

How does suicide happen?

A suicide may occur when both a strong **intent** to die and the **capability** for potentially lethal self-harm **come together**.

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

A capability for lethal self-harm may result from personal or job-related trauma, exposure to abuse or violence, pain, access to firearms or other weapons, military training, and many other experiences.

Substance use contributes to increased risk in individuals with gambling problems. Substance use enhances impulsivity as well as disinhibition, which then heightens the likelihood of suicidal behavior.

You are not alone.



Problem Gambling Resources

National Problem Gambling Helpline is a source of help 24/7.
800-GAMBLER
800-426-2537
ncpgambling.org

The Council on Compulsive Gambling of Pennsylvania, Inc., offers education and information 24/7.
215-643-4542
pacouncil.com

Gamblers Anonymous: Delaware Valley Intergroup Hotline
855-222-5542
gamblersanonymous.org

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For information on self-exclusion from casinos and other gambling venues, please visit the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board website.

responsibleplay.pa.gov

Scan the QR code to visit the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board's guide on self-exclusion.



Problem Gambling and Suicide Risk

**Montgomery County
Emergency Service**

50 Beech Drive
Norristown, PA 19403
610-279-6100
www.mces.org

What is **problem gambling**?

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

Signs of problem gambling include increasing **preoccupation** with gambling, feeling the need to **bet more money more often**, becoming **restless** or irritable when attempting to stop gambling, seeking **loans** to cover losses, **chasing losses**, and **lying** to others about their **gambling habits**.

Problem gambling can grow out of social or recreational gambling. It is more common in men than in women and often occurs in younger and middle-aged adults; however, **problem gambling can impact anyone**.

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 behavior often associated with a strong risk of suicide.

Gambling-related suicide risk is rising. This may be due to an increased access to online gambling, lottery games, sports betting, and casinos.

Financial stress may lead to criminal activities, law enforcement contact, and incarceration, which are all serious suicide risk factors.

Individuals with gambling problems may come to see suicide as a means of escape from rising debt and losses.

Do I have a **gambling problem**?

If you are worried about your gambling behavior, this quick **self-assessment can help you determine if it's time to make a change**.

Have you often gambled **longer than you had planned**?

Have you often gambled until your **last dollar was gone**?

Have thoughts of gambling caused you to **lose sleep**?

Have you used your **income or savings to gamble while letting bills go unpaid**?

Have you made **repeated, unsuccessful attempts to stop gambling**?

Have you **broken the law or considered breaking the law** to pay for your gambling?

Have you **borrowed money** to pay for your gambling?

Have you felt **depressed or suicidal** because of your gambling losses?

Have you been **remorseful** after gambling?

Have you ever **gambled** to get money to **meet your financial obligations**?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, help with problem gambling is available 24/7.
800-426-2537

Adapted from the Pennsylvania Gambling Control Board

How can problem gambling **bring about suicidal behavior**?

Problem gambling **erodes protective factors**, especially personal supports, and **creates and aggravates existing 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 individuals struggling with gambling problems have **frequently considered suicide**. Deteriorating health, housing, and living conditions are also common in individuals experiencing problems with gambling.

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

**NO JUDGMENT.
JUST HELP.**

TEXT, CALL, CHAT

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