



A Healthy Outlook!

240-314-1040 • FAX 240-314-1049 • www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/EAP • Vol. 14 No. 1

What Is a GAMBLING DISORDER?

GAMBLING has been legal in Maryland for about five years. In a 2008 constitutional referendum, Maryland voters approved the installation of video lottery terminals (slot machines) at five privately owned facilities in Maryland. In a 2012 referendum, voters approved the legalization of table games at Maryland casinos and the addition of a sixth facility in Prince George's County. Go to <http://gaming.mdlottery.com/faq/> for more information.

With this increased accessibility comes the potential for an increase in problems related to gambling. Lots of people enjoy gambling without causing problems for themselves or their families, but what defines when gambling has crossed the line and become a problem? According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V), an individual meets the criteria of a "gambling

disorder" if he or she has at least four of the following behaviors/symptoms:

- ♦ **Needs to gamble** with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement
- ♦ **Is restless** or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling
- ♦ **Has made repeated attempts** to control, cut back, or stop gambling
- ♦ **Is often preoccupied** with gambling
- ♦ **Often gambles** when feeling distressed
- ♦ **"Chasing one's losses"** or returning another day after losing money
- ♦ **Lies to conceal** the extent of involvement with gambling

- ♦ **Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship**, job or career opportunity because of gambling

- ♦ **Relies on others to provide money** to relieve desperate financial situations caused by gambling

If you are concerned about your own gambling or the behavior of someone you know, please contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 240-314-1040. We can help you find resources for assistance. For a comprehensive description of help available in Maryland, go to <http://gaming.mdlottery.com/responsible-gambling/>

Adapted from the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, November 2013

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Upcoming Events:

CANCER Support Group May 12, June 16

Anyone who has, has had, or is caring for someone with cancer is welcome to attend. All meetings are from 4 to 5 p.m., on the second Monday of the month at the Carver Educational Services Center (CESC), 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 43. For more information, please contact Debra Tipton on Outlook or call her at 240-314-1040.

WORKSHOP: "HELP! My Mother has Fallen..." Finding Caregiver/Work-Life Balance" April 8

You are not alone. One out of every six employees is a caregiver to an aging or disabled family member. The EAP will host a brown bag seminar to address the challenge of finding balance in our lives while providing care to our loved ones. The seminar will be led by Laurel Jones of Infinity Business and Concierge Services. Please join us at CESC, room 127, from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. You are welcome to bring your lunch. Space is limited, so please reserve a spot by contacting the EAP on Outlook (EAP@mcpsmd.org) or by calling 240-314-1040.

HEROIN ABUSE Is on the Rise

THE RECENT DEATH of actor Phillip Seymour Hoffman of an apparent heroin overdose has put increased media focus on the use of heroin in the United States. According to the 2013 National Drug Threat Assessment (NDTA), a publication put out by the U.S. Justice Department, heroin-related overdoses and overdose deaths are increasing in certain areas of the country, possibly due to factors such as high heroin purity, increasing numbers of heroin abusers initiating use at a younger age, and inexperienced abusers switching from prescription opioids to heroin. The following are possible reasons for these increases in overdose deaths:

- ♦ **The availability of high-purity heroin.** Law enforcement officials in affected areas reported an increase in the availability of high-purity heroin at the street level.
- ♦ **People are switching from abusing prescription drugs to abusing heroin.** Law enforcement and treatment officials throughout the country report that many heroin abusers began using the drug after having first abused prescription opioids. These abusers turned to heroin because it was cheaper and more easily obtained than prescription drugs and because heroin provides a high similar to that of prescription opioids. According to

treatment providers, many opioid addicts will use whichever drug is cheaper or available to them when they want it. Several treatment providers report that the majority of opioid addicts will eventually end up abusing heroin and will not switch back to another drug because heroin is highly addictive, relatively inexpensive, and more readily available. Those abusers who recently have switched to heroin are at a higher risk for accidental overdose. Unlike with prescription drugs, heroin purity and dosage amounts vary, and heroin often is cut with other substances, all of which could cause inexperienced abusers to overdose by accident.

