

Money problem scenarios: Gambling Addiction

Print enough sets to give each group one scenario, plus a full set for yourself.

Please note that the content references to addiction and addictive behaviours.

James' story



I became involved in gambling when I was nine. Some older boys started inviting me to card games – it was my first experience of betting. It gave me a real buzz, especially when I won. But soon I had lost more than I had won. I turned to crime to pay my gambling debts and fund my betting habit.

By the time I was 16, I was addicted to fixed-odds betting terminals (FOBTs) in betting shops. I took temporary jobs to try and fund my habit. All of the money I earned went into those machines. I could get through hundreds of pounds in no time at all – the way the machines work is so quick, you only wait a few seconds for your next spin.

My habit has cost me so much money. I've lost most of my friends, which has made things worse. I started drinking and taking drugs to take my mind off the money I was losing. In the end I lost everything. It affected my mental health, my relationship with my family and my ability to work.

Extra information:

- More than 2 million people are addicted to gambling or at risk of developing a problem.
- There are many forms of gambling, e.g. betting on horse races.
- Men are 4 times more likely than women to be classed as problem gamblers.
- The UK industry takes £15.1bn from betting customers every year.
- You have approximately 90% chance of winning a prize on a FOBT, but often the prizes are very small in relation to the amount of money you've put into the machine.
- FOBTs are known as the crack cocaine of gambling because they are so addictive.
- Fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs) are gambling machines. They contain a variety of games, including roulette. The stake and prizes from an individual game can be rolled over into the next game up to a maximum stake of £2 per game and a maximum prize of £500.00. (Before Autumn 2019, the maximum bet was £100).

Other types of slot machines include fruit machines and gaming machines found in arcades. You pay to play and have a chance to win a prize. They are cheaper to play and give out small prizes.

Source: Gambling Commission report 2023

The symptoms of gambling addiction may include:

- Needing to gamble with larger amounts of money to achieve the same excitement.
- Lying to family members, therapists, or others to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling.
- Feeling restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling.
- Chasing losses: After losing money gambling, often returning another day to get even.

Source: www.priorygroup.com 2024

Continued ➔

Money problem scenarios: **Gambling Addiction**

James' story continued

The impact of gambling may include:

- Low Self-Esteem
- Stress and Anxiety
- Depression
- Sleep Problems
- Substance Misuse
- Suicidal Thoughts

Source: www.mentalhealth.org.uk 2024



Questions:

1. How many different forms of gambling can you think of?
2. How and why do you think people are attracted to gamble?
3. Do you think there is too much advertising for gambling sites?
4. Where might you seek help for a gambling problem?
5. Now think of five things James could have done/could do to resolve the situation he finds himself in and prepare to share these with the whole group.

Money problem scenarios: Spending Addiction

Mo's story



When I was 21, my dad died. I was a bit depressed, but I discovered that if I went shopping, it would cheer me up. So I started shopping. I didn't really have the money, but I signed up for store cards and a couple of credit cards.

It's so easy just to load up my basket and then pay for it using a card. Sometimes I don't even take the items out of the bag or box. I just put them in a cupboard when I get home. I think this is because once I get home, I feel so guilty about spending the money. I try to keep things hidden from my family and friends.

Now, two years later, I have finally realised I'm addicted to spending money. I go shopping just to make myself happy because I get such a good feeling from buying new things. As my debts have increased, I've found it very difficult to make the repayments on all the cards. I'm anxious all the time as

I worry about how I am going to pay the bills. I can't afford to go out with my friends because I have no money. It's changed the way I feel about myself and the things I can afford to do.

Extra information:

- Consumer Credit Counselling Service deals with 50,000 people a year who have got into financial trouble because of their shopping addiction.
Source: ajp.psychiatryonline.org
- A Stanford University report in 2006 found 6% of women and 5.5% of men are compulsive shoppers.
Source: med.stan.edu

The symptoms of shopping addiction may include:

- Feeling remorse because they have spent too much money or bought things that they do not really need.
- Developing financial problems because of their behaviour.
- Attempting to control their spending, but being unable to maintain this for any real length of time.
- Feeling uncomfortable if they are unable to shop. They may become anxious and experience cravings to go shopping. This is similar in many ways to the withdrawal symptoms that alcohol and drug addicts will experience.
- Feeling the need to hide the extent of their shopping habit. The individual may even lie about where they are going and conceal their purchases.

Based on information from Workingminds.org.uk and Addiction.org.uk 2024



Questions:

1. What's the difference between having a shopping addiction and going on a shopping spree?
2. What are the consequences of a shopping addiction?
3. Why do you think people might find it hard to stop a shopping addiction?
4. Where might you seek help for a shopping addiction problem?
5. Now think of five things Mo could have done/could do to resolve the situation he finds himself in and prepare to share them with the whole group.

Money problem scenarios: Debt with an unlicensed money lender

Kelly's story



I was working full-time and managing my money ok. Then I was made redundant. I coped for the first few months as I had some savings. I was applying for loads of jobs and going for interviews until car broke down and needed a costly repair. I had to have it repaired as I'd just been offered a job but had to have my own transport to get there.

I didn't have any money to pay for the repair. I saw an advert in the local shop advertising loans. I rang the number. Big mistake! However, I didn't realise that at the time.

A nice man came out to see me and told me he could lend me the £2,000 I needed. Soon I had the car back on the road and had started my new job.

After two years, I realised that the repayments on the loan were so big that I couldn't afford to pay them and my living costs. I asked to reduce the payments but was told I couldn't. I missed a payment, and that's when the trouble started. He threatened to take my car and other things in the house. He scared me so much I've had to try and find money to give him.

I've worked out that I've already paid back £2,000 and they still want a further £4,000. I had no idea that they were going to charge me £6,000 to borrow £2,000. Now I'm really scared of what they'll do – not to mention how long it's going to take me to pay off the debt.

Extra information:

- In 2019, An illegal money lender pocketed £340,000 from people in vulnerable circumstances in six years (**local.gov.uk**).
- Loan sharks set their own interest rates.
- It is estimated that over 1.08 million people in the UK are in debt to an illegal money lender (**stoploansharks.co.uk 2024**).
- Loan sharks are illegal. Even if you owe them money, report them immediately to Stop Loan Sharks.
- One woman borrowed £500 from a loan shark and ended up paying back £88,000 (**moneyadvice.service.org.uk 2020**).

How to spot a loan shark:

- They seldom offer paperwork. Borrowers are kept in the dark about how much they still owe.
- They can charge high rates of interest. Rates of over 1,000% APR have been known.
- They often add 'extras' to the debt e.g. for having to make an extra visit. This makes the debt even harder to repay.
- They take items of value if you can't make a payment, e.g. TV, car, jewellery, passport.
- They use threats and violence to reclaim their debts.

Source: **stoploansharks.co.uk 2024**

Money problem scenarios: Debt with an unlicensed money lender

Kelly's story continued

Reasons someone might borrow from a loan shark:

- For everyday bills and living expenses.
- Car repair or purchase.
- To help another family member.
- Mortgage or rental deposit.

Source: stoploansharks.co.uk 2024



Questions:

1. How and where might loan sharks target potential victims?
2. Why might someone use a loan shark?
3. Why don't loan sharks provide paperwork detailing the loan arrangement?
4. What do you think a loan shark looks like?
5. Now think of five things Kelly could have done/could do to resolve the situation she finds herself in and prepare to share them with the whole group.