

Super Bowl Handicappers: A Word to the Wise

The Super Bowl and March Madness are the two biggest sports betting events of the year. An estimated **\$10 billion worldwide** will be bet on this year's Super Bowl (legal and illegal — last year's legal betting in Vegas alone weighed in at a record **\$119 million**). For most, a Super Bowl bet is harmless entertainment - A little extra fuel for nudging at the office on post-Super Bowl Monday, or the potential for a few extra bucks in the pocket to buy lunch for a friend.

But for about **16 % of lowans**, gambling has become more than just fun; it's a serious problem that interferes with their lives and an average of **1 in every 3 people** around them. The problem has quite a reach **as it affects families, jobs, and even the economy.**

So how would you know if someone's got a problem with gambling? We're not suggesting anyone be the "gambling police," just keep an eye on our friends and family if they seem to have gone too far.

Signs of more than just a fun game-day bet

- Does he or she seem unusually **hung up on a certain detail** of the game? Maybe even change who they're rooting for, based on the score or a certain player's stats?
- Does s/he seem to **talk about odds** a lot?
- Is s/he offering to sell or trade something for a bet, because s/he's **out of money**?

General tips about loved ones, no matter their gambling preference:

- Are they **spending more and more time or money** on gambling?
- Can they **stick with limits** on their betting/gambling?
- Do they "**chase**" **losses** with more gambling, trying to win back money?
- Do they seem to **hide their gambling**, or lie about how much and when they have gambled?

Some helpful tips

- Always set a limit on time and money — and stick with it.
- Avoid betting if you're intoxicated (!) — Or if you're mad, sad, hungry or tired. (***Hungry / Angry / Lonely Tired — HALT — This is a good idea no matter what the decision***)
- Don't try to "chase" bets you've lost with more bets.
- Parents, set a good example for your kids with alcohol and bets. Ads are a good opportunity to talk about not "needing" bets to have fun.

The good news is that, if you know someone with a problem, help is available— for the gambler and/or their loved ones — by calling the **24-hour gambling help line at [563-583-1216](tel:563-583-1216).**