

WHEN GAMBLING BECOMES A PROBLEM

888-ADMIT-IT

 Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling

www.gamblinghelp.org



Ten Questions About Gambling Behavior

1. Preoccupied with thoughts of gambling (reminiscing about past gambling experiences, planning the next outing or thinking about ways to get gambling money)?
2. Increasing bets to maintain excitement?
3. Becoming irritable when trying to cut back on gambling?
4. Using gambling as an escape from feelings of anxiety or depression?
5. Gambling to chase or make-up for previous losses?
6. Borrowing money from others, or selling or pawning items to pay debts or to keep the action going?
7. Lying to conceal gambling related activities?
8. Resorting to illegal acts to finance gambling?
9. Risking or losing personal, family and professional relationships?
10. Repeatedly failing to stop or cut back on gambling?

If you or someone you know answers "yes" to any of these questions, gambling may be a problem. For help, call the FCCG 24-hour HelpLine (888-ADMIT-IT)

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Compulsive Gambling, Inc.
237 Lookout Place, Suite 100
Maitland, Florida 32751

Phone: (407) 865-6200
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HelpLine: 888-ADMIT-IT
888-236-4848



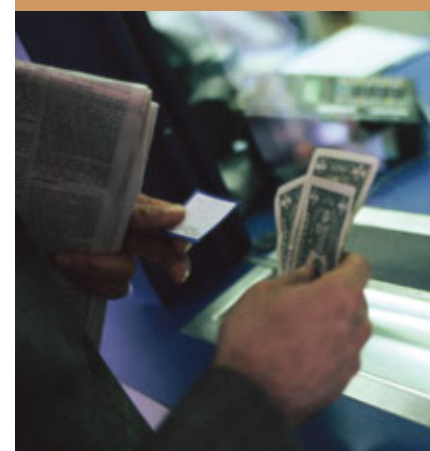
Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc.

FOCUS

Concerning People with Gambling Problems

Winter 2004

Up Close & Personal



Lost Lifetime

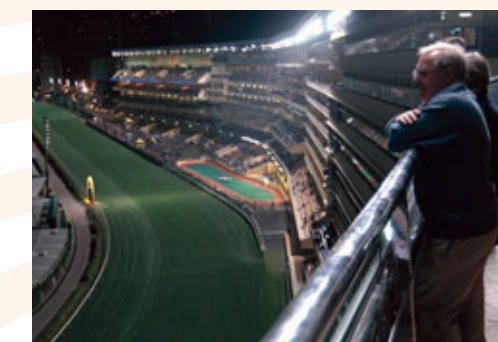
When asked, Bill will openly tell you: "As I look back at my past, I don't know how I made it." Bill isn't his real name but he's in his late fifties now and has finally pulled himself out of a lifetime of compulsive gambling. The wasted years full of crushing debt, despair, anger and isolation are behind him now but the memories linger.

What started out as family outings to the racetrack in his teens eventually ignited an insatiable hunger to gamble. "It got to the point," Bill recalls, "that betting consumed my every waking moment. Towards the end of my gambling career I was going to the track every day. When I would get there, it was like nobody else was around. It was just me, money, racing forms, the horses or dogs and having a few drinks."

Bill still can't quite comprehend how he became so absolutely lost that nothing in his life really mattered but gambling. Other people could bet at the track and not become totally obsessed, he reasons, so why wasn't he able to do the same thing? "I don't know," he muses when talking about the past, "but I'll tell you one thing. I do remember a time at the track when I was a lot younger. I watched how excited my buddy got during a race and from that moment on I was hooked. Yeah, it was the excitement, the risk, and that quick fix all rolled into one. It got so bad that I once went to three racetracks in one day and believe it or not, I even cheated my bookie."

