

Why Are We Afraid to Ask About Gambling?

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Goals and Objectives

1. Identify gambling's placement in today's addictions.
2. Explore why gambling is hidden among professionals.
3. Explore views/beliefs on gambling as individuals and professionals.
4. Incorporate gambling questions into intakes/screenings for client assessments to better identify individuals with problem /gambling use disorders and assist in providing better treatment or referral needs.
5. Learn professional ways to bring awareness of gambling for addiction counselors, mental health professionals, marriage and family therapists, treatment settings, communities, and individuals.

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Gambling Questions

- ▶ How widespread is gambling in the U.S.?
 - ▶ Approximately 80-85% of U.S. adults have gambled at least once in their lives; 60% in the past year.
 - ▶ Some form of legalized gambling is available in 48 states plus the District of Columbia. The two without legalized gambling are Hawaii and Utah.
- ▶ How widespread is problem gambling in the U.S.?
 - ▶ 2 million (1%) of U.S. adults are estimated to meet criteria for pathological gambling in a given year.
 - ▶ Another 4-6 million (2-3%) would be considered problem gamblers.
 - ▶ They do not meet the full diagnostic criteria for pathological gambling, but meet one or more of the criteria and are experiencing problems due to their gambling behavior.

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Gambling Information

- ▶ The American Gaming Association reports the casino industry generated approximately \$72 billion in gross revenues during the 2003-04 fiscal year.
- ▶ In 2004, gambling became a part of mainstream America through the popularity of televised poker tournaments, fantasy sports, and internet gambling.
- ▶ One of the most popular-selling holiday gift ideas in 2004 was gambling-related merchandise, namely poker chips and home casino games.
- ▶ The Candy Crush series collectively made more than \$1.5 billion in revenue from micro-transactions in 2018 (\$4.2 million per day).

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Gambling Relative to Other Conditions

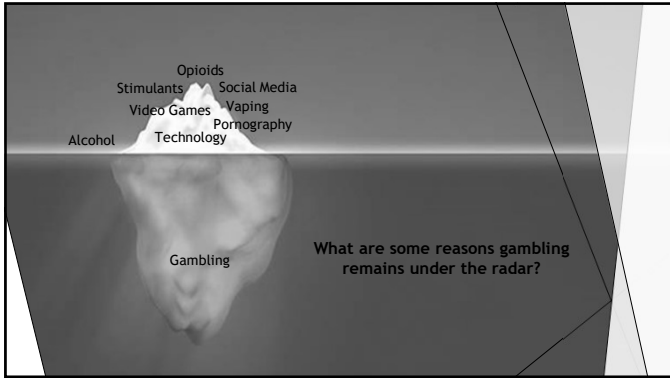
- ▶ Dice were found in an Egyptian tomb dated from approximately 3000 B.C.
 - ▶ Fermented beverages existed in early Egyptian civilization.
 - ▶ Early alcoholic drink in China around 7000 B.C.
- ▶ 80-85% of the adult population have reported gambling at some point in their life; 60% in the last year.
 - ▶ According to 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 86.3% of adults reported they drank alcohol at some point in their life and 70.0% in the last year.
- ▶ Problem/Pathological gambling combined is estimated to compromise approximately 1-3% of the general population.
 - ▶ Bipolar and Schizophrenia have a similar prevalence rate.
- ▶ Despite this, problem/pathological gamblers are often not recognized in general mental health treatment.

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What are some of the addiction epidemics you have heard of in the last few years?

Where is gambling in today's world of addictions?

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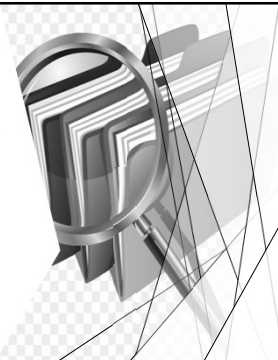
Reasons Why Gambling Remains Hidden

- Few individuals seek gambling treatment.
- No easy indicators for recent gambling.
- Gambling can be an isolating issue.
- Gambling is seen as a social/cultural activity.
- Lack of training/education on gambling and gambling-related issues/concerns.
- Prioritizing treatment can be difficult; mental health, alcohol/drug use, legal issues, marital problems, interpersonal relationship conflicts, family dysfunction, employment concerns, etc.
- Other addictions grab headlines and attention.
- Technology blurs how gambling is defined.

