

## Get Help Now!

If you or someone you know is exhibiting any of the suicide warning signs,  
**YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

Call the **Suicide Prevention Lifeline:**

**NATIONAL**  
**SUICIDE**  
**PREVENTION**  
**LIFELINE**<sup>TM</sup>  
**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**  
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

## Are you struggling with a gambling problem?

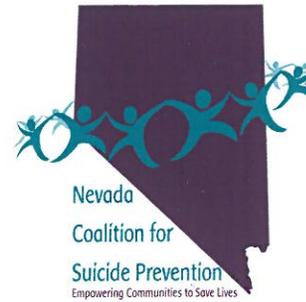
Or worried about someone else's gambling?  
*Don't wait for the problem to get worse.*

Call the **Problem Gamblers HelpLine**  
for treatment and support resources:

**1-800-522-4700**  
**Problem Gamblers HelpLine**  
24 Hr. Confidential Assistance

## Get Involved

The Nevada Coalition for Suicide Prevention is dedicated to partnering and collaborating with local and state individuals and organizations for the development and implementation of evidence-based suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention strategies and programs in the State of Nevada.



For more information, visit:  
[www.nvsuicideprevention.org](http://www.nvsuicideprevention.org)



The Nevada Council on Problem Gambling generates awareness, promotes education and advocates for quality treatment of problem gambling in the State of Nevada. The Nevada Council is committed to working with all stakeholders to provide sustainable programs and services that reduce the impact of problem gambling in Nevada. The Council does not take a position for or against legal gambling.

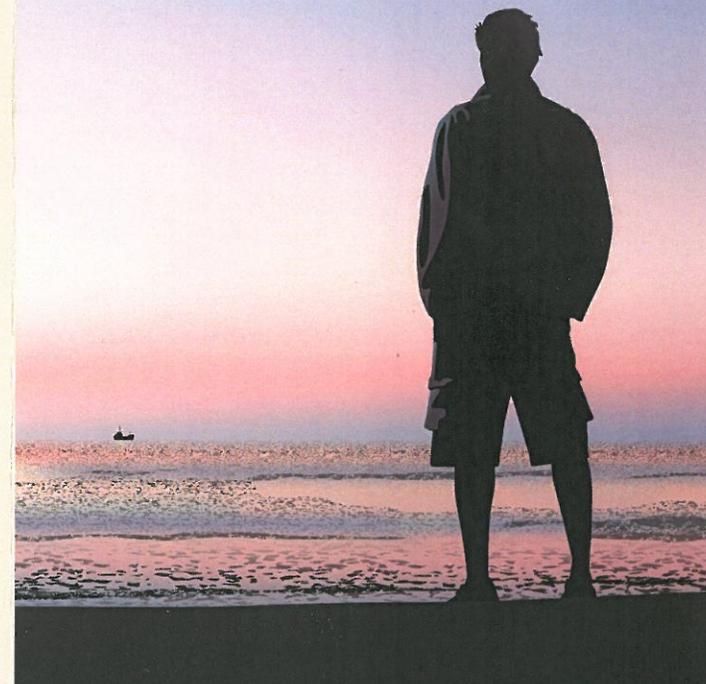
For more information, visit:  
[www.nevadacouncil.org](http://www.nevadacouncil.org)

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# RISKS

## and RESOURCES

# Problem Gambling and Suicide



## Paul's Story

**I was not prepared to outlive one of my children,** but I didn't see the trajectory his life was taking. I watched my son Paul struggle as he was growing up. Moving around with a military family was difficult for him and adjusting to different schools and neighborhoods was a challenge.

Though he was never involved with drugs and only drank an occasional beer, he barely graduated from high school, with good grades only in music. He became a tall (6' 4"), lanky young man who was kind, funny, and sensitive. A two-year tour in the Navy after high school seemed to help "grow him up," but it wasn't long enough.

**My son Paul started gambling in his late teens with "fun family football pools,"** but his gambling escalated beyond family fun. His gambling finally stopped when he took his life in June 1993, at the age of 25. He left behind moderate debt and monumental grief for his family, friends, co-workers and teachers. Although I didn't understand it then, I can now see how the consequences of Paul's gambling problem clearly overlapped many of the warning signs and risk factors for suicidal thoughts and acts.

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) released a paper in 2011 recognizing four major risk factors for suicide: prior suicide attempt, mood disorders, substance abuse, and access to lethal means. Though Paul had not attempted suicide, he had threatened...he masked depression...and he had easy access to lethal means. These conventionally accepted factors for suicide risk can be common as well to problem gamblers.

The good news is that resources are available for problem gamblers or anyone who is vulnerable to suicide. **I strongly believe that there was help for Paul. Sadly, however, he chose not to access it.**

-Linda Flatt, 2014

***ONE IN FIVE* problem gamblers may demonstrate suicidal gestures, attempt suicide or complete suicide.**

### What is Problem Gambling?

For most people gambling is harmless entertainment, but just as you can become addicted to drugs or alcohol, it is also possible to become addicted to gambling.

Sadly, problem gambling often remains hidden until the financial and emotional consequences become noticeable to the gambler's friends and family. As the problems increase, the gambler tries to solve it all through even more gambling. The result is a progressive deterioration which can destroy both the gambler and his/her family.

### Signs of a Gambling Problem:

- Gambling more money or for longer than planned
- Neglecting school, work or family to gamble
- Borrowing money and lying about gambling activities
- Using gambling to cope with stress or loss
- Unsuccessful attempts to reduce or stop gambling
- Feelings of hopelessness, depression or suicide

### Warning Signs of Suicide

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline has identified the following as some of the signs that a person may be at risk for suicide, and individuals may be more at risk if these are related to a loss, change or painful life event:

- Talking about wanting to die or kill oneself
- Looking for ways to kill oneself
- Talking about feeling hopeless, having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or being in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing use of drugs or alcohol
- Acting anxious or agitated
- Behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much

## Help *IS* Available!

When you reach out for **Help**, there is **HOPE**. Use the resources on back to get the help you need, or to learn how you can help others.

### Problem Gambling and Suicide

According to research studies, as many as 20% of problem gamblers demonstrate suicidal gestures, attempt suicide or complete suicide. This is a tremendous difference from the general population, in which 5% are having thoughts of suicide at any given time.

**Problem gambling does not, in itself, cause suicide, but the risk factors for problem gambling and suicide are very similar:**

- Recent loss, including job loss, retirement, divorce or death of a loved one
- History of trauma or abuse
- Mental illness, including depression or anxiety
- Substance abuse
- History of impulsive or risk-taking behavior
- Low self esteem
- Family history of substance abuse
- Family history of mental illness
- Financial problems