

Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM) is designed to achieve three goals: to increase public awareness of problem gambling; to increase the availability of prevention, treatment and recovery services; and to encourage healthcare providers to screen clients for problem gambling. This grassroots campaign brings together a wide range of stakeholders – public health organizations, advocacy groups and gambling operators – who work collaboratively to let people know that hope and help exist.



Problem Gambling is known as the Hidden Addiction. Unlike other addictions, problem gamblers do not display physical signs. There are no “card marks” on their arms, no “roulette breath,” no “dice eyes,” and no saturation point. While visible symptoms are minimal, problem gamblers are often depressed, anxious, and may have suicidal thoughts. They often neglect family and friends, run up large amounts of debt, and may be involved in illegal activity in order to fund their addiction.

Youth have been found to have 2-4 times the rate of gambling problems as adults, and gambling is often the first “risky” behavior children and teens engage in. A young person’s first gambling experience is often likely to be in their home, and parental attitudes and behaviors around gambling strongly influence a young person’s likelihood to begin gambling at a young age. Since we know that beginning to gamble at a young age may contribute to developing problems later in life, it is essential for parents, teachers, coaches, and other youth leaders to “have the conversations” with the young people in their lives

IF you gamble, do you gamble responsibly? Consider these questions:

- Have you ever bet more than you could really afford to lose?
- Have you ever needed to gamble with larger amounts of money to get that same feeling of excitement?
- When you gambled, did you go back another day to try to win back the money you lost?
- Have you ever borrowed money or sold anything to get money to gamble?
- Have you felt that you might have a problem with gambling?
- Has gambling caused you any health problems, including stress or anxiety?
- Have people criticized your betting or told you that you had a gambling problem, regardless of whether or not you thought it was true?
- Has your gambling caused any financial problems for you or your household?
- Have you felt guilty about the way you gamble or what happens when you gamble?

GET HELP

Gambling addiction is a diagnosable and treatable mental health disorder. Help and hope are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To learn more or get help for yourself or a loved one, visit www.beforeyoubet.org, contact a counselor at **Crossroads Counseling, Inc (740) 695-9447**, or talk to a counselor on the **Ohio Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-589-9966**. To text with someone, text “4hope” to **741741**.