidebook's Resources section.

Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBGS)

A “yes” answer to any one question indicates that the person is at risk for developing a gambling problem.

1. During the past 12 months, have you become restless, irritable or anxious when trying to stop/cut down on gambling? Yes / No
2. During the past 12 months, have you tried to keep your family or friends from knowing how much you gambled? Yes / No
3. During the past 12 months, did you have such financial trouble as a result of your gambling that you had to get help with living expenses from family, friends or welfare? Yes / No



ROADS TO RECOVERY

Recovery from addiction is a long and winding road. About 80 to 90 percent of individuals entering recovery from addiction will relapse during the first year after they begin treatment.²⁰ However, most people do eventually recover from gambling addiction and other addictive disorders.

EA professionals should be aware of resources for recovery so that they can develop effective treatment plans for employees with gambling problems or make a referral to a qualified treatment provider. HR professionals will benefit from knowledge of these resources in situations where they need to refer concerned employees or to ensure that their company's EA program is using evidence-based practices. The Resources section at the end of this guidebook provides self-help and brief intervention survey tools for HR managers and EA professionals to help connect them and their employees to a clear path to recovery for those in need of professional help.

Key Takeaways

- Only 12 to 15 percent of people with gambling disorders seek formal treatment and, therefore, it is vital to make self-help tools and brief interventions available.
- Although there is no evidence-based treatment standard for gambling disorders, research indicates that cognitive therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, Motivational Interviewing and some drug treatments show promise.

Gamblers Anonymous

Research has yet to establish a treatment standard for gambling disorders because of the lack of clinical trials. For a long time, one of the few avenues for help was Gamblers Anonymous (GA), a self-help fellowship that provides mutual support through group meetings for individuals experiencing gambling-related problems. GA is based on the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Its goal is to garner from its members a commitment to abstinence from gambling, a lifelong commitment to the principles of GA and participation in GA meetings.

For more information on GA, visit www.gamblersanonymous.org or call 1-888-GA-HELPS for meeting locations and times.

Natural Recovery

Researchers are now beginning to make significant inroads in their search for evidence-based treatments and in understanding the process of recovery. We have learned that about one-third of the people with a gambling problem get well on their own, without formal treatment.²¹ This estimate is consistent with the rates of natural recovery in other addictions.²² Natural recovery is sometimes aided by self-help guides or tools, which are referenced in the self-help section on the next page.

Professional Treatment

Not everyone can get well without professional help. Because of the lack of a treatment standard for pathological gambling, health care providers have had to borrow clinical strategies designed for similar mental health problems, such as alcoholism, or rely on anecdotal information when developing treatment plans. Research has shown that various treatment approaches,

including cognitive behavioral therapy and Motivational Interviewing, show promise in helping an individual work through the recovery process for gambling disorders.²³ Scientists are now experimenting with several classes of drugs for gambling disorders including antidepressants, mood stabilizers and opioid antagonists, drugs used to reduce craving. Continued research is needed to determine the most effective drug-treatment strategies.²⁴

When HR or EA professionals refer an employee to professional treatment, they can expect that one or a combination of these treatment methods will be used and can help the employee prepare for that process.

Self-help and Brief Interventions

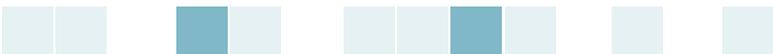
Because only about 12 to 15 percent of people with gambling disorders seek formal treatment, research on self-help and brief interventions is vital. When grounded in the research-based clinical techniques listed above, self-help manuals and online resources such as *Your First Step to Change* (www.basisonline.org) offer alternatives for people who cannot or will not enter formal treatment. This interactive, confidential program is for individuals concerned about their gambling but not ready to change their behavior. *Your First Step to Change* helps the person understand gambling disorders and think about how to make changes in their gambling and their life. For more information on *Your First Step to Change*, please view the self-help toolkit in the Resources section of this guidebook.



Additionally, a new research-based resource for gamblers interested in a self-help approach is a book titled *Change Your Gambling, Change Your Life: Strategies for Managing Gambling and Improving your Finances, Relationships and Health*, written by Howard Shaffer, Ph.D., Ryan Martin, Ph.D., John Kleschinsky, M.P.H. and Liz Neporent.²⁵ Either of these approaches might be effective in providing help to those individuals who are having problems as a result of their gambling. They are also a useful way to help people without easy access to medical resources.

