

# ARE YOU AT RISK? LEARN THE WARNING SIGNS!

## When Bingo Becomes a Binge... Why Me? Why Now?

Seniors who have never had a problem with gambling before are especially prone to becoming escape gamblers. What makes them so vulnerable?

- **ACCEPTABILITY:** Today, many senior centers, assisted living facilities and retirement communities arrange daily outings for seniors to local casinos. Churches and schools host casino fundraisers and bingo nights. And where it was once socially unacceptable for women to visit gambling establishments alone, times have changed. **The stigma that once surrounded gambling is gone.** Seniors are more than welcome to "come and play."
- **LACK OF EDUCATION ABOUT GAMBLING ADDICTION:** *"I used to think gambling was risk free. My father was an alcoholic so I made the decision early in life not to drink. I had no idea how addictive gambling could be until it was too late,"* says an anonymous 67-year old woman in recovery from gambling addiction.
- **LIFE FACTORS SET SENIORS UP FOR COMPULSIVE ESCAPE GAMBLING:** Seniors often face **overwhelming emotional pain** - loss of a spouse, boredom, loneliness, relocation, retirement, loss of identity, dwindling finances, anxiety about children or grandchildren - as well as **chronic physical pain**. For seniors with certain predisposing factors, casino machines in particular have an anesthetizing effect that temporarily releases them from pain.

## Rules of Responsible Gambling

**TREAT GAMBLING AS ENTERTAINMENT.** Treat the money you lose as the cost of your entertainment. Treat any winnings as a bonus.

**SET A DOLLAR LIMIT AND STICK TO IT.** Decide beforehand how much money you want to spend. Do not change your mind after losing!!

**SET A TIME LIMIT AND STICK TO IT.** Leave when you reach your limit whether winning or losing.

**BE PREPARED TO LOSE.** The odds are that you will lose. Accept loss as part of the game.

**DO NOT GAMBLE ON CREDIT.** Never borrow to gamble.

**CREATE BALANCE IN YOUR LIFE.** Gambling should not replace friends, family, work or other worthwhile activities.

**AVOID "CHASING" LOSSES.** If you reach your designated dollar limit, stop. DO NOT continue playing in an attempt to win back the money.

**DON'T GAMBLE AS A WAY TO COPE WITH EMOTIONAL OR PHYSICAL PAIN.** Instead, talk to a friend, family member or professional counselor.

**EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT THE WARNING SIGNS OF COMPULSIVE GAMBLING.** Visit our website at [www.azccg.org](http://www.azccg.org) or call us at **1-800-777-7207**.

## Gambling Addiction... Have You Crossed its Invisible Line?

Compulsive gambling creates **increasingly unmanageable life issues** for the gambler and his/her family.

- Are you preoccupied with thoughts of gambling and/or urges to gamble, **especially after emotional upsets?**
- Do you use gambling to **"solve"** financial difficulties or **"escape"** from boredom, loneliness, arguments, worries or fears?
- Do you plan leisure activities, like family trips or vacations, around **gambling opportunities?**
- When you are not able to gamble, is your mood or behavior **negatively affected?**
- Are you **defensive about your gambling** when others ask "why?" or "how often?" or "how much?"
- Do you **minimize or justify** your gambling to yourself, and **hide it or lie about it** to others?
- Are you **neglecting** your responsibilities or special interests, **isolating** from your family or **avoiding** your friends?
- Have you tried **repeatedly and unsuccessfully** to curtail, control or stop your gambling?

**IF YOU OR ANYONE YOU KNOW NEEDS HELP, PLEASE CALL 1-800-777-7207**