



A Guide for Behavioral Health Providers and Preventionists to Promote Responsible Gambling and Problem Gambling Prevention



UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

*The Maryland Center of Excellence
on Problem Gambling*

To print: this guide was designed to be printed double sided, long edge.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Guide is a compilation of information provided by the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency, the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG), NCPG Affiliates, additional Organizations across the country, and the Center.

Introduction and Overview

‘Tis the season for festive celebrations, generosity and family gatherings. It is also a season where excesses are more acceptable, mental stress can be heightened, and financial strain stretched to the limit. For those who are struggling with, and affected by, problems caused by gambling behaviors, actions and stress around the holidays can be magnified.

Each year at this time, the Center promotes and supports messaging around several campaigns that bring awareness of responsible gambling behaviors, overall wellness and resources available for those that may be struggling with problem gambling.

Gift Responsibly – Don’t Gift Lottery Tickets to Children

Each year, the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) and the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors at McGill University asks lotteries and other organizations in the United States and around the world to support the responsible gambling campaign and help raise awareness regarding the risks of underage lottery play during the holiday season as well as throughout the year.

The Center embraces this campaign to encourage adults to not give a lottery ticket to ANY child under the age of 18, and to have the conversation with family members of all ages about the risks of gambling.



Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling

250 W. Pratt Street, Suite 1050, Baltimore MD 21201 ~ 667-214-2120 ~ Fax: 410-799-4396
HELPLINE: 1-800-GAMBLER ~ www.mdproblemgambling.com ~ helpmygamblingproblem.org

Holiday Wellness

Messaging for mental wellness is appropriate all year long and is incorporated in the overall messaging of the Center for gambling prevention and recovery. During the holidays, messaging on how to cope with seasonal stress is especially important. Also is highlighting how to “keep gambling safe” if gambling is part of adult holiday activities.



Give Yourself the Gift of Holiday Wellness

This holiday, take the stress out of the season. Here are a few holiday coping skills to keep your holiday festive:

- TAKE A BREAK—when you wake, and during the day stop and take a few deep breaths, be in the moment.
- STAY IN MOTION—exercise, whether indoors or out, provides the energy boosts you need.
- GET PLENTY OF REST—dreams of sugar plums are optional.
- LIMIT CONSUMPTION OF HOLIDAY FOOD AND ALCOHOL—overindulgence can cause sluggishness and depression.

If you gamble as part of your holiday festivities (visit a casino or buy lottery tickets as gifts), **PLAY IT SAFE:**

- View gambling as entertainment and not as a way to make money.
- Set a money and time limit and stick with it.
- Don't try to win back losses by more gambling.
- Balance gambling with other recreational activities.
- Don't mix drinking and/or taking drugs and gambling.

Have a Conversation with someone who has been there...

If gambling is causing problems in your life, talk to a **Peer Recovery Support Specialist** who can help you limit, control or stop or gambling, and provide additional support through the recovery process.

 **Maryland Helpline**
1-800-GAMBLER
(1-800-426-2537)
helpmygamblingproblem.org

Gambling Peer Support – On the Road to Recovery

The Center offers Peer Recovery Support to help individuals seeking to limit, control or stop their gambling. Support is offered 24/7 to help those during the holiday season to start and stay on the road to gambling recovery through the **Maryland Helpline 1-800-GAMBLER** or by calling the Center directly at (667) 214-2120.



This holiday season, don't struggle with gambling problems alone – start and stay on the road to recovery with a **Peer Recovery Support Specialist**

Peer Support can help those seeking to limit, control or stop their gambling, and connect them with the most useful resources in their communities.

Holiday Triggers:

- Financial Issues
- Loneliness
- Family Conflicts
- Loss of Loved One
- Celebrations

If you or any one you know is gambling problematically or struggling with gambling addiction, help is a phone call away with someone who “has been there.”

Call or Text – 1-800-GAMBLER (1-800-426-2537)
helpmygamblingproblem.org

 **University of Maryland School of Medicine**
The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling

For More Information and Assistance, Contact:

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2021 Gift Responsibly Blog

For Web Banner or News Article

‘Tis The Season for Gifting Responsibly

At this gift-giving time of year, lottery scratch off tickets are a popular and easy gift to slip into a stocking or a present. Holiday lottery tickets are designed to be festive, boasting bright colors and clever themes, and creating conversation and competition among family members who receive them.