Self-Exclusion

Another step that can be taken for a gambler who is trying to avoid developing a gambling problem or trying to get help with an existing problem is enrollment in a self-exclusion program. While specific program components vary, self-exclusion programs now offered by many casinos and governments in the U.S. and around the world allow individuals to voluntarily ban themselves from entering casinos for a specified time period that can range from a month to a lifetime. Casinos, in turn, are responsible for enforcing the voluntary ban. Early research on self-exclusion as an intervention for gambling disorders indicates that it is a safe approach with great promise. (A summary of research on self-exclusion is provided in the fifth edition of the NCRG's monograph series, titled "Evaluating Self-Exclusion as an Intervention for Disordered Gambling," available at www.ncrg.org.)



Financial Education

An important component of recovery from gambling addiction might include assistance with financial management. The publication *Problem Gamblers and Their Finances: A Guide for Treatment Professionals* can be used to help individuals with gambling problems. It is available for free download at www.ncpgambling.org/files/public/problem_gamblers_finances.pdf.

Financial strategies can include limiting access to money used to gamble; establishing a spending plan; shifting control of finances to a non-gambler in the family; setting up a repayment plan; and legal transfer of assets. HR and EA professionals can easily refer employees to this resource as a way to alleviate one consequence of pathological or problem gambling.

RESPONSIBLE GAMING

Gambling has become an accepted part of America's mainstream culture, comparable to leisure activities such as attending movies or athletic events. A large majority of Americans who gamble can do so recreationally without adverse consequences. Gambling should be viewed as fun, not as a way to make money or escape from problems. However, for some, gambling is not a risk-free activity. HR and EA professionals can help encourage responsible gaming behavior when an individual approaches them or displays signs that, for them, gambling may have become a problem.

To better understand the principles behind responsible gaming, it is best to know these four characteristics:

1. Responsible gamblers understand that gambling by its nature entails risk and that the odds of winning are with the house.
2. Responsible gaming is done socially, with family, friends or colleagues.
3. Responsible gaming is done for limited amounts of time, both in frequency and duration.
4. Responsible gaming always has predetermined acceptable limits for losses.

Key Takeaways

- Gambling should be viewed as fun, not as a way to make money or escape from problems.
- Responsible gaming advice emphasizes setting a budget for time and money when gambling and avoiding gambling when drinking excessively or in a low mood.
- Responsible gamblers understand that the odds of winning are with the house; that gambling should be done socially; that gambling should be done for limited amounts of time; and that they should not exceed predetermined, acceptable limits for losses.

Setting Limits

HR and EA professionals can offer advice to employees that help them establish their own personal limits while gambling. Advice to these individuals emphasizes setting a budget for time and money when gambling and avoiding gambling in certain circumstances. Additional suggestions include:

1. The decision to gamble is a personal choice; no one should feel pressured to do so.
2. Gambling is not essential for having a good time and shouldn't be perceived as necessary for having fun with friends.
3. An acceptable loss limit needs to be determined before starting to gamble. Any money spent should be considered the cost of entertainment and people should only gamble with money they can afford to lose.
4. Borrowing money to gamble should be avoided and discouraged.
5. There are times when people should not gamble, such as when the form of gambling is illegal or when it interferes with work or family responsibilities.
6. There are certain high-risk situations during which gambling should be avoided, such as gambling under stress or when lonely, angry or depressed.
7. Excessive use of alcohol when gambling can be risky and result in poor decision-making.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What's the first thing I should do if an employee discloses that he/she has a gambling problem?

A: EA professionals should administer one of the brief screens listed in the Resources section to see if the person is having problems. Or, you can refer the employee to confidential Internet resources such as *Your First Step to Change* or the BBGS (www.divisiononaddictions.org) if the person would prefer to do a self-evaluation. If the employee's condition warrants further evaluation, refer him or her to a health care provider with a specialty in gambling addiction. You can find such professionals through your state department of public or mental health (some states have certification programs for gambling specialists), the national helpline number (1-800-522-4700) or the American Academy of Healthcare Providers in the Addictive Disorders (www.americanacademy.org).

Q: Are there warning signs of a gambling problem among employees in the workplace?

A: It is very difficult to identify a person with a gambling problem just by looking at him/her. Even seasoned addiction specialists cannot always recognize a person with a gambling disorder. However, there are some warning signs that could indicate a problem:

- The employee is using the computer at work to gamble.
- The employee is borrowing money from co-workers.
- The employee asks for an advance in pay.

