

Gamblers Anonymous from the Inside: An Open Meeting and Q&A Experience

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Who Am I?

Recovery Experience

Credentialed Treatment Provider

Advocate for Recovery and Education

Learning Objectives

- **Participants will understand the purpose, principles, and structure of Gamblers Anonymous as a 12-Step Fellowship.**
- **Participants will assess how Gamblers Anonymous can support and collaborate with professional treatment.**

Purpose of today's meeting – from the inside . . .



- **Demystify Gamblers Anonymous from an insider's perspective**
- **Share experience and professional insights**
- **Provide space for open Q & A**

What is an Open Meeting?

- **Open to anyone interested (family, friends, professionals, public)**
- **Safe, respectful environment**
- **No obligation to share**





Understanding the Gambling Addiction

From a treatment provider's perspective:

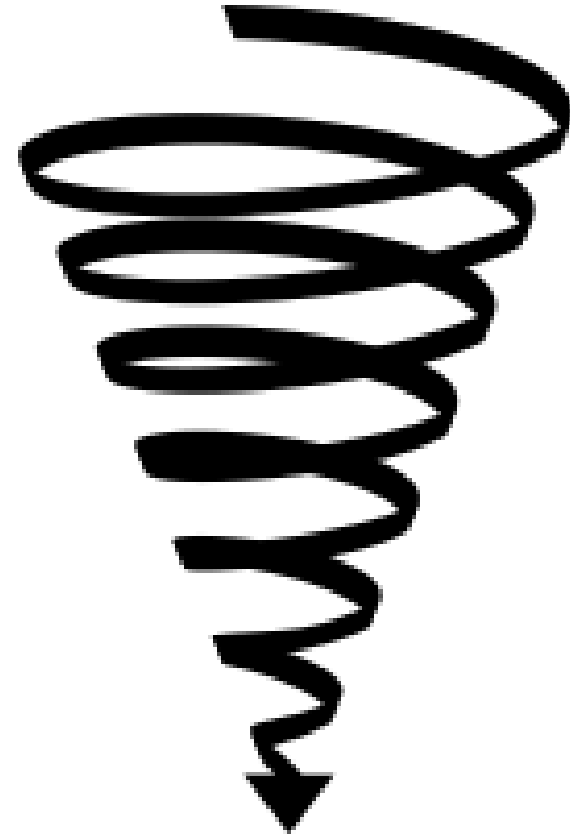
- **A progressive disorder**
- **Recognized mental health disorder**
- **Cognitive distortions - (chasing losses, illusion of control)**
- **Emotional drivers - (escape, excitement, shame)**
- **Co-occurring disorders - (depression, anxiety, trauma, SUD)**
- **Financial and relational consequences**



The Progression of the Illness



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- **Winning Phase**
 - **Losing Phase**
 - **Desperation Phase**
 - **Hopelessness Phase**



Impact on Life

- **Financial devastation**
- **Relationship breakdowns**
- **Emotional and physical health decline**





My Story in Brief

- **First bet to rock bottom**
 - **Turning point moment**
 - **First Gamblers**
- Anonymous meeting**

How Gamblers Anonymous Works

- **Peer support**
- **Shared experience**
- **Structured recovery program**
- **Pressure Relief Group/ Budget meeting**



Inside a Gamblers Anonymous Meeting . . .





