

**2006 Midwest Conference on
Problem Gambling and
Substance Abuse**

**How to Identify
and
Approach Problem Gamblers**

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Problem Gamblers:

**How To
Know One
When
You See One**

[Objectives:]

- To learn how to identify a problem gambler based on observable behaviors
- To know what to say and how to say it when approaching a problem gambler.

Clinical Criteria—5 Required

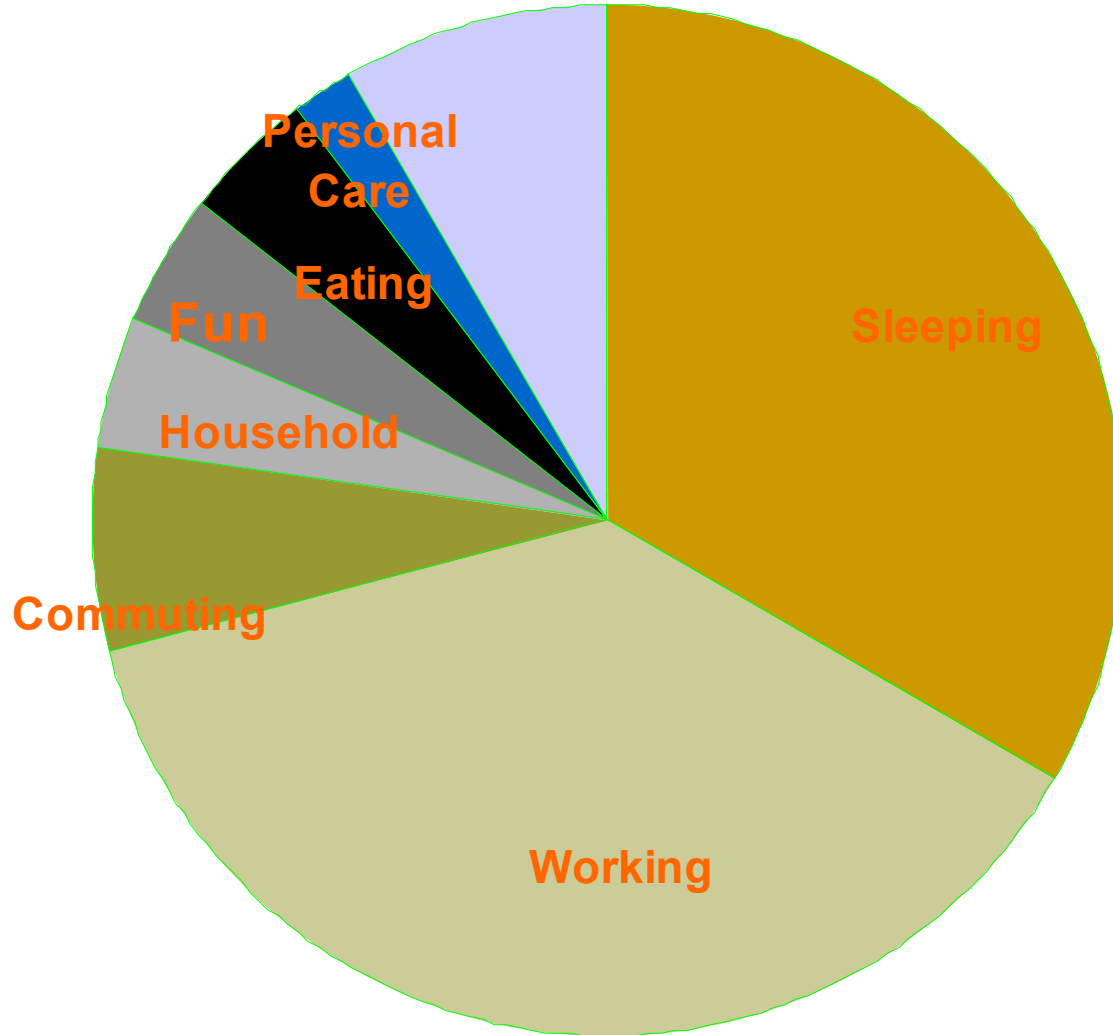
1. Preoccupation with Gambling
2. Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money
3. Repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, or stop
4. Restless or irritable when trying to stop or cut back
5. Gambles as a way of escaping
6. Chasing
7. Lies to others to conceal gambling involvement
8. Has committed illegal acts to finance gambling
9. Jeopardized or lost significant relationship or opportunity because of gambling
10. Relies on others to provide financial bailouts

