

How does a suicide attempt happen?

A suicide attempt may occur when a strong intent to die and the ability for lethal self-harm come together.

An intense desire to die may result from a person's *belief* that they are a burden to those close to them, or that others would be better off without them. Shame and guilt related to gambling problems may lead to such feelings.

An ability for lethal self-harm may arise from mentally practicing a suicide plan, self-injury, violent experiences, and pain or trauma.

Substance use contributes to increased risk in individuals with gambling problems. It enhances impulsivity and disinhibition and heightens the probability of suicidal behavior.

Some Problem Gambling Resources:

- National Problem Gambling Help Line is a source of help 24/7.
1-800-GAMBLER (1-800-426-2537)
- The Council on Compulsive Gambling of Pennsylvania, Inc., offers education and information 24/7.
215-643-4542
- Gamblers Anonymous: Delaware Valley Intergroup Hotline Number:
1-855-2CALLGA (1-855-222-5542)

Information on self-exclusion from casinos, other venues.



Problem Gambling & Suicide Risk

**Montgomery County
Emergency Service**
50 Beech Drive
Norristown, PA 19403
610-279-6102
www.mces.org

What is problem gambling?

Problem gambling is a repetitive behavior that negatively affects personal and family life, school or work, financial well-being, and physical and mental health.

Signs include increasing preoccupation with gambling, needing to bet more money more often, becoming restless or irritable when attempting to stop, seeking loans to cover losses, chasing losses, and lying about gambling habits.

Problem gambling can grow out of social or recreational gambling. It is more common in men than women, and in younger and middle-aged adults.

Problem gambling can begin with any activity where someone stakes a thing of value on the outcome of something involving chance.

How is problem gambling related to suicide risk?

- Problem gambling represents a chronic, addictive-like behavior often associated with strong suicide risk.
- Gambling-related suicide risk is rising. This is felt to be at least in part due to the increased access to online gambling, lottery games, sports betting, and casinos.
- Individuals who report high-risk gambling behaviors are at increased risk of suicidality.
- Financial stress may lead to criminal activities, law enforcement contact, and incarceration, which are serious suicide risk factors.
- Individuals with gambling problems may come to see suicide as a means of escape from rising debt and losses.

How can problem gambling bring on suicidal behavior?

Problem gambling erodes protective factors, especially personal supports, and creates and aggravates risk factors such as serious family, financial, legal, substance abuse, and employment problems.

Studies have found that suicidal ideation rises with the severity of the gambling problem and that almost one-third of individuals with gambling problems have made one or more suicide attempts; many frequently consider suicide. Deteriorating health, housing, and living conditions are also common in individuals with gambling problems.

Individuals with gambling problems often struggle with mental illness or substance use. This increase the risk of suicidal behaviors, including attempts.

For help with thoughts of suicide call 988 to talk to a crisis counselor 24/7.