



# VETERANS' FACT SHEET

## WHAT IS PROBLEM GAMBLING?

Also known as gambling addiction, it is a diagnosable and treatable medical condition. While problem gambling has its own set of criteria for diagnosis and treatment, many still don't seek help for this potentially life-threatening condition.

## WHY ARE VETERANS AT RISK?

While in the military, many veterans spent time playing card games and making small bets – and some military bases even have slot machines. Gambling is often a way for veterans to relieve stress or boredom, and a form of competition. Playing slots, card games, and buying scratch-off tickets are the most frequent forms of gambling among veterans.

## KNOW THE SIGNS

The signs of a veteran struggling with gambling are not always easy to see. A few signs to look for include:

- Gambling more often or with more money
- Withdrawing from relationships
- Hiding gambling behavior from friends and family
- Borrowing money to relieve financial distress
- Gambling more to make up for previous gambling losses

## WHAT ARE THE DANGERS OF PROBLEM GAMBLING?

Similar to other forms of addiction, problem gambling can have long-lasting effects, such as:

- Suicidal thoughts
- Depression
- Irritability and mood swings
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Restlessness

## A SERIOUS ISSUE

Problem gambling among veterans is important to address, as veterans are more likely to struggle with it, and it often coincides with other pressing issues:

- Veterans with PTSD are up to 60% more likely to struggle with problem gambling
- Depression among veterans who have a problem with gambling is as high as 76%
- Of veterans who use veteran treatment services, up to 10% struggle with problem gambling
- Among veterans seeking treatment, those who have reported attempting to take their own life is as high as 40%

## TIPS FOR RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING

Here are a few tips to keep gambling responsible:

- Set limits on how much you bet
- Pay your bills before gambling
- Know the risks before you bet
- Keep gambling a social activity
- Have other hobbies outside of gambling

## ARE YOU AT RISK?

If you or someone you care about is at risk of problem gambling, visit **PauseBeforeYouPlay.org**

- ⏸ **Take the quiz** to see if you're at risk for problem gambling
- ⏸ **Find free resources** for responsible gambling
- ⏸ **Get help** from free and accessible locations

