



FEMALE GAMBLERS FACT SHEET

Prevalence

- Gap between women and male gamblers is dwindling
- Old estimates of 33% of compulsive gamblers as women seen as understatement
- Some states have more help –line calls from women than men
- Among gamblers age 45-64 women outnumber men
- 67% of women who seek help are between age 40 and 60

Causes of female gambling

- Lifestyle changes such as retirement, loss or divorce lead to transition from social to problem gambling
- Gambling experience characterized by social isolation and self abandonment
- Women gamble for anonymity and isolation, aim is to play (rather than win), dull feelings and forget
- Often victims of abuse or from family history of addiction

Escape gambling

- Gambling way to lose awareness of time, money lost and people
- 95% of women who gamble are escape gamblers- slots, video poker, lottery, , bingo
- Gambling as coping mechanism to forget overwhelming troubles and emotions
- Gambling used to escape, soothe, reduce stress and distract
- Mental health issues common: depression and anxiety
- Release from situational stress, demand from others and yearning for autonomy
- Gambling for mood management

Course of gambling

- Women begin gambling later than men but develop problems more quickly
- Women engage in fewer types of gambling
- More likely to report financial problems, less access to financing than men
- Women seek help faster than men
- Telescoping- rapid development of problem due to continuous play form of gambling and rapid reinforcement

Barriers to treatment

- Women less accepted by society as gamblers, portrayed as mature nurturing mothers, loving daughters and responsible homemakers
- Societal gender roles and caregiver expectations
- Shame in breaching social and personal values, neglecting children and families, isolating from friends and jeopardizing employment
- Autonomy issues- drive to be self reliant in dealing with problems
- Fear of judgment, exposure, shame and guilt
- Inaccurate information about treatment services and availability
- Women less likely to attend Gamblers Anonymous meetings: fear of being hit on by men, fear non-skilled gambling ridiculed, increased stigma and guilt, hard to share about abusive relationship and family issues

Casinos as easy to get to, comfortable and familiar enough to go alone- safety and security