

Gambling, Part I



By Rebecca Harris, MS, LPC, CEAP, Solutions EAP Coordinator

“The greatest advantage in gambling lies in not playing at all”.

Girolamo Cardano 1501-1576.

We hear so much debate about gambling lately, but just what defines gambling for fun and recreation, as opposed to “problem gambling”?

Gambling is defined as:

1. Playing games of chance for money or some other stake
2. To take a risk in order to gain some advantage
3. An act or undertaking involving risk of a loss

Given these as the definitions, all of us gamble everyday just by the virtue of living our lives. For some people, the biggest gamble they take is driving their car and trusting everyone else is following the rules of the road. For others the big gamble is which supermarket line is quicker-they assess the other customer’s cartloads, and then opt for the line that looks like it will move the fastest. Then they gamble that the cashier won’t ring the buzzer for the supervisor to reset the register just as they get in line. For some of us, well, the gamble was the 401K we used to have. Risk is an ingredient in many of the things we do, but what makes gambling a problem for so many people?

Unfortunately for many, gambling has become a seemingly uncontrollable habit, which has severely adverse consequences. What does it mean to have a gambling addiction? Did you know that your kids may be gambling on line, or betting in sports pools that they consider harmless entertainment?

This month we will look at all the wonderfully creative ways people can spend their money to make money. It is so much easier to get caught up than you might think. Marketers have creative ways that make lottery and scratch tickets so alluring. You can buy them with your favorite sports teams on them, and perhaps they have even created one for Mother’s Day. “Don’t just buy her flowers that will die, buy her a dream...” Whatever the technique to lure you in, you can be certain that the people who have created these wonderful opportunities for us, have created better ones for themselves. As Steve Wynn, owner of mega casinos in Las Vegas says, “If you wanna make money in a casino, buy one”.

Next week, signs of addiction-what to look for if you think you or a loved one are headed for trouble.

Call Solutions EAP at 1-800-526-3485 for assistance for all of life’s challenges.

It’s free, confidential and open to family members.

Check us out on-line www.solutions-eap.com