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Case Study

- ▶ 32-year-old male presenting for treatment for opioid use.
- ▶ Interested in medicated-assisted treatment to stop using heroin.
- ▶ Tested positive upon admission for opioids, cocaine, amphetamines, and marijuana.
- ▶ Self-reports having depression, anxiety, and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
- ▶ Not currently taking any prescribed medications and is not seeing any mental health provider.
- ▶ Currently unemployed and trying to obtain disability for mental health and back pain.
- ▶ Interests include going for walks, drawing, and reading. Lives with his grandparents after both his parents died unexpectedly when he was in his late 20s.



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Exploring Beliefs About Gambling as an Individual and a Professional

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- ### Reflect on the Following...
- ▶ How do I **define** gambling?
 - ▶ What do I believe is considered to be a **gambling-related activity**?
 - ▶ How **often** do I ask about gambling in sessions?
 - ▶ How **comfortable** am I asking about, or addressing, gambling with clients and patients?
 - ▶ What **knowledge, education, or training** do I have about problem/pathological gambling?
 - ▶ Do we ask about gambling during the **assessment or intake**?

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- ### Reflections, cont...
- ▶ How do I **treat**, or work with, a client who self-identifies as having a problem with gambling?
 - ▶ If the individual says they do gamble, how much further do I **explore** it in session?
 - ▶ Where do I rank gambling as far as **treatment priorities**?
 - ▶ What **impact** does gambling have on other disorders, such as substance use and mental health?
 - ▶ What **resources** do I have for someone who identifies with having a gambling problem?

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Defining Gambling

- ▶ The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) defines gambling as, "risking something of value, usually money, on the outcome of an event decided at least partially by chance."
- ▶ How can the definition of gambling be complicated?



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Why is it important for a helping professional to know about gambling?

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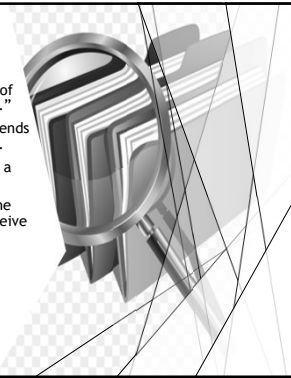
The Importance of Helping Professionals Being Aware of Gambling

- ▶ People with a gambling problem are **less likely** to seek treatment for that specific issue, or to self-identify in session.
- ▶ If they do seek helping services, it is more likely because of **other issues** associated with problem gambling, like marital conflict or financial problems.
- ▶ The presence, or issue, of gambling may come up while **treating or addressing other issues** (such as substance use, mental health, etc.).
- ▶ There is a **lack** of gambling resources and professionals in the area.
- ▶ The **implications and consequences** of gambling on addiction and mental health.
- ▶ The **convergence** of gambling-gaming-technology is making it difficult to identify them as separate issues.

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Case Study

- ▶ 45-year-old female seeking counseling because of concerns regarding "spending money on a game."
- ▶ Reports that she doesn't "really gamble" but spends a lot of time and money on a smart-phone game.
- ▶ The game is a slot machine where you are given a certain amount of "tokens."
- ▶ If you lose all your tokens, more are available the next day for free or you can spend money to receive more tokens immediately.
- ▶ You cannot exchange your winnings for actual money.
- ▶ Has spent \$50,000 on in-game purchases.
- ▶ Embezzled money from own private practice to cover costs.



