

When Winning Isn't Worth It: The Quiet Toll Gambling Takes on Mental Health



WORKPLACE
WELLBEING

The financial side of problem gambling is the visible one. The mental health side is what often shows up first and lingers longest.

THE MENTAL HEALTH AND PROBLEM GAMBLING CONNECTION

- Anxiety, persistent worry, and rumination about losses
- Depression, low mood, and loss of interest in things you used to enjoy
- Sleep disruption from late-night betting and chasing losses
- Shame, secrecy, and isolation from family, friends, and coworkers
- Suicidal thoughts: among addictive disorders, gambling disorder is associated with the highest level of suicide risk

Source: National Council on Problem Gambling; Child Mind Institute

BY THE NUMBERS IN MISSOURI

27.5%

Missouri adults with gambling disorder who reported suicidal thoughts due to gambling

~27%

Missouri adults with gambling disorder who reported a suicide attempt due to gambling

~55,000

Estimated Missouri adults represented in those figures

Source: 2022 Missouri Gambling Prevalence Study; Sports Betting in Missouri: Responsible Gambling Policy 2025

THE WARNING SIGN TO WATCH: COPING MOTIVATION

Gambling to cope or escape was the strongest indicator distinguishing gambling-disorder cases from at-risk and recreational gamblers in the 2022 MO Prevalence Study.

GROUP	COPING / ESCAPE SCORE (OF 6)	ENTERTAINMENT SCORE (OF 6)
No-criteria gamblers	1.81	4.55
At-risk gamblers	2.11	3.65
Gambling disorder	3.26	3.89

Source: 2022 Missouri Gambling Prevalence Study

YOU ARE NOT ALONE, AND IT CAN CHANGE

If you or someone you love is having thoughts of suicide, reach out now. Call or text 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. For gambling support: 888-BETS-OFF in Missouri (24/7, free, confidential) or 1-800-MY-RESET nationally.

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