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PG 101

Intro to Gambling
Disorders and
Treatment
Strategies



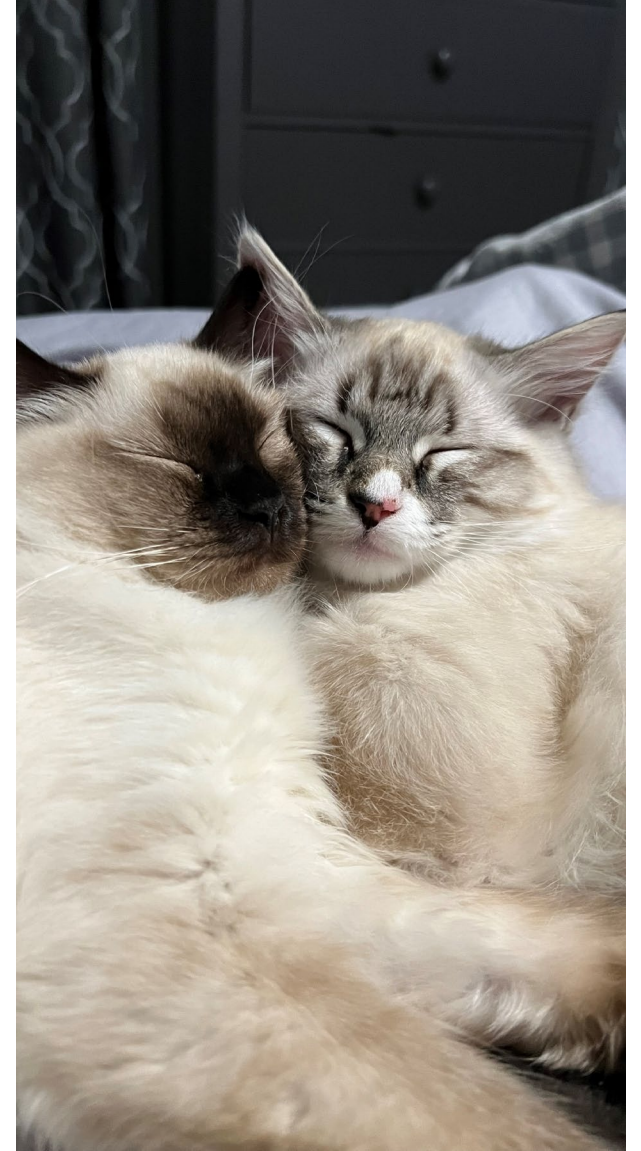
Wheeler

COMMUNITY | HEALTH | CARE



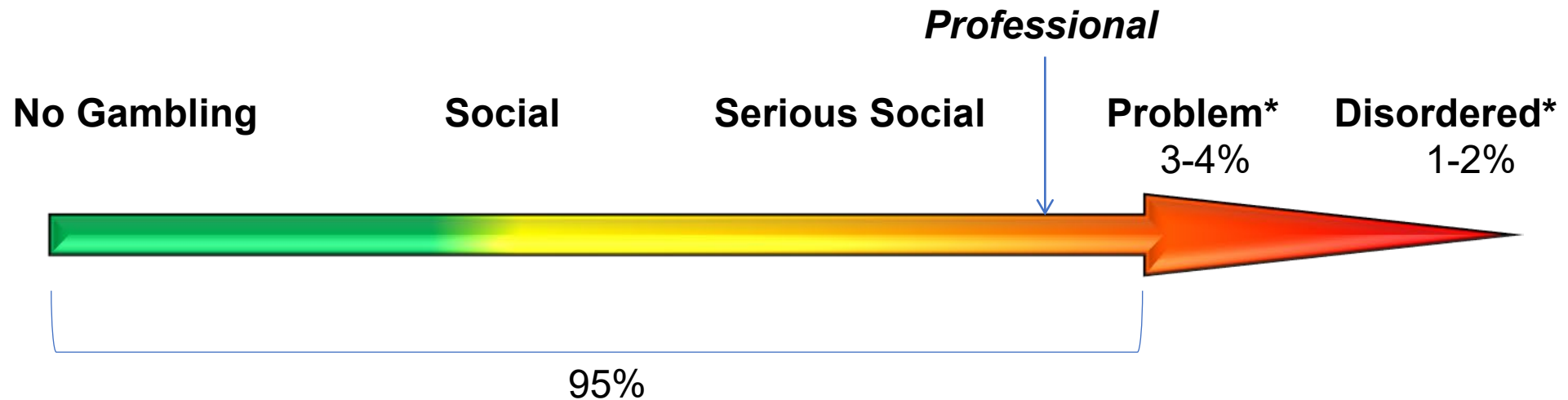
A Little About Me

- 2011 Graduate of the UCONN School of Social Work
- Worked at The Connection Inc. from 2011-2015, therapist for Better Choice
- Adjunct Professor for UCONN SSW from 2014-2018
- Clinical Supervisor, Better Choice
 - LCSW, ICGC-II, BACC
 - EMDR Therapist
 - Acudetox Specialist