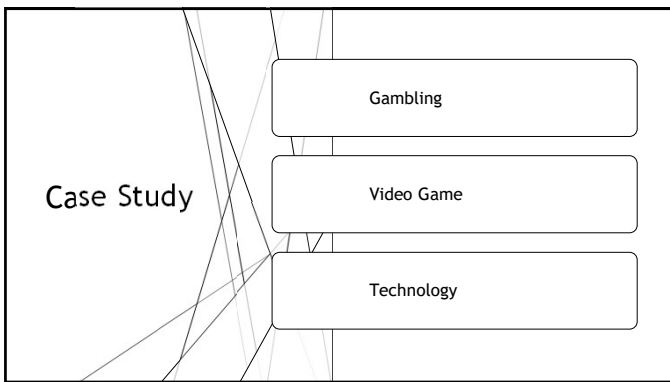
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Case Study

Gambling

Video Game


Technology



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The Future of Gambling

- ▶ **Video Game Gambling: The Next Big Thing for Online Casinos?**
 - ▶ Imagine playing Mario Kart, but instead of playing to complete a level or compete with friends, you're playing for a high score to win money.
 - ▶ As an alternative to chance-based games like slots, these skill-based video games create a hybrid between gaming and gambling by rewarding skill rather than luck.
 - ▶ What kind of implications does this potentially have?



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Gambling + Gaming = Gamebling?



Gambling and Video Games



Gambling on Video Gaming Events




Online Fantasy Betting on Video Games

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Social media copies gambling methods 'to create psychological cravings'

Methods activate 'same brain mechanisms as cocaine' and leads to users experiencing 'phantom' notification buzzing, experts warn

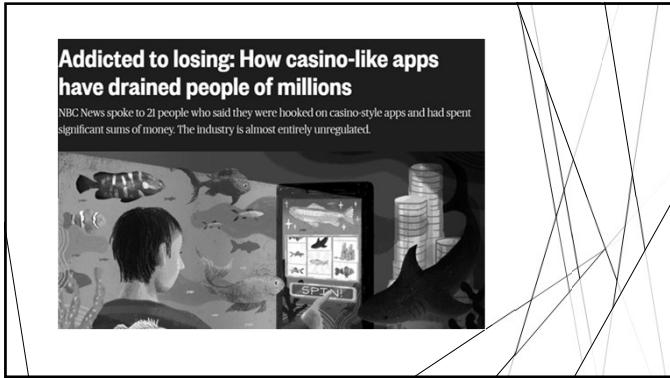


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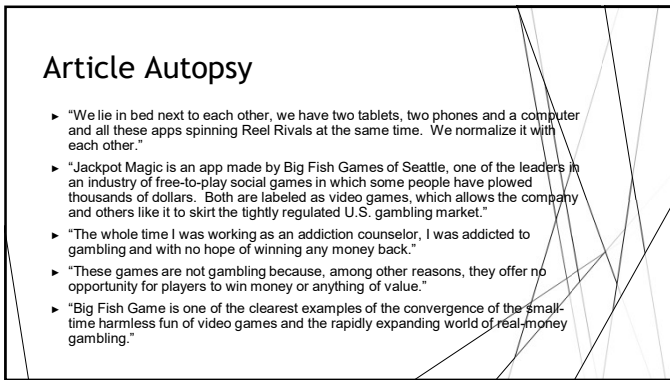
Article Autopsy

- ▶ "These methods are so effective they can activate similar mechanisms as cocaine in the brain, create psychological cravings and even invoke **phantom calls and notifications** where users sense the buzz of a smartphone, even when it isn't really there."
- ▶ "Facebook, Twitter and other companies use methods similar to gambling industry to keep users on their sites."
- ▶ "Whether it's Snapchat streaks, Facebook photo-scrolling, or playing CandyCrush, you get drawn into **ludic loops** or repeated cycles of uncertainty, anticipation, and feedback."
- ▶ "We have to start recognizing the costs of time spent on social media. It's not just a game."
- ▶ "Like gambling, which physically alters the brain's structure and makes people more susceptible to depression and anxiety, social media use has been linked to depression and its potential to have an adverse psychological impact on users cannot be overlooked or underestimated."