Many view gifting lottery tickets as harmless fun for any age that adds a touch of excitement in the anticipation of possibly winning money. However, research shows that children who gamble – **including the use of lottery scratch off tickets** – are four times more likely to become problem gamblers (Felsher, et al., 2010).

There are reasons why the minimum age is 18 to buy a lottery ticket in the State of Maryland:

- ❖ Similar to reasons why youth should not use alcohol and drugs at a young age, the risk of problem gambling later in life increases for youth who gamble at a young age.
- ❖ Gambling disorders run in families. Children of disordered gamblers are more likely than the general population to have gambling problems themselves later in life.
- ❖ Addictions often start as an unhealthy coping strategy for stress or untreated mental health conditions.
- ❖ Gambling addictions often co-occur with other addictions such as alcohol, substance misuse, and/or gaming addiction.
- ❖ Regardless of the type of addiction, brain scans show the same pleasure centers in the brain light up due to the addiction of a behavior or substance. The brain is what causes youth and adults with addiction to continue the unhealthy behavior.
- ❖ Just like cigarettes and alcohol are referred to as gateway drugs, lottery tickets can be a gateway to problem gambling.
- ❖ According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 22% of Maryland high school students reported gambling in the last year.
- ❖ 2% of Maryland adults are problem gamblers and the percentage of youth problem gamblers is likely higher than 2%.
- ❖ Populations at greater risk for problem gambling include males, Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, and those who have been diagnosed with a mental health or substance misuse disorder.

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Have the Conversation about Gambling - Tips for Parents:

- ✂ Talk to your children about the risks of gambling, similar to conversations about alcohol and drugs.
- ✂ Teach your child about budgeting money and odds of winning when people gamble.
- ✂ Be a good role model.
- ✂ Encourage wellness for your children including healthy eating, sleeping and exercise.

This season give a child a gift, not a ticket. Avoid gifting lottery tickets to any child under 18. And have the conversation with your family about the risks of gambling.

If you, or any one you know, is struggling with problems due to gambling behavior, call 1-800-GAMBLER (1-800-426-2537) for assistance to resources on the road to recovery.

Sources:

Felsher, Jennifer. Lottery Participation by Youth with Gambling Problems: Are Lottery Tickets a Gateway to Other Gambling Venues? International Gambling Studies, November 2004, 4 (2): 109-125. DOI: 10.1080/14459790412331296956

Maryland Department of Health, Youth Risk Behavior Survey/Youth Tobacco Survey (YRBS/YTS) 2018-2019. <https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/ccdpc/Reports/Pages/YRBS2018.aspx>

National Council on Problem Gambling. Responsible Gambling Lottery Campaign. <https://www.ncpgambling.org/>

Tracy, J K, Maranda, L, Scheele, C. Statewide Gambling Prevalence in Maryland: 2017. University of Maryland, Baltimore funded by the Maryland Department of Health, Behavioral Health Administration. <https://www.medschool.umaryland.edu/media/SOM/Departments/EpidemiologyandPublicHealth/MD-Problem-Gambling/Docs/2017-Gambling-Prevalence-Report-Final-rev-1.21.18.pdf>

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Promote Awareness

This **HOLIDAY SEASON** join the Center to promote **AWARENESS** within your organization and your community about responsible lottery gifting, the risks of gambling and the resources available for help and hope.

Posters and Awareness Materials

- ❖ Put up Holiday awareness flyers on your bulletin boards. We have included in this Guide four 8½ x 11 flyers you can print.
- ❖ Distribute flyers and posters electronically to your contacts.
- ❖ Promote holiday awareness on your website.
- ❖ The Center can provide additional awareness materials for your organization, including flyers, rack cards, and trifold brochures. Complete the Public Awareness Materials Form attached in this Guide, and fax (410-799-4396) or email (Info@mdproblemgambling.com) the completed form to the Center.

