



GAMBLING

Gambling addiction is the uncontrollable urge to continue gambling despite the toll it takes on one's life. Gambling is addictive because it stimulates the brain's reward system much like drugs or alcohol can. In fact, gambling addiction is the most common impulse control disorder worldwide.

As sports betting becomes more popular and accessible in the United States, we have seen an increase in service members using legal, gambling websites and apps. Everywhere you turn there seems to be an avenue to gamble. Initially relegated to brick-and-mortar casinos, now an online casino or bookmaker can be accessed with the tap of a button. Improvements in both mobile technology and internet, have made it possible for people all across the globe to indulge in gambling be it playing the slots, trying to beat the dealer in a card game or picking the exact score of the Super Bowl.

It is well documented that military personnel are highly susceptible to developing gambling problems. Military members are often stationed in remote areas, away from their homes and loved ones. At times they might have more free time on their hands and with limited entertainment options, some will choose to spend their time on gambling related activities. Some also use it to combat depression, stress and anger. According to the National Council on Problem Gambling, it's estimated that 36,000 active duty members have a problem with gambling.

Do you...

- Think about gambling a great deal of your time?
- Lie about your gambling to others?
- Gamble while bills go unpaid?
- Borrow money to finance your gambling?
- Miss work because of your gambling?
- Feel anxious, depressed or even suicidal after you gamble, but still don't quit?

If you answered yes to any of these, you could have a problem with gambling.

If you feel like your gambling has become a problem, there are some different options for support. Consider making an appointment or walking in to your local mental health clinic. Many mental health providers have specialized training in treating addictions and can be very effective in helping you curb gambling behaviors. There are also a host of online support communities, like the National Council on Problem Gambling (1800-552-4700) or Gamblers Anonymous (<http://www.gamblersanonymous.org/ga/hotlines/>). These agencies will provide you with tools to enhance and maintain your motivation to quit, how to cope with urges to gamble, and how to develop a healthy lifestyle balance amongst other things.

Questions? Contact us at 363ISRW.ART.363ISRW@us.af.mil or at 757-764-4178