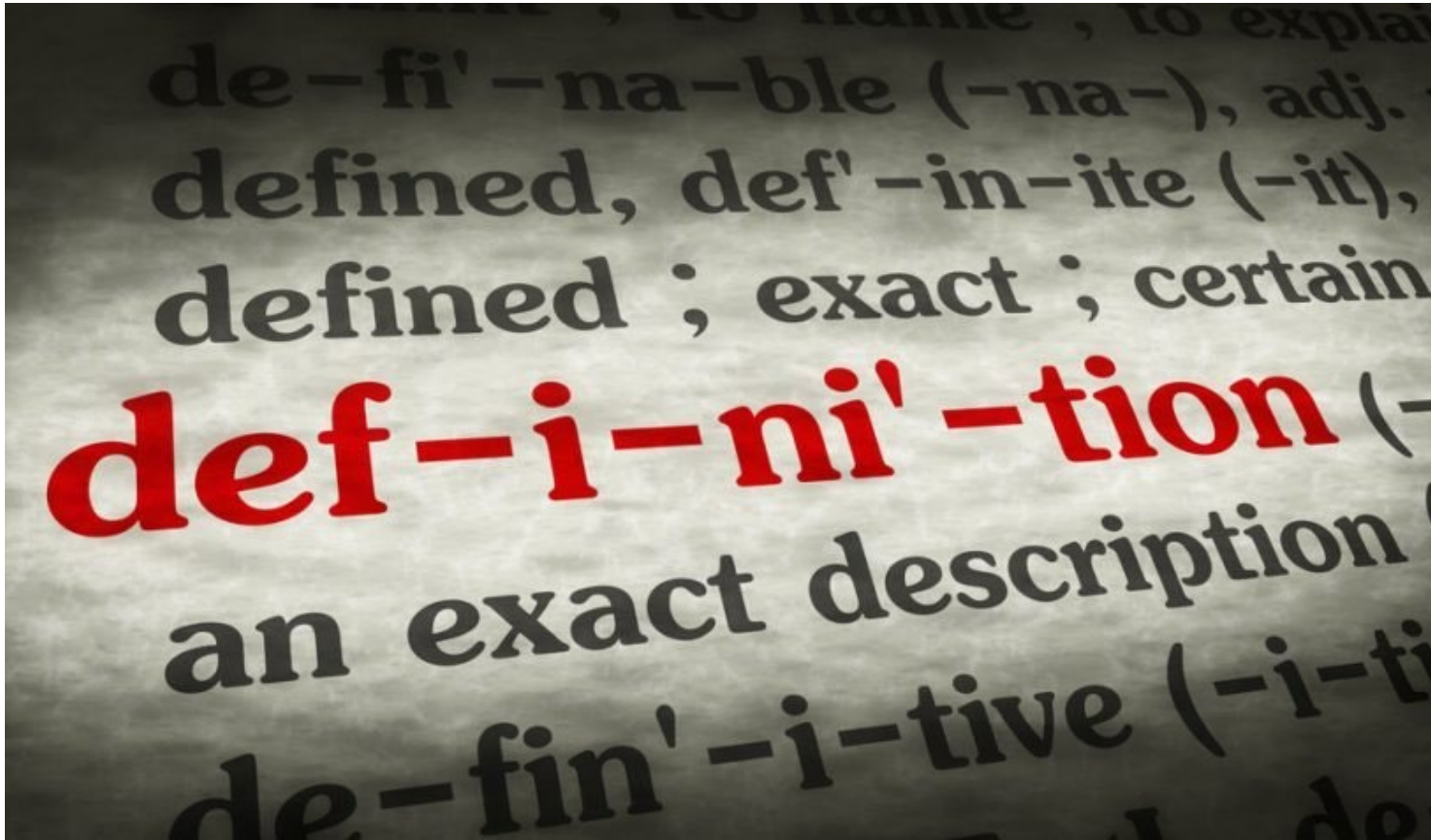


The Gambling Continuum

Is it even a problem?



