

**Gambling Awareness:
Understanding the “Hook”**

Jody Bechtold, MSW, LCSW, NCGC-II

*HOW MUCH DO YOU
ALREADY KNOW ABOUT GAMBLING?*

HOW MANY STATES HAVE LEGALIZED
GAMBLING?

28?

30?

42?

50?

TRUE OR FALSE

- ▶ If a gambler can afford it, gambling is not a problem

- ▶ Money is only one aspect of the problem. The quality of relationships, lifestyle, and ability to cope with emotions are also impacted by the addiction


TRUE OR FALSE

- ▶ It is easy to spot problem gambling

- ▶ Problem gambling has few obvious symptoms, and problem gamblers often hide their gambling until it is severe.

WHAT IS GAMBLING?

Risking something you have in the hopes of gaining something you don't have...



When the outcome is uncertain

FORMS OF GAMBLING

- Bingo
- Slots
- Lottery
- Football Pools
- Card Games
- Table games



NATIONAL STATISTICS

- ▶ **Profits:** US Treasury from Federal withholding tax on individual jackpots ≈ \$6 billion per year
- ▶ **Prevalence:** 1% of adults meet criteria for pathological gambling; 2% meet for problem gambling; 6-9 million adults and 500,000 adolescents
- ▶ **Problems:** social cost of problem gambling, including addiction, bankruptcy, and crime ≈ \$7 billion last year

Source: www.ncpgambling.org

NATIONAL STATISTICS (CONTINUED)

- ▶ **Co-Occurring:** Problem gamblers also have high rates of co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders
- ▶ **Oversight:** There are no Federal agencies with a formal responsibility for addressing problem gambling issues

Source: www.ncpgambling.org

SPECIFIC SCREENS & ASSESSMENTS

**LIE-BET
PROBLEM GAMBLING SCREEN**

1. Have you felt the need to bet more and more money?
2. Have you ever had to lie to people important to you about how much you gambled?

A **YES** answer to one or the other of the following two questions, or a **YES** to both questions, should indicate a need for full assessment for problem and pathological gambling. A **NO** to both may indicate no gambling concerns.

▶ Johnson, Nora et al Las Vegas VA Hospital, Nevada

BRIEF BIOSOCIAL SCREEN - NCRG

1. During the past 12 months, have you become restless, irritable, or anxious when trying to stop/cut down on gambling?
2. During the past 12 months, have you tried to keep your family or friends from knowing how much you gambled?
3. During the past 12 months, did you have such financial trouble as a result of your gambling that you had to get help with living expenses from family, friends, or welfare?

A "yes" answer to any of the questions means the person is at risk for developing a gambling problem.

DSM – V
Addictive Disorders:
Behavioral Addiction

© 2010 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

GAMBLING DISORDER:
DSM-V CRITERIA 312.31

- ▶ Preoccupation
 - ▶ Is often preoccupied with gambling (e.g. having persistent thoughts or reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble)
- ▶ Tolerance
 - ▶ Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement
- ▶ Withdrawal
 - ▶ Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling

GAMBLING DISORDER:
DSM-V CRITERIA 312.31

- ▶ Escape
 - ▶ Often gambles when feeling distressed (e.g. helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed)
- ▶ Chasing
 - ▶ After losing money gambling, often returns another day in order to get even (chasing one's losses)
- ▶ Lying
 - ▶ Lies to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling

**GAMBLING DISORDER:
DSM-V CRITERIA 312.31**

- ▶ Loss of control
 - ▶ Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling
- ▶ Risked significant relationship
 - ▶ Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, education or career opportunity because of gambling
- ▶ Bailout
 - ▶ Relies on others to provide money to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by gambling

**GAMBLING DISORDER:
DSM-V CRITERIA 312.31**

- ▶ The gambling behavior is not better explained by a manic episode.


DIAGNOSIS / TERMINOLOGY

- ▶ **Gambling Disorder:** **4 or more** of the DSM-V criteria
- ▶ **Problem Gambling:** more than **1** but **fewer than 4** of the DSM-V criteria

- ▶ **Compulsive Gamblers/Gambling:** term used by GA and persons identifying themselves as gambling addicted


FACTORS EFFECTING PROGRESSION

- ▶ Type of Game
- ▶ Access to Money
- ▶ Understanding of Risks
- ▶ Big Win
- ▶ Bail Outs




FACTORS EFFECTING PROGRESSION

- ▶ Life Stress
 - ▶ Losses
 - ▶ Relationship Problems
 - ▶ Physical Illness
 - ▶ Trauma
 - ▶ Alcohol/Drugs



