



Starting the Conversation:

Integrating Gambling Treatment and Drug Court

October 16, 2017

Disordered Gambling Court – N.Y.

- Original model: Gambling Treatment Court, Amherst, NY founded in 2001
 - Designed and structured to follow the Drug Court model
 - The only one of its kind in the United States
 - Created by Judge Mark G. Farrell

“We’re creating early intervention.”

-- Judge Farrell



Disordered Gambling Track in Drug Court Pierce County

Public/Private Partnership

- Pierce County Superior Court
 - Drug Court(s)
 - Family Court
- Pierce County Alliance
- Department of Justice
- Lakewood City Police
- Puyallup Tribe of Indians
- Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling

Goals

- Increase knowledge and understanding of issues related to problem gambling
- Equip the legal community to better serve people struggling with gambling issues
- Encourage the coordination of services (legal, mental health, public)
- Provide access to referral and information to reduce impacts of problem gambling



Skepticism to Mandate!

- Trying to bring a stand-alone Problem Gambling Court to Washington proved impossible during times of budget deficits.
- The Judge in Pierce County Drug Court agreed to have all current participants assessed using the NODS and SOGS.
- **More than 20%**, of those entering Felony Drug Court, were assessed as problem or pathological gamblers. (DSM-IV)
- Originally, the problem gambling track was “Opt-In”
- In 2012, the Presiding Judge, together with Prosecuting and Defense Counsel, determined that the success of the program indicated that assessments would be a regular procedure and those who met clinical criteria for Disordered Gambling, would be mandated to be in the program.



What is Disordered Gambling?

- Problem Gambling, Compulsive Gambling, Disordered Gambling... what's in a name?
- Problem gambling is any pattern of gambling behavior that compromises, disrupts, or damages family, personal, or vocational pursuits.
- A problem gambler is anyone whose gambling is causing psychological, financial, emotional, marital, legal, or other difficulties for themselves or the people around them.
- Problem gambling affects between 2%-4% of the adult population.



Social vs. Disordered Gambling

- Occasional gambler
- Sticks to limits of money/budget
- Hopes to win but expects to lose – understands the advantage is with the house
- Can take it or leave it – it's entertainment
- Frequent gambling or spends more and more time gambling
- Plays with money that is “borrowed”
- Expects to win; keeps playing to win back losses
- “Life” revolves around gambling

SOCIAL GAMBLING

DISORDERED GAMBLING



Disordered Gambling and Other Disorders

With DG, comorbidity is the rule, not the exception

- ~75% have a history of an alcohol use d/o
- ~40% have a history of a substance use d/o
- ~60% have a history of nicotine dependence
- ~50% have a history of a mood disorder
- ~40% have a history of an anxiety disorder
- ~60% have a history of a personality disorder

Petry et al. (2005)



Gambling and Suicide

Of 374 problem gamblers in publicly funded treatment in Washington State, 50 had suicidal thoughts, and more than 6% had attempted suicide. (2013)



Addiction: Gambling vs. Substances

- Loss of control
- Denial
- Depression
- Progressive/Tolerance
- Chasing
- Blackouts
- Escape
- Similar Highs
- Brain effects
- Hidden addiction
- No “overdose”
- Huge financial problems—often quickly
- No “UA” test
- Doesn’t require ingestion
- Fewer resources available
- Public perception
- Higher rates of suicide attempts

SIMILARITIES

DIFFERENCES



Gambling Facts

- About 75%-86% of all adults in the U.S. gamble at one time or another. [94% in Washington]
- Legal gambling in the U.S. is a more than \$100 billion industry.
- Gambling is legal in all states but Hawaii and Utah.
- In U.S., 47 jurisdictions (44 States and D.C., Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands) run lotteries.
- 6 states have river boats.
- 36 states and Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands have casino gambling.



Who is at Risk?

- Young People
- Aging Adults
- Service Men and Women and their Families
- Casino workers
- People with Mental Health disorders.

