



## PROBLEM GAMBLING & SUICIDE FACT SHEET 2018

- \* Gambling disorder is an impulse control disorder characterized by persistent and recurrent maladaptive gambling that disrupts personal, family or vocational pursuits.<sup>1</sup>
- \* In the U.S., 60% of adults gamble in a given year. In Minnesota 78% of adults gamble in a given year. Problem gambling is present in 1-4% of the population.<sup>1</sup>
- \* The lifetime prevalence of problem gambling in the U.S. is 2.5% for women and 6.8% for men.<sup>4</sup>
- \* Problem gambling amongst racial groups: Blacks (8.3%), Hispanics (6.7%), Native Americans (6.6%), Asians (4.8%) and Whites (2.8%).<sup>3</sup>
- \* Game type is irrelevant to the acquisition, development and maintenance of problem gambling.<sup>4</sup>
- \* Problem gamblers are 3.4 times more likely to attempt suicide compared to the general population.<sup>5</sup>
- \* 17-24% of problem gamblers attempt suicide.<sup>6</sup>
- \* 5% of gambling related suicidal thoughts resulted in attempts.<sup>7</sup>
- \* Higher rates of social support were associated with longer periods of abstinence from problem gambling.<sup>3</sup>

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### Risk Factors

In addition to such recognized suicide risk factors in the general population, problem gamblers face further stresses associated with:

- Major depression
- Substance Abuse
- Marital breakdown
- Unemployment
- Financial crisis
- Legal difficulties

### Treatment & Resources

Every gambler is unique and so needs a recovery program tailored specifically to them. What works for one gambler may not work for another. The biggest step is recognizing you have a problem with gambling. It takes tremendous strength and courage to own up to this. Do not despair and do not try to go it alone. Many others have been in your shoes and have been able to break the habit.

**Gambler's Anonymous**—A 12-step recovery program. Meetings are available throughout the U.S. and Minnesota. Visit <http://www.minnesotaga.com/> or call 1-855-222-5542.

**Counseling treatment** is available at no cost in Minnesota. For a referral call the helpline **1-800-333-HOPE(4673)**.

If you or someone you know is suicidal call a mental health professional or **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.

**Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance**—Minnesota's advocate for problem gambling. [www.northstarg.org](http://www.northstarg.org)