- ❖ Youth increase 2x's
- ❖ SA/MH increase 10x's
- ❖ DOC population increase 20x's



What Is Gambling?

Gambling: The act of risking something of value, including money and property, on an activity that has an uncertain outcome.

What percentage of CT residence have placed a bet in the last year?

DSM-V Criteria for Gambling Disorder (1-4)

- 1. Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement (Tolerance)**
- 2. Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling (Withdrawal)**
- 3. Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling**
- 4. Is often preoccupied with gambling (e.g., having persistent thoughts of reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble)**



DSM- V Criteria for Gambling Disorder (5-9)

- 5. Often gambles when feeling distressed**
- 6. After losing money gambling, often returns another day in order to get even (chasing loses)**
- 7. Lies to conceal the extent of one's gambling**
- 8. Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling**
- 9. Relies on others to provide money to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by gambling**



Types of Drugs (Uppers, Downers, All-Arounders)- D.O.C.

Alcohol

Marijuana

Cocaine/Crack

Opioids/Opiates

MDMA

PCP

Mushrooms

LSD

Benzodiazepines

Methamphetamines

Amphetamines

Ketamine

Steroids

Rohypnol

Types of Gambling- G.O.C.

Blackjack

Poker

Roulette

Baccarat

Pai Gow

Sports Betting

Fantasy Sports

Lottery

Scratch Tickets

Bingo

OTB – Off
Track Betting

Bracketology

Keno

Craps

Raffles

Stock Market

Charitable
Events (50/50)

Slot Machines

Video Games
(Loot boxes)

Gambling vs Substances

Differences

Similarities

Fantasies of
Success

No biological
test – easier to
hide

Unpredictable
outcome

No saturation
point

More intense
feelings of
shame and guilt

Less tolerance
from public &
judicial systems

Greater financial
problems

Intensity of
family anger

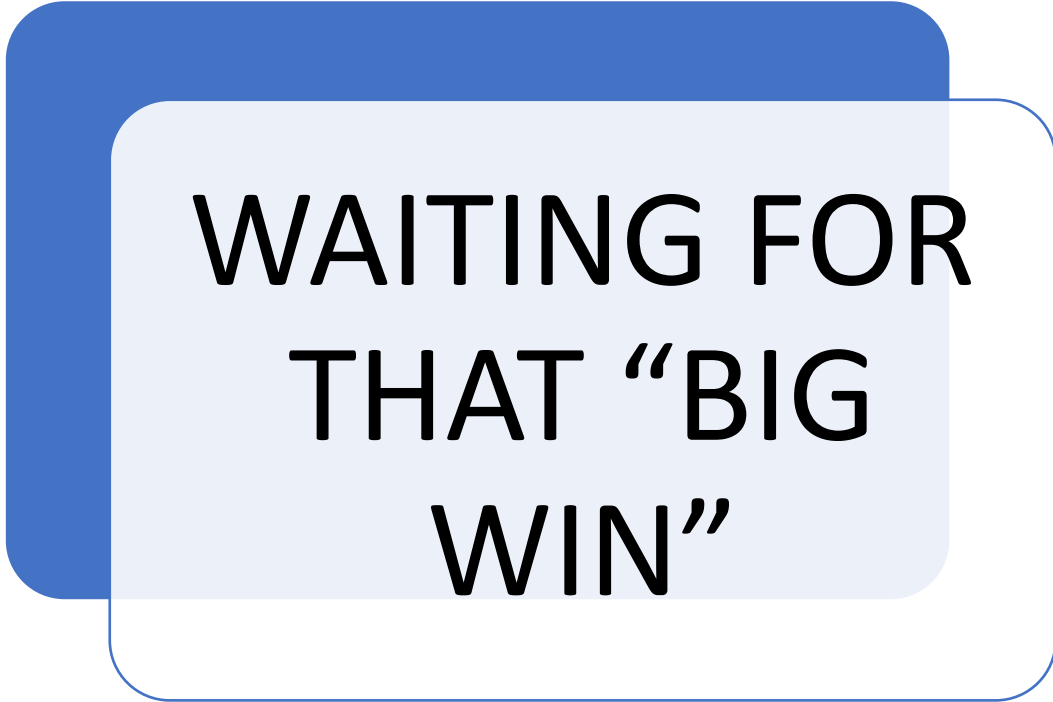
Less public
awareness =
Greater stigma

- Preoccupation
- Loss of Control
- Cravings
- Negative impact on major life areas
- Tolerance
- Withdrawal Symptoms
- Used as form of self-medication
- Self-help groups
- Brain changes

The Problem Is....



