

Culture, Conversations & Connections: Engaging Communities of Color Through an African-Centered Lens

National Council on Problem Gambling
2026 Conference
Renaissance Hotel, Nashville, TN

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July 22-24, 2026



Words of Wisdom for Life's Journey

▶ “Today spread all that is good, positive, beautiful and amazing about you....everywhere you go.”

▶ -Dr. Rhonda Wells-Wilbon



Why Culture Matters?

- ▶ Culture Influences:
- ▶ How we understand gambling?
- ▶ How we cope with stress and trauma
- ▶ Family and community responses
- ▶ Recovery and Healing



African-Centered Lens

What is African Centered?

African-centered practices emerge from the philosophies, rituals, and values that have been preserved, adapted, and revitalized across generations. At their core, these practices emphasize interconnectedness, collective responsibility, spirituality, and the centrality of culture in shaping identity and experience.

Sanoka, Ubuntu, Ma'at & Nguzo Saba

Sankofa

► Sankofa is a philosophy and Adinkra symbol originating from the Akan people of Ghana, West Africa, that translates to "go back and get it".



Ubuntu- “I Am Because We Are”

- ▶ Shared Humanity
- ▶ Collective Responsibility
- ▶ Compassion
- ▶ Interdependence
- ▶ Community Healing



Ma'at Restoring Balance

- ▶ Healing Focus
- ▶ Mind
- ▶ Body
- ▶ Spirit
- ▶ Relationships
- ▶ Finances
- ▶ Community

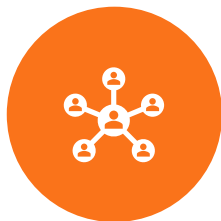


Nguzo Saba

- ▶ Umoja —---Unity
- ▶ Kujichagulia—Self-Determination
- ▶ Ujima—Collective Work & Responsibility
- ▶ Ujamaa—Cooperative Economics
- ▶ Nia—Purpose
- ▶ Kuumba—Creativity
- ▶ Imani—Faith



Strategies



Prevention: Community Education, Financial Wellness, Youth Engagement, Faith Partnerships, Cultural Identity, Community Healing Circles, Mindfulness and Meditation



Advocacy: Reduce Stigma, Increase Culturally responsive care, Address Health Inequities, Partnerships



Treatment: Trauma-informed care, Spirituality, Community Support



Communal Healing: Storytelling, Rituals, Healing Circles, Economic Empowerment, Collective Action

Reflection

- Healing is sustained when individuals and communities heal together.

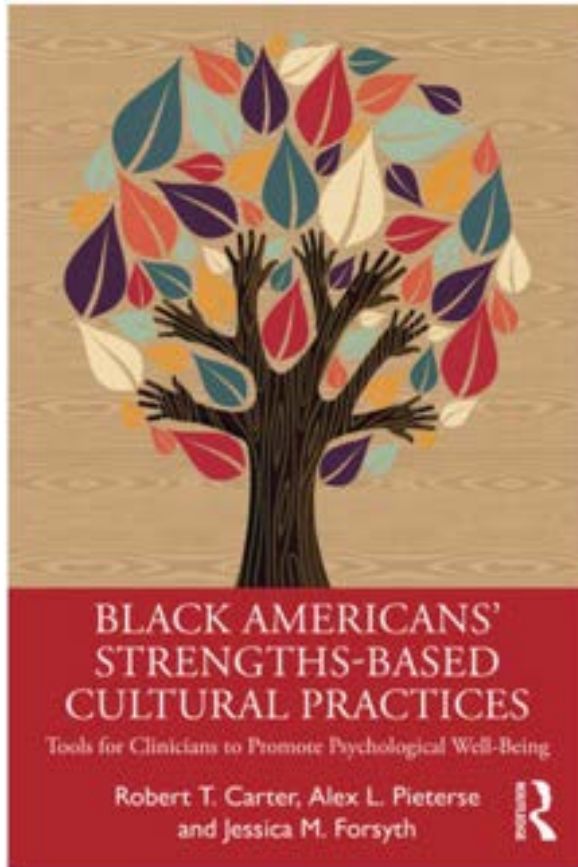


Thank You!

