

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ON GAMING EMPLOYEES AND GUESTS

For many in our community, the sudden isolation, restrictions on normal daily activities, and complete uncertainty about the future, is creating unprecedented levels of anxiety and fear, along with very real financial insecurity and in some cases, even financial devastation.

Many guests and employees may be experiencing additional financial stress as families have been impacted by job loss and economic uncertainty. This may lead previously responsible gamblers to try to recoup financial losses by gambling, risking money they cannot afford to lose.

This is a difficult time for us all, but for the 6% of Nevada adults who may have a gambling problem, this could be a tipping point into desperation and further destruction when gaming operations resume.

Gambling, for the problem gambler, is NOT a safe and healthy activity – it is an addictive behavior that progresses over time and accelerates in frequency and impact as the gambler uses gambling to escape from the increasing mental, emotional and financial distress in their life. The added uncertainty right now due to COVID-19 can put even more pressure on someone who is struggling. COVID-19 may be impacting individuals with gambling problems more severely than others due to increased individual health risks such as higher rates of depression, anxiety, and isolation. Studies show that individuals with a diagnosed gambling disorder attempt suicide at a higher rate than individuals with other mental health disorders and addictions. As gaming reopens to the community, this an important time to be highly aware of the warning signs of a gambling problem and resources for help.

For all of these reasons, it is important to provide guests and employees with Responsible Gaming messaging about the risks of using gambling as a coping mechanism in times of stress, or trying to solve financial difficulties through gambling. Please remind your employees and guests of these important guidelines for gambling responsibly:

Responsible Gambling Guidelines

- **If you choose to gamble, do so for entertainment only.** If your gambling is no longer an enjoyable activity, ask yourself why are you still “playing”?
- **Treat the money you lose as the cost of your entertainment.** Remember winning is the exception, not the rule!
- **Set a dollar limit and stick to it.** Decide what you can afford to spend and don’t change your mind while playing.
- **Set a time limit and stick to it.** Decide how long you will gamble and leave when your time is up, even if you are winning.
- **Expect to lose.** The odds are that you will lose so be prepared to accept the loss as part of the game.
- **Make it a personal rule not to gamble on credit.** Never gamble with borrowed money or with money you can’t afford to lose.
- **Maintain balance in your life.** Gambling should not interfere with or be a substitute for friends, family, work or other worthwhile activities.
- **Avoid “chasing” lost money.** Chances are the more you try to recoup your losses the larger your losses will be.
- **Don’t gamble as a way to cope with emotional or physical pain.** Gambling for reasons other than entertainment can lead to serious problems including addiction.

When Gambling Becomes a Problem

Gaming employees who interact with guests should pay special attention to any behaviors that suggest increased levels of stress. Employees should also monitor their own stress levels and seek help to manage this stress in a healthy way. The reopening of gaming activities after the unprecedented shutdown will likely be a time of heightened excitement for everyone, but it is important to insure that players are not letting the excitement override responsible decision making, and employees are not discounting the added stress they may also experience at this time.

As always, be observant and aware of the warning signs of problem gambling and make sure employees and guests have easy access to this information and resources for help.

Problem Gambling Warning Signs

- 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 unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling.
- Is often preoccupied with gambling (e.g., having persistent thoughts of reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble).
- Often gambles when feeling distressed (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed)
- After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even (“chasing” one’s losses).
- Lies to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling.
- Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling.
- Relies on others to provide money to relieve desperate financial situations caused by gambling.

If an employee is concerned about a guest, follow company policy in addressing that concern and utilize the resources below.

If you are concerned about yourself or someone you know, the following resources are available to provide information and assistance:

24 Hour Problem Gamblers HelpLine: 1-800-522-4700 www.WhenTheFunStops.org

National Suicide Prevention LifeLine: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) www.SuicidePreventionLifeLine.org

Thank you to our gaming community for your continued and enhanced efforts to promote Responsible Gaming to your employees and guests. Together we can reduce the risk and impact of problem gambling in Nevada.

Stay Healthy. Play Safe.



This information is provided by the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling in support of Nevada Gaming Control Board Responsible Gaming Guidelines. Contact the Nevada Council at 702-369-9740 or Programs@nevadacouncil.org for questions or additional information.