**THE
SOLUTION IS
THE PROBLEM**



**WAITING FOR
THAT “BIG
WIN”**

Why Do
People
Gamble?

What is Gambling Really All about?

Maladaptive
Positive Affect

Avoidance



It's not about the money

Positive Adaptive vs Maladaptive Behaviors

- Positive Adaptive- When a person is able to adjust to a situation or experience that leaves them feeling healthy and happy.
- Maladaptive- The opposite. Pattern of behavior that prevents people from adapting to situations. Usually in the form of short term gains and long term consequences.



Why do People Gamble?



WHAT IS THE
DRAW?



LOTTERY – HOPES
AND DREAMS



CASINO –
LIFESTYLE/STATUS



SPORTS BETTING-
CONNECTION

Action Gambling “Augmenters”



- Typically, male
- “Skill-based” games
- Horses, casino card games, sports bettors
- Gambles to feel “alive”/Important
- VIP Status
- Thrill seekers
- About 50% have experienced a big win
- Often started gambling at a young age
- Higher levels of depression
- Negative Cognitions of not being good enough, important enough

Escape Gamblers “Reducers”



- Typically, female
- Gambles to escape stressors or to relieve dysphoric mood
- Escape from trauma or abuse
- Prefers to gamble alone
- Onset is later in life
- Don't need a “big win” to get hooked
- Prefer activities that create a dissociative state
Blaszczynski et. al (1986)
- Higher levels of anxiety

Intermittent Reward System – The Challenge for Gamblers

- Anticipation of Reward is, according to Skinner, “The Most Powerful factor in directing human behavior”.
- Human beings are driven by rewards
- Hidden Brain Podcast- “The Paradox of Pleasure” – We are wired to pursue pleasure and our modern world is full of temptation.



Let's Talk About Money \$\$\$

Money is Triggering in
many ways for Gamblers





Financial Interventions



Financial Interventions- Early States of Treatment

- Know the debts
- Pull credit reports/ Bring in mail or bills
- What options is the client exploring? Bailouts? Bankruptcy?
- Budgeting
- Truelink Visa Card
- MMI – Money Management International
- Trusted Family/Friend
- Financial Advisor

Spending categories

- ☒ ALLOW Grocery stores
- ☒ BLOCK Bars and liquor stores
- ☒ ALLOW Pharmacies
- ☒ BLOCK Online and phone purchases

Access to cash

- ☒ BLOCK Cash-back at time of purchase
- ☒ BLOCK ATM withdrawals

Funding

SVB 1234567891 *****1234 **CONNECTED**

- Scheduled recurring transfers
- Make one-time transfer

Top-line alerts

- ☒ Balance: Alert me when card balance drops below \$ 50
- ☐ Cash: Alert me when cash is used
- ☐ Funding: Alert me when funding is initiated