FACTORS EFFECTING PROGRESSION

- ▶ Internal Factors
 - ▶ Depression/Negative Affect
 - ▶ Competitiveness
 - ▶ Narcissism
- ▶ Impulsivity
 - ▶ Substance use disorders
 - ▶ Gambling
 - ▶ ADHD
 - ▶ Bipolar disorder
 - ▶ Personality disorder
 - ▶ Suicidality



**PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING:
COMPARISON TO SUBSTANCE USE / ABUSE**

Similarities

- ▶ Preoccupation with the activity and a loss of control
- ▶ Abuse of drugs/alcohol and problem gambling can both be progressive
- ▶ Denial is the hallmark of both: the problem resides outside the person who is exhibiting the disordered behavior

**PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING:
COMPARISON TO SUBSTANCE USE / ABUSE**

Similarities

- ▶ Continued behavior despite negative consequences in major life areas
- ▶ Tolerance develops – more of the substance or gambling is needed to attain same feelings
- ▶ Urges and cravings develop among problem gamblers too
- ▶ Similar psychological drives including escape, excitement, self-medication and avoidance

**PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING:
COMPARISON TO SUBSTANCE USE / ABUSE**

Differences

- ▶ Gambling is not self-limiting
- ▶ Behavior not attributable to intoxication
- ▶ More intense sense of shame and guilt
- ▶ Greater denial and stronger defenses

**PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING:
COMPARISON TO SUBSTANCE USE / ABUSE**

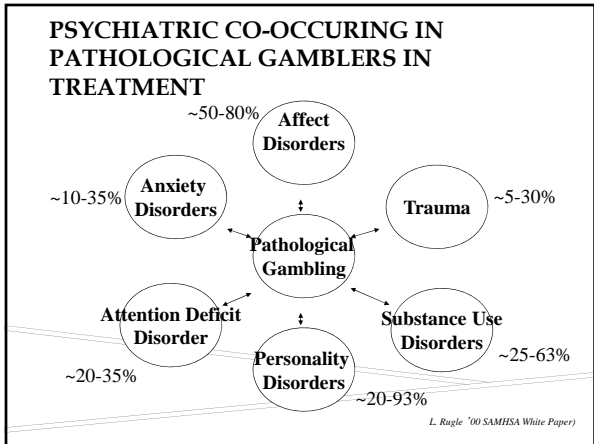
Differences

- ▶ Fantasies of success
- ▶ Unpredictable outcome
- ▶ Easier to hide (no biological tests)
- ▶ Problem gambler's financial situation is often critically damaged and must be addressed as part of treatment

**PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING:
COMPARISON TO SUBSTANCE USE / ABUSE**

Differences

- ▶ Intensity of family anger
- ▶ There is much **less** public awareness about problem gambling
- ▶ Acceptance of gambling is even more **widespread** than for alcohol



BRAIN CHEMICALS - VULNERABILITIES

- ▶ Serotonin
 - ▶ Lower levels in the brain, less able to inhibit their behavior
 - ▶ Risk-taking behaviors like gambling
- ▶ Dopamine
 - ▶ Rewarding feeling associated with behaviors
 - ▶ Problems with dopamine system may contribute to vulnerability to addictive behaviors
- ▶ Opioid System
 - ▶ Problems with opioid system plays a role in regulating urges and the processing of pleasure

MEDICATIONS

- ▶ Antidepressants
 - ▶ Prozac – mixed results
 - ▶ Lexapro – reduced anxiety driving gambling behavior
- ▶ Mood Stabilizers
 - ▶ Lithium (bipolar) – mixed results
- ▶ Opioid Antagonists – effective treatment for urges and co-occurring alcohol disorders
 - ▶ Naltrexone and Nalmefene

MEDICATIONS - CONTINUED

- ▶ Glutamatergic agents
 - ▶ N-acetyl cysteine (NAC) – most beneficial for urges
 - ▶ vitamin

Source: Dr. Ken Nelson

N-ACETYL CYSTEINE, L-METHYL FOLATE, SSRI OR NALTREXONE

BIPOLAR – STABILIZE THEN NALTREXONE OR NAC

SUBSTANCE ABUSE – CHOOSE NALTREXONE

MAJOR DEPRESSION – SSRI OR SNRI

ADHD – USE BUPROPION OR STRATTERA

TREATMENT ALGORITHM

UNDERSTANDING THE “HOOK”

Gaming Industry Psychology

**INDEPENDENCE OF TURNS:
COIN TOSS**

1	Heads
2	Heads
3	Tails
4	Heads
5	Tails
6	Heads
7	Heads
8	Tails
9	Heads
10	_____


SKILL VS CHANCE

- ▶ “What is the definition of **skill**?”
- ▶ “The more you practice, the better you will be”
- ▶ “What is the definition of **chance**?”
- ▶ “All unforeseen or unpredictable events over which a person has no control.”

