

How Does Someone Get Help?

The first step to recovery is finding out if you or someone you know has a problem.

For free and confidential Gambling assessment, call.....

SOUTHEAST MISSOURI BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Farmington, MO (573) 756-5749

Salem, MO (573) 729-4103

Poplar Bluff, MO (573) 686-5090

A Certified Addiction Counselor with specific training in the treatment of Pathological Gambling will perform a professional assessment to identify if you have a problem, and then suggest an appropriate level of care in our treatment and counseling programs.

SOUTHEAST MISSOURI BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Admissions: 1-800-455-5749

Corporate Office
5536 Highway 32
Farmington, MO 63640
(573) 756-5749
M-F 8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

Salem Center
203 North Grand
Salem, MO 65560-0429
(573) 729-4103

Poplar Bluff Office
101 South Main
Poplar Bluff, MO 63901
(573) 686-5090

Website: www.semobh.org

Office Hours

M-F 8:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.

Saturday hours available



**COMPULSIVE GAMBLING:
The Hidden Addiction**

Is Gambling Addictive?

Compulsive gambling is often called a “hidden addiction” since prominent indications such as needle tracks or impaired conversation skills cannot be observed in this disorder. However, pathological gambling can be as destructive as other forms of addiction, such as, chemical dependency. For example, many of those compulsive gamblers experience an inability to stop the addiction, severe depression, mood swings and low self-esteem just as many drug addicts or alcoholics do. Also, the characteristics of pathological gambling– the sudden euphoria and the marked dysphoria– are similar to the characteristics of dependency on cocaine.



Phases of Gambling

- **The Winning Phase**
- **The Losing Phase**
- **The Desperation Phase**

During the **winning phase**, gamblers experience a big win, or a series of wins, that leaves them with unreasonable optimism that their winning will continue. This leads them to feel great excitement when gambling and they begin increasing the amounts of their bets.

During the **losing phase**, the gamblers often begin bragging about wins they have had, start gambling alone, think more about gambling and borrow money (legally or illegally.) They start lying to family and friends. They become more irritable, restless and withdrawn. Their home life becomes more unhappy and they are unable to pay off debts. The gamblers begin to “chase” their losses, believing they must return as soon as possible to win back their losses.



During the **desperation phase**, there is a marked increase in the time spent gambling. This is accompanied by remorse, blaming others and alienating family and friends. Eventually, the gamblers may engage in illegal acts to finance their gambling. They may experience hopelessness, suicidal thoughts and attempts, arrests, divorce, alcohol and/or other drug abuse, or an emotional breakdown.

Current estimates suggest that 3 percent of the adult population will experience a serious gambling problem that will result in significant debt, family disruption, job losses, criminal activity or suicide.

Who is affected?

Pathological gambling affects the gamblers, their families, their employers and the community. As the gamblers go through the phase of their addiction, they spend less time with their family. They spend more of their family’s money on gambling until their bank account is depleted. Then, they may steal money from family members.

At work, the pathological gambler misuses time in order to gamble, has difficulty concentrating and finishing projects and may engage in embezzlement.

Do I have to stop completely to fix my gambling problem?

First, get an professional evaluation of your gambling problem and history. There are education programs to help individuals with risk and harm reduction techniques. Many of the individuals that learn these control mechanisms and receive counseling regarding the triggers and issues, eventually choose to stop gambling all together. Begin the process by examining your situation with a professional.