True Link

4000 1234 5678 9010

GOOD THRU 09/22

ANDREA DAVIS

DEBIT

VISA

True Link

www.truelinkfinancial.com

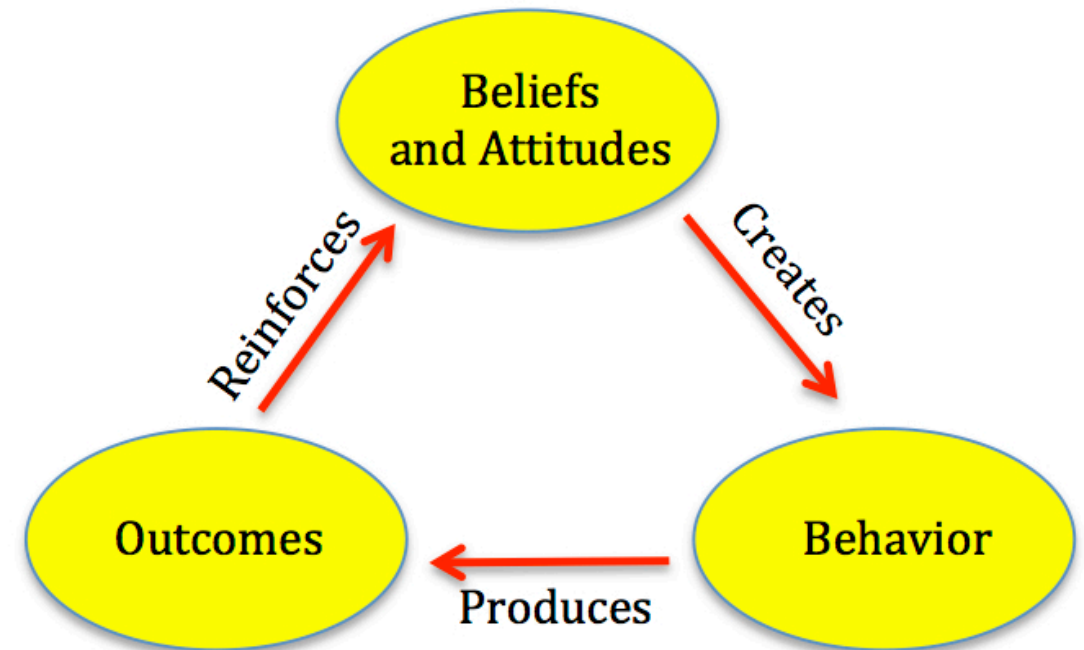


Gambling
Treatment
involves a
LOT of CBT

Cognitive Distortions

Myths

Illusions of Control



Pop Quiz!

Do More People Die from Strokes or
Accidents?



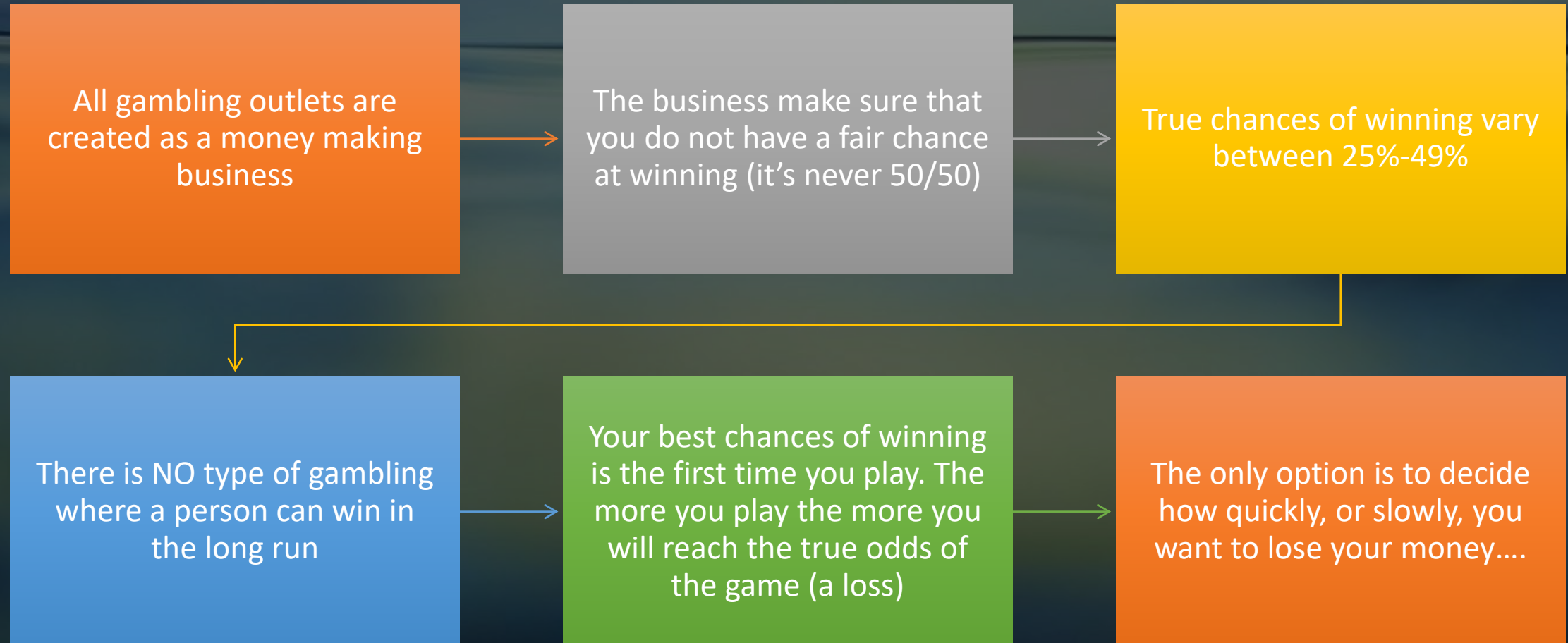
Pop Quiz!

