



Look out for changes in mood and behavior, as well as becoming more withdrawn

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Five warning signs of gambling addiction ahead of England's Euros semi-final

As England prepare to take on the Netherlands in the semi-final of the Euros, experts have warned of the dangers of gambling addiction

By Neil Shaw, Assistant Editor (Money and Lifestyle)

08:27, 9 Jul 2024 | UPDATED 09:42, 9 JUL 2024

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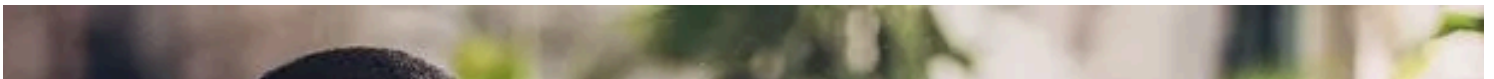
Ahead of England's crunch semi-final clash with the Netherlands, top shrinks are warning footie fans about the gambling risks. The Three Lions' upcoming battle has sparked concern from the

Royal College of Psychiatrists who've pointed out the spike in betting addictions during big sporting events like the Euros and the soon-to-happen Paris Olympics this July.

"Major sporting events are a time when many fans place bets on their favourite teams," noted Professor Henrietta Bowden-Jones of the college's faculty of Addictions Psychiatry. She warned that without careful control, these wagers could spiral into full-blown gambling addictions or cause those already struggling to fall back into old habits.

"The Euros will inevitably act as a trigger for many people who may fall into a harmful cycle where they repeatedly place bets they cannot afford. Sadly, the end result can be that people are put at risk of losing their home, relationships and even their jobs."

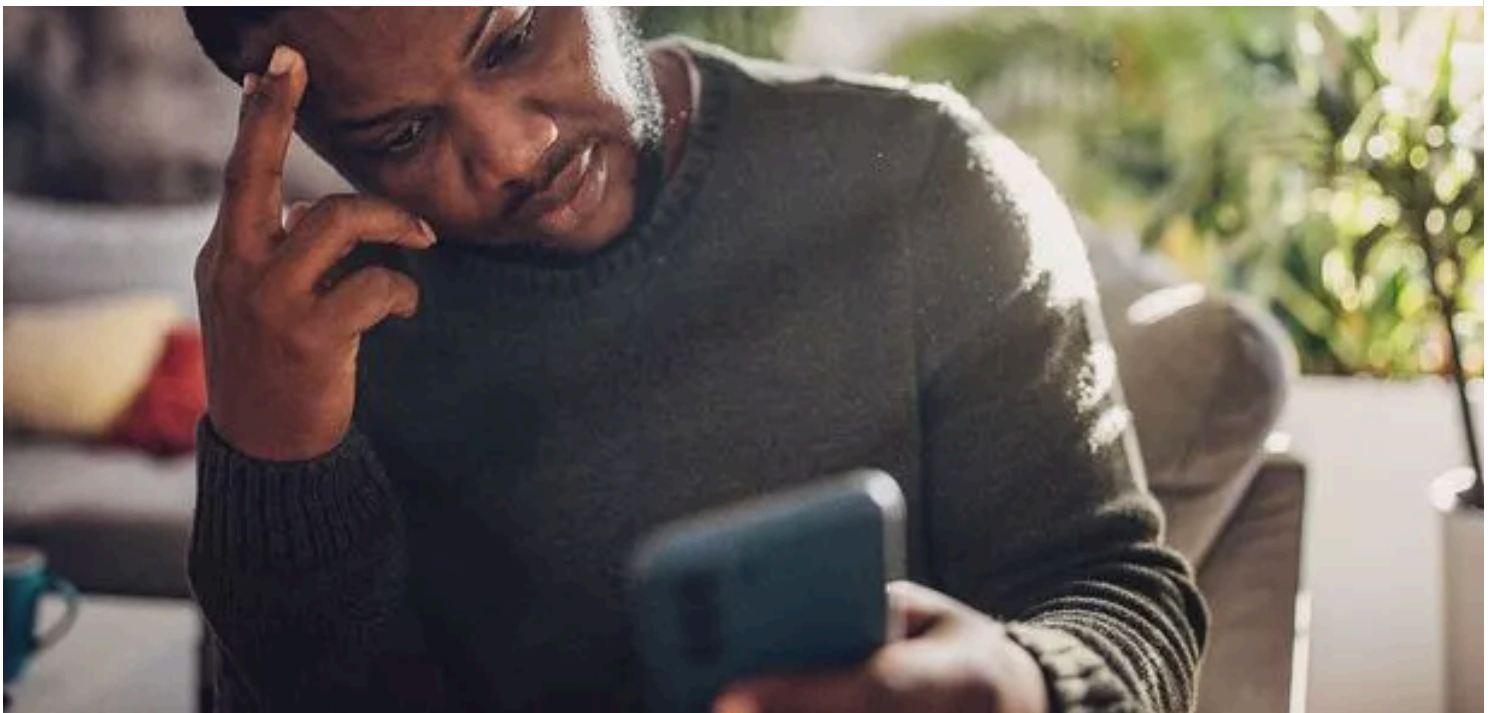
But how can you tell if someone's love for a flutter on the footie is turning into a dangerous obsession? Experts are sharing the red flags and all the must-know info, reports **the Liverpool Echo**.