[Red Flag Behaviors]

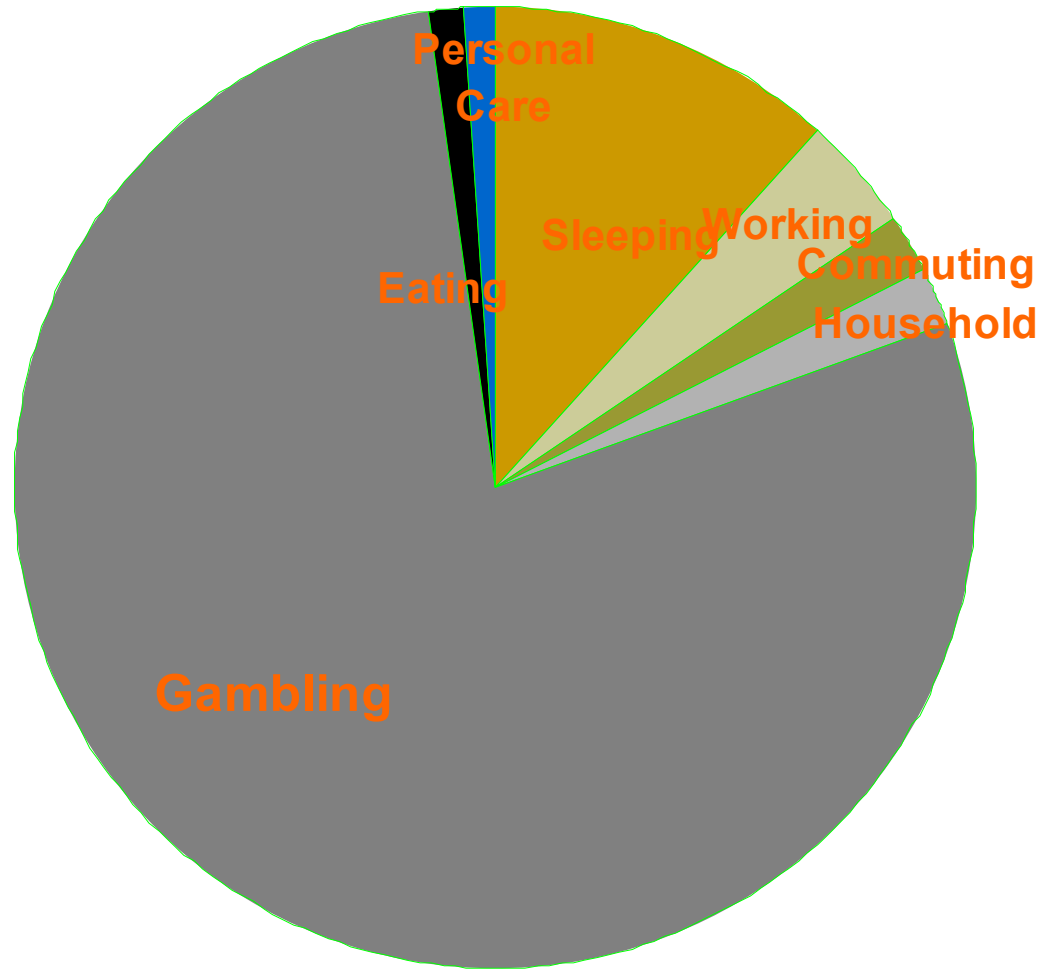
Criteria 1: Preoccupation with Gambling

- Extended periods of uninterrupted gambling
- Excessive solo gambling
- Same day visits
- Talks about gambling—a lot!
- Personal neglect
- Leaving children/pets in parked cars

[A 'Regular' Day]



[A Problem Gambler's Day]



Red Flag Behaviors

Criteria 2: Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money.