Do More words start with the letter “R” or have “R” as the third letter?

Confusing
Most Often
with Most
Memorable



Law Of Averages & The House Edge



Casino Gambling





Casino, Escape Gambling

- Slots, Bingo
- Anxious, depressed, lonely, isolated, withdrawn
- Clinical Areas of Focus: Mental Health, Life Transitions, Trauma

Action Gamblers

Card Games, Roulette

Impulsivity, hyperactive, aggressive

Clinical focus in treatment

- Self-esteem/self-worth
- Trauma history
- Relationship difficulties

Casino Gamblers: Assessment of Play

Card Status –
Updated every
April and October

Slot/Free Play
Amounts
(Giveaways)

Win/Loss
statements

Number of Points
earned (\$80 bet =
1 point)



Casino Gamblers: Early Interventions

VSE – Voluntary Self Exclusion

- Know your casino
- MA – GameSense Center or Designated Agent (1yr, 3yr, 5yr, Lifetime)
- RI – Present Form to Security Office at Twin Rivers (1yr, 5yr, Lifetime)
- CT- Allow mail in forms that must be notarized (Mohegan – 1yr or 5yrs, Foxwoods – 5yrs or Lifetime)

Debit Card Self Exclusion (NRT and EVERI)

Removal from distribution/mailing lists – reduce triggers

Win/Loss Statements



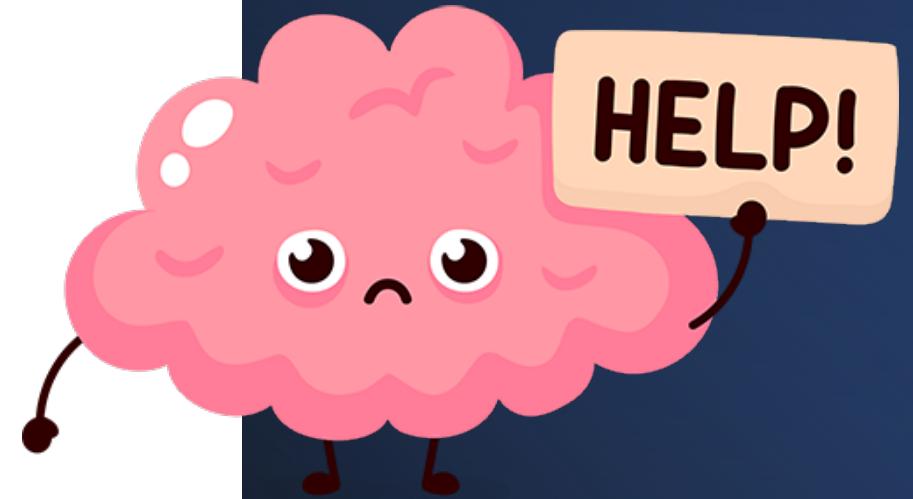
Casino Slots Cognitive Distortions, Myths, and Illusions of Control

- Believing a machine is on a “hot streak”
- Changing bets believing the payout will change
- Stopping the machine while reels are spinning hoping to affect the outcome
- Touching a screen for luck
- Believing certain machines payout more (End machines)
- Believing payout percentages are being altered during live play
- Thinking a machine is “due” to win if it hasn’t payed out in a while
- Any others?



Casino Table Games – Cognitive Distortions, Myths, Illusions of Control

- Choosing a certain table, seat, or dealer based on past experiences
- Changing bets often thinking you are due for a hit
- Observing other hands that are dealt and believing that mastery of a game will equal winning
- Watching the history of the wheel and believing a certain number or color is due to hit next
- Almost hitting your color/number/exact card needed – brain stimulation





Casinos – What IS True

- It is a business and designed to take your money! (Slots are the biggest money maker)
- Law of averages
- Slot machines use Random Number Generators
- Altered Atmosphere to keep you there and keep you playing
 - No windows or clocks
 - Color Schemes
 - Floor layout
 - Sights and smells
 - Slot machines are designed to be comfortable, engaging, and ease of access to losing money

Help Them Learn the Traps. It's Not YOU, It's Them.