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(Image: Getty)

Appearing withdrawn

According to Katie Reynolds-Jones, CMO at GAMSTOP, the first sign to look out for is if they appear withdrawn. "Losing interest in usual activities like going out with friends or spending time

with family and wanting to stay at home more frequently, needing to check their phone constantly to check the latest results,” she said.

Time spent gambling

If you find yourself gambling more often than planned or for longer periods than you intended, Jack Symons, co-founder of Gamban, thinks this could be a sign of a gambling addiction. “You become preoccupied with gambling, constantly thinking about your next bet. You prioritise gambling over other important areas of your life, such as work, family and social relationships,” he said.

Borrowing money to fund gambling

For Symons, it’s also when you borrow money or resort to illegal activities to fund your gambling habit. “Have you gotten into debt or do you find yourself asking others for financial help because large sums of money have been lost through betting?” he said.

“Sports betting can lead to addiction and cause negative consequences financially, professionally or personally. If you’re not sure whether gambling is a problem for you, setting limits, being aware

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symptoms when you try to quit could be a cause for concern. You experience a loss of control while gambling, chasing losses or placing increasingly risky bets to win it back,” said Symons.

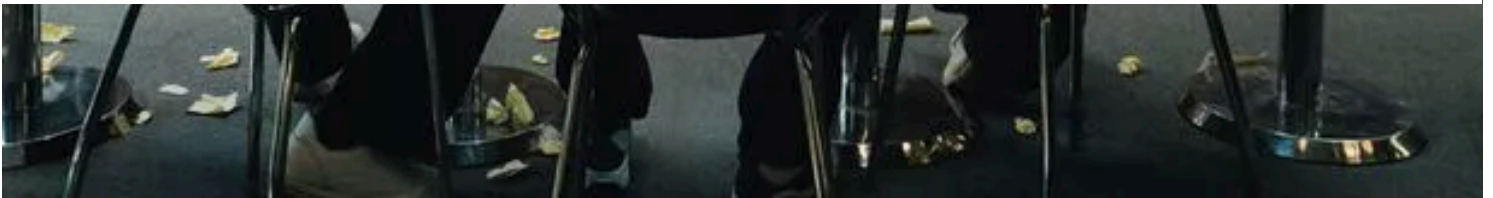
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Gambling can quickly become more of a problem than a hobby

Changes in mood

It's also important to monitor the changes in mood and heightened emotions. "There could be noticeable changes to a person's mood and behaviour, including looking worried, agitated or upset for no apparent reason," said Reynolds-Jones.

"If someone is chasing losses and losing money they might also not sleep well due to anxiety or constant worrying."

How can you provide support?

According to Helen Wells, psychotherapist and clinical director at The Dawn, the Euros captivate audiences, so it's crucial to stay vigilant about the potential pitfalls of sports betting. "Have an open dialogue and approach the individual with empathy and without judgment. Express your concerns and share specific behaviours that worry you," she said.

She also added that you could advise them to seek help either via support groups or professional gambling treatment. "Recommend joining support groups such as Gamblers Anonymous, where they can find community support and shared experiences," Wells said.

"Entering rehab will hasten recovery as triggers (including mobile phones) will be removed from their environment while they learn skills to manage these triggers once they return to everyday life. Establish clear boundaries regarding financial support and access to money to prevent further harm.

"Ensure that you, as a concerned loved one, also seek support and maintain your wellbeing. Supporting someone with an addiction can be challenging and emotionally draining."

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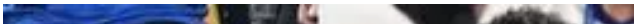
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