▶ Continuing the conversation...

▶ Questions?





Resources

Resources

Ashby, M. (1998). *The Forty Two Precepts of Maat, the Philosophy of Righteous Action and the Ancient Egyptian Wisdom Texts*. Opp Alabama: Sema Institute of Yoga.

Wells-Wilbon, Rhonda & Estreet, Anthony (2022). Trauma and Mental Health Social Work with Urban Populations: African-Centered Clinical Interventions



Harmony & Hope

RECOVERY FELLOWSHIP

Healing Together. Stronger Together.

A SAFE, WELCOMING SPACE FOR MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES IMPACTED BY PROBLEM GAMBLING.

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE

- If you are in recovery
- If you are questioning your relationship with gambling
- If you are supporting a loved one
- If you just need a safe space to be heard

You are not alone. ♥



CONFIDENTIAL
Your story stays here.



JUDGMENT-FREE
You are accepted just as you are.



COMMUNITY
We rise by lifting each other.



HOPE
Recovery is possible. Change is real.

UPCOMING TOPICS

1. Breaking the cycle of gambling	3. Trauma and gambling
2. Financial healing & rebuilding trust	4. Healthy relationships & boundaries
5. Shame versus self-compassion	6. Self-care and wellness
7. Faith and recovery	8. Finding purpose after addiction

Topics rotate every other week. ♥



*Together we heal.
Together we grow.
Together we recover.*

SCAN TO JOIN OUR FELLOWSHIP



Healing starts here. ♥

WHEN
EVERY OTHER SUNDAY
(Every 2 Weeks)

TIME
5:00 – 6:30 PM EST

WHERE
ZOOM 

*Come as you are.
Leave with hope.* ♥

ZOOM DETAILS

 **MEETING LINK**
<https://harmonyhope4u.com/>

 **MEETING ID**
813 0800 7644

 **PASSCODE**
111915

 **CALL IN (AUDIO ONLY)**
+1 848 508 8454 US (New York)
Meeting ID: 813 0800 7644
Passcode: 111915

*Put your connection early.
We start on time!* ♥

 harmonyhope4u@gmail.com
 <https://harmonyhope4u.com/>

♥ HOPE IS REAL. HELP IS HERE. YOU MATTER. ♥

Resources

Contact Information

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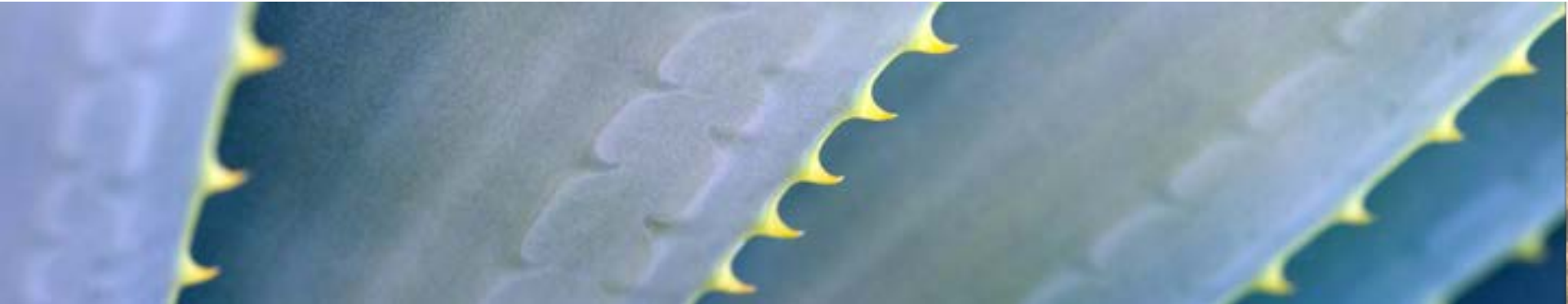


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**National Council on Problem Gambling 2026 Conference
Renaissance Hotel, Nashville, TN
July 22-24, 2026**