- The employee is organizing or taking excessive interest in the office pool for March Madness or other sporting events.

Keep in mind that any of these activities do not necessarily mean that a person has a gambling problem.

Q: What training is available for EA providers on gambling disorders?

A: The NCRG offers various educational programs for health care providers that include the annual NCRG Conference on Gambling and Addiction, free webinars and free treatment provider workshops held in various regions of the U.S. The NCRG is approved by the following organizations to sponsor continuing education: the American Psychological Association (APA), NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, the National Board for Certified Counselors and the California Board of Behavioral Sciences. The organization also typically receives single-program approval from the Employee Assistance Certification Commission, the National Association of Social Workers and other certifying organizations. For details visit the Public Education and Outreach section of www.ncrg.org.

Q: What if our company's health insurance does not cover treatment for pathological gambling?

A: Some health insurance policies do not cover treatment for gambling disorders. However, because so many individuals with gambling problems have other psychiatric disorders, clinicians are usually able to receive reimbursement for treating the co-occurring problems. That is why a careful and comprehensive assessment of the client's mental health condition is so important.

Q: What if one employee suspects another employee may have a gambling problem? What should they do?

A: There are a few considerations that need to be made when talking about gambling disorders in the workplace. First and foremost, it is very important to be careful about approaching a person who might have a problem with gambling based solely upon observations of the person's behavior. It is very difficult to tell if someone has a gambling problem just by looking at him/her.

Second, if the employee has established that their colleague is in trouble and is interested in getting help, there are a variety of resources available. The employee can refer their co-worker to talk with an HR or EA professional, or can even suggest that they speak to a health care provider specializing in addiction (preferably in gambling addiction) for a comprehensive assessment. This is important because most individuals with gambling disorders have co-occurring addictive or psychiatric problems that could be the basis for the excessive gambling.

If the individual is reluctant to see a clinician or is uncertain about whether there is a problem, the confidential, online self-help resources such as *Your First Step to Change* or the Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen can be useful. Other resources such as Gamblers Anonymous or the national gambling help line telephone number might also be helpful. Keep in mind that people with addiction are usually ambivalent about seeking help, and the employee might not want to change behavior. Also, be aware that most people with addictive behaviors usually relapse when first attempting to recover. Patience and understanding are needed on the road to recovery.

Q: I have a family member/spouse that has disclosed they have a gambling problem. What should I do?

A: The first step is to understand what type of health insurance coverage is available for mental health problems with the family’s provider. If the family member is covered, encourage him or her to see a health care provider specializing in addiction for a comprehensive assessment. If not covered, contact the state’s department of health to find out if there are free treatment resources available for the uninsured. Confidential, online self-help resources such as *Your First Step to Change* or the Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBGS) can be useful, and family members can also direct the individual with a gambling problem to other resources, such as Gamblers Anonymous or the national gambling helpline telephone number. Finally, family and friends of a person with a gambling disorder can find support in Gam-Anon meetings. See the Resources section for the toll-free telephone number.

Q: I have disclosed I have a gambling problem to HR. Will my company give me time off work to deal with my addiction?

A: This is subject to the rules and regulations as stipulated in the employee handbook and by the HR personnel. Employees should discuss this with their HR manager because each company’s policy is different.

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

General Information about Gambling Disorders

NCRG's website: www.ncrg.org

The NCRG's website contains the latest research and science-based resources that are available to address gambling disorders and educate the public about responsible gaming. It houses most of the publications and tools available in this guidebook, as well as information on upcoming public education programs and outreach events. For more information, visit www.ncrg.org.

Gambling Disorders 360° and Other Online Resources

Gambling Disorders 360°, the NCRG's blog, explores the latest news, issues and research relating to gambling disorders and responsible gaming. To view Gambling Disorders 360°, visit <http://blog.ncrg.org>. The NCRG is also active on Facebook and Twitter. To connect with the organization on Facebook, visit www.facebook.com/theNCRG. To follow the NCRG on Twitter, visit www.twitter.com/theNCRG.

