



ARE YOU CODEPENDENT?

Family and others do not often realize how codependent their lives might be on the gambler. A loved one becomes codependent when their life, needs and behaviors revolve around the gambler and his or her behaviors. While codependency, to some extent, is not unusual in most relationships, when living with a compulsive gambler, it becomes unhealthy when a family member's life is deeply affected and their decisions or actions are reliant or revolve around the gambler's irrational behaviors.

Codependency Checklist

To determine whether you or someone you know may be codependent due to gambling, answer the questions in the following checklist. Be sure to check the box that most closely matches how you feel:

Do you or someone you know:	Never	Sometimes	Very Often	Always
Have a hard time saying "No" to the gambler?				
Have difficulty telling the gambler what you really think or feel?				
Do whatever the gambler wants you to do?				
Try not to let the gambler see that you're upset about her gambling?				
Try not to let the gambler see that you're upset about other things so she will remain happy?				
Try to keep the gambler away from situations in which he will gamble?				
Encourage the gambler to gamble?				
Make excuses for the gambling behavior?				
Feel afraid that the gambling is hurting your relationship or your family's, but hide how you're feeling?				
Just give up trying to change things?				
Feel that things could be worse and that you should try to live with the gambling?				
Let the gambler do whatever he wants so you can have free time?				
Feel sorry for the gambler because she has nothing to do if she doesn't gamble?				

If you or someone you know responded primarily in the "Very Often" and "Always" categories, you likely have some level of codependency and might even be enabling the gambler.

WAKING UP AS THE ENABLER

Codependents and others are frequently in denial as to how they may be contributing to the gambling problem and ultimately to their own unhappiness. In some cases, loved ones may actually be enabling the gambler in his behavior. The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling's HelpLine has many years of experience listening to the stories of the non-gambling spouses or partners, parents, adult children, young people, and others who call in to its 24-hour HelpLine. More often than not, enablers do not recognize their behaviors until it is brought to their attention by a friend or family member, colleague, professional counselor, self-help support group or other person.

Some of the more common explanations reported by family members include:

- I accompany my wife to the casino because I don't want her to be there all hours of the night alone.
- I make only friendly bets with my son or wager low amounts but never on the game he's experiencing the most difficulty with.
- I lie or cover for my mother because it's easier.
- I loan or borrow money for my partner to pay off debts or to gamble.
- I would never get upset about his gambling because I didn't want the children to see us arguing.
- I give my girlfriend money to gamble with because I don't want to deal with her irrational behavior.
- I think the gambling problem will somehow just stop.

Like codependency, enabling is a behavior that becomes ingrained and can take time for family members to change their behaviors and to redirect their attention to themselves. Recognizing oneself as an enabler can truly be the single most awakening moment for loved ones, as well as a time for renewed vigor to keep the focus on self.