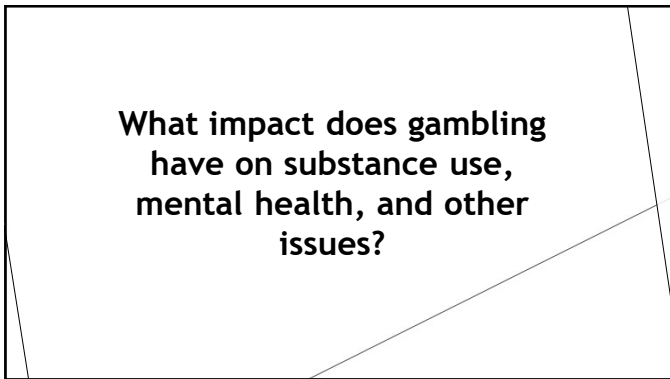
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Impact of Gambling

- ▶ Studies show gambling alters neurobiological processes (affect responses to reward, impulsivity, learning, and self-control).
- ▶ Sleep deprivation is a common consequence of gambling. One study reports an average of 32 hours of sleep were lost per month due to late gambling and the average number of hours of sleep lost to gambling was 69 hours per month.
- ▶ Chronic stress can lead to hypertension, cardiovascular disease, peptic ulcer disease, and exacerbation of baseline medical problems.

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Impact of Gambling

- ▶ Pathological gambling can directly trigger or worsen symptoms of depression, general anxiety, obsessions, and personality disorders.
- ▶ Escalating symptoms of hopelessness, guilt, shame, and desperation.
- ▶ Increased rate of suicidal ideation and attempts:
 - ▶ 17-24% of pathological gamblers will attempt suicide during their lives.
 - ▶ Close to 80% of gamblers calling a helpline reported feeling suicidal at the time of calling.

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Impact of Gambling

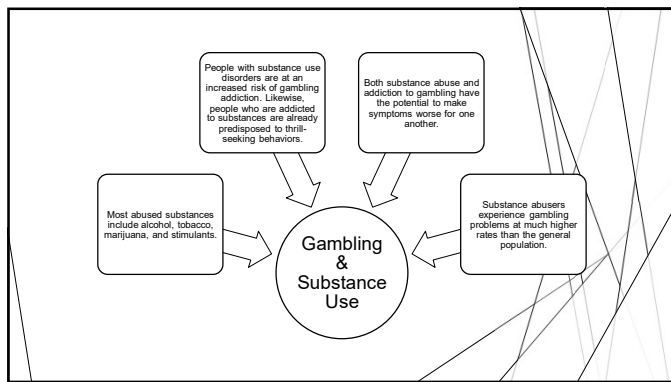
- ▶ Defense mechanisms: avoidance, acting out, rationalization, denial, minimization, and intellectualization.
- ▶ Study suggests problem gamblers negatively affect 10 to 17 people who are significant in their lives.
- ▶ Researchers have estimated close to 30-40% white-collar crimes are tied to problem/pathological gambling in some way.

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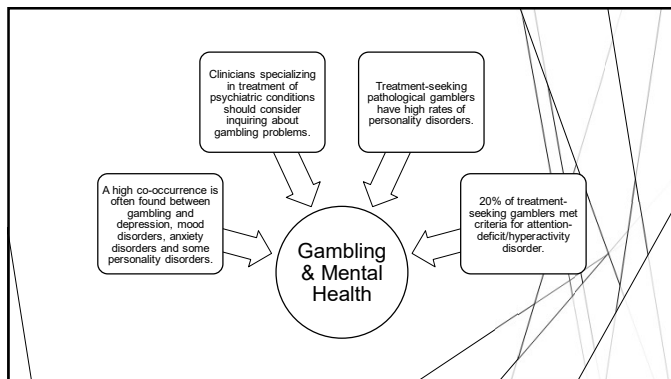
Impact of Gambling

- ▶ Problem/pathological gamblers have higher rates of bankruptcy. 1 in 5 are more likely to use loan sharks and illegal tactics to fund gambling.
- ▶ Average debt of pathological gamblers is close to \$40,000.
- ▶ Problem/pathological gamblers have higher rates of divorce (53.5%) and higher rates of spousal and child abuse.
- ▶ Past-year job loss rates have been reported to be twice as high in problem/pathological gamblers.

