

Gambling Prevention in the Correctional Population:

Ohio Best Practices & Approaches

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Slideshow



Self-care notice:

- ❖ The following presentation contains depictions of gambling and mentions suicide.
- ❖ Please take care of yourself!
- ❖ If you or someone you know has a gambling problem or mental health crisis, help is available.

- **1-800-GAMBLER**
- ncpgambling.org
- **Ohio PG Helpline: 1-800-589-9966**



Objectives

After this presentation, participants will:

1. Participants will understand the importance of targeted interventions in the correctional facility population
2. Participants will describe different methods used to prevent gambling harm in the correctional facility population

Gambling in correctional environments

What is the connection between gambling and the correctional population?

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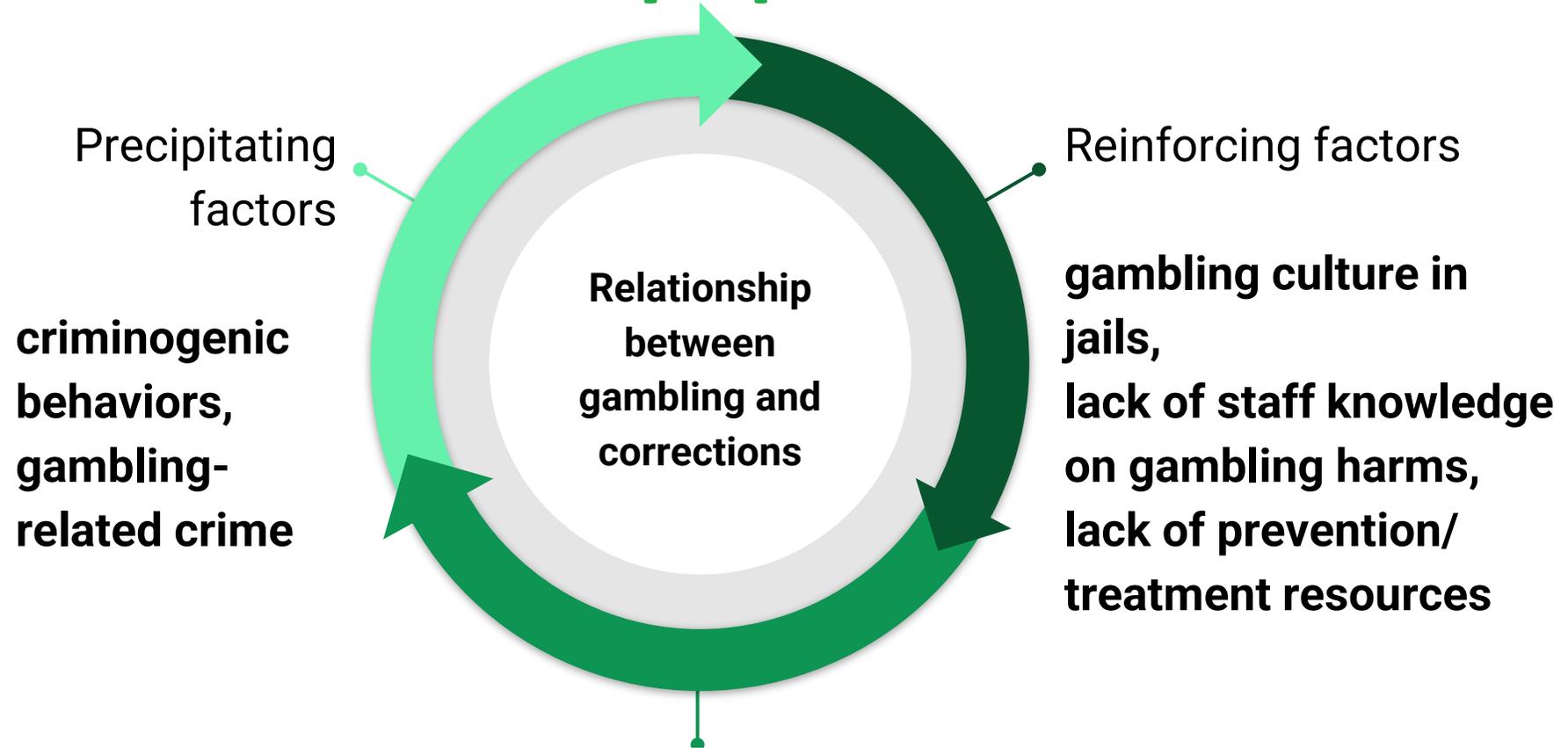
- **Tordel et al. 2024** cross-national meta-analysis
- 26 studies comprising 9,421 individuals

- Overall, the meta-analysis revealed that 1 in 3 prisoners have gambling problems
- Authors suggest need for more emphasis on relevant prevention and treatment models for this population.

What is the connection between gambling and the correctional population?

- “Criminogenic” connections to gambling & organized crime
- The prison system normalization of gambling culture
- Third associated variables, such as certain antisocial traits, impulsive traits, etc., or a history of mental health concerns

What is the connection between gambling and the correctional population?



Perpetuating factors
Gambling can be exacerbated or not treated by jail system, could lead to problem gambling upon societal re-entry

(Based on Tordel et al., 2024)

Gambling in the correctional facilities

- Beyond money, drugs, cigarettes, drinks, or other valuables/commissary items may be used as currency (**Smith et al., 2022**).
- In an English study of 282 individuals in a male prison (**Smith et al., 2022**), 45% reported gambling in prison, and 30% reported gambling as a normal part of prison life.

Gambling in the correctional facilities

- **Potenza et al. (2000)** analyzed help-line data and suggested individuals who seek help for gambling problems and report related illegal behavior tend to have more severe issues, with distinct differences between those who have been arrested and those who haven't, suggesting a need for tailored treatment approaches.

