

*What Attorneys Need  
To Know About  
Problem Gambling*

## **Clients with a gambling problem may be seeking legal help in the following areas:**

### **Bankruptcy and Tax Law**

- Clients are required to disclose gambling debts on their bankruptcy and tax forms.
- A potential gambling problem may be revealed through a conversation about why a client is facing bankruptcy or tax issue.
- Bankruptcy and tax attorneys review confidential financial documents that may reveal spending patterns that could be related to a gambling problem.

### **Criminal Defense**

- A potential gambling problem may be the reason a criminal offender is committing a financial crime, such as fraud, theft, or embezzlement.
- Co-occurring addictions are common. Drug and alcohol related offenses may be tied to a gambling problem.

### **Family Law**

- When reaching community property settlements, family law attorneys are privy to assets and debts that could reveal a gambling problem.
- A gambling problem may be the reason a client is unable to pay child support.
- Many divorces occur as the result of issues with disputes over finances, which could be related to a gambling problem.

## **WHAT IS PROBLEM GAMBLING RESOURCE SERVICES (“PGRS”)?**

PGRS is a new program led by the Louisiana Department of Justice, Gaming Division in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Behavioral Health, to bring awareness about problem gambling and the FREE gambling treatment services available to all Louisiana residents.

### **A client’s gambling addiction may be an underlying cause of what led them to seek your help:**

Attorneys are in a unique position to identify problem gambling behavior in their clients because they have access to client information, financial records, and other documentation that is generally not available to others. Clients, protected by attorney-client privilege, may feel safe disclosing a gambling problem to their attorney.

It is important to screen and identify whether your client has a potential gambling problem so that you can assist them in receiving the help that they need.

### **How can you determine whether or not your client has a gambling problem?**

Talk to them about their gambling. Encourage them to disclose as much information as possible and make them aware that if the information is not disclosed, it can affect your ability to best represent them.

## **Lawyers and their staff are also at a high risk for Problem Gambling. Here's why:**

- Lawyers are among the professionals most likely to suffer from stress and depression, which can play a role in the development of problem gaming behavior.
- Lawyers are risk takers. The legal profession is often a high risk, high reward environment, which may lead to risk taking behavior such as gambling.
- Lawyers often have access to large sums of money, such as client trust accounts, retainers, settlement proceeds, etc.
- Lawyers are at a heightened risk for alcohol and drug misuse and dependency, which can increase the possibility for developing co-occurring alcohol, drug, and gambling addictions.

**If gambling is more than a game,  
no one wins...**

**Take the steps necessary for recovery.**

**What can you do if you have concerns about your own gambling, or if you suspect a client or colleague may have a potential problem?**

**Call the Problem Gambling Helpline at  
1-877-770-STOP  
for FREE help.**

**What happens when someone calls the Helpline?**

- The Helpline is answered by trained, certified, and caring Helpline Specialists.
- The Specialists do not provide counseling, but they will refer you to a qualified counselor and all the FREE resources in your area.
- The Helpline, like all gambling treatment services offered by Louisiana, is confidential and FREE.



# **PROBLEM GAMBLING RESOURCE SERVICES**

[www.FreeGamblingHelpLA.org](http://www.FreeGamblingHelpLA.org)

**1-877-770-STOP**

This public document was published at a total cost of \$1,263.90. 5,000 copies of this public document were published in the second printing at a cost of \$1,263.90. The total cost of all printings of this document, including reprints was \$2,060.90. This document was published by OTS-Production Support Services, 627 North 4th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, for the Louisiana Department of Justice, to inform attorneys about the Problem Gambling Resource Services Program. This material was printed in accordance with the standards for printing by state agencies established in R.S. 43:31. Printing of this material was purchased in accordance with the provisions of Title 43 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes.