



OLDER ADULTS & GAMBLING



Older Adults & Gambling

Gambling, or playing a game of chance for money or things of value, has become a popular activity for people of many ages – and seniors are no exception. While experts agree that most adults can gamble without a problem, prevalence studies conducted in Oregon find that 2.6% of the general population and 1.2% of the older adult population (about 6,000 Oregonians 62 years or older) are disordered gamblers. It is estimated that every disordered gambler affects 8-10 people on average.

Gambling opportunities for Oregonians are plentiful. Tribal Casinos, Oregon Lottery products, sports betting, and internet gambling are more available than ever. Many gambling opportunities available now are intentionally designed to keep people gambling longer. The increase in the number of people with gambling problems corresponds to the increase in availability of gambling opportunities.

Older Adults & Problem Gambling Concerns

Older adults' gambling differs from younger age groups because:

- People coping with big changes or losses are more vulnerable to developing gambling problems; many older adults face life transitions and losses (deaths, retirement, illness, isolation).
- Older adults who have gambled away their retirement savings don't have working years to make up their losses.
- Many older adults may not understand addiction, making them less likely to identify a gambling problem.
- Older adults appear less willing to seek assistance for a gambling problem than younger adults.
- Many older adults hide their gambling because of the stigma associated with it and health professionals rarely assess for problem gambling.
- Many older adults have easy access to gambling and are drawn to gambling to fill their time or to be with other people.
- A larger proportion of older adults, compared to younger adults, have cognitive impairment, which may interfere with their ability to make sound decisions.

Definitions

Gambling: The wagering of money or something of material value on an event with an uncertain outcome with the hope of winning something of even greater value.

Problem Gambling: The continuation of gambling activities despite negative personal, social or financial consequences (see signs on page 2)

Disordered Gambling: A clinically recognized disorder from the American Psychiatric Association where four or more problem gambling signs are met.

Responsible Gambling: When games of chance are offered and participated in a socially responsible way that lowers risk of gambling harms.



Statistics

An estimated 2.6% of Oregon Adults are Disordered Gamblers

An estimated 5.4% of Oregon Adults show signs of problem gambling, but do not meet Disordered Gambling diagnosis

In FY 2019, The Oregon Lottery made **\$1,346,526,005** in sales

- Marion County made 8.88% of the Oregon Lottery Sales.
- 19% of all players were adults aged 65+

Signs & Symptoms of Problem Gambling

Are you or is someone you know experiencing these symptoms?

- Preoccupied with gambling
- Secretive about his or her gambling habits, and defensive when confronted
- Increasing bet amounts when gambling in order to achieve the desired excitement (high)
- Trying unsuccessfully to control, cut back, or stop gambling
- Restless or irritable when not gambling
- Gambling to escape problems
- “Chasing” losses with more gambling
- Lying to family and others about the extent of gambling
- Decreased desire to engage in other activities and interests
- Exaggerated displays of money and possessions
- Jeopardizing or losing relationships, jobs, education or career opportunities because of gambling
- Spending money needed for something else on gambling

Prevention & Treatment Services

Marion County Problem Gambling Prevention can provide technical assistance for prevention services. This can include:

- Presentations to nursing home staff, care givers, parent groups, educators, and concerned citizens.
- Posters, brochures, and educational materials.
- Help crafting policies for businesses and organizations to prevent problem gambling, including those serving older adult populations.

Contact information:

MCHDPrevention@co.marion.or.us

503-576-2867

Resources for Problem Gamblers

www.OPGR.org:

The Oregon Problem Gambling Resource offers free help and more information for gamblers and loved ones to prevent and treat problem gambling.

www.GamTalk.org:

GamTalk is a free online community for anyone with questions about their own or someone else's gambling.

www.Oregoncpg.org:

The Oregon Council on Problem Gambling has problem gambling statistics and more helpful information

www.co.marion.or.us/HLT/PH/PS/gambling:

Local information and resources from the Marion County Problem Gambling Prevention Program

