

# PROBLEM GAMBLING SCREENING

## Why Screen for Problem Gambling?

- Gambling Disorder leads to financial, emotional, social, occupational, and physical harms.
- Nearly 50% of those with gambling problems are in treatment for “something,” but not their undetected gambling disorder.
- 2 million U.S. adults (1%) are estimated to meet the criteria for severe gambling problems each year. Another 4-6 million (2-3%) would be considered to have mild or moderate gambling problems.
- 1 in 5 individuals living with a gambling problem will attempt or die by suicide - the highest of any addiction.

## Who Should Screen for Problem Gambling?

- Prevention Providers
- Addiction Service Providers
- Recovery Centers & Providers
- Mental Health Service Providers
- School & Campus Counseling Offices
- Healthcare Providers
- Community Service Providers
- Employee Assistance Providers
- Veteran Groups & Service Providers
- Faith Leaders

## Screening Tools

Participating in Problem Gambling Screening has never been easier with free screening tools for service providers, community organizations, and individuals.

- **Brief Bio-Social Gambling Screen (BBGS)** - This brief screening tool will help determine if an individual is at-risk for developing a gambling problem and if they would like to be connected to more information and support.
- **E-Screener** - This nine-question self-screener self-screening tool is based on common signs and negative impacts of problem gambling to help an individual determine their risk for developing a gambling problem and if they would like to be connected to additional resources.

## Next Steps

After completing the three-question Brief Problem Gambling Screener (BBGS) with an individual, asking the additional questions provided is vital in raising problem gambling awareness and connecting individuals who screen as at-risk to information and support.

- Be sure to discuss the results of a positive or negative screen with the individual. Those who screened negative may share that they have a loved one who may be exhibiting signs and would like to learn more.
- Connect the individual to additional resources and support when appropriate. \*A warm transfer to your local **Problem Gambling Resource Center (PGRC)** is recommended.
- Provide the individual with printed materials when appropriate.



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## About the Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBS)

### Overview

Brief screens can help individuals decide whether to seek a formal evaluation of their gambling behavior. The 3-item BBS<sup>1</sup> is based on the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) criteria for disordered gambling.

### Scoring

A "yes" response to any single item indicates potential gambling-related problems and the need for additional evaluation.

### Psychometric Properties

For identifying individuals with disordered gambling, Gebauer and colleagues (2010) report that the BBS has good psychometric characteristics: high sensitivity (0.96) and high specificity (0.99). The Positive Predictive Value of the BBS is 0.37. This suggests that one of the three individuals who screened positive on the BBS will be identified as experiencing gambling disorder after a full follow-up.

### Additional Evaluation

Researchers other than the original authors have completed independent evaluations of the BBS. For example, Brett et al., (2014)<sup>2</sup> concluded that the BBS was psychometrically robust to the DSM-5's diagnostic protocol changes, but specificity would improve if a two-item endorsement were adopted: high sensitivity (0.99) and high specificity (0.83).

Likewise, an evaluation of the BBS among a substance-using population<sup>3</sup> also suggested solid psychometric features: high sensitivity (0.91) and high specificity (0.87). Clinical researchers have used the BBS with a number of populations, including veterans,<sup>4</sup> college students,<sup>5</sup> and opioid substitution therapy patients,<sup>6</sup> among others.

<sup>1</sup> Gebauer, L., LaBrie, R. A., Shaffer, H. J. (2010). Optimizing DSM IV classification accuracy: A brief bio-social screen for detecting current gambling disorders among gamblers in the general household population. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 55(2), 82-90.

<sup>2</sup> Brett, E. I., Weinstock, J., Burton, S., Wenzel, K. R., Weber, S., & Moran, S. (2014). Do the DSM-5 diagnostic revisions affect the psychometric properties of the Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen? *International Gambling Studies*, 14(3), 447-456.

<sup>3</sup> Himelhock, S. S., Miles-McLean, H., Medoff, D. R., & Brownley, J. (2015). Evaluation of brief screens for gambling disorder in the substance use treatment setting: Screening for gambling in substance use treatment. *American Journal on Addictions*, 24(5), 460-466.

<sup>4</sup> Stefanovics, E. A., Potenza, M. N., & Pietrzak, R. H. (2017). Gambling in a national U.S. veteran population: Prevalence, social-demographics, and psychiatric comorbidities. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 33(4), 1099-1120.

<sup>5</sup> Martens, M. P., Arterberry, B. J., Takamatsu, S. K., Masters, J., & Dude, K. (2015). The efficacy of a personalized feedback-only intervention for at-risk college gamblers. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 83(3), 494-499.

<sup>6</sup> Castren, S., Salonen, A. H., Alho, H., Lahti, T., & Simojoki, K. (2015). Past-year gambling behavior among patients receiving opioid substitution treatment. *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*, 10(4).

[www.ICRG.org](http://www.ICRG.org)

[www.DivisiononAddiction.org](http://www.DivisiononAddiction.org)



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## Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBS) Questionnaire<sup>1</sup>

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

To screen for potential gambling-related problems, please ask the first three questions below.<sup>2</sup>

1. During the past 12 months, have you become restless irritable, or anxious when trying to stop/cut down on gambling?  
Yes  
No
2. During the past 12 months, have you tried to keep your family or friends from knowing how much you gambled?  
Yes  
No
3. During the past 12 months did you have such financial trouble as a result of your gambling that you had to get help with living expenses from family, friends, or welfare?  
Yes  
No

### Additional Questions:

Would you like more information about problem gambling?

- Yes
- No

Would you like to be connected to support services for problem gambling?

- Yes
- No

<sup>1</sup>Gebauer, L., LaBrie, R., & Shaffer, H. J. (2010). Optimizing DSM-IV-TR classification accuracy: a brief biosocial screen for detecting current gambling disorders among gamblers in the general household population. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry. Revue Canadienne De Psychiatrie*, (2), 82-90.

<sup>2</sup>An online version of the BBS is available at: <https://www.divisiononaddiction.org/resources1/bbgs-e-screener-2> \*The electronic version of the screening tool is available in 22 different languages



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