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Sports Betting Alert -February 14, 2023



With the rise in sports betting apps, more young men are at risk of problem gambling

As a therapist who treats people with gambling problems, I've noticed a shift over the past few years — not only in the profile of the typical clients I treat, but also in the way their gambling problems develop.

With most sportsbooks offering betting apps, my clients are finding it more difficult to quit gambling than ever before. Unlike other forms of gambling, such as playing roulette or slots at a casino, these apps are on their phones and in their pockets, accompanying them wherever they go.

This availability makes it that much harder to resist any urges that might arise, and presents unique challenges for helping clients reduce their gambling.

I've noticed that my average client has started to look different. I'm now providing therapy to younger men, mostly in their 20s, seeking treatment for problems with sports betting. These clients tend to earn more money and be wealthier than my previous clients, a pattern that sports betting researchers have observed.

Many of them started betting on sports after hearing promotions for

various betting companies. Even if you're a casual sports fan with no interest in betting, you can't miss these ads, which regularly air during televised sporting events.

There's also a social element. One client talked about betting on sports as a way to bond with relatives who also gambled. A few college students told me that they started betting because they wanted to fit in with their fraternity brothers.

No easy way to set limits But once gambling issues begin, it can be hard for these clients to stop. Most of them started by placing smaller bets on a single outcome. Over time, they start to bet more to recoup their losses. Before they knew it, their bets had increased, with many not realizing how this change even happened.

Betting apps are available on any smartphone and are connected to clients' bank accounts, making it quick and easy to deposit more funds. This often leads clients to lose track of how much money they have lost. As one client told me, "It's easier to spend money on these apps because you never really see it. The transactions are all done electronically."

These apps do not make it easy for those with gambling problems to sign up for cool-off periods or self-exclusion.

Hard to avoid sports and smartphones Sports betting presents unique challenges for treating gambling problems.

Therapists often encourage clients to fill their time with activities that aren't connected to gambling or to avoid situations where they may be likely to gamble. But when gambling is available at the touch of a button, it becomes harder to determine what situations may lead to gambling and harder to figure out what to avoid.

Before the apps, clients had to make plans for how and when to gamble. Now, all they have to do is pick up their phone and open an app. It is also incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to ask a client to stop using their smartphone or stop watching sports. [READ](#)

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