- **Moving up to higher stake machines/tables**
- **Unwillingness to move down**

Statements

- **That pot is too low to even bother with.**
- **I don't even go to gamble unless I have xx \$.**

Red Flag Behaviors

Criteria 3: Repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, or stop

- Explains an absence by saying he/she was trying to stop, or reports being able to stop only for a short time.
- Promises self (and others) to quit as soon as s/he wins enough to _____.
- Wins and plays winnings until gone.

Red Flag Behaviors

Criteria 4: Restless or irritable when trying to stop or cut back

- **Agitation or restlessness during loss limit time.**
- **Refuses encouragement by companions to take a break/do something else/leave.**

Red Flag Behaviors

Criteria 5: Gambles as a way of escaping

Mostly exhibited by women

- **Loses track of time**
- **Forgets about family/work responsibilities**

Statements

- **I go there to get away from _____.**
- **I don't have to think about ____ when I'm there.**

[Red Flag Behaviors]

Criteria 6: Chasing

Returns to casino to try to win back previous losses.

- **A look of desperation**
- **Increasing panic when payouts don't occur**

[Red Flag Behaviors]

Criteria 7: Lies to others to conceal gambling involvement

Statements

- **My spouse/boss/friends think that I'm somewhere else.**
- **I can't tell my spouse/partner that I won/lost tonight.**
- **I'll have to figure out how to get the rent paid without my spouse/partner finding out.**

[Red Flag Behaviors]

Criteria 8: Has committed illegal acts to finance gambling

- **Bounces checks**
- **“Borrows” from others without their consent; intends to replace or put back**
- **Steals from employer**
- **Trades sex for money to gamble**

Red Flag Behaviors

Criteria 9: Jeopardized or lost significant relationship or opportunity because of gambling

Statements

- **My spouse/partner left me—s/he doesn't like to gamble/says I gamble too much.**
- **I lost my job.**
- **I'm on probation at school.**

[Red Flag Behaviors]

Criteria 10: Relies on others to provide financial bailouts

- Repeatedly coerces, or manipulates others to get money, and then often gambles it.
- Runs up credit card limits
- Spends savings/retirement/college funds
- Kites checks

Other Behaviors We Might See

NOT HAVING FUN!

- **Fails to leave machine/table to toilet/eat**
- **Falls asleep at the machine**
- **Fails to medicate**
- **Abandons winnings because of DAP status**
- **Multiple Players Cards**

Distorted Thinking

- **Angry if someone uses ‘their’ machine;**
- **Belief that their ‘system’ works**
- **Distorted understanding of odds/probability**
- **Belief that payoffs are related to value of bet, time invested, or other behaviors**
- **Feels very ‘close’ to casino employees**
- **Downplays losses—focuses on wins**

[Helpline Attitudes]

- No political or moral 'stand' on gambling
- Non-judgmental
- Active listening
- Awareness of Suicide Risk
- Awareness of addictive behaviors

[Helpline Protocols]

- Assessment of Gambling Problem
- Suicide Assessment
- Discussion of options
- Education
- Information
- Referral
- Possible Follow-up

[Making Your Approach: First...]

- Be comfortable talking about gambling and addiction
- Address your own fears and concerns first
- Be ready with information
- Brace yourself
- Practice

[When you 'go in']

- Cite behaviors, not characteristics
- Listen for failure of logic
- Withhold judgment
- Ask “Are ya having fun?”
- Address the bullsh - it

[Develop a plan]

- Harm reduction
- Abstinence
- An evaluation

Contact Information

- Gambling Helpline: 1-888-BETS OFF
- Suicide Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK
- Life Crisis Services: 314-647-3100
(bus.)

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