**Sub-Topic:
The Long & Winding Road: Migration, Identity, and Ubuntu in Problem Gambling Prevention**

**Paulette J. O'Gilvie, PhD, MBA, CPS-G, IGPS, CCGC
American Baptist College**



Paulette J. O'Gilvie, PhD, MBA, CPS-G, IGPS

- ❖ Faculty Chair & Associate Professor
- ❖ NYS Credentialed Prevention Specialist w/Gambling Designation (CPS-G)
- ❖ International Gambling Prevention Specialist (IGPS), IPGGC
- ❖ International Clergy Lay Minister Certified, IPGGC
- ❖ Social Justice Advocate * Public Service Leader * Scholar-Practitioner
- ❖ Casino & Gambling Researcher/Author

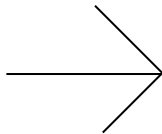




The Journey

"The Long & Winding Road" (The Beatles)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnhYDa3Ebcg>



The Journey

“The Long and Winding Road” (Beatles) establishes the **journey**—migration as movement, uncertainty, and transformation.

The long or winding road – lived experiences of migration

Reasons for migration (safety, opportunities, education, better future)



Disclaimer

This presentation is not suggesting that migrants are more likely to develop gambling problems.

Rather, migration represents a life transition that can reshape social networks, identity, and exposure to new gambling environments.

Understanding those transitions can help us to build more culturally responsive prevention strategies.

Migration*...

- Described in terms of economics, politics, or geography
- Individuals carry languages, traditions, faith, and deeply-rooted ways of understanding community
- The road is not simply **long or windy**; it's transformative.
- Countries and borders can be crossed in a matter of a day or even hours...**identity often travels a much longer journey.**
- Challenging our identities, our relationships, and our sense of community.



Migration changes more than geography, it reshapes identity, relationships, and our sense of belonging.

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Mentimeter

Open Mentimeter to edit

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Add Mentimeter slides

When people migrate, what do they leave behind besides a physical place?



menti.com
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Cultural Identity



Migration...

Cultural identity: “Affiliation or identification of a particular group or groups”(SAMHSA.gov)

What happens when identity is disrupted?

Loneliness * social isolation * financial pressure

Acculturation stress * Discrimination * loss of community

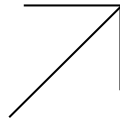
These do not automatically cause gambling...

They may weaken protective factors while increasing vulnerability.

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory (1979)

Identity develops within interacting environments – migration changes those environments.



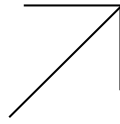


Migration Changes the Gambling Environment

Migration changes exposure by changing the

- Availability
- Accessibility
- Acceptability* ... of gambling
- People don't just move, they move into different gambling ecologies
- USA: (48 states participate in legal gambling [lotteries, casinos, horse racing, sports betting, etc.], AGA, 2026.
- Migration changes gambling ecologies!





The Connection: Migration, Identity & Gambling

Framed as entertainment, individuals gamble beyond reason for money:

- Social activity
- Escape
- Way to cope
- Redefining identity
- Substitute community
- An attempt to restore belonging

Where do people belong?

- Family
- Culture
- Healthy communities
- Faith communities
- Sports

- Or... gambling venues, online betting communities, casino loyalty clubs?

