



## Facts & Myths about Problem Gambling

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**Myth:** You have to gamble every day to be a problem gambler.

**Fact:** A problem gambler may gamble every day or just some days. Binge gambling can have as many serious negative consequences as gambling daily. However, in general, the more often a person gambles the more likely a gambling problem will develop.

**Myth:** Excessive gambling is not really a problem if the gambler can afford it.

**Fact:** Problems caused by excessive gambling are not just financial. A person's gambling can interfere with the ability to act in a responsible way in family, work or school life. There is no amount of money that can protect against a gambling problem.

**Myth:** Problem gamblers are basically irresponsible people.

**Fact:** Problem gamblers behave increasingly irresponsibly as the gambling takes over more areas of their lives. Prior to the beginning of the problem and after recovery, problem gamblers are often as responsible as anyone else.

**Myth:** If the problem gambler stops gambling, important relationships are likely to be restored in a relatively short period of time.

**Fact:** The frequent lies and broken promises during the period(s) of gambling usually take a long time to heal.

**Myth;** problem gambling is basically a moral issue and therefore not well treated

**Fact;** Pathological Gambling is a recognised mental disorder and is treatable with a similar approach as other addictions



## What can Parents do to Decrease the Risk of Problem Gambling?

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- ✓ **Examine their own attitudes about gambling and be responsible role models**
- ✓ **Learn the facts about gambling: Age restrictions, Types of gambling and Gambling Terminology**
- ✓ **Know the warning signs of problem gambling and be alert to changes in behavior that might indicate a problem**
- ✓ **Talk to their children about the risks associated with gambling**
- ✓ **By flagging to our children the possibility that gambling can become a serious problem and the true nature of odds.**
- ✓ **By using gambling blocking software on all home computers**

**Young people who engage in the least risky behaviours cite their parents as the most significant influence.**

**If you are concerned about someone's gambling please contact Aiseiri**



## What can Schools do to decrease the risk of Problem Gambling?

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- ✓ **Include gambling awareness information in curricula**
- ✓ **Provide training through professional development programmes for teachers and administrators**
- ✓ **Train student teams and school mental health personnel to assess for problem gambling and refer students to appropriate treatment resources**
- ✓ **Review or establish a school policy on gambling and promote enforcement of the policy**
- ✓ **Recognise the legal age limit for gambling/betting in Ireland (18 including National Lottery products, except the Tote)**

**Schools can contact Aiseiri who have developed a programme specifically for secondary school students**



## Problem Gambling in Ireland-The Nature and Extent

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Irish people like a flutter on the horses and for the majority it is a form of entertainment. However for a significant minority gambling becomes a serious problem. Estimates of general population problem gambling is between 0.5% and 2%. In Ireland it is estimated at around 40,000 adults and three times that figure in adolescents (IPH report 2010)

**An estimated €5 Billion is spent on gambling in Ireland yearly.**

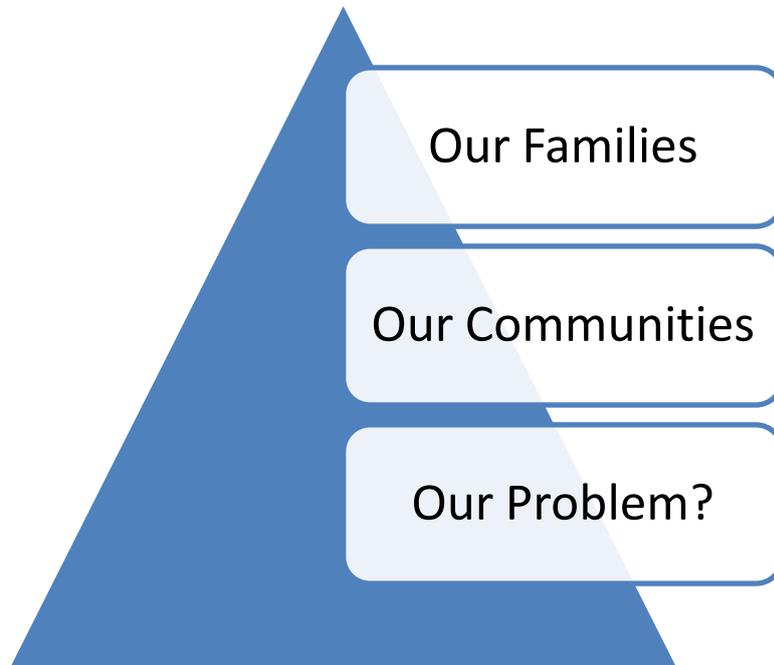
Gambling lies along a continuum of;

- 1. Non-gambling: Has no gambling problems.**
- 2. Casual social gambler: gambles for recreation and excitement. It is one form of entertainment as opposed to the only form of entertainment.**
- 3. Serious social gambling: gambles as the main form of entertainment, playing on a regular basis.**
- 4. Harmfully involved gambling: gambles to escape, and to experience relief from problems and anxiety.**
- 5. Pathological Gambling: meets DSM-5 criteria.**

**Many people develop a problem and this interferes with some areas of their lives especially family relationships and work. They may not present for treatment and will eventually stop for their own reasons. Therefore it is safe to assume there are higher rates of problem gamblers in our communities than previously estimated. These gamblers lose much more than money and their lives are not periods of constructive living while “in action”. Aiseiri would urge those who have developed or feel they are developing a problem with their gambling to make contact with us for a simple assessment and advice.**



PROBLEM GAMBLING.....



**Gambling when it gets out of control affects everybody and we need to respond in a way that removes any stigma associated with it and recognises that anybody can develop a problem. There is NO shame in asking for help.**

**Aiseiri works together with problem gamblers and their families and we have developed specific treatment programmes with options for short stay residential treatment or out-patient day programmes.**

- ▶ **The explanation that seems most acceptable to Gamblers Anonymous members is that compulsive gambling is an illness, progressive in its nature, which can never be cured, but can be arrested. Gamblers Anonymous.**

**Aiseiri recommends attendance at Gamblers Anonymous meetings for on-going support. Meetings are plentiful in local communities across Ireland, and are relatively cost free.**