CHANCE & SKILL GAMES

Chance	Skill
<hr/>	

ILLUSIONS OF CONTROL



**RECOGNIZING TRAPS –
ILLUSIONS OF CONTROL**

- ▶ Slot Machines Illusions
- ▶ Lottery Illusions
- ▶ Bingo Illusions
- ▶ Blackjack Illusions
- ▶ Roulette Illusions
- ▶ Horse Racing Illusions

**WHICH LOTTERY TICKET
DO YOU WANT?**

1 2 3 4 5 6

11 4 7 28 9 32

**UNDERSTANDING
“RANDOMNESS”**

REWARD OR PUNISHMENT

Type of Event		
	Positive Event	Aversive Event
Presented	Get what you want	Get what you don't want
Removed	Take away what you want	Take away what you don't want

REWARD OR PUNISHMENT

Type of Event		
	Positive Event	Aversive Event
Presented	Gamble and win \$\$ (+/+)	Gamble and Debt (+/+)
Removed	Gamble and lose \$\$ (+/-)	Gamble and bailout (+/-)

- THE "HOOK"**
- ▶ Independence of Turns
 - ▶ Chance vs. Skill
 - ▶ Illusions of Control
 - ▶ Randomness
 - ▶ Reward/Punishment (Intermittent Reward)

 - ▶ Research by Dr. Robert Ladouceur
-

HARM REDUCTION
A common practice for those at-risk for developing
a gambling problem
(co-occurring mental health / substance abuse)

**10 RULES
OF RESPONSIBLE
GAMING**
How to "Keep It Fun"

I. IF YOU CHOOSE TO GAMBLE...

- ▶ Do so for entertainment purposes.
- ▶ If your gambling is no longer an enjoyable event, then ask yourself why you are still "playing."

2. TREAT THE MONEY YOU LOSE...

- ▶ As the cost of your entertainment.



3. SET A DOLLAR LIMIT

- ▶ ...and stick to it.
- ▶ Decide before you go not only what you can "afford" to lose, but how much you want to spend. Don't change your mind after losing.



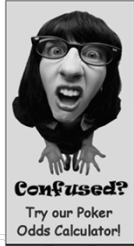
4. SET A TIME LIMIT

- ▶ ... and stick to it.
- ▶ Decide how much of your time you want to allow for gambling. Leave when you reach the time limit whether you are winning or losing.



5. EXPECT TO LOSE...

- ▶ The odds are that you will lose.



6. MAKE IT A PRIVATE RULE...

- ▶ Never to gamble on credit.
- ▶ Do not borrow money to gamble.



7. CREATE BALANCE IN YOUR LIFE...

- ▶ Gambling should not interfere with or substitute for friends, family, work, or other worthwhile activities.



8. AVOID "CHASING"

- ▶ Lost money.
- ▶ Chances are the more you try to recoup your losses, the larger your losses will be.



9. DON'T GAMBLE AS A WAY TO COPE...

- ▶ With emotional or physical pain.
- ▶ Gambling for reasons other than entertainment can lead to problems.



10. BECOME EDUCATED...

- ▶ About the warning signs of problem gambling.
- ▶ The more you know, the better choices you can make.



COUNSELING OPTIONS IN PA

- ▶ Many individuals will present for "help" in a variety of settings
 - ▶ Individual counselors (MH, SA, Trauma, Relationship, etc.)
 - ▶ Group counseling (MH or SA)
 - ▶ Inpatient hospital / residential
 - ▶ (MH, SA, crisis or involuntary commit)
 - ▶ Helplines / Hotlines
 - ▶ (Crisis, DV, Suicide, etc.)
- ▶ Not all counselors are trained in problem gambling
 - ▶ Ask about trainings and certifications

PA CERTIFIED CLINICIANS & STATEWIDE RESOURCES

- ▶ Preferred Providers
 - ▶ Certified Gambling Addiction Counselors (MH & SA)
 - ▶ Treatment funding for individuals and family
 - ▶ No insurance
 - ▶ Insurance isn't taken by Provider
- ▶ 1-800-Gambler
- ▶ www.PAProblemGambling.com

**THANK YOU!
QUESTIONS?**

Jody Bechtold, MSW, LCSW, NCGC-II
jody@jodybechtold.com
www.jodybechtold.com
(412) 303-0163