When he reached his mid-forties, Bill finally realized that he had a problem, but only with alcohol, not gambling. He joined Alcoholics Anonymous, sobered up and tried to deal with his betting debts as a financial issue. While working hard to pay his creditors, he even attended some Gamblers Anonymous meetings and swore off going to the track. But before long, Bill

was buying lottery tickets, investing in penny stocks and pyramid schemes. None of this, he told himself, was gambling. Eventually, he returned to the racetrack and lost in excess of \$100,000. "To show you how crazy I was," Bill muses, "I would leave my AA meetings to go bet on the horses. Of course, I never told my sponsor, because I knew he would try and make me stop gambling."



"Finally," he recalls, "I realized after losing \$9,000 in one month that I had this huge hole in my soul I was trying to fill up with gambling. It was then that an inner voice told me to go back to Gamblers Anonymous and that's just what I did. Thank God I listened. Through those meetings I got help from therapists trained by the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling (FCCG) to deal with problem gamblers. It was those FCCG folks who got me into treatment and helped me turn my life around."

"To show you how crazy I was, I would leave my AA meetings to go bet on the horses."

Now when the FCCG trains therapists to help people like Bill, he is right there as a guest speaker, telling his story and helping them to eventually fill the holes in the souls of other compulsive gamblers with the gift of effective recovery.

Gambling Problems?
Yours? A friend's?
A family member's?
Call the FCCG 24-hour
HelpLine
888-ADMIT-IT
(888-236-4848)

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Want to help? Join FCCG.

(Contributions are tax deductible)

Name _____
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Membership Categories

Full	\$35
Sponsor	\$75
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Care to volunteer? If so, select your area(s) of interest:

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Make check payable to the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling.

"It is time that policy makers and gambling entrepreneurs (whether government, e.g. the lottery, or private industry) begin incorporating responsible gaming program mandates to ensure that any expansion effort be accompanied by appropriate provisions and supports."



Photo by Greg Dillon

From Our President

Gambling: Risk vs. Reward

by Paul Ashe

Legalized gambling in the United States, as an institution, has been one of the fastest growing industries of our time. During the past 25 years, I have witnessed the industry grow from less than \$50 billion to in excess of \$900 billion in 2002, with a current growth rate of 8-10% per year.

In addition to the \$900 billion wagered legally, it is estimated that another 20% is bet on illegal gambling activities, such as sports betting through bookies, office pools, etc. Further, each year, amounts wagered on the Internet, as well as the number of sites available continues to rise. Considering that Internet gambling is technically an illegal activity, it is alarming that the number of online gambling sites currently total in the thousands. The old adages of Barnum and Bailey, "give the customer what he wants" and "a sucker is born every minute" have no truer application than in today's gambling active society.

Similarly, state governments continue to approve gambling expansion options as a source of revenue to alleviate the implementation of new tax initiatives. The rationalization for this expansion is based upon the theory that if states fail to take advantage of gambling revenue, their citizens will patronize adjoining states with legalized gambling opportunities, as well as visit Native American casinos, all of which adds no additional revenue to state tax coffers. Exacerbating matters is the non-level playing field between private gaming industry operators, who are well fit to finance gambling expansion initiatives through advertising and campaign coffers (which total millions of dollars each year), and anti-gambling advocates, as well as others with varying viewpoints from the industry, who are unable to compete financially in furthering their positions. Ultimately, the treadmill continues and growth begets more growth.

The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling (FCCG) is gaming neutral, neither taking a position for or against legalized gambling. However, the Council is well aware and concerned about the impacts of gambling expansion on problem and compulsive gambling. It is time that policy makers and gambling entrepreneurs (whether government, e.g. the lottery, or private industry) begin incorporating responsible gaming program mandates to ensure that any expansion effort be accompanied by appropriate provisions and supports. Gaming industry operators can easily finance, develop and incorporate signage and literature on the effects of excessive gambling within their facilities, while simultaneously promoting the FCCG's State-authorized 24-Hour HelpLine number available for persons needing help with gambling problems. They can also train and educate employees on this aspect of their business as well as assist those employees in understanding their role in the problem gambling program.