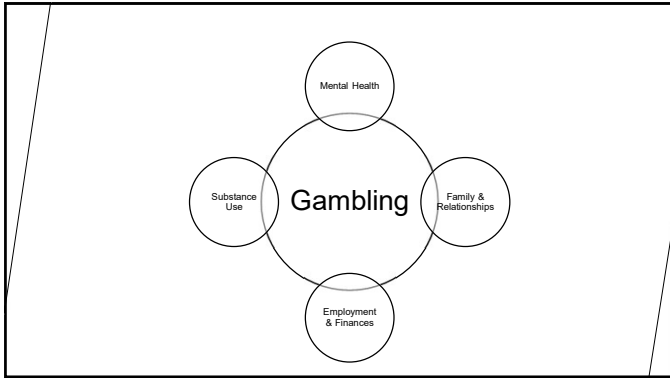
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Populations to Pay Attention to for Gambling

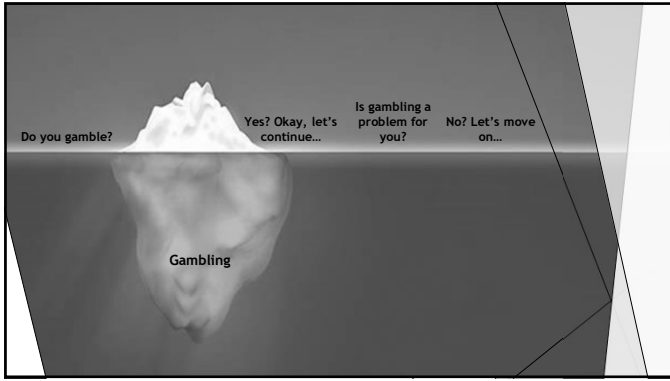
- ▶ Substance Use
- ▶ Mental Health
- ▶ Older Adults
- ▶ Younger Age
- ▶ Ethnic Minority Status
- ▶ Lower Socioeconomic Standing
- ▶ Employee Assistance Programs
- ▶ Communities in Proximity to Gambling Facilities

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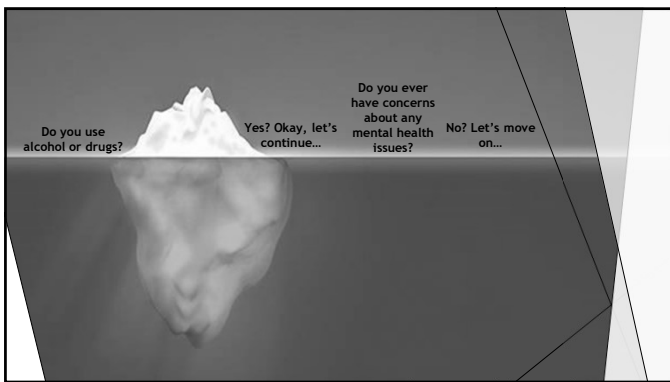
Intakes & Interviews

- ▶ How many of you inquire about anything related to gambling during your intake process or diagnostic interview?
 - ▶ No - why don't you?
 - ▶ Yes - what do you ask?
- ▶ How do you respond to:
 - ▶ Yes, I do gamble.
 - ▶ No, I don't gamble.

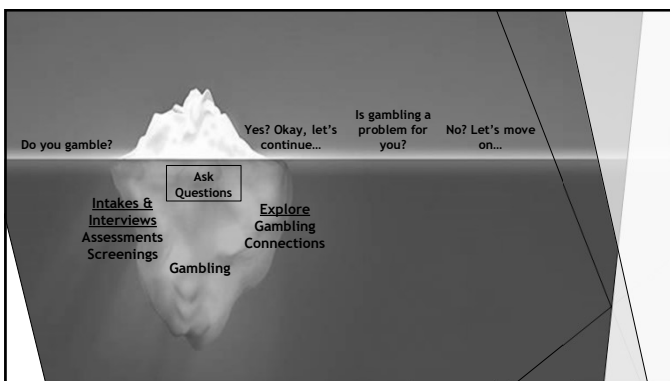
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Intakes & Interviews