- ♦ **More people are using heroin and at a younger age.** It is possible that increasing overdoses are the result of more people using heroin and using it at a younger age. According to national-level survey data, the number of new heroin users has been increasing recently. The NSDUH (National Survey on Drug Use and Health, <https://nsduhweb.rti.org/respweb/homepage.cfm>) reports that the number of new heroin users increased from 142,000 in 2010 to 178,000 in 2011. Both numbers are a sizeable increase



from the average annual estimates of 2002 to 2008 (ranging from 91,000 to 118,000). Moreover, these new heroin users are considerably younger. In 2011, the average age at first use among heroin abusers aged 12 to 49 was 22.1 years and in 2010 it was 21.4 years, significantly lower than the 2009 estimate of 25.5 years. In Minneapolis, for example, arrestees who tested positive for opiates were much younger (19.8 percent were under 21 years old) than those testing positive for cocaine and methamphetamine, according to the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program.

If you are concerned that you or someone you know has a possible substance abuse problem, contact the EAP at 240-314-1040 for a consultation on your options and available resources.

GOT CONFLICT? Welcome to the MCPS Dispute Resolution Program

CONFLICT IS INEVITABLE.

When people work together, disagreements can lead to conflict. Usually people can resolve this conflict with little or no input from others. However, sometimes people need help to resolve their differences. The Dispute Resolution Program provides free mediation services to MCPS employees

who would like help resolving workplace conflict. Whether it is a matter of feeling disrespected, dealing with someone who is always late, or working with someone who encroaches on your personal space, mediation can help. With the assistance of a neutral mediator, provided through an agreement with the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County, people

are able to find their own solutions to problems. A private, informal, and confidential agreement may help you resume a more workable relationship with someone with whom you have had difficulties.

To learn more, or to schedule mediation at a convenient time and place, call the Dispute Resolution Program at the EAP at 240-314-1041.

How to Be a GOOD Member of the Team

ACCORDING TO A DOCUMENT from the Laborer's Health and Safety Fund of North America, the following are qualities of a good team member:

- ♦ **A willingness to sacrifice for the benefit of the group.** For a group to be successful, many personalities must merge into one working unit.
- ♦ **A willingness to let the group leader lead.**
- ♦ **The ability to contribute your best as a group member.** If you always have been a loner, try to avoid group projects. If selected, try to contribute your best.
- ♦ **A spirit of compromise.** Group decisions involve everyone speaking their minds and supporting a decision once it is made.
- ♦ **A willingness to try something new.** The best group members usually keep an open mind.
- ♦ **The ability to see things clearly and to solve problems.** Cultivate this skill if you like being part of team projects.

Concerns About E-CIGARETTES

E-CIGARETTES are battery-powered devices that look like cigarettes and deliver an aerosol of nicotine and other chemicals. Chinese pharmacist Hon Lik invented the device in 2003. The electronic cigarette first entered the market in China, in 2004. Manufacturers say they are an alternative for tobacco smokers who want to avoid inhaling smoke. Tobacco smoke contains more than 4,000 different chemicals, many of which are hazardous to human health. Manufacturers and a significant number of users say the e-cigarette provides a similar sensation to inhaling tobacco smoke; however, there is no combustion (no smoke). These devices are largely unregulated, and have no effective controls on marketing them to minors. Despite industry claims that it markets only to adults, the percentage of 12- to 18-year-olds who use e-cigarettes doubled from 2011 to 2012. As of 2012, an estimated 1.8 million American adolescents had used the devices. The long-term safety of e-cigarette use has not been established.

An Outline of HEALTHY and UNHEALTHY Boundaries in Relationships

Healthy	Unhealthy
♦ Feeling like your own person	♦ Feeling incomplete without your partner
♦ Feeling responsible for your own happiness	♦ Relying on your partner for your happiness
♦ Togetherness and separateness are balanced	♦ Too much or too little togetherness
♦ Friendships exist outside of the relationship	♦ Inability to establish and maintain friendships with others
♦ Focus on the best qualities of both people	♦ Focus on the worst qualities of the partners
♦ Achieving intimacy without chemicals	♦ Using alcohol or other drugs to reduce inhibitions and achieve a false sense of intimacy
♦ Open, honest, and assertive communication	♦ Game-playing, unwillingness to listen, and manipulation
♦ Commitment to partner	♦ Jealousy or lack of commitment
♦ Respecting the differences in your partner	♦ Blaming your partner for his/her own unique qualities
♦ Accepting changes in the relationship	♦ Feeling that the relationship should always be the same
♦ Asking honestly for what is wanted	♦ Feeling unable to express what is wanted
♦ Accepting endings	♦ Unable to let go

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Five Ways to Have FUN AT WORK

1. Build stronger relationships.

ONE WAY to increase the chances of having fun at work is to enjoy the company of the people there. Make the effort to get to know your colleagues and boss by being nice, asking questions, and finding other ways to interact with them.