Finally, the industry can provide sufficient funding for programs and services, including but not limited to prevention, education, outreach and treatment for persons in need. Gaming operators reap the substantial rewards from gambling and have clearly benefited by the astronomical growth of their industry. Isn't it time they make an active effort to reduce the risks for all persons who participate in gambling, while supporting the needs of those who are, or become, adversely affected by their offerings? It just makes good business sense. To date, most litigation regarding claims for adverse consequences from gambling activities actually have either been dismissed for lack of causal effect, or have been settled out of court in order to avoid any adverse precedents, including recent litigation settled in the Canadian Provinces vs. the lotteries in their jurisdictions. Given this information, it is incumbent upon the industry and others to realize they have a choice. They can either pay now, or pay later. But in the end, unless they make provisions to enact a responsible gaming program, the fact is that we will all pay dearly.



Photo by Greg Dillon

Executive Director's Update

Gambling Expansion —

The Misconceptions by Pat Fowler

There appears to be a real misconception in the minds of most as to what gambling expansion means. The answer will generally vary depending upon whom you ask and where they are positioned on the gambling continuum (pro or con). No matter which side of the fence people fall, most generally believe that gambling expansion refers only to casino gambling or the introduction of a new major form of wagering. However, this perception is far from accurate.

Gambling expansion can consist of the introduction of an entirely new form of gambling or an addition to an existing form. A recent example in our state is the increase in pot size in card rooms located at pari-mutuels from \$10 a pot up to \$100 or more. In effect, the increase in amounts wagered is an expansion of gambling. Such an increase will attract new gamblers, who in the past failed to participate due to small pot prizes. At the same time, it will allow bettors to wager more than the card games previously permitted, resulting in an overall increase in participation at pari-mutuels as well as in the amounts wagered and lost. Although approval for such expansion was recently obtained, some card rooms are already taking steps to accommodate the increase in demand while others are now considering offering such options.

"In the event gambling expansion is approved, treatment and related supports should be well funded to aid Floridians adversely affected."

Another example is the new adult game rooms, which are surfacing in communities across the state. The theory is that because the machines do not pay winnings in cash, it is not "real" gambling. Yet, the fact is that many gamblers are losing hundreds of dollars a week and attaining the same emotional payoff or "high" as if they were sitting in a casino in front of a computerized slot machine.

In addition to numerous other examples, there are the "cruises to nowhere," also known as floating casinos, which have brought full fledged casino gambling to Florida, even though they are not land based.

Overall, the reasons this discussion is vital are to point out to voters and lawmakers:

1. The importance of being well-informed when considering any new or increased form of gambling in the State.
2. That it is not necessary to introduce a new venue in order to "expand" gambling in Florida.
3. That increasing availability, participation, or limits, significantly impact upon individuals and families with gambling problems.

Such actions should be thoroughly examined by all stakeholders. In the event gambling expansion is approved, treatment and related supports should be well funded to aid Floridians adversely affected.

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Our Mission:

The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc. (FCCG), established in 1988, is a not-for-profit 501 c (3) educational and advocacy corporation under contract with the Government of the State of Florida. FCCG's primary mission is to help persons adversely affected by difficulties due to problem and compulsive gambling. The FCCG maintains a neutral stance on the issue of legalized gambling while seeking to assist citizens in need of support. Governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, the FCCG is an affiliate of the National Council on Problem Gambling.

FCCG Officers

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Former President, National Council on Problem Gambling

Vice President: Thomas Talley

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Monsignor Joseph Dunne

First President, National Council on Problem Gambling

Sheila Rozzo

Educator

Executive Director: Pat Fowler

What's New

Don't Miss our Annual Conference. *Call today to reserve your seat.*

In cooperation with the Broward Older Adult Workgroup, the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling will soon be presenting a one-day forum devoted to the issue of problem gambling among senior citizens. Topics will include the following:

- Types of gambling among older adults
- Diagnostic screening and strategies for early identification
- The older adult addictive brain
- Impacts of switching addictions within this population
- Challenges and approaches with co-occurring conditions