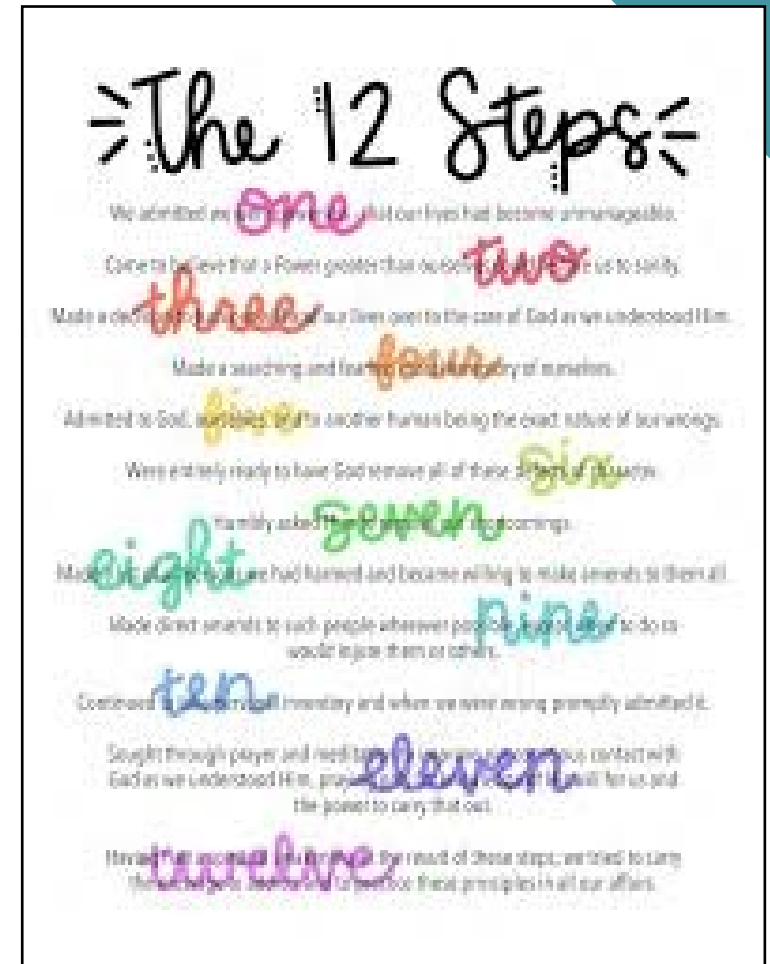
The Gamblers Anonymous Program:

History

- **Founded in 1957**
- **Modeled after 12-step principles**
- **Worldwide fellowship**

The 12 Steps of Gamblers Anonymous

- **Spiritual and practical framework**
- **Focus on honesty, restitution, and service**



Meeting Formats



- **Closed Meetings**
- **Open Meetings**
- **Step Meetings**
- **In-Person Meetings**
- **Virtual Meetings**



Typical Meeting Flow

- **Welcome and readings**
- **Member shares**
- **Announcements**
- **Closing: Serenity Prayer**

The Role of Sponsorship

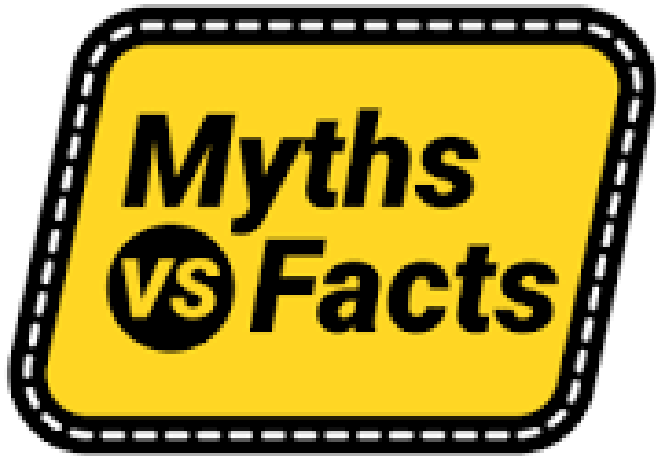
- **One-on-one guidance**
- **Writing the Steps**



Tools for Recovery

- **Daily reflection**
- **Phone list**
- **Service commitments**





Common Myths About Gamblers Anonymous

“It’s religious”

“It’s only for severe cases”

“It’s just talking”

My Experience in Meetings – a 50+ year perspective. . .

- **What has changed in gambling?**
- **What has stayed the same in recovery?**
- **The gift of helping others**
- **Why I still attend meetings today**





Recovery And Treatment Insights

Recovery is a Lifelong Process

- **No “cure” – ongoing maintenance and support**
- **Recurrence prevention focus:**
 - **build a new way of living**
 - **practice honesty, hope, and accountability**



Integrating Gamblers Anonymous with Professional Treatment



- **Therapy + fellowship synergy**
- **Addressing co-occurring disorders**

Family Involvement

- **Gam-Anon support**
- **Education and boundaries**



Challenges in Recovery

- **Stigma**
 - **Access to meetings**
 - **Maintaining motivation**
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Success Stories



Key Takeaways



- **Recovery is possible**
- **Gamblers Anonymous offers unique peer support**
- **Professional help + fellowship = stronger outcomes**



Thank you

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