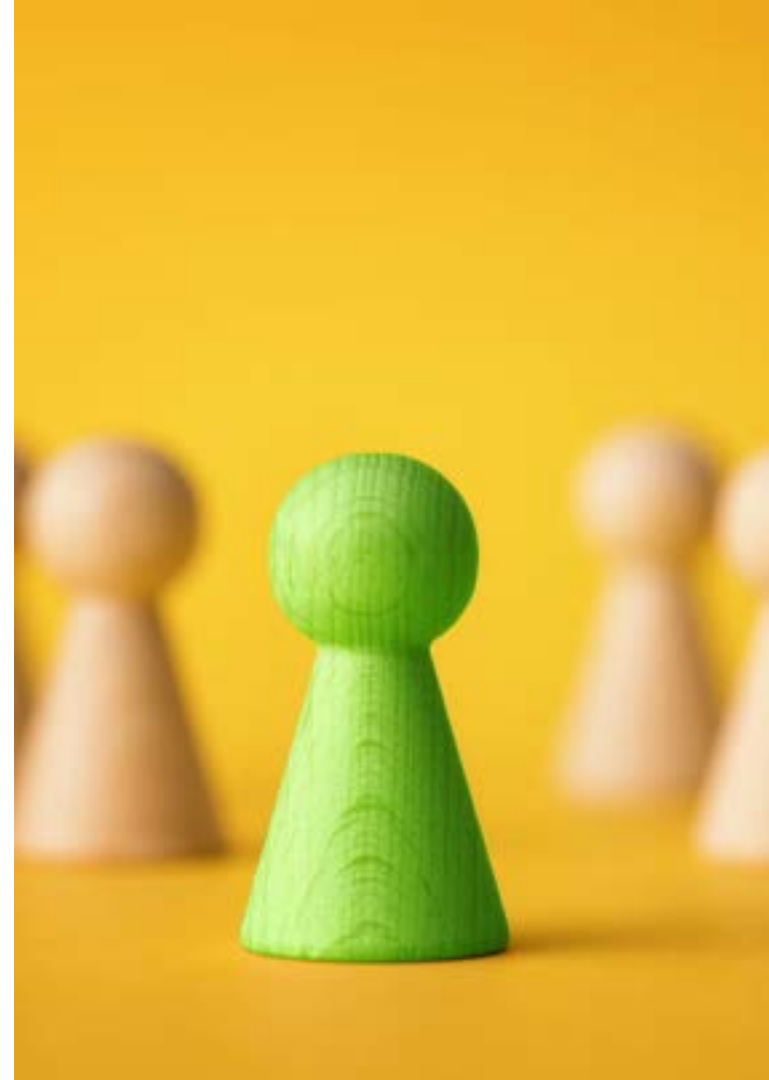


Changing the Prevention Conversation

- Migration: *changes where we live*
- Identity: *shapes who we become*
- Belonging: *influences how we adapt*
- **Ubuntu**: *restores belonging through relationships* (philosophical foundation)

Ubuntu- African philosophy that understands that **identity** is formed and sustained through relationships.

Well-being is inseparable from the well-being of our families, communities, and society.



Changing the Prevention Conversation

Ubuntu asks:

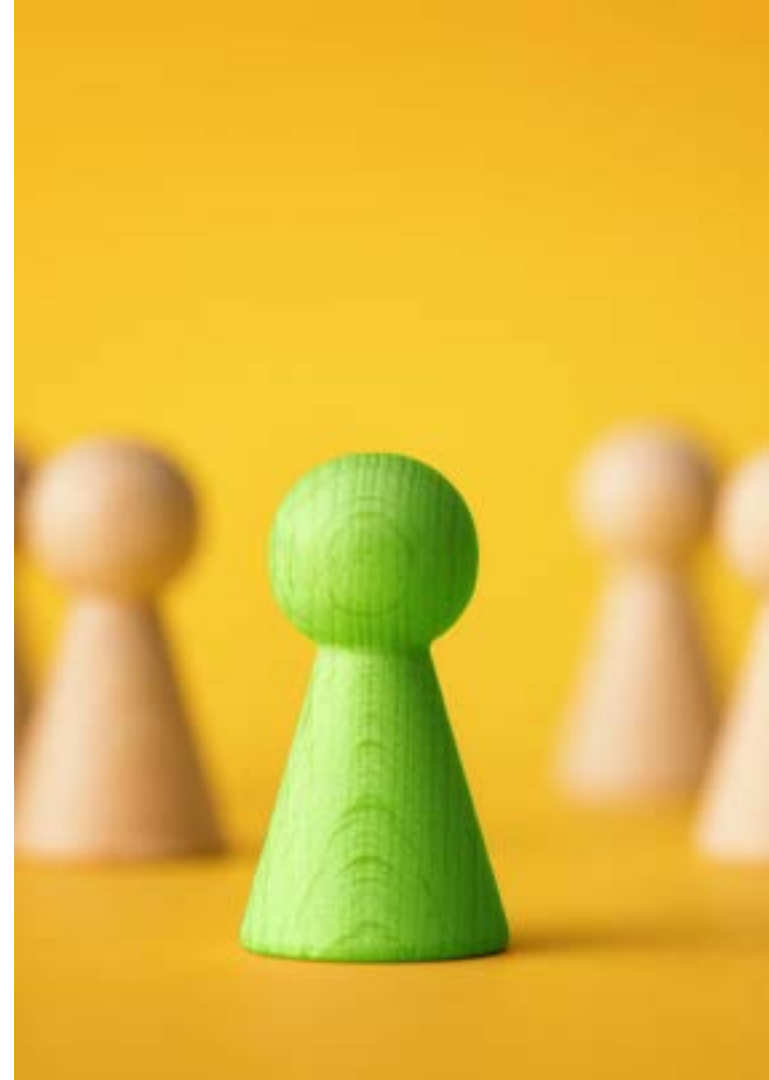
How do we recognize someone struggling?