*Featured Keynote
Terry White, Secretary,
Florida Department
of Elder Affairs.*



Here are further forum details:

Title: Gambling Among Older Adults: Recreation or Risk?
 Date/Times: Friday, March 19, 2004 from 8 AM to 4:30 PM
 Location: Wyndham Hotel, Fort Lauderdale, FL (\$129 per night) Phone: (954) 920-3300
 Cost: \$45 (Includes workshops, continental breakfast, breaks and lunch)
 \$35 for FCCG members.
 Registration is free for the first 50 senior attendees.
 Credit: 7.5 Continuing Education Units offered
 Registration: Send payment to: FCCG
 237 Lookout Place, Suite 100
 Maitland, FL 32751
 Questions? Call or e-mail Maria Zapata,
 Phone: (407) 865-6200, mzapata@gamblinghelp.org

Department of Elder Affairs Signs on to Help Older Adults

Recently, the President and the Executive Director of the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling (FCCG) were delighted to learn that an important division of Florida state government had joined the battle against problem gambling. The recognition by the Department of Elder Affairs that gambling can negatively impact senior citizens in our state was a welcome sign indicating a developing governmental sensitivity to this very serious issue.

In a communication to the FCCG from the Elder Affairs Wellness Coordinator, Joy Styracula, it was made clear that problem gambling among seniors would be a targeted area of concern for 2004. Ms. Styracula explained that she would work with all the wellness coordinators from Area Agencies on Aging throughout the state in order to effectively begin the process of educating them about older adults and gambling.

Pat Fowler, Executive Director of the FCCG immediately pledged the full backing of her agency to Ms. Styracula's efforts and initiated plans to give direct assistance to Area Agencies on Aging statewide.

The Status of Gambling in Florida

As wagering in the Sunshine State, whether legal or illegal, continues to increase, so do the severe difficulties that arise from this activity. It is estimated that there are already at least 300,000 to 500,000 Florida residents who are experiencing serious to severe gambling related difficulties. When family members, friends and employers are added to the list of those directly affected by this disorder, the numbers grow to very sizeable portions of the state's population.

While most people are able to gamble for fun and not have it deeply affect their lives, problem and compulsive gamblers find it impossible to pass up Florida's many betting options without therapeutic treatment. When local bingo halls, charitable games, illegal Internet and sports gambling, and highly questionable "adult game rooms" are added to the state government monitored gaming venues listed below, the lure for those with gambling problems can be overwhelming.

- 12,000 Lottery retail outlets
- 6 Casinos on Native American territory
- 20 Casino "cruises to nowhere"
- 18 Greyhound dog tracks
- 6 Thoroughbred and harness racing tracks
- 6 Jai-alai facilities

With as many or more government approved gaming venues than most states, Florida's rating in the nation is: (Data prepared by Christiansen Capital Advisors, LLC)

- 3rd for Pari-mutuels (Dog/horse racing and Jai-alai)
- 5th for Bingo
- 7th (of 7) for Pari-mutuel card rooms
- 5th in traditional Lottery revenue
- 9th in overall Lottery revenue (including revenue from states with video lottery terminals)

In recent years, the arrival of card rooms and simulcast betting at pari-mutuel locations, coupled with the introduction of video lottery terminals (VLTs) in Native American casinos, has helped drive the overall pace of wagering and problem gambling in Florida even higher. Most recently, the 2003 Legislature approved an increase in the betting pots at pari-mutuel card rooms from \$10 to \$100, which has spurred the growth of wagering in these arenas resulting in an increase in the number and size of these card rooms.