<p>Substance Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Do you consume alcohol? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How much? ▶ How often? ▶ Last time? ▶ Do you use any of the following drugs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ask about all drugs. ▶ Have you ever received treatment? ▶ Has anyone ever expressed concern over your AODA? ▶ Have you felt the need to cut back? ▶ Have you used more than you intended to? 	<p>Mental Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Have you ever been treated for any psychological or emotional problems? ▶ Have you had any significant periods of time where you experienced... (depression, anxiety, etc.)? ▶ Have you ever experienced serious thoughts of suicide or attempted suicide? ▶ Have you ever been prescribed medication for any psychological or emotional problems? 	<p>Gambling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Do you gamble? ▶ Have you ever had any problems with gambling?
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Different Kinds of Gambling

- CASINO-STYLE CARD GAMES (POKER)
- DICE GAMES (CRAPS)
- ELECTRONIC GAMES (SLOTS)
- BETTING ON SPORTING EVENTS
- LOTTERY TICKETS, SCRATCH OFFS & PULL TABS
- BINGO (EX: CHURCH)
- 50/50 RAFFLE TICKETS (EX: SPORTING EVENTS)
- ONLINE GAMBLING OR GAMBLING-RELATED GAMES ON A SMARTPHONE OR TABLET DEVICE?

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Explore Gambling

- ▶ Alcohol & Drug Use:
 - ▶ Anything else you believe you have a problem or addiction with besides alcohol and drugs? Sex, pornography, gambling, technology, video games, etc.?
 - ▶ Are there any other behaviors or activities you engage in that coincide with drug use?
- ▶ Mental Health:
 - ▶ What happens when you experience really low or high moods?
- ▶ Leisure Activities/Hobbies:
 - ▶ What do you do with your free-time?
 - ▶ What kinds of activities and hobbies do you, or did you, like to engage in?

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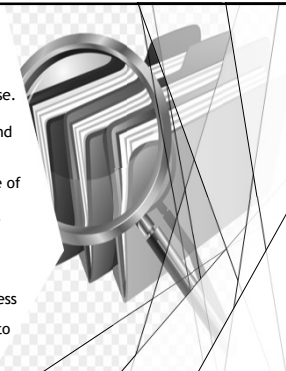
Explore

- ▶ Activities with Parents, Family Members & Peers:
 - ▶ What activities do you engage in with family members and peers?
 - ▶ Now, and during your childhood/growing up?
- ▶ Finances:
 - ▶ Besides spending money on alcohol and drugs, was there anything else you spent money on that caused problems or may have hurt when it comes to your finances?
- ▶ Interpersonal Relationships:
 - ▶ Are there any other issues or behaviors that caused arguments or disagreements in your relationships?

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Case Study

- ▶ 28-year-old male in treatment for substance use.
- ▶ Reports using heroin, prescription opiates, benzodiazepines, stimulants (amphetamines and cocaine), and marijuana.
- ▶ Works as a roofer; and often reports concerns over finances when winter approaches because of being laid off.
- ▶ Currently involved in WCS and has to complete day reporting and groups.
- ▶ Reports most of his family also uses drugs.
- ▶ Lives with his mother and girlfriend.
- ▶ Comes into session talking about feeling hopeless because his mother is asking him to move out immediately, and he doesn't have any money to pay for a place to live.



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“Playing the lottery isn’t helping either.”

What do you do?



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Case Study Breakdown

- ▶ Own Beliefs: How do I feel about playing the lottery?
 - ▶ My own experience with the lottery.
 - ▶ That experience could have easily led to a dismal of gambling as a concern or issue.
- ▶ Any red flags about gambling and this particular client?
 - ▶ Stated, "playing the lottery isn't happening."
 - ▶ Money problems
 - ▶ Job could be laid off any moment due to the weather.
 - ▶ Does not have enough money to move out.
 - ▶ Substance Use
 - ▶ In particular, stimulants (cocaine and amphetamines)
 - ▶ Mental Health Issues
 - ▶ Feels hopeless at times

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Case Study Breakdown

- ▶ Came back in for next session.
- ▶ Briefly completed a check-in since our last one.
- ▶ Decided to explore gambling:
 - ▶ Counselor: "Right before our last session concluded you mentioned how the lottery wasn't helping. I wanted to follow-up a little bit on that because I know your financial situation is causing a lot of distress recently. What did you mean by that?"
 - ▶ Client: "I'm just losing a lot to the lottery, and it's not paying off."
 - ▶ Counselor: "When you say a lot, how much would you estimate you've lost on the lottery?"
 - ▶ Client: "Just on the lottery?"
 - ▶ Counselor: "We can start there, but by your statement I'm guessing there are some other types of gambling you participate in?"

