

Seniors and Gambling

There are some reasons why seniors are drawn to gambling activities:

- *Loneliness*—Many seniors have lost their spouse, their friends, and possibly their children. The family they have may live far away, offering little comfort for the loneliness a senior might encounter.
- *Loss of physical capability*—Through the aging process, people may lose the ability to participate in hobbies and skills that they enjoyed when they were younger. Gardening and knitting, bowling and dancing, may no longer offer the pleasure they once did because of physical changes that have taken place in the body.
- *Boredom*—The senior no longer has a job to go to regularly. The kids may live across the country. There is not the ability to produce products or services that once was there. There is a lot of time available, but the choices of what to do with that time may be limited.

Gambling offers:

- Excitement
- Respect and recognition
- Hope
- Socialization
- Entertainment
- A pleasurable way to pass time

But for seniors, gambling can lead to:

- Loss of control
- Lying
- Bankruptcy
- Breaking the law
- Shame
- Broken relationships
- Dependence on children for financial assistance or bailout
- Financial disaster
- Inability to afford necessary medications
- Loss of house/property
- Worsening health problems

For seniors, here are some alternatives to gambling.

- Be a foster grandparent
- Take a walk in the neighborhood or in the mall
- Read alone or to the children at the local library
- Take a class to learn something new
- Volunteer at the hospital, library, church synagogue, park, or museum, or favorite charity

- Garden indoors in a flower pot
- Baby sit
- Call a friend who cannot get out of the house
- Visit someone who is ill or lonely
- Make a new friend
- Write a card, letter, or short story
- Fix a broken appliance, unplug it, take it apart to see how it works, or take it to someone who can fix it
- Think creatively