

# **Problem Gambling**

*What We Need to Know*

New York Council on Problem Gambling, Inc.

# **Gambling is a high risk behavior...**

Particularly for  
adolescents.

# Why is youth gambling a problem now?

- Societal influences have normalized gambling
- On-line gambling has become accessible.
- Parents, family members, schools, and the community may not be aware of the risks of youth gambling
- Today's youth are the first generation to have legal gambling throughout their lifetime
- The media is bombarding youth with pro-gambling messages

# Five Types of Gamblers

- Social Gambler
- Problem Gambler
- Pathological (Compulsive) Gambler
- Organized Crime Gambler
- Professional Gambler

# Adolescents are actually more likely to become pathological gamblers than adults. (Gupta and Derevensky, 2000)

- Impulsivity
- Developmental nature
- Susceptibility to peer influence
- Emerging egos
- The attraction of winning
- Their belief that nothing negative can happen to them
- Their lack of understanding that there can be a downside to gambling

# Adolescent Brain Development

- Adolescence is a period of profound brain maturation.
- It was once believed that brain development was complete during childhood.
- The maturation process is not complete until about age 24.

# Does normal brain development contribute to adolescent susceptibility to gambling?

## INDIRECT SUPPORT:

1. **Greater risk taking (particularly in groups)**
2. **Greater propensity toward low effort-high excitement activities**
3. **Lower capacity for good judgment and weighing consequences**
4. **Greater sensitivity to novel stimuli**

# Types of Gambling in New York State

- Lottery
- Horse Racing at Race Tracks and OTB
- Casinos
- Floating Casinos (Cruises to Nowhere)
- Stock or Commodities Market, Day Trading
- Cards for Money, Dice, and slots not at a Casino
- Games of Skill for Money
- Sports Betting
- Office Pools, Raffles
- Dog or Cock Fighting
- Pull Tabs
- Bingo
- Internet Gambling

# Adolescent Gambling Statistics

<b>National (1999)</b> (National Adolescent Review)	<b>New York State (1998)</b> (Gambling and Problem Gambling Among Adolescents in New York)	<b>New York State (2006)</b> (OASAS School Survey)
<b>1.5%</b> of teens age 16-17 can be classified as “problem or pathological gamblers	<b>2.4%</b> of teens are currently suffering	<b>10%</b> of students have experienced problem gambling in the past year
<b>2%</b> can be classified as “at-risk”	<b>14%</b> total are at risk for developing a problem	<b>20%</b> either at risk or already experiencing problems
<b>30-40%</b> of adolescents report gambling with their parents	<b>44%</b> of adolescents who have gambled started with parents or other family members	<b>37%</b> of students do not know how their parents feel about gambling.

# Other Statistics



- 72% of students in grades 7-12 engaged in at least one gambling activity in the past year.
- 34% have gambled within the past month and 12% have gambled four or more times in the past month.
- Males were 4x more likely to have experienced problem gambling compared to females.

(OASAS School Survey, 2006)

# Forms of Gambling Associated w/ Problem Gambling in NYS Youth

- **Playing Cards for Money**
- **Playing Lottery or Scratch Off Games**
- **Playing Pool, Basketball or other games of skill for Money**
- **Betting on Sports for Money**
- **Playing Dice for Money**

# College Age Youth

- **Similar statistics and risk involved as for adolescents**
- **Less supervision and more access to gambling activities (i.e. poker tournaments, online gambling)**
- **School and Greek sponsorship of Texas Hold' em/ Casino Nights, excursions to casinos, etc.**
- **School-related sports betting**

# Sports Illustrated 2005

- **“In college you’re live wired...The number of hands you can play, the amount of thinking and studying you can do about those hands-  
EVERYTHING’ S ACCELERATED” -Strausser**
- **Students are at the HIGHEST-RISK AGE...They think they’ re smarter than anyone else-  
invulnerable.” -Derevensky**

Quotes from Sports Illustrated 2005

# **U.S. News and World Report: “NCAA March Madness Can Cause Lifetime Gambling Problems”**

- Numerous studies have shown that the number of adolescents addicted to gambling is two to four times the adult rate and 4 to 7 percent of college students meet the criteria for pathological gambling.
- Research also has shown that the earlier a person begins gambling, the more likely she or he is to develop a gambling problem; the average problem gambler starts wagering around age 10.

# Teen Gambling & “March Madness”

- **The NCAA tournament—a three-week, single-elimination competition—not only builds excitement among students and alumni of participating schools and among sports fans at large but also creates a flurry of gambling activity.**
- **A significant number of college-aged problem gamblers surveyed indicated that they were first introduced to gambling by completing an NCAA tournament bracket or buying a Superbowl Square.**

# Teen Gambling & “March Madness”

- **The students were introduced to gambling as teenagers, either by classmates in junior high or high school, or by male family members in the home setting.**
- **These findings suggest that completing an NCAA tournament bracket may serve as a gateway to participation in more expensive and dangerous forms of sports gambling that can hold dire consequences.**

# Reports show students that reported gambling were:

- **Over 50% more likely to drink alcohol**
- **More than twice as likely to binge drink**
- **More than three times as likely to use marijuana**
- **Three times as likely to use other illegal drugs**
- **Almost three times as likely to get in trouble with the police**
- **Almost three times as likely to steal or shoplift**

# What Can You Do to Help Prevent Adolescent Problem Gambling?

- Incorporate gambling lessons in already existing ATOD prevention programs.
- Analyze gifts, prizes and events to ensure they do not promote a pro-gambling message.
- Help parents and schools create policies about gambling.
- Raise awareness that gambling can be problematic.
- Challenge youth misconceptions about gambling and the odds.
- Educate kids about the potential dangers.
- Inform kids about how to get help.

# If You or Someone You Know has a Problem with Gambling...

Help is Available

***New York State HOPEline***

24-hour Help Line

1-877-8-HOPENY

**New York Council on Problem Gambling**

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

***Gambler's Anonymous***

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

**NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services**

[www.oasas.state.ny.us/gambling](http://www.oasas.state.ny.us/gambling)



# Just because you're sixteen doesn't mean you can't be up to your eyeballs in debt.

You may be a minor, but your gambling debts may not be. It's not hard for a teenager to run up hundreds of dollars in debts. The time to quit is before you get in too deep. For help, call the Minnesota Compulsive Gambling Hotline. Break the habit before the habit breaks you. [Minnesota Compulsive Gambling Hotline 1-800-437-3641](http://www.mncompulsivegambling.com)

