

Common Misconceptions About Gambling: The Fallacies That Cost You



WORKPLACE
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Some of the most expensive ideas in gambling sound like common sense. Knowing the trap keeps you from falling for it and helps you get out of it.

FOUR COMMON COGNITIVE TRAPS

- **The Gambler's Fallacy:** 'After a string of losses, a win is due.' Random outcomes have no memory; previous losses do not change the next probability.
- **The Illusion of Control:** 'I know this team, so I am not really gambling.' Sports knowledge does not change the structure of a bet.
- **The Winning Strategy Belief:** 'There is a system that beats the house.' For chance-based games, no system changes the long-run math.
- **Near-Miss Logic:** 'I almost won, I will win next time.' Near misses are designed to feel like wins. They are not.

Source: Sports Betting in Missouri; A Review of Sports Wagering & Gambling Addiction Studies; Teens and Online Gambling; NCPG

TRANSLATION FOR A FRIEND OR COWORKER



Most adults who gamble do not develop a problem.



Time, money lost, and frequency do not define a gambling problem on their own.



The defining feature is loss of control and the harm it creates in the rest of your life.



Believing the traps increases odds of a gambling problem.

Source: National Council on Problem Gambling. FAQs: What is Problem Gambling?

TRAPS FOR YOUTH ONLINE BETTING

Youth rarely start with real money. Research describes a pathway of five escalating stages, where each step normalizes the next and blurs the line between play and gambling.

- **Leisure Gaming:** ordinary video games played for fun, with no betting, but building the habit of long, reward-driven play.
- **Gaming-Like Features:** loot boxes, prize wheels, and reward mechanics inside games that mimic the chance and payout of gambling.
- **Simulated Gambling:** free casino, slots, or betting apps that use points or credits instead of cash, teaching the mechanics risk-free.
- **Monetized Wagering:** spending real money on in-game items, skins, or virtual currency that can be traded, sold, or wagered.
- **Real-Money Gambling:** sports betting and casino apps that take cash bets, often reached before a young person is legally of age.

Source: Illinois Family Resources, Gambling Concerns for Youth.

Why This Matters In Missouri

BELIEFS ENDORSED	% MEETING GD CRITERIA
Neither belief endorsed	1.9%
Only the Gambler's Fallacy	16.3%
Only the Winning Strategy Belief	23.3%
Both maladaptive beliefs	42.7%

IF YOU CATCH YOURSELF RUNNING THE MATH ON A SYSTEM

That is a warning sign that needs your attention. 888-BETS-OFF and your EAP are both confidential, and neither requires you to commit to anything before you call.

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