Other Gambling Activities in a Correctional Facility my students have shared about:

- Bets with other inmates
- Sports betting through phone calls to family/friends
- Dice games
- Card and table games



They even bet on my name one day when I was walking into the classes! *The reward?* Macaroni and cheese!

What is currently being done?

What work is currently being done in this space, and where are the gaps?



What do we know? What are the gaps?

- Despite data pinpointing to higher need for prevention and treatment in this population, there is relatively **minimal focus on reducing gambling in correctional facility environments**
- There is a **lack of evidence-based or evidence-informed resources** for gambling prevention programming tailored to this population and treatment considerations (Tordel et al., 2024)
- This can lead professionals to consider data and insights from other areas of gambling research until we have further needed research

What do we know? Where are the gaps?

- **Erikson et al. 2023**- Meta-analysis of 29 RCT studies to treat gambling disorder
- There is evidence that psychological interventions, more specifically face to face CBT being most efficacious in RCTs of treating gambling (**Erikson et al., 2023**)
 - not specific to correctional environmental, more data needed on this specific population

What do we know? Where are the gaps?

- **Rosen & colleagues (2020)** RCT found brief motivational interventions significantly reduced gambling severity, frequency, and harmful attitudes among ex-offenders with gambling problems, showing promise for use in justice-involved populations
- Specific programming for prevention of gambling harm in the correctional facility was not identified in the search of literature. More research is also needed on clinical considerations for treating gambling with the incarcerated population.
 - *Until further research is provided, we can still provide insights from other relevant data*



What is Ohio doing?

Gambling prevention classes and partnerships with Probation Court and Jail

Gambling Prevention Classes

Series of 3 (1-hour) classes at a local CBCF (Community Based Correctional Facility)

- Developed by Recovery Resources Prevention Department
- Ties key life skills and AOD conversations into gambling prevention topics
- Engaging activities and conversations to keep clients interested
- Reflective worksheets for applying skills learned
- Certificates offered after class completion
- BBGS and PIR in class 3

Gambling Prevention Classes

Class # and name	Description	Activities/handouts:
Class 1: What is Gambling?	Participants will learn about gambling definition, types, and risks/consequences associated with gambling harm/addiction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeopardy game
Class 2: Risk-taking and Decision-making	Participants will learn about critical thinking, the PROPS decision-making matrix, and how they can use these skills to make meaningful decisions in their lives in accordance with their values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dice Game • <i>Props decision-making handout</i>
Class 3: Applying the knowledge: SMART goals and Resources	Participants will learn about effective stress management/ goal-setting techniques. Participants will learn about responsible gambling and local resources available for gambling addiction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study • <i>SMART goals handout</i>

Key considerations

- The importance of good rapport
- Keeping students involved and engaged and making gambling relevant to them
- Use prevention science!
- Trauma-informed and respectful of all students
- Understanding barriers to discussing gambling behaviors, such as stigma or fear



Probation Court

- Partnership with Probation Court where Court provides screenings, probation officers utilize BBGS with all clients on their caseloads, and provide referrals to Recovery Resources
- Recovery Resources provides annual trainings for probation court staff on-site and also for new staff hires
- **Notes from this partner:**
 - Individuals Screened may not be as forthcoming about the depths of their gambling issues.
 - Negative stigma/embarrassment revolving around problem gambling outcomes
 - Individuals that are screened want to know exactly how long the treatment program is, how many times a week do they meet, and what they need to do to complete successfully.

County Jail

- Recovery Resources partners with MetroHealth Hospital (under the approval of County Jail)
- Recovery Resources clinical staff member in Jail can process referrals to clinical department
- **Notes from this partner:**
 - Understand barriers to gambling prevention/treatment and how to overcome them
 - Know how to find what motivates folks in the gambling conversation
 - Consider tying gambling into pre-existing mental/health AOD programming

Collaboration

- Quarterly meetings with CBCF, County Jail, Probation Court, and Recovery Resources
 - **During meetings, we share**
 - updates
 - ways to problem solve and increase effectiveness
 - how we can streamline referrals and client tracking across the CBCF, jails, & probation court systems
 - **Successes of this collaboration:**
 - having the right contact person at the table (who is passionate about this or willing to learn?)
 - being flexible
 - open communication including all relevant stakeholders about quality improvement

How can you get involved?

Considerations for getting involved in this work

How to get involved?

- **Form partnerships** with your local county jails/prisons, probation court, or police departments!
- **Gauge interest** for a wide variety of mental health content, including gambling
- **Provide support** to correctional facilities that may be interested in gambling prevention/treatment but may not have enough resources
- **Earn buy-in** from a variety of staff members, including those with the decision-making abilities
- **Learn how to pivot** and be flexible!

Next steps for our programming

Next steps

- **Evaluation** of programming through a Health Education and Promotion Lens (*needs assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation*)
- Understand most salient modifiable prevention factors
- Potential partnership with an academic institution/IRB
- Goal of scaling of programming and partnership model to share with other interested entities





Bringing it all Together

Final remarks



The correctional facility population is **high risk** for gambling harm.

It is the duty of professionals in prevention, treatment, and beyond to ensure protections for this vulnerable and often overlooked community to prevent harm and provide access to treatment and other resources.

More research is needed on effective prevention and treatment for this population. Although more research is needed, Ohio has cultivated some groundbreaking work in this sphere by creating strong partnerships with the courts and jails, as well as providing gambling prevention education for incarcerated individuals. **Next steps include program evaluation and future updates on the efforts of this programming and partnerships.**

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Questions



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