Increasing the Odds: A Series Dedicated to Understanding Gambling Disorders

Increasing the Odds is the NCRG's monograph series that spotlights specific topics in the field of research on gambling disorders and is written for a general audience. Volumes include:

Volume 1: Youth and College Gambling

Volume 2: Roads to Recovery from Gambling
Addiction

Volume 3: Gambling and the Public Health – Part 1

Volume 4: Gambling and the Public Health – Part 2
Volume 5: Evaluating Self-Exclusion as an Intervention
for Disordered Gambling
Volume 6: Gambling and the Brain: Neuroscience
Research on Gambling Disorders

To download the monographs, visit
www.ncrg.org/resources/publications/monographs.

Responsible Gaming Quarterly

Responsible Gaming Quarterly, produced by the American Gaming Association (AGA) and the NCRG, serves as a resource for news and analysis of issues on gambling disorders and provides a broad range of coverage on recent research results, regulatory initiatives, studies and developments in the treatment field and model citizen programs in responsible gaming. To download the current issue of *Responsible Gaming Quarterly*, visit **www.americangaming.org/newsroom/newsletters/responsible-gaming-quarterly**.

The BASIS (Brief Addiction Science Information Source)

Developed by the Division on Addiction, Cambridge Health Alliance, a Harvard Medical School teaching affiliate, the BASIS publishes The WAGER, a brief monthly online report on new research on gambling disorders. Visit **www.basionline.org**.

“Talking with Children about Gambling”

“Talking with Children about Gambling” is a research-based guide designed to help parents, as well as others who work with youth, deter children from gambling and recognize possible warning signs of problem gambling and other risky behaviors. The guide was developed in consultation with the Division on Addiction. For more information, download

the brochure in both English and Spanish at www.ncrg.org/public-education-and-outreach/college-and-youth-gambling-programs/talking-children-aboutgambling.

Resources for Employees with Gambling Problems

Your First Step to Change

Your First Step to Change is a self-help guide for individuals thinking about changing their gambling behavior. Go to www.basionline.org and click on self-help tools to access this confidential, interactive online program or download a PDF of the booklet. *Your First Step to Change* has been translated into Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin), Khmer and Vietnamese. It was developed by the Division on Addiction, Harvard Medical School, and the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling with support from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the NCRG.

Gamblers Anonymous

www.gamblersanonymous.org

National Hotline: 888-GA-HELPS (888-424-3577)

Gam-Anon

www.gam-anon.org

718-352-1671

Gam-Anon is a self-help organization for spouses, family or close friends of people with gambling disorders.

National Council on Problem Gambling

www.ncpgambling.org

National Helpline: 800-522-4700

The helpline will refer individuals to treatment providers in their areas.

Brief Screening Instruments

The purpose of a brief screen is to identify those who might have a gambling disorder in a timely and cost-effective manner. If the brief screen indicates a problem, the individual should be referred to a qualified clinician. The following is a list of several brief screens in current use:

Lie-Bet Screen

- (1) Have you ever had to lie to people important to you about how much you gambled?
- (2) Have you ever felt the need to bet more and more money?

Answering “yes” to at least one question is indicative of a potential gambling problem.²⁶

NODS-CLIP

- (1) Have you ever tried to stop, cut down or control your gambling?
- (2) Have you ever lied to family members, friends or others about how much you gamble or how much money you lost on gambling?
- (3) Have there ever been periods lasting two weeks or longer when you spent a lot of time thinking about your gambling experiences, or planning out future gambling ventures or bets?

Answering “yes” to one or more questions is indicative of a potential gambling problem.²⁷

Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBGS)

- (1) During the past 12 months, have you become restless, irritable, or anxious when trying to stop and (or) cut down on gambling?
- (2) During the past 12 months, have you tried to keep your family or friends from knowing how much you gambled?
- (3) During the past 12 months, did you have such financial trouble as a result of gambling that you

had to get help with living expenses from family, friends or welfare?

A “yes” answer to any one question indicates that further assessment is warranted.¹⁸ The questions, derived from the results of the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC) that interviewed 43,093 households, are considered the most likely to identify a gambling problem.¹⁹

For information about additional screens and other assessments, see the seventh edition of the NCRG’s monograph series, titled “What Clinicians Need to Know about Gambling Disorders.” This will be available for a free download on www.ncrg.org in the fall of 2012.

Responsible Gaming

“Keep it Fun”

Casino gambling is one of America’s favorite forms of entertainment, and for a vast majority of Americans it is just that — entertainment. This brochure outlines the characteristics of responsible gambling and tips for setting personal guidelines when visiting a casino. This is available as a free download at www.americangaming.org/files/aga/uploads/docs/keep_it_fun_prev.pdf.