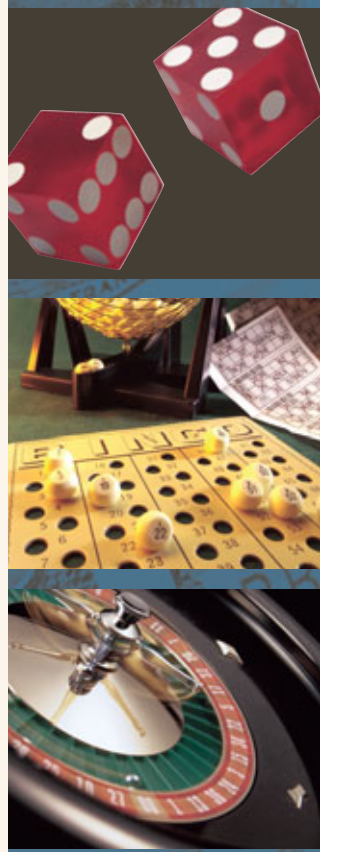
When the sheer dollar volume of betting at state monitored gambling facilities alone is examined, the figures strongly hint at the potential for the development of gambling disorders amongst Florida citizens (see right). The total of the figures for 2002 was in excess of \$4.6 billion, up nearly 11% from just five years ago in 1997.

Research shows that with increases in gambling options and wagering come increases in the numbers of people who are adversely impacted by that activity. Florida is no exception and the number of individuals in the state who are affected by problem and compulsive gambling is growing rapidly. Unfortunately, there are fewer than 30 treatment professionals within the state who are qualified by the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, under state contract, to offer the help that is so badly needed by more than half a million people. Sadly, even the minimal level of assistance now furnished by these few providers is not subsidized through state funding.

Given the severity of this situation, it is difficult to comprehend how legislators and others can continue to consider gambling expansion opportunities without first thoroughly evaluating their impact on our citizens and the resulting need for state funded treatment. Now is the time for the state of Florida to become proactive and provide funding from gambling revenues to fill the void. Any further delays in addressing this need will only deepen an already pitiful situation.

Type of Gambling	Gross Wagering 2002
Lottery	\$2,715,550,000
Pari-mutuels (Dog/horse racing & Jai-alai)	\$1,566,630,000
Bingo	\$188,800,000
Charitable games	\$143,300,000
Card rooms at pari-mutuel facilities	\$35,890,000 (FY)

Special Focus



*Data prepared by Christiansen
Capital Advisors, LLC*

Special Focus

Professional Training Update

The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling (FCCG) is proud to announce that five participants (pictured here) in its Problem Gambling Training for Mental Health and Addictions Professionals have passed the national examination that puts them well on the path to becoming fully certified compulsive gambling counselors. These very diverse and highly qualified

individuals, trained by FCCG trainer Terri Orsino-Rebosio, will soon be giving much needed help to Floridians caught in the grip of problem gambling.

The FCCG training meets certification criteria for national certification in the field of compulsive gambling. Continuing education credits are also available for: Mental Health, Addiction, Criminal Justice and Prevention professionals granted by the Florida Certification Board, Inc.; the Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling; and the Board of Psychology.

Anyone interested in being trained and joining this illustrious group should call the FCCG at (407) 865-6200. A brief program description and the current schedule of classes are listed below:

Program Description: In order to begin the compulsive gambling counselor certification process, the full 60-hour program (8 days) must be successfully completed. The training is split into Phase I (days 1-4) and Phase II (days 5-8). This structure allows for candidates interested in taking a single training session to select one or more from Phase I only. In order to participate in Phase II, however, all of Phase I must be successfully completed. The cost is \$30 per session.



From left to right: Sheila Martinez, Evelyn Mesa-Ojeda, Paul Adams, Pat Fowler (FCCG Executive Director), Pamela Moore, Maria Jaques.

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available for this training.

