

Recognizing How Gambling Affects the Workplace

Many people enjoy gambling, and hearing that workers gamble is not always something to worry about. Yet for some, gambling goes beyond a fun activity and develops into an unhealthy habit or even an addiction. Problem gambling can often be hard to recognize, until it has progressed to the most advanced stages. At these stages not only is the worker affected, but home life and work performance are affected as well. Below are some signs and symptoms of problem gambling.

Indicators you may notice at work:

- **Tardiness** – Often occurs due to late night gambling activities or a bad night's sleep worrying about gambling related problems
- **Long lunches or breaks** – Trips to the convenience store to buy scratch-off and lottery tickets or meeting with creditors may take additional time away from work
- **Taking leave** – Sick days are usually taken right when they become available so they can be used to gamble
- **Excessive use of the telephone** – Used to make calls to creditors or to find other sources of money to fund their gambling needs. Creditors often call the work number attempting to collect on loans.
- **Excessive use of the Internet** – Time is spent in online gambling and games such as fantasy football
- **Moodiness** – Workers get happy when they have wins (this is often short-lived) and down when they are losing (more long-term). Co-worker relationships often suffer during the low mood stages.
- **Office sports pools** – Workers who often create and run these pools sometimes have gambling problems
- **Serves as money collector** – Workers who collect money from co-workers for betting or playing the lottery sometimes do so for their own benefit
- **Requests pay advances or loans from 401k** – Financial problems typically accompany gambling problems and workers often try to get money to pay off accrued debt



If you recognize workers who fit these descriptions, give us a call. Our consultants are available 24 hours a day, and your EAP benefit covers free, confidential consulting to discuss what you are noticing and the best course of action to take. We can help.

The dedicated organizational consultants at First Sun are also available to assist you in setting up training for your staff on this and other topics. Just give us a call toll free at **800-968-8143**, or **(803-376-2668** in the Greater Columbia area), or visit us at www.firstsuneap.com.