Website URLs

- ❖ Promote holiday awareness on your agency website for gambling prevention and problem gambling resources for help and hope.
- ❖ Promote the Center's Problem Gambling help seeker website – ***helpmyproblemgambling.org***.
- ❖ Visit the Center's website ***mdproblemgambling.com*** for additional resources.
- ❖ Download a copy of the 2021 Gift Responsibly Campaign Tool Kit from the National Center on Problem Gambling – ***<https://www.ncpgambling.org/programs-resources/programs/gift-responsibly-campaign-2021/>***

Social Media Posts

Utilize your organizations' social media and post messages each day/each week during this holiday season and beyond. Link to Suggested topics and messages for posting are listed below.

December:

- ❖ Lottery tickets aren't child's play. Give a gift not a lottery ticket.
- ❖ Start the conversation with your family today about the risks of gambling.
- ❖ If you think gambling is a financial solution, it may be a problem.

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Promote Awareness *continued*

Social Media Posts *continued*

December:

- ❖ Lottery scratch off tickets present a possible gateway to other gambling activities.
- ❖ Someone you love gambling too much? Call 1-800-GAMBLER and ask for Family Peer Support.
- ❖ This holiday, give yourself the gift of holiday wellness.
- ❖ Many young people report their first gambling experience occurs around 9-11 years of age.
- ❖ Keep gambling safe – only gamble what you can afford to lose.
- ❖ Have the Conversation with someone who has been there – 1-800-GAMBLER
- ❖ Help and hope is available at helpmygamblingproblem.org
- ❖ It's never too late to start on the road to recovery. Call 1-800-GAMBLER today.
- ❖ Gambling should be entertainment – not a financial solution.
- ❖ In Maryland, the minimum age to buy a lottery ticket is 18 and 21 to enter a casino.

January:

- ❖ Problem gambling can become an addiction.
- ❖ Begin the new year with a new start – take a self-assessment test to see if your gambling is becoming a problem.
- ❖ Maryland residents can now get “no cost” counseling for gambling.
- ❖ Have a conversation with your whole family about gambling.
- ❖ Early gambling experiences are a risk factor for later problem gambling.
- ❖ Keep your gambling problem free.
- ❖ Teen rates for problem gambling are higher than for adults
- ❖ Know the signs of problem gambling – visit helpmygamblingproblem.org.
- ❖ About 80% of high-school aged adolescents report having gambled for money during the past year.
- ❖ You're not alone – reach out to have a conversation with a Peer Support Specialist.
- ❖ Problems due to gambling? Don't go it alone.
- ❖ Visit helpmygamblingproblem.org and take a self-assessment test.
- ❖ Call, text, or chat 1-800-GAMBLER for free confidential, compassionate help with gambling problems.

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Peer Recovery Support Specialists

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling (the Center) offers Peer Recovery Support Specialists to help individuals seeking to limit, control or stop their gambling. The Center's Peers have lived experience with addiction and have been in recovery a minimum of two years. They are trained in how to assist those seeking help with gambling behaviors by providing access to treatment, connecting them to resources, and supporting them with encouragement during the recovery process.

The Center's Peer Recovery Support Program for problem gambling can assist your organization by:

- Connecting with existing peer support specialists located within your treatment delivery system; and
- Offering assistance with resources for those identified as a problem gambler.



Eastern Shore

Kenneth (Kenny) Crawford, CPRS, CRC, Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist

Office: 667-214-2135; Cell: 443-717-1137; Email:

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Baltimore City

James (Jim) Nowlin, Peer Recovery Support Specialist

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Northeast Central Maryland

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Southern Maryland

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Western Maryland

Carin Miller, CPRS, CRC, Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist

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GIFT RESPONSIBLY

Lottery Tickets
Aren't Child's Play.

**This holiday, gift responsibly –
give a child a gift, not a ticket.
And have the conversation
with your whole family about
the risks of gambling.**

**If you or someone you know is struggling
with problems due to gambling behavior,
call, text or chat today – **WE CAN HELP.****

**1-800-GAMBLER (1-800-426-2537)
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the risks of
gambling.**

Children who gamble
by age 12 are 4x more
likely to become
problem gamblers.

Percentage of Maryland Youth
problem gamblers
is greater than the
2% average for Adults.

Call the **Maryland Helpline if you or someone
you know is struggling with gambling problems.**

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