

## Compulsive Gambling Can Ruin Lives

Compulsive gambling is a progressive illness that can ruin lives. Gambling beyond recreational entertainment hurt families. Some relationships do not survive a gambling problem.

Gambling is an emotional problem that has financial consequences. If you pay all of a problem gambler's debts, the person will still be a problem gambler. The real problem is that they are obsessed by gambling. Most obsessions are unhealthy. A life ruined by gambling is not a great life. There will be many pieces to pick up.

This pyramid of debt eventually crashes – maxed out credit, people are tired of lending money, but worst of all the family has no resources. A gambler believes that as long as they have a job they can manage it, thinking that they will out earn what they lose. Eventually, they lose it all looking for, “The Big One” that never hits.

A gambler has a profound, adverse effect on about seven other people. Like alcoholics and drug abusers, there is nothing one can say or do that will motivate the problem gambler to stop gambling. Only the gambling addict will make the decision to stop gambling and get help.

Family members deal with the aftermath of this obsession. The gambler is dishonest about whereabouts, finances and employment so trust is often the first victim. The burden of having to deal with creditors and financial resources such as home equity, retirement accounts, etc. may all be lost or damaged without their knowledge. The stress, isolation and distrust adversely affects the gambler and the entire family.

Gambling is an addiction and treatment is free. Go to the EASE website under “Featured Services” for no-cost counseling and treatment.

<http://www.lacoe.edu/Home/EASE.aspx>

If you want to talk to a counselor call 800-882-1341.



***“Strength is the courage...to reach out!”***