“The House Advantage: A Guide to Understanding the Odds”

This brochure explains the house advantage, providing typical ranges for specific games, along with other factors that should be taken into account when betting on casino games, such as the amount wagered, the length of time played and, to a degree, a player’s skill level. It also debunks common myths about gambling and provides an explanation of regulatory procedures in place to ensure all games in a casino are fair. This is available as a free download at www.americangaming.org/files/aga/uploads/docs/rgew/odds_brochure_2011_final.pdf.

“Taking the Mystery Out of the Machine: A Guide to Understanding Slot Machines”

While a significant majority of gamblers say slot machines are their favorite form of casino entertainment, most people know very little about how slots are developed or how they work. The brochure provides easy-to-understand facts about how slots are operated, developed and regulated, and uses common language to debunk many players’ most widely held myths about slot machines. This is available as a free download at www.americangaming.org/files/aga/uploads/docs/taking_the_mystery_out_of_the_machine_brochure_final.pdf.

PEER

The Partnership for Excellence in Education and Responsible Gaming (PEER) is a dynamic, one-of-a-kind program created by the NCRG to provide gaming entities with the tools and resources needed to develop a comprehensive and world-class responsible gaming program. The PEER program offers members full access to the resources needed to implement high-quality responsible gaming programs. PEER members also have access to unique employee training opportunities, on-call implementation assistance and an annual report card to demonstrate progress on their initiatives. To learn more about the PEER program, visit www.ncrg.org/peerprogram.

EMERGE

The *Executive, Management and Employee Responsible Gaming Education* (EMERGE) program is a science-based, online training program for gaming industry employees developed by Harvard Medical School faculty with support from the NCRG. EMERGE is the only program of its kind grounded in scientific research, but designed for everyone to use and understand. The self-paced program teaches employees how gambling can become an addiction and the specific responsible gaming policies and practices of their organization. For more information, download the brochure and view a demo of the program at www.ncrg.org/public-education-and-outreach/employee-communications/emerge-training.

Continuing Education Opportunities

The NCRG, which offers various educational programs for health care providers, is approved by the following organizations to sponsor continuing education: the American Psychological Association, the National Board for Certified Counselors, NAADAC and the California Board of Behavioral Sciences. The NCRG also typically receives single-program approval from the Employee Assistance Certification Commission, the National Association of Social Workers and other certifying organizations.

NCRG Conference on Gambling and Addiction

Since 1999, the annual NCRG Conference on Gambling and Addiction has brought together public health officials, researchers, health care providers, regulators, policy makers and gaming industry representatives (including HR managers) from around the world. The conference provides a unique forum for these audiences to discuss the latest research advances in

the field of gambling and related disorders, and how these findings can be incorporated into practical, real-world applications. The NCRG Conference is held each fall in conjunction with Global Gaming Expo (G2E), the gaming industry's largest international trade show and conference. For details, visit www.ncrg.org/conference.

NCRG Webinar Series

The NCRG Webinar Series provides year-round educational opportunities designed to help individuals better understand and address critical issues related to gambling disorders and responsible gaming — without having to leave their own home or office. These one-hour online programs are free and eligible for continuing education units. For details, visit the Public Education and Outreach section of www.ncrg.org.

NCRG Treatment Provider Workshop Series

The NCRG hosts a national series of workshops that gives mental health and addiction treatment providers an opportunity to understand the most up-to-date research on gambling disorders and apply those findings to their clinical practice. Each training session features leading researchers and clinicians in the field of gambling disorders, and topics range from screenings and assessments for pathological gambling to new manuals including effective behavioral treatment strategies. These free workshops are hosted in partnership with various state and regional organizations. For details, visit the Public Education and Outreach section of www.ncrg.org.



Additional Organizations

American Psychological Association

www.apa.org

Employee Assistance Professionals Association

www.eapassn.org

NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals

www.naadac.org

National Association of Social Workers

www.nasw.org

National Board for Certified Counselors

www.nbcc.org

National Council on Problem Gambling

www.ncpgambling.org

Society for Human Resource Management

www.shrm.org

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR RESPONSIBLE GAMING

WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE

1299 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 1175
Washington, DC 20004

BOSTON OFFICE

900 Cummings Center
Suite 418-U
Beverly, MA 01915