

Gambling addiction

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Pathological gambling, as gambling addiction is called in medical science, is included in the so-called behavioural addictions which means it is an addiction not depending on substances (e.g., alcohol or nicotine).

A person gambling too much can lose control over his/her own behaviour. However, there is not one cause or several clear causes that lead to an addiction. Rather individual, social and biological factors form the basis of an addiction. Consumption and abuse frequently are used to support the individual in the challenges of everyday life or to escape from these, to suppress feelings or to make them bearable, to fill emptiness and to endure boredom. If certain factors from the areas of dependence causing substance, persons and environment come together, addiction can result.

Physical as well as mental characteristics are included in the Person factor. In particular, feelings of low self-worth, lack of ability to deal with disappointments, stresses, difficulties and problems, as well as a high attendance to incur risks are considered to be risk factors for development of addiction.

Environment includes family, workplace, nursery, school, friends, recreational facilities, etc. In the areas of life named, stress situations and habits individually perceived by people can work to promote addiction. Stress factors are e.g., lack of social relations, pressure to perform and to compete, bad career and life prospects, unemployment, debts, inadequate housing conditions, lack of appraisal and excessive demands.

The development of an addition is also influenced by the characteristics of the dependence causing substance itself, therefore influenced by gambling and the length of time spent. Winning leads, e.g., to a positive feeling. To experience this feeling again, the gambler must continue playing, more money is lost, more money needs to be "won back"...