Gambling and our Youth

- Early onset of gambling behavior is a huge risk factor – those who start by age 12 are 4 times more likely to develop a problem and average age of exposure is 10
- Estimates put 2-4% of adult population with gambling disorder; up to 8% youth
- Nearly 3,000 students reported that gambling had caused them problems, at home, at school or with their friends in the 2012 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey (8.7%).
- Some have “natural recovery” that is to say, they age out.
- Gambling can increase risk of alcohol or other drug use.



Seniors and Gambling

- More than half of visitors to casinos are over 50 years of age.
- Seniors often name gambling as their favorite form of entertainment
- Older women are at a higher risk (“telescoping” of addiction)
- Efforts to intervene can be seen as interfering with their independence
- University of Pennsylvania study showed more than 1 out of 10 people over the age of 65 are at risk of financial problems because of gambling
- Dementia affects frontal lobe of brain, which not only lowers inhibitions, but blunts responses, making the highs not as high and the lows not as low
- Seniors have few options to earn back money lost



Gambling and the Military

- Higher rates of PG among both active-duty and veterans (6-8%)
- Approx. 36,000 active duty members meet criteria now
- At least 3,000 slot machines are available overseas on base
- Legal to play at age 18
- These slots generate more than \$100,000,000 in profits
- **None of these profits or any DoD funds are directed to programs to prevent or treat gambling disorder**

Source: NCPG



Slots at Ramstein AFB Officer's Club



Gambling and the Military

- Slot machines on military installations since the 1930's
- Removed from CONUS installations 1951
- Renewed interested as revenue generators for Welfare and Recreational Funds/Activities in 1960's
- Removed from Army & Air Force bases 1972 after illegal activities but brought back in 1980
- Approximately 4,150 video slot on installations in nine countries
- Some estimates put revenue from slots at approximately \$120 million and others put the handle at nearly \$2 billion

Thomas L. Moore PhD 2008



Gambling and the Military

- Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety tend to have more gambling addiction problems.
- Unemployment seemed to play a major role in whether the veteran had gambling addictions, and married veterans were more likely to have gambling addictions.
- Younger veterans (20s) were more likely to be diagnosed as pathological gamblers.
- While there are plentiful opportunities for veterans and enlisted personnel to gamble in the United States and overseas, many members of the military do not have access to treatment for gambling problems; a 2008 study cited only three programs.

Larry Ashley, UNLV for NAADAC DoD and VA Medical Systems presentation based on The Veterans Administration Health Services Research & Development study in 2011

(<http://www.citizenlink.com/2011/05/26/military-gambling-addiction-twice-as-high/>) (Veterans and Problem Gambling: A review of Literature, Emshoff, 2010).

19Wachter, K. (2008, August). Treating Gambling difficult in Military. *Clinical Psychiatry News*, 32a-34b.

Rates and Correlates of Pathological Gambling Among VA Mental Health Service Users Ellen L. Edens • Robert A. Rosenheck J Gambling Studies



Legal/Social Impact



Non-Gamblers

- 4.8% had lost job in past year
- 21% reported poor health
- 7% arrested in past year
- 0.4% lifetime incarceration

Pathological Gamblers

- 25% had lost job in past year
- 29.6% reported poor health
- 26.4% arrested in past year
- 21.4% lifetime incarceration

Crime and Gambling

- Fraud
- Bouncing checks repeatedly
- Theft from employer (money, services or goods, lottery tickets)
- Bookmaking
- Co-morbidity related drug/alcohol offenses
- Theft from family (money, opening credit cards without their knowledge)
- Leaving children at home without supervision
- Leaving children in car
- Drug sales



Source: California Council on Problem Gambling

Crime and Gambling

- 75% of non-incarcerated/ 97% of incarcerated gamblers report engaging in illegal activities to finance gambling.
[Lesieur, 1992]
- More than 1/3 of pathological gamblers report stealing from their employer [Ladouceur et. al. 1994]
- Majority of gambling-related crimes are non-violent (theft, embezzlement, forgery, fencing stolen goods, insurance fraud, bookmaking) [<http://www.gameplanit.com>]

