

# Help available for people with gambling problem

The Alcohol and Drug Programs of the El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency is reminding residents that help is available for people who may be struggling with gambling issues.

March 4–10 is National Problem Gambling Awareness Week.

“Gamblers often don’t realize they have a problem, Christy White, supervising health education coordinator with ADP, said in a press release. “What starts out as an occasional, fun activity can slowly become a compulsive addiction ... one that drains the person of their time, resources and relationships and can lead to other problems such as substance abuse and depression. Getting help is the key to breaking the cycle.”

## **Warning signs of problem gambling include:**

Losing time from work due to gambling;

Repeatedly promising to stop gambling, yet returning to it again and again;

Borrowing money to gamble or to pay gambling debts;

Lying to cover up gambling activity;

Suffering from feelings of remorse or depression due to gambling;

Gambling until the last dollar is gone.

The California Office of Problem Gambling Helpline offers free, confidential help over the phone at 800.426.2537. The helpline is open 24 hours a day, including weekends and holidays.

Callers to the helpline can receive over-the-phone counseling, referral to a treatment therapist, and information about resources such as Gamblers Anonymous, and other help.