- Giveaways/Hotel Rooms
- Casino hosts
- No clocks, windows,
- Clean bathrooms/facilities
- Certain colors/smells
- Design of casinos
- Seen as a “safe place” security and people there to take care of you



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Lottery Gambling

- Any game that is vendor based
(Scratch tickets, Daily Numbers, Keno, Powerball/Megamillions)
- Why do people play the lottery?
 - Fantasy of a big win
 - Escape from MH symptoms and other psychosocial stressors
 - Relief from difficult financial situations
 - Appealing form of gambling
(From a little to a lot very quickly)
 - Seeking validation



Lottery Gambling- Assessment of Play



- How much and how often?
- Denomination of tickets
- Routines in play? (Getting their morning coffee)
- When new games are introduced do they also play those?
- Higher jackpots for draw games = increase in play?

Lottery Games – Early Interventions

Ctlottery.org

Masslottery.com

Rilot.com

Revealing true odds and how games work

Limit access to cash

Changes in routines

Work on MH issues

Explore ways to increase income

Learn budgeting strategies and live within means



Pick One Blade of Grass

You are more likely to die from...

An accident with a vending machine

Falling out of bed

Dying from an asteroid strike

Driving to purchase a lottery ticket

Lottery Gambling- Cognitive Distortions, Myths, and Illusions of Control

- Believing one retailer is luckier than others/having a favorite
- Having a favorite game or favorite numbers
- Believing if there are multiple losing tickets, the next will be a winner
- Believing that all the winning tickets are stacked in the beginning of games
- Choosing family birthdays/anniversaries thinking that will produce winning numbers
- Believing that every time you don't play your numbers they hit
- Following perceived patterns in numbers



Sports Betting

Baseball, basketball, football, soccer, hockey, golf, Fantasy sports, Horses (OTB), Boxing

Sports Betting

Clinical areas of Focus

- Typically younger males (except horses)
- Former athletes – grief
- Dissatisfied with current life circumstances
- Low self-esteem/self-worth
- Gamble to feel inclusive
- Status
- Enjoys the competition (mostly against themselves)
- Feel important and validated by others when they win



Sports Betting – Assessment of Play

- **Sports** – Favorite sport? Bookie or Online? How much or how often? Fantasy sports? Daily Fantasy sports? Buying squares? March madness? Prop bets? Live action bets? Betting on the lines?
- **Horses** – Online? Brick and Mortar? Apps? How much, how often. Paying attention to times in the year when big races are happening. Handicapping horses when not betting?

Sports Betting - Cognitive Distortions, Myths, and Illusions of Control

- Believing they know all about a certain sport
- Following players on social media and predicting their level of play based on their personal lives
- Looking up wind and other weather related factors that could impact a game
- Wearing “lucky articles of clothing” or other superstitious acts thinking that will change the outcome of the game



Sports Betting: What IS true

Sports Betting was illegal until 2018 when the federal ban was lifted

Sports Betting is a business and designed to take your money!
The house advantage is the Vigorish (Vig. Cut. Juice. Tax)

The more people bet, the more likely they are to lose

There will always be an element of chance – “Bad Beats-SportsCenter”

Some games are rigged and have mob involvement

Sports Betting – Early Interventions

Depending on the type of play, blocking software may need to be implemented (Online and apps)

Fanduel VSE

Draftkings VSE

Paying of debts to bookies and deleting/blocking phone numbers

Avoiding watching sports (if possible) and making mind bets



Online Gambling- Assessment of Play

- What sites? FanDuel, DraftKings, Bovada.lv
- Phone/Computer/Work/Home?
- What games?
- How much, how often?
- How did it start?
- What form of money to access play? Cryptocurrency? Credit Cards?



Online Gambling – Clinical Areas of Focus

Social Isolation

Anxiety

Pandemic driven? What did
they like to play before?

Online
Gambling –
Early
Interventions

Gamban

Gamblock

Betfilter

Freedom

Other Interventions

- GA <https://ctwmaga.org>;
<http://newenglandga.com/>
- Treatment Groups
- Peer Counselors
- Triggers
- Maladaptive Positive Affect
- Avoidance
- Harm Reduction
- Know the odds/House advantage for games
- Asking questions certain times of the year

