

Gambling Treatment Task Force

VA Bedford has an ongoing seminar group of trained clinicians certified as gambling specialists who are available to offer staff education, answer questions and in some cases to accept referrals.

The Gambling seminar group consists of the following staff:

Gambling Seminar Clinicians / Staff

Facilitator

Edward Federman: 781-687-2378

Clinicians

Bill Gilbert: 781-687-2000 x6566
Monica Jubinsky: 781-687-3213
Diane Clinton: 978-671-9115 x9135
Cynthia Yeager: 97-671-9115 x9102
John Smolinsky: 781-687-3473

Administrative Support

Kendra Pugh: 781-687-2320

Gambling Treatment Resources

VMAP Gambling Education:

Educates Veterans about problem and pathological gambling. This group also provides initial support to those Veterans who identify with a gambling addiction. *Referrals are through VMAP*

Gambling Recovery Group:

offers long term support and psycho-education for Veterans who have identified gambling problems. Open to all, no wait. Group is held Tuesdays 11am–12pm Bldg 2 Room 248.

Referrals: Bill Gilbert
781- 687- 2000 x6566

MA Council on Gambling

24 hour HELPLINE 1-800-426-1234

<http://www.masscompulsivegambling.org/>

Gamblers Anonymous

Includes meeting locator

<http://www.gamblersanonymous.org/ga/>

Game-A-Non

Includes meeting schedules.

<http://gam-anon.org/>

National Council on Problem Gambling

24 hour confidential national HOTLINE

1-800-522-4700

Resources for clinicians, gamblers

<http://www.ncpgambling.org/>



Veterans Health
Administration

Edith Nourse Rogers

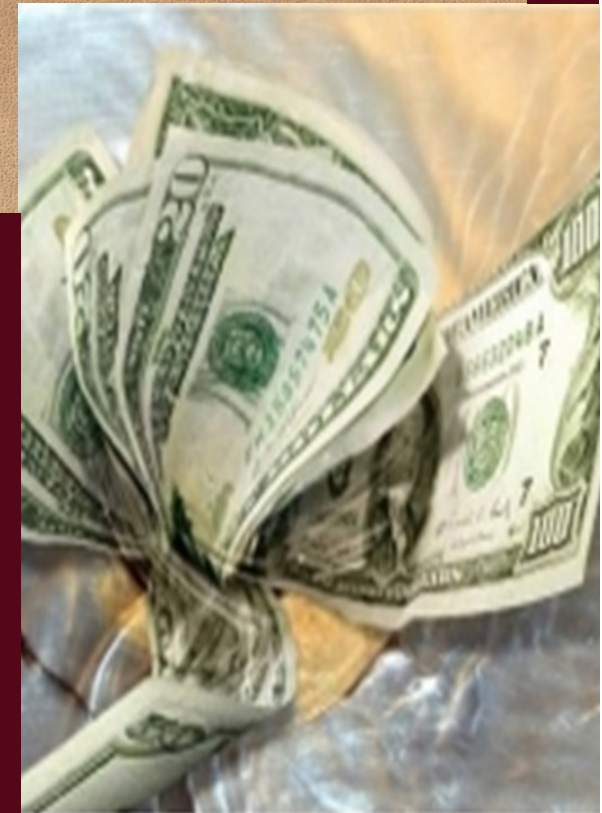
Memorial Veterans Hospital

200 Springs Road

Bedford, MA 01730

(781) 687-2000

Gambling Education and Clinical Care Team



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Risk Factors

There are risk factors that can contribute to the development of gambling problems or make it more difficult to stop. People are more at risk if they :



- ◆ Have a big win (leading to expectations of future wins)
- ◆ Have easy access to their preferred form of gambling
- ◆ Have had a recent loss or change, such as divorce, job loss, retirement, or death of a loved one
- ◆ Often feel bored or lonely, or have a history of risk-taking or impulsive behavior
- ◆ Have financial problems
- ◆ Have few interests or hobbies, or feel their lives lack direction
- ◆ Have a history of mental health problems, particularly depression and anxiety
- ◆ Have a parent who also has (or has had) problems with gambling
- ◆ Have (or had) problems with alcohol or other drugs, gambling or overspending

4 Reasons to Screen for Gambling Problems in Substance Abuse and Mental Health Programs

- 1. High Co-Occurrence** – Problem gambling can often co-occur with substance abuse and mental health disorders. Consider these examples: an individual with depression or anxiety might use gambling as a way to cope; an individual with a gambling problem might have suicidal thoughts due to increasing life stressors; abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs may occur simultaneously with problematic gambling behavior.
- 2. Switching Addictions** – Social gambling is not a risk-free activity for people in recovery from substance abuse or mental health conditions. Gambling can stimulate chemicals in the brain to produce a euphoric effect that acts as a powerful incentive and distraction from life's problems. Gambling may seem like a harmless 'sober' activity at first but can turn into an addiction for some individuals.
- 3. Gambling Can Be a Relapse Trigger** – Alcohol and drugs are often used to celebrate positive events and to mourn negative events. Thus, either winning or losing money while gambling can become a trigger for a return to substance use. In addition, alcohol is often readily available at gambling venues.
- 4. Screening is easy!** -Screening tools such as the Lie/Bet Screen and the Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen take only a few minutes to administer and can help you determine whether or not further assessment is needed.

Visit the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling website at <http://www.masscompulsivegambling.org/> to find information about available treatment options and resources.