

Youth Gambling – Know the Facts?

Gambling has become an accepted form of entertainment in today's society. Gambling is defined as, 'the act of risking money or something of value on an activity with an uncertain outcome.' Most people often think of betting in a casino, playing a slot machine at the local convenience store, or betting on sports with a 'bookie' as forms of gambling.

Which of the following might also be considered forms of gambling and which not?

- Buying raffle tickets at school or church
- Making a friendly bet with friends on the 'Big Game'
- Betting your lunch money on some sporting event with a friend
- Playing dice or cards at school for money
- Playing bingo
- Buying lottery tickets or scratch cards
- Playing games of skill such as golf or pool for money
- Wagering on horse or dog races



Actually, these are all forms of gambling. Gambling is anytime when money or something of value is risked to try to win more.

Most people do not have problems because of their gambling, but that isn't true for everyone. You may even already know someone who has problems because of their gambling.

Here's a look at some of the Myths and Facts about youth gambling in Nevada:

MYTH: If you're old enough to vote, you're old enough to gamble in Nevada.

FACT: The legal voting age is 18, but you must be at least 21 years old to gamble in Nevada. It is illegal to gamble in a casino or even a convenience store if someone is less than 21 years old.

MYTH: Most adolescents in Nevada have not gambled.

FACT: Nearly 7 out of 10 adolescents have gambled under the age of 21; almost 5 out of 10 have gambled in the past year; and, 7% gamble once a week or more. Usually it involves making bets on cards, dice, or board games with family and friends, but this can be the beginning of serious problems related to gambling.*

* Source: Volberg, R.A. (2001). *Gambling and Problem Gambling Among Adolescents in Nevada. Report to the Nevada Department of Human Resources. Carson City, NV: Department of Human Resources.*
http://www.dhhs.nv.gov/PDFs/GamblingAmongAdolescents_Nevada.pdf

MYTH: If someone has a problem with their gambling, it only costs them money.

FACT: It can also cause difficulties in school and poor grades; lead to problems in relationships and losing friends or causing conflict with family members; and, people may resort to lying and stealing to support their habit, even if they have not done those things before. Also, other problems may crop up such as loneliness, depression, anxiety, and alcohol or other drug use.

MYTH: Teens in Nevada do not have problems because of gambling.

FACT: 1-3% of Nevada teenagers have serious problems related to gambling and another 8-12% are at risk for developing some problems because of gambling. That means that about 10 to 15 adolescents out of 100 are affected by their gambling.*

MYTH: If you are good at playing videogames you will probably be good at playing video poker.

FACT: False! Unlike a videogame, you cannot directly influence the outcome of a video poker machine. And, the more someone plays, the more they will lose in the long run.



MYTH: Teenagers who have gambling problems are just plain stupid.

FACT: Not true. Some characteristics of adolescent gamblers are that they are bright, competitive, popular, and may actually think they are smarter than other people when it comes to gambling. But they may also be insecure and are using gambling as a way of feeling better about themselves.

Gambling is an adult activity... and that's a fact!

See how much more there is to making a bet than just wagering money? It can cause all sorts of problems. That is why gambling is an adult activity. Underage gambling is a risky business that can lead to serious emotional, financial, relationship, and even legal problems.

Talk to your friends about it and help prevent underage gambling.

**If you think youth gambling is no big deal, think again.
Chances are you could end up losing a lot more than just money.**

To learn more about problem gambling and resources for help, log on to www.nevadacouncil.org.
For immediate assistance, please call the Problem Gamblers HelpLine at 1-800-522-4700.

* Source: Volberg, R.A. (2001). *Gambling and Problem Gambling Among Adolescents in Nevada. Report to the Nevada Department of Human Resources. Carson City, NV: Department of Human Resources.*
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