Family Interventions

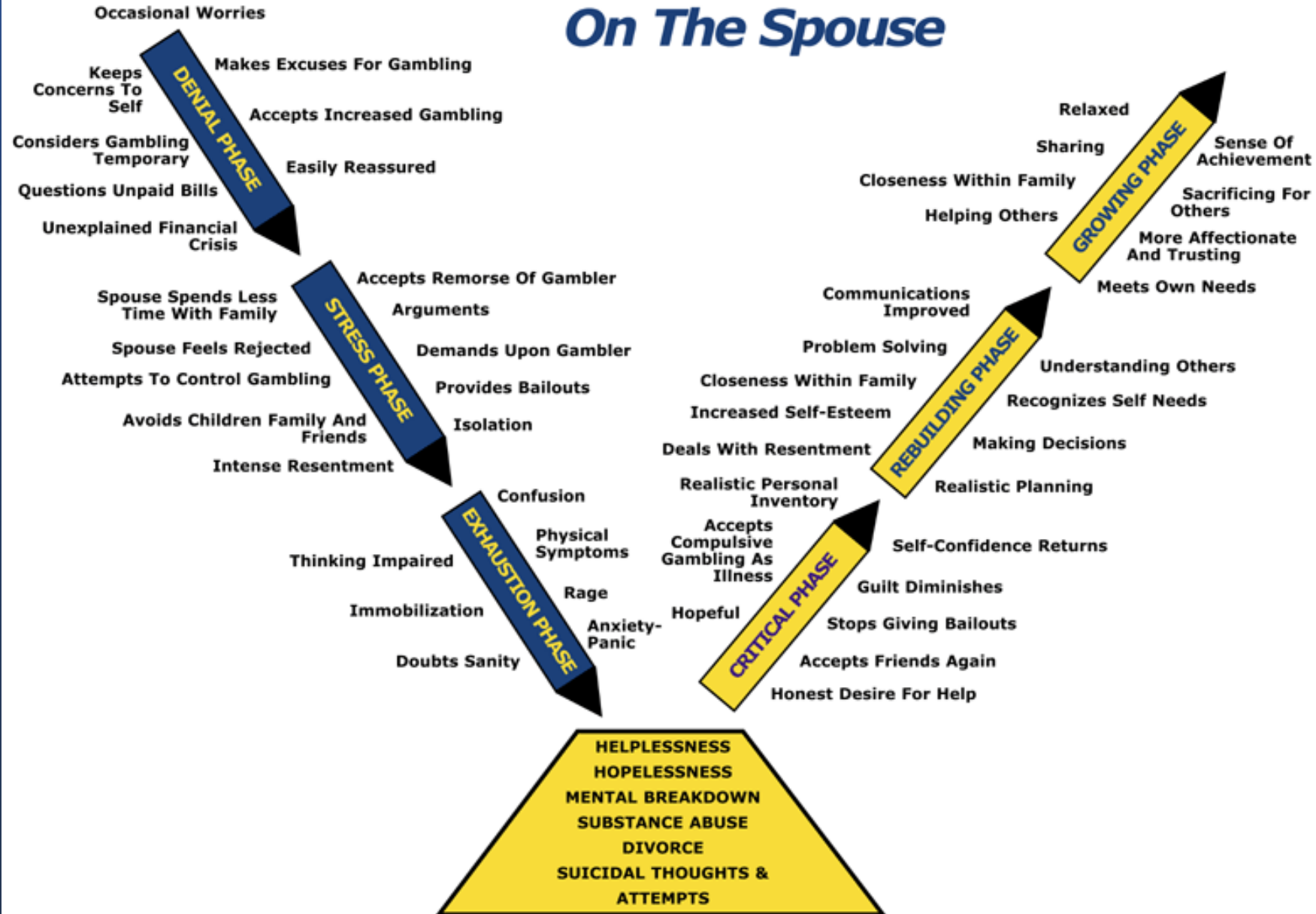
- Bring in family early on
- Provide psychoeducation about gambling
- Anger, resentment, lack of trust – Betrayal Trauma
- Help with finances
- Do not support bailouts
- Healthy Boundary setting (Financial, Emotional, Physical)
- V Charts



A Chart of Compulsive Gambling and Recovery



A Chart On The Effects Of Compulsive Gambling On The Spouse





Additional Resources

- “Action” Documentary (Hulu, YouTubeTV, Sling)
- Movies – Uncut Gems, Owing Mahoney, Rounders
- 60 Minutes: Slots The Big Gamble (Youtube.com)
- 60 Minutes: Sports Betting Fuels concerns Over Problem Gambling
- Podcasts- ALL IN: The Addicted Gambler’s Podcast
 - Facebook Group- Broke Girl Society



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Thank You!



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