

# Problem Gambling & Veterans

Our country's veterans often faced unimaginable stress during their service to our country – this often continues long after they return to civilian life. Veterans are considered a high-risk group for mental health disorders and addiction, including gambling disorder.

Gambling is not an unusual pastime for those serving. Veterans likely spent some time gambling while in the military, so it is no surprise that this may continue when they leave the service. But, when does gambling become a problem, and why should we be particularly concerned about this group?

Risk factors for gambling addiction include those who are prone to risk taking or sensation seeking, using or misusing substances, stress, depression and PTSD – all factors known to be more likely among veterans. Of particular concern is that 40% of veterans seeking treatment for a gambling problem report a past suicide attempt.



**Council on  
Compulsive Gambling  
of Pennsylvania**

Help is available.  
**1-800-GAMBLER®**  
[www.pacouncil.com](http://www.pacouncil.com)

## Problem Gambling & Veterans

Several factors contribute to veterans developing gambling related issues.

For many veterans, gambling is used as an escape, brought on by the following:

- Increase of unstructured time after retirement
- Loss of a spouse, friend or other loved one
- Difficulty adapting to civilian life
- Changes in physical or mental health
- Boredom & Isolation

### Warning Signs of a Gambling Problem

- Increased gambling frequency & preoccupation
- Gambling for longer than intended
- Lying about where lost money has gone
- Borrowing in order to fund gambling/pay debts
- Distancing or isolating from friends/family
- Unable to pay bills or cover expenses
- Efforts to stop/cut back are unsuccessful

### Getting Help for Veterans

Several counseling options exist in Pennsylvania for those whose lives are impacted by gambling. Also, support groups, such as Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon, welcome people of all backgrounds.

### What Help Is Available?

If you think you, or someone you know, may have an issue related to gambling, please call the 24/7 toll-free Pennsylvania Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLER®.

**Help is just a phone call away.**

For information about accessing help, please call 1-800-GAMBLER® or visit [www.pacouncil.com](http://www.pacouncil.com).



**Council on  
Compulsive Gambling  
of Pennsylvania**

Published with support from the Pennsylvania Lottery  
and the Pennsylvania Department of  
Drug and Alcohol Programs