



How to Help: Problem Gambling

Problem gambling is often called the “hidden addiction” as symptoms often are not apparent until the situation has become a crisis. Accessing help early is vital. If you are concerned about someone’s gambling behaviors or even have worries about your own behavior, the LAP provides confidential assistance, give us a call. 518-487-5669.

Common symptoms of problem gambling behaviors:

- Increasing time or money spent on gambling, often beyond intended limits.
- Preoccupation with gambling (frequent discussion of betting, games, or odds).
- Chasing losses or attempting to recover gambling debts through additional bets.
- Borrowing money, using credit, or experiencing unexplained financial stress.
- Irritability, restlessness, or mood changes when not gambling.
- Declining work performance, missed deadlines, or distraction at work.
- Secrecy or minimizing the extent of gambling activity.
- Strained personal or professional relationships related to gambling behavior.

How you can help:

- Focus on observable performance concerns such as missed deadlines, financial stress, distraction, or absenteeism rather than assumptions about gambling.
- Consult firm leadership or HR before taking action to ensure a consistent and appropriate response.
- Meet privately with the associate to discuss concerns in a supportive, non-accusatory manner.
- Provide confidential support resources, including the New York State Bar Association Lawyer Assistance Program, 518-487-5669, or other lawyer assistance programs.
- Protect clients and the firm by reviewing supervision, workload, or financial responsibilities if necessary.
- Encourage help-seeking and follow up, reinforcing that seeking assistance is a professional and responsible step.

Do:

- Speak clearly and identify the issues.
- Show compassion and respect.
- Understand that problem gambling is a complex condition.
- Abide by ethical considerations.
- Offer resources.
- Call the LAP for more support.

Don't:

- Ignore the behaviors and think they will improve on their own.
- Accuse or threaten.
- Be judgmental or punitive in your language.
- Diagnose.
- Don't push the lawyer to admit there's an issue.

Conversation starters:



I've been concerned about you. I've noticed you've seemed distracted and under pressure lately. You're quite short with everyone and you look exhausted. Is there anything you'd like to talk about?



Are you doing okay? You've been calling out sick on Mondays the past few weeks and you've been on your phone during client meetings. This isn't like you. Let's sit down in your office and talk, I'm worried about you.



I understand that you've run up some unapproved expenses on the company account and overheard you asking to borrow money from an associate. Are you doing okay? You have been really up and down lately and I'm concerned. Let's talk.

Brief Gambling Screen

1. During the past 12 months, have you become restless, irritable, or anxious when trying to stop/cut down on gambling?
2. During the past 12 months, have you tried to keep your friends or family from knowing how much you gambled?
3. During the past 12 months, did you have such financial trouble as a result of your gambling that you had to get help with living expenses from family, friends, or social services?
4. During the past 12 months, have you had to move money from your client accounts or misled clients regarding settlements in order to cover debts from your gambling?

If you answered "yes" to any of the questions above, you are at risk for problem gambling, please reach out to the LAP or a resource below for assistance.

For 24/7 support for gambling concerns call the NYS OASAS HOPEline at 1-877-846-7369 or text 467369

Or call the LAP Hotline

LAP Office: 518-487-5669

 Lawyer Assistance
Program

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental, emotional, or substance abuse issues call the **Lawyer Assistance Program Hotline**

877-772-8835

#useyourfour



Gamblers Anonymous:

<https://gamblersanonymous.org/>

Debtors Anonymous:

<https://debtorsanonymous.org/>

NY Council on Problem Gambling:

<https://nyproblemgambling.org/>

Office of Addiction Services and Supports:

<https://oasas.ny.gov/>

www.nysba.org/lap