

- Stammering
- Twitches
- Nose bleeding

Fear, guilt and deception are major issues, and need to be addressed through counselling. A Christian Counsellor is recommended and he has to get to the roots of the problem and deal step by step with it. Building up self-esteem and assertiveness training are important factors for recovery.

Gamblers are often involved in court actions through criminal offences and the Counsellor need to help the gambler through the court issues, and may well be asked for his opinion on them by the authorities and by relatives.

The Twelve Step Program for gamblers is invaluable in the recovery process, including the recovery of Christian compulsive gamblers.

Twelve Step programs available for compulsive gamblers are provided by the following.

- Gamblers Anonymous (GA)
- Gam-Anon (for family and friends of compulsive gamblers)

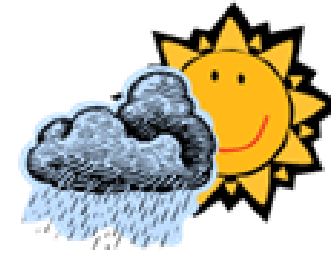
Gamblers Anonymous Twelve Steps are the same as those for AA except for the first step which states, *We admitted we were powerless over gambling - that our lives had become unmanageable.*

Self-Assessment

1. Do you lose time from work due to gambling?
2. Does gambling make your home life unhappy?
3. Does gambling affect your reputation?
4. Do you ever feel remorse after gambling?
5. Do you ever gamble to get money to pay debts?
6. Does gambling cause a decrease in your ambition and efficiency?
7. After losing, do you feel you must return as soon as possible to win back your losses?
8. After a win, do you have a strong urge to return and win more?
9. Do you often gamble until your last dollar is gone?
10. Do you ever borrow to finance your gambling habit?
11. Do you ever sell anything to finance gambling?
12. Does gambling make you careless about the welfare of your family?
13. Does gambling ever cause you to have difficulty sleeping?

If you answered "Yes" to any of these questions you need to take action to control your gambling.

For more information please go to our website at <http://christ-education.blogspot.com.au>



Gambling Addiction

With the advent of so many casinos around the country, issues surrounding gambling addiction are becoming more numerous. The "thrill of it all" can lead to grief for someone who cannot control his risk taking. Bingo and poker at home or in casinos, slots and table games in casinos are the most common types of gambling.

But the stock market is in many ways also gambling and can lead to even more severe losses than most other forms. In addition, the constant emphasis placed on stocks as "investments" and the lip service paid to the gambling aspects by investment companies can obscure the reality.

As with alcoholism, gambling addiction is often treated in psychotherapy and while GA programs are not as numerous as AA programs, Gamblers Anonymous is a frequent referral for those afflicted with this addiction.

If you suspect that you or someone you know has gambling related addiction, try the following quick test:

1. *Do you visit frequent casinos or other gambling locations often?*

2. *Do you lose more than you can afford when you gamble?*
3. *Do you look forward to the risk involved or does the element of chance in situations appeal to you?*
4. *Do you attract attention at lottery stores by the large number of tickets you buy?*
5. *Do you often think of winning the lottery or of making a big kill at a casino?*
6. *Do you have difficulty controlling your desire to take risk?*

If you can answer yes to any of these questions you may be responding to an unhealthy need to take risk.

2.5% of the Australian adult population, or around 300,000 people have a significant gambling problem.

On average around seven other people are affected by a severe problem gambler's behaviour. That's around 2 million Australians.

Characteristics

Compulsive gamblers have two leading compulsive drives.

- For action, with its risks and thrills
- To get even and chasing their losses.

Some personality traits are as follows.

- Achievement
- Exhibitionism
- Dominance
- Deception
- Fear and guilt
- Loneliness
- Compliance
- Endurance
- Sociopathic tendencies
- Depression

Alcoholism is common in compulsive gamblers. Compulsive gamblers often resort to alcohol to drown the pain of heavy losses and low self-esteem. One study found that some 20 percent of alcoholics at a treatment centre were also compulsive gamblers.

The three Phases

The **Action, Adventurous or Winning Phase** is the initial euphoria of thinking that gambling is fun, exciting and enjoyable. Common expressions to illustrate this include, I get my thrills at the Casino. In this first stage, most compulsive gamblers win and lose and often break even.

The **Chasing and Losing Phase** starts when continued gambling brings with it increased losses. With these losses comes lowered self-esteem. To salvage self-esteem, further gambling is pursued with the desire to win back losses. To do this gambler borrow money, bet

on credit and resort to other dangerous practices. This phase may continue for a long period getting progressively worse.

Lying and deception becomes pronounced, large amounts of time are used in pursuing the addiction, family disruption occurs, time is misused to preoccupation with gambling at work, and financial problems increase and become serious.

The **Desperation Phase** starts with an extension of the previous phase, gambling becomes a full-time obsession with desperate and destructive consequences.

This phase is characterised by the following.

- Serious marital and family disruption
- Selling personal and family items
- Problems at work
- Misuse of business finances
- Panic, because funds are drying up
- Physical injury from violent debtors
- Intense fear and guilt

Recovery

Compulsive gamblers go through **Withdrawal** when they stop gambling, with the following symptoms.

- Illness
- Depression
- Irritability
- Sleep disorders