

PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY



Sports Gambling Can Be A Dangerous Game

(NAPSA)—Whether it's the Super Bowl, the Olympics, the World Series or the collegiate basketball tournament known as "March Madness," the American public loves its sporting events.

Unfortunately, this fascination with sports can also have what some describe as a dark side. For some, wagering on sporting events—either legally or illegally—can become a problem. Advocates say problem gambling can devastate thousands of individuals and families in many ways, such as extreme debt, lying, borrowing and/or stealing, agitation when not gambling, stress, aggression, broken relationships, depression and, in extreme cases, suicide.

This year, "March Madness" coincides with National Problem Gambling Awareness Week, March 7–13, 2010. To publicize the dangers associated with problem gambling, two men who lost their sons to a gambling-related multiple homicide—Bill Swanson and Robert McGuigan—are telling their story to remind the nation that sports betting can turn deadly.

McGuigan's son had become a bookie. Swanson's son was staying at McGuigan's apartment when Swanson was killed by a gambler who was laying in wait for his bookie—McGuigan's son—

to return home. The young McGuigan was later murdered as well. The gambler charged with the murder eventually committed suicide.

Problem gambling can devastate individuals and families in many ways, such as extreme debt, stress and broken relationships.

“Problem gambling changes people. It takes them down an unhealthy road,” says McGuigan, cautioning that gambling addiction can progress over time. “Gambling can be as addictive as any drug,” Bill Swanson cautions. “Everyone in America needs to know.”

This marks the 8th Annual Problem Gambling Awareness Week campaign, a grassroots public awareness and outreach campaign. The goal of this campaign is to educate the general public and health care professionals about the warning signs of problem gambling and raise awareness about the help that is available both locally and nationally.

The NCPG (National Council on Problem Gambling) is the national advocate for programs and services to assist problem gamblers and their families. For more information, visit www.npgaw.org.