Current Schedule:

1. Delray Beach:
 - Phase I - January 30, February 27, March 26, April 30
 - Phase II - May 28, June 25, July 30, August 27
2. Daytona Beach:
 - Phase I - March 16, April 20, May 18, June 15
 - Phase II - July 20, August 17, September 21, October 19
3. Orlando:
 - Phase I - February 11, March 17, April 21, May 19
 - Phase II - June 23, July 21, August 18, September 22
4. Seminole:
 - Phase II - January 9, February 13, March 12, April 23

In the Limelight

Video Gambling Study Confirms Impacts

By Dr. Robert Breen, Ph.D., NCGC, Director, Rhode Island Gambling Treatment Program, Rhode Island Hospital Department of Psychiatry

It was about 10 years ago when I first heard the phrase “the crack cocaine of gambling” to describe video gambling machines. This sensational little sound-byte caught my imagination, as intended. But was it true? I found myself in a position to investigate the question about four years ago, after beginning the Rhode Island Hospital Gambling Treatment Program in Providence (RIGTP) (www.gamblingtreatment.org).

We began with a simple, elegant hypothesis. If it is true that video gambling is more “addictive” than other, more “traditional” forms of gambling, then we figured that the progression of the disorder would happen faster in people

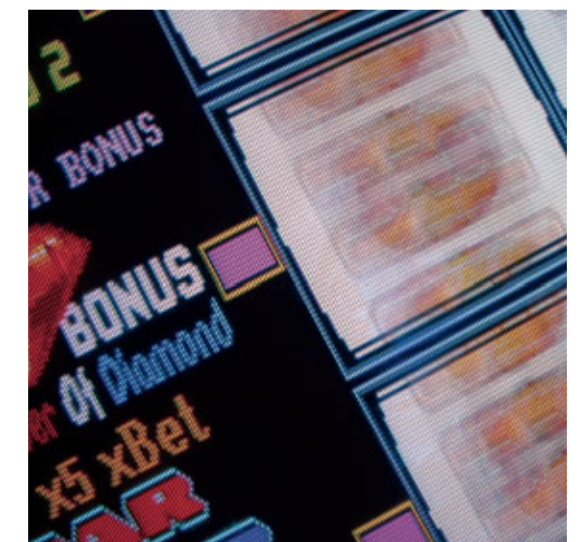
“...video gambling is by far the most addictive form of gambling...”

who got involved with video gambling devices, compared to people who got involved with “traditional” forms of gambling (e.g., horses, sports, card games, etc.). As an aside, I knew from years of clinical experience that compulsive gamblers, contrary to any stereotype, do not become compulsive about everything in the betting universe. In fact, they tend to find the one thing that “does it” for them, and that’s what “triggers” the addiction. I also knew that it wasn’t uncommon for someone to gamble without problems for 20-30 years on traditional forms, only to develop problems soon after discovering video gambling.

To provide the necessary empirical support, we interviewed gamblers seeking treatment at the RIGTP. These interviews were not your run-of-the-mill 50-minute initial evaluation. They included a diagnostic interview (SCID) as well as a detailed personal history of gambling involvement and problems. It simply won’t do to ask people, “When did you start gambling?” We had to find out how and when personal patterns of gambling initiated, developed and changed over time, with particular sensitivity to the primary form of gambling at different points in time and how that was related to the onset of a diagnosable gambling disorder. The resulting study (Breen & Zimmerman, 2002) showed an average of one year between the time people began gambling with video slots or poker machines and when they met DSM-IV criterion

for problem gambling. This was significantly faster than an average of 3.6 years to develop problem gambling when gambling on traditional forms. Another important aspect of this work was that it showed no “gender effect.” In other words, women and men get hooked just as quickly by video gambling. Equal-opportunity addiction-delivery devices!

We replicated that study with a much larger sample of 180 gamblers. The results are about identical, showing a progression of pathological gambling of about one year in video gamblers, compared to 3.9 years in “traditional” gamblers. Also because of the large sample size, we were able to examine all the “traditional” games separately. The speed of addiction occurs in direct proportion to the speed and continuity of the type of gambling. The results suggest that video gambling is by far the most addictive form of gambling, followed by scratch-offs/keno (2.7 years), card games (3.6), horses and dogs (5.1) and sports betting (5.4). The paper will be available online in March 2004 (eCOMMUNITY: International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, www.pasinfo.net).



“The resulting study showed an average of one year between the time people began gambling with video slots or poker machines and when they met DSM-IV criterion for problem gambling.”