- ♦ Take the time to get to know your colleagues by talking about your families and interests.
- ♦ Do not be closed off at work. Look available instead of incredibly busy, and more people will want to talk with you. Indulge in the occasional chat session in the break room.

- ♦ Step out for lunch with one of your colleagues. You will enjoy having a nice conversation and getting to know each other.

- ♦ Do not let all of your relationships end with the workday. If you are growing close with some of your colleagues, invite them out for a drink or coffee after work.

2. Spruce up your workspace.

- ♦ You can have more fun at work by trying to make your work space just a bit more fun. Though you can have only so much control over what your

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FUN AT WORK

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workspace looks like, there are a few things you can do to make your work environment more appealing.



- ◆ Decorate a bit. You could put up an attractive poster or just bring in a brightly colored vase with some flowers in it. Also, liven up your work area. Hang up a funny calendar and pictures that make you smile in your work space.
- ◆ Bring some food. Bake cookies or bring in some chips and guacamole and see how it puts everyone in a friendly, happy mood.

3. Plan some after-work events.

You can socialize with your colleagues even after the work day is over. Have a weekly happy hour, a bi-monthly team meal, or just invite a few people to have dinner after work once in a while.

- ◆ If you throw a party, invite some of your colleagues. Bring them into a fun environment.
- ◆ Volunteer with your colleagues. You can have fun while doing a good deed.

4. Take breaks.

Do not spend all day at your desk, even if it means you will be home quicker. Taking breaks at least every hour will help your mind and body recharge and give you more energy throughout the day.

- ◆ Go out for lunch when you can. Stepping out of the office for lunch, whether alone or with a colleague, will give you a brief break that will make you feel happier about getting back to work.
- ◆ Get a little bit of physical exercise. Even if you are in the classroom all day, take at least a few minutes to go for a walk, whether you walk outside or around the building.
- ◆ Try taking the stairs instead of the elevator. This break will give you quick physical exercise.

- ◆ Vary your tasks during the day. Switch from filing to making calls to reading e-mails and you will find that each task becomes more fun.

5. Play some games while you work.

There will not be any major interruptions to your productivity if you take the time to play a little during your day. Even just playing with silly putty or a slinky while you are at your desk will make your workday a little more fun.

- ◆ If you have a more casual office, throwing a Nerf ball around with your colleagues can be fun.
- ◆ If you have your own office, hanging a basketball hoop over your door and shooting a light ball into it from time to time: it will make your day feel more fun.

Ask the EAP:

Q. I have a family member who seems to have a serious problem, but will not seek help. This is bothering me a lot, and I cannot figure out what to do. Is there anything the EAP can do to help me?

A. There are a few things that we can do that you might find useful. First, we could help you think through your options and the implication of each option. Options can range from exploring whether an intervention can be staged to figuring out what to do for yourself and your family member if intervening is neither possible nor effective. We could provide you with a list of possible resources should this person become open to help at a later date. Some people find it useful to be able to talk about such difficult, private situations with an impartial person. Overall, getting assistance with a family problem is one of the most common reasons that employees contact us, and we would encourage you to give us a call.

Do you have a question for the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?

Send your questions via Outlook or the Pony to Jeff Becker at Jeffrey_Becker@mcpsmd.org.



A Healthy Outlook!

To help employees with troubling issues before they become overwhelming.



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

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Important Notice: Information in *A Healthy Outlook!* is for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional. For further questions or help with specific problems or personal concerns, contact your employee assistance professional.

You may contact us or send your questions and comments to Jeffrey_Becker@mcpsmd.org

Please note that e-mail is not necessarily confidential.

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