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What did you mean by that?

How much have you lost? Other types?

Have you ever lied about gambling? Do you ever return or go back to try and win from previous gambling?

Gambling

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Gambling Use Disorder

- A. Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money to achieve the desired excitement. ✓
- B. Restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling. ✓
- C. Repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling. ✓
- D. Often preoccupied with gambling (e.g., persistent thoughts of reliving past gambling experiences, planning the next venture, thinking of ways to get more money to gamble). ✓
- E. Often gambles when feeling distressed (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed).
- F. After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even ("chasing" one's losses). ✓
- G. Lies to conceal the extent of gambling. ✓
- H. Jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling. ✓
- I. Relies on others to provide money to relieve desperate financial situations caused by gambling. ✓

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Ways to Bring Gambling into the Light

- ▶ Assessments & Intakes
- ▶ Explore in sessions the role/impact of gambling
- ▶ Training & Education
- ▶ Become Certified
- ▶ Supervision
- ▶ Discussing gambling concerns/issues in current supervision
- ▶ Article Autopsies
- ▶ Pay attention to when gambling is identified in other areas.

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Article Autopsies

- ▶ "Police officer sent to rehab for doing scratch-off lottery tickets on duty, lawsuit claims."
- ▶ "Professional poker player pleads guilty to fraud, embezzling \$22M and using most of it for crypto trading."
- ▶ "Two Catholic school nuns accused of embezzling about a half-million dollars on gambling trips."
- ▶ "Saudi Prince lost more than \$350M, gives wives in gambling at Egypt's casino."
- ▶ "The Knicks were roasted by fans when a fan hit a half-court shot was rewarded with \$1,000 in scratch-off lottery tickets."

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Learn More About Gambling

- Textbooks
- Research
- Journals & Magazines
- Books & Films

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Gambling Resources and Referrals

- ▶ National Council on Problem Gambling <https://www.ncpgambling.org/>
- ▶ Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling <https://wi-problemgamblers.org/>
- ▶ Gambling Treatment Providers WI <https://wi-problemgamblers.org/resources/gambling-treatment-providers>
- ▶ Gamblers Anonymous Meetings <https://www.gamblersanonymous.org>
- ▶ Gam-Anon Meetings <https://www.gam-anon.org>
- ▶ 1-800-GAMBLE-5 (WCPG Hotline)
- ▶ 1-800-522-4700 (NCPG Hotline)

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Conclusion

- ▶ Gambling is not new and is not going away. Participating in it is common, and to some people, it can destroy their lives.
- ▶ Gambling has greater potential to impact people already experiencing issues with substance use and mental health.
- ▶ Advancements in technology and innovation are making gambling more difficult to identify; it is already leading to hybrid gambling-gaming related activities.
- ▶ Professionals need to look into their personal and professional beliefs about gambling and the impact it may have on their clients.
- ▶ Asking questions during intakes and exploring gambling in sessions will help identify individuals showing signs of problem and gambling use disorders.

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Conclusion

- ▶ Having feelings of sadness does not automatically equate to a mental health disorder.
- ▶ The use of alcohol or drugs does not automatically equate to a substance use disorder.
- ▶ Engaging in gambling does not automatically equate to a gambling use disorder.
- ▶ For many people they will be able to manage their feelings, limit their alcohol or drug use, and control their gambling.
- ▶ However; individuals who do have mental health, substance use, and gambling use disorders need help because without it their lives can become devastated.
- ▶ The co-occurrence of these or combination of symptoms interacting can lead to even greater consequences and impact.
- ▶ Professionals have a responsibility to make gambling awareness part of their routine with other important issues (such as substance use, mental health, and trauma).

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Conclusion

- ▶ Any Questions?
- ▶ Contact Information
 - ▶ New Life Resources
 - ▶ andrewschreiernlr@gmail.com
 - ▶ Waukesha Comprehensive Treatment Center
 - ▶ andrew.schreier@ctcprograms.com



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