

# Problem Gambling Awareness Month

Bulletin 3



## Keep the Problem out of Gambling

### Defining Problem Gambling: Finding a Home with Substance Use Disorders

The newest version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatric Disorders (DSM-5) is redefining Problem Gambling (PG). Since 1980, problem gambling was included in the DSM with the official name of Pathological Gambling. However, no one was quite clear as to which diagnostic category it fit, so it was included in a “catch all” category of Disorders of Impulse Control, Not Elsewhere Classified along with Pyromania, Trichotilomania (hair pulling), Kleptomania and Intermittent Explosive Disorder. (Rather like the island of misfit diagnoses). After decades of debate as to whether PG should be classified as an addiction, an obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorder or an impulse control disorder, DSM-5, based on the accumulation of research that shows that PG shares much with substance use disorders (including biology, epidemiology, etiology and treatment approaches) PG is the only “behavioral addiction” to be included in the new category of Substance Use and Addiction Disorders and is officially termed Gambling Disorder.

#### Criteria:

1. *Preoccupation with gambling (i.e. reliving gambling experiences, planning the next venture, or thinking of ways to get money for gambling)*
2. *Lying about the extent of gambling*
3. *Tolerance – needing to increase bets or risk involved when gambling to achieve the desired excitement.*
4. *Control – trying unsuccessfully to control, cut back or stop gambling.*
5. *Withdrawal – feeling restless or irritable when not gambling*
6. *Escape – gambling to escape or relieve stress, problems or uncomfortable feelings*
7. *Chasing – going back repeatedly to try to win back losses.*
8. *Jeopardizing or losing relationships, jobs, education or career opportunities due to gambling*
9. *Bailouts – relying on others to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by gambling*

*Suggested criteria is 4 of the above 9 to make diagnosis of a gambling disorder.*

For more information contact [Jeremy.Wampler@ct.gov](mailto:Jeremy.Wampler@ct.gov), Problem Gambling Services at 860.344.2244 or [www.ct.gov/dmhas/pgs](http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/pgs)

**Toll Free Problem Gambling Helpline: 888-789-7777**