

Influences of Parents on Youth Gambling

This is the negative impact that problem gambling within the family can have on a young person.

'Hidden harm' is a term which comes from the drug and alcohol field, and refers to the impact of the problem gambling of an adult on a young person who is dependent on them. Hidden harm is an emerging area of research in the field of problem gambling.

Parental attitudes are important determining factors. Most parents believe that gambling is harmless fun and evidence suggests that parents are far less likely to talk to their children about problem gambling than they are about other risky behaviours, such as alcohol and drug misuse or safe sex.

Parents may think that social gambling for children is fun, however by facilitating underage gambling they are helping a child to commit a criminal offence.

If parents gamble, young people are twice as likely to be at risk and four times more likely to develop a gambling problem.

Around 4 in 10 (38%) young people who have gambled in the last seven days have seen their parents gamble.¹

Education and awareness about risks and consequences is often more beneficial than a prescriptive 'don't do it' approach - after all, young people are only a few years away from legally being able to gamble.

Know the warning signs!

Kids watch what we do, so parental gambling is a major risk factor. Avoid emphasising winning, and talk to them about the risks involved in gambling. Awareness about responsible gambling is really important - key messages include:

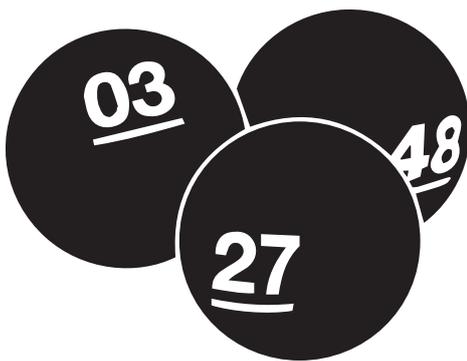
- View any money lost as the cost of entertainment, accept losing as part of the game
- Remember to set time and spending limits and stick to them
- Don't borrow money and don't chase your losses
- Don't let gambling interfere with family life, and don't use it as a way to cope with pain!



Consider talking about:

- How gambling occurs and the risk of placing bets.
- The low odds of winning - compare these odds to being struck by lightning etc., to get the point across that gambling rarely results in gain.
- The risks of gambling addiction in the same way as drugs/alcohol abuse.
- How they can enjoy card games etc. without placing bets.
- What they could do with money they save by not gambling, and how gambling could affect their ability to save for these activities.
- What to do if they suspect problem gambling is affecting their friends; highlight that it can be a serious problem.

By having these conversations you can help them to stay aware of the dangers of problem gambling. As they get older it will help them understand the difference between gambling on occasion and excessive gambling that can negatively impact other areas of their life.



Where to find support

- www.BigDeal.org.uk
- GamCare counselling - more information at www.gamcare.org.uk

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