Reduce isolation?

Preserve dignity?

How do we restore belonging?

How do **we strengthen the relationships** that protect individuals before gambling becomes harmful?



Prevention Through Ubuntu

Ubuntu Protective Factors

Connectedness

Shared responsibility

Community

Identity



Prevention begins with understanding cultural identity!

What does this Mean for Gambling Prevention?

- Partner with migrant communities
- Engage faith leaders as prevention partners
- Incorporate cultural identity into prevention messaging
- Strengthen social connectedness before crisis occurs
- Frame gambling prevention as community well-being, not just an individual behavior
- Recognition of migration experiences during prevention planning and programming.



Summary

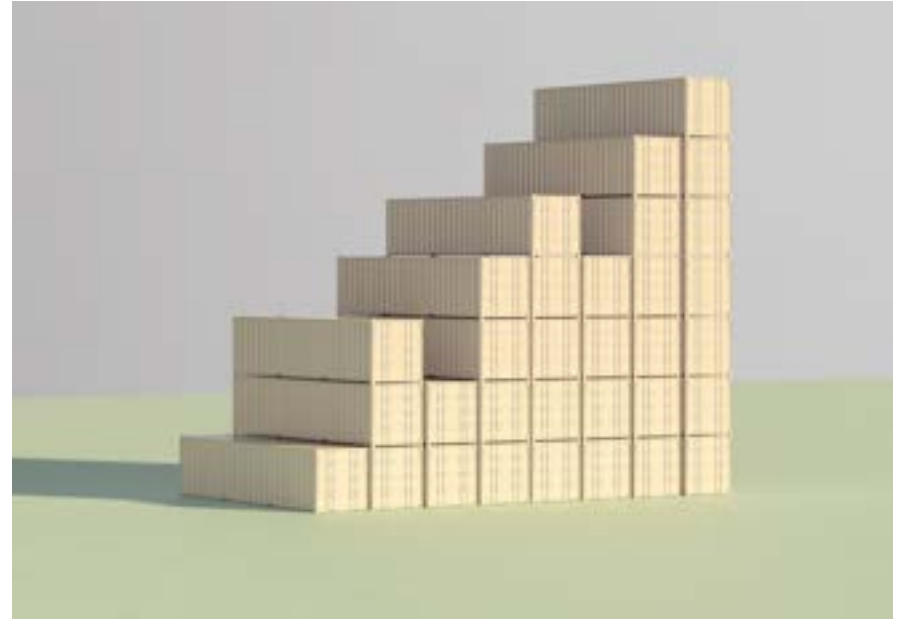
Migration – *changes where we live*

Identity – *shapes who we become*

Belonging – *influences how we adapt*

African Philosophy (Ubuntu) – *explains why belonging matters*

Prevention – *public health application*



Wrap-Up

Ubuntu reminds us that prevention begins with understanding cultural identity!

“One Love” Bob Marley & the Wailers

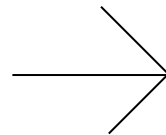




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Contact and References



Q&A