Studies Show Brain Effects Similar to Substance Abuse



Similar to Meth

“Pathological Gamblers Demonstrate Frontal Lobe Impairment Consistent with that of Methamphetamine-Dependent Individuals,” Kalechstein, Fong, Rosenthal, Davis, Vanyo, Newton (2007): Journal of Neuropsychiatry & Neurosciences



Similar to Cocaine

“Functional imaging of neural responses to expectancy and experience of monetary gains and losses,” Breiter, Aharon, Kahneman, Dale, Shizgal (2001): Neuron, 30(2) 619-639



Substance Use Disorders

- U.S. Pop. With Past Year Problem ¹

20.8 Million
7.8%²

- 2016 Public Funds Invested into SUD Treatment⁵

\$24.4 Billion
\$14.7 B Federal
\$9.7 B State

Gambling Disorders

- U.S. Pop. With Past Year Problem ³

2.2%⁴

5.45 Million
(3.8 times smaller)

- 2016 Public Funds Invested into Problem Gambling Services⁶

\$73.0 Million
(334 times smaller)
\$0 Federal
\$73 M State

Adding a Problem Gambling Track

- Why should all Drug Courts have a Problem Gambling Track?
 - Disordered Gambling is a process addiction, often occurring along with substance use or mental health problems.
 - Therapeutic courts work! They focus on addressing the underlying issues related to the behaviors that led to legal consequences.



How Does it Work?

Roles

- **The Court:** To ensure individual rights are being protected while holding participants accountable through disciplinary interventions.
- **Council on Problem Gambling:** To ensure that training, certification and credentialing is available for treatment providers. Secure original funding for 3-year period.

Roles

- **Treatment Agency:** To educate and counsel individuals and motivate them to higher stages of change with goal of attaining long-term healthy recovery. To communicate with the courts regarding compliance.

Everyone plays an integral part in the program. Every role is needed to maximize the chances of successful treatment and recovery.

--Pierce County Drug Court Judge

Challenges

- **Primary challenge:** developing a process to address gambling in parallel with a well-established substance use disorder and mental health treatment regimen.
- **Expanding the “therapeutic team” to include gambling counselors**
- Education of the Drug Court team members on what constitutes Disordered Gambling while gaining their insight and support in undertaking additional issues in a manner that supports each individual client’s long-term recovery.



Challenges

- Recruitment of clients with a gambling problem.
 - Many clients are reluctant to “sign on” to a treatment regimen of a year or more.
- Counselors needed time in sessions to help clients see for themselves that their gambling issues might be integral to their substance use issues.



Milestones and Successes

- Integrated gambling treatment with Drug Court – October 2012
- Proactive cooperation between government, industry, service providers, Council on Problem Gambling
- Assess clients for gambling (SOGS and NODS) – scores become part of the 1st court report for every client.
- Problem gambling training for court and treatment staff (ongoing)
- Adapting for new methods – new formats for court reports to include gambling.
- Regular dockets in Drug Court dedicated to those in problem gambling track.



How Do I Become a Certified Problem Gambling Counselor?

- **Criteria for Problem Gambling Certification** (See full certification packet at www.evergreencpg.org)
 - Current certificate or license issued by the State of Washington to provide mental health or chemical dependency treatment services...
 - Bachelor's Degree or a Bachelor's Equivalency*
 - Associate's Degree and.....
 - 2 years post-CDP Licensure clinical experience to include:
 - Preponderance (minimum of 85%) of duties related to the fields of mental health/addictions/problem gambling treatment.
 - Proof of successfully completed problem gambling-specific training programs/courses (30-hour Introductory Problem Gambling Training AND a minimum of 10 additional hours of face-to-face advanced gambling-related training).
 - 1,500 hours of professionally supervised post-certification or post-licensure experience providing mental health or chemical dependency treatment...
 - Three letters of reference...



Milestones and Successes

I have found that those clients in the Problem Gambling Track appear to move into a high stage of change more quickly and often exhibit accelerated progress in their treatment as a whole.

--Steve Ramey, Problem Gambling Counselor



Thank You!

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