

College student gambling



Gambling in Oregon has changed dramatically over the past several years. It is more accessible, more accepted, and more glamorized than ever before.

Reality TV shows portray gambling as sexy, as an easy way to get rich, and as a harmless activity for anyone with a sense of excitement.

The truth is, gambling is a fun and entertaining activity for most college students who play for social or recreational reasons. However, it can cause problems and for some those problems are harsh.

About one in every 20 college students will develop a gambling problem (Shaffer, 2001). They usually start out gambling for fun and with friends. Then they get sucked in by either believing they can make money gambling or by gambling as a means to cope with loneliness, stress or depression.

Recreation?

For most college students, gambling is a social or recreational activity. It is fun and entertaining. It does not cause problems.

For college students who choose to gamble recreationally, the following tips will help ensure that gambling does not lead to problems:

Every semester students drop out because of gambling problems. They find themselves in a financial mess, they are stressed-out, they miss class, and they often feel angry, shameful and depressed.

Fortunately, many college problem gamblers do get past their gambling problem and back on track. Often it takes a friend's intervention or their own reality check. Skilled help can be found at the campus counseling center and/or health center. Oregon also has a statewide toll-free gambling helpline

(877 MYLIMIT) and an online helpline at 1877mylimit.org.

Counselors at the helpline or on campus can offer assistance and help people make changes.

- ⌘ If you choose to gamble, do so for entertainment purposes;
- ⌘ Treat the money you lose as the cost of your entertainment;
- ⌘ Set a dollar limit and stick to it;
- ⌘ Set a time limit and stick to it;
- ⌘ Expect to lose;
- ⌘ Don't use your credit card to gamble;
- ⌘ Create balance in your life;
- ⌘ Don't increase your bets to recoup lost money;
- ⌘ Don't gamble as a way to cope with stress, loneliness, or depression;
- ⌘ Become educated about problem gambling.

Gambling can be risky for those who spend a lot of time gambling and do not stay involved in other activities.

The following are some signs of a possible gambling problem:

- ⌘ Gambling more often;
- ⌘ Gambling for more money;
- ⌘ Gambling for longer periods of time;
- ⌘ Gambling in spite of negative consequences, such as large losses or poor grades;
- ⌘ Gambling as a way to cope.

Recognizing gambling problems among your friends:

- ⌘ Unexplained absences/sudden drop in grades
- ⌘ Change of personality/ visible changes in behavior
- ⌘ Possession of a large amount of money; brags about winnings
- ⌘ An unusual interest in sports scores or stats
- ⌘ An intense interest in gambling conversations
- ⌘ Unexplained financial problems or clues about financial problems (borrowing money)

How you can help friends

- ⌘ Tell the person what he or she has done that has raised your concern and how you feel.
- ⌘ Tell the person what you'd like to see him or her do including talking to another trusted person and/or getting professional help.
- ⌘ Tell the person what you are willing to do; this may include being available to talk again, or assisting in finding help.
- ⌘ Do not lend money or in any way support continued gambling as a solution.

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