



VOLUME 153 · OCTOBER 2023

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month: Know the Connection to Problem Gambling

The FCCG takes this month to shine a light on domestic violence, which is unfortunately more common than one might think. Across the population, did you know that 37.9% of Florida women and 29.3% of Florida men experience intimate partner dating violence, intimate partner sexual violence and/or intimate partner stalking in their lifetimes? [1] Before continuing, take a moment to note the definition of domestic violence and what it can include, along with the domestic violence and abuse hotlines:

“Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and emotional abuse.” [2]

The National Domestic Violence Hotline is 1-800-799-7233 [3], the Florida Domestic Violence Hotline is 1-800-500-1119, and the Florida Abuse Hotline is 1-800-962-2873 [4] – all are available 24/7. If you are in a situation where you fear for your safety, call 911.

Add compulsive gambling to the equation, and emotions can quickly become explosive. Tensions already run high when problem gambling is a factor, as relationship, financial, legal, and other pressures build. **Problem gambling has been extensively reported to negatively impact family relationships and is consistently the most frequently cited precipitating event individuals report as their primary reason for reaching out to the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine for problem gambling supports.** According to the FCCG’S 2021-2022 Annual HelpLine Report, almost one-third of help seekers (31%) cited relationship problems as their primary reason for reaching out for help, while 60% of all HelpLine contacts reported family conflict this fiscal period, 41% indicated family neglect, and an alarming 5% reported family violence due to a gambling problem in the home! The percentage of individuals reporting familial conflict of all types were found to have increased from the last fiscal period. [5]

Though it may be easier to imagine a loved one of an addicted gambler as the victim of resulting domestic violence, know that it can also go the other way. As problem gambling is often misunderstood and stigmatized, and may even remain hidden as the root cause, the individual suffering from addiction can also become the target for blame and frustration from the resulting impacts on loved ones.

We all need to focus our efforts on helping those who cannot help themselves when relationship violence becomes involved, no matter who is the victim. The FCCG’s theme in promoting its **888-ADMIT-IT Problem Gambling HelpLine** this year is **“Can You Walk Away?”** This is a two-sided coin, which asks a fundamental and universal question about the negative impacts of problem gambling:

- Can you walk away from gambling, when it becomes a problem? **The FCCG has a free self-assessment quiz on its website at gamblinghelp.org.**
- If you are a loved one impacted by problem gambler, can you walk away from the relationship to save yourself? **Learn more in our [blog post on codependency](#).**

The 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine serves anyone impacted by problem gambling, and that includes loved ones and individuals who have never gambled. With 24-hour, confidential, and multilingual service, help and hope are ALWAYS available. Recovery is possible, and treatment is available. Call or text the HelpLine number, or start a live chat at gamblinghelp.org today.



References: 🔍

1. Smith, S.G., Chen, J., Basile, K.C., Gilbert, L.K., Merrick, M.T., Patel, N., Walling, M., & Jain, A. (2017). *The national intimate partner and sexual violence survey (NISVS): 2010-2012 state report*. Atlanta: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>
2. “What Is Domestic Violence?” *The Nation’s Leading Grassroots Voice on Domestic Violence, NCADV: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, ncadv.org/learn-more, Accessed 4 Sept. 2023.*
3. “Safety and Protection.” *Florida Department of Children and Families, www.myflfamilies.com/services/abuse, Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.*
4. “National Domestic Violence Hotline.” *The Hotline, National Domestic Violence Hotline, 27 Apr. 2023, www.thehotline.org/.*
5. “2021-2022 24-Hour Problem Gambling Annual HelpLine Report.” *Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, February 2023*