

Gambling Issues

1-3% of any population is pathological—having no control over their problem
Oklahoma—3.5 million people x 1-3%= 35,000 to 105,000 people!

In 1999, The American Medical Association stated that gambling is inherently a dangerous illness.

20% of all gamblers are pathological.

Suicide is 600% higher than with any other addictive disorder.

More people gamble in Iowa than with any other state. More money is spent in Nevada. Oklahoma has more casinos than any other state and most Oklahomans are within 20 minutes of a casino. Lottery is the biggest gambling item in the U.S.

Targets for gambling: Senior Adults and Adolescents

Internet gambling will take over casinos and lotteries before too long.
“You could lose your house from your house!”

One out of 120 million will win big! Slot machines—one out of 88,000!

Cannot reason with a person nor believe a gambler!

\$30,000 is the average debt for a woman.

\$55,000 is the average debt for a man

It is not unusual for an adolescent to incur a debt of \$25,000 for his/her parents

America believes in debt. Credit card companies are continually offering more credit cards. Some Americans have over 25 credit cards. Casinos offer credit or accept checks.

Gambling is an *impulse disorder*.

Gambling Defined

“Any betting or wagering, for self or others, whether for money or not, no matter how slight or insignificant, where the outcome is uncertain or depends upon chance or ‘skill’, constitutes gambling.” *Gamblers Anonymous*

7 Types of Gamblers:

- Social
- Serious Social
- Recreation/Escape
- Problem
- Pathological
- Professional
- Anti-Social

2 Types of Problem Gamblers:

- Action/Skill—Stereotypical gambler, likely to be male, narcissistic, earlier onset/late treatment seeking.
- Escape/Luck—Increasing in numbers, prefer machines and games of chance, more females, late onset/early treatment seeking.

Forms of Gamblers:

ACTION (AGGRESSIVE)

- Mostly Males
- Competitive, skill gambling
- Started gambling at a young age
- Stereotype gambler
- Has gambling “friends”
- Grandiose, image is important
- Tendency to commit criminal activity
- Extremely self-centered
- Money or any avenue to get money is relapse issue
- Become obvious escape seekers late in life
- Can have false bottoms

ESCAPE (PASSIVE)

- Use to be mostly females
- Noncompetitive gambling (low skill)
- Comparatively short gambling career
- Late onset
- Relationship issues
- Gambling is emotion-based
- Lower debt to income ratio
- No attempts to control gambling
- Emotion is a relapse issue
- Often forced into treatment by significant other
- Bottom is comparatively mind

PREFERRED TYPES OF GAMBLING:

AGGRESSIVE GAMBLERS

- Sports betting
- Black-jack
- Poker
- Horse racing
- Dog racing
- Craps
- Fantasy sports
- Day trading

PASSIVE GAMBLERS

- Slot machines
- Sweepstakes
- Lottery
- Powerball
- Office pools
- Video poker and other machines
- Bingo

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

- Inability to stop
- Denial
- Severe depression and mood swings
- Progressive disease with similar phases and stages
- Chases the high—WIN
- First high—WIN remembered
- Blackouts/blowouts
- Used to escape emotional, cognitive pain
- Preoccupation with getting the activity started
- Low self-esteem with high ego
- Dysfunctional family
- High of gambling has been compared to the rush of cocaine
- Use of rituals
- Instant gratification
- Severe financial problems
- High relapse history
- Family/client will ask for help (look for real reason)
- LYING!!!!

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- Gambling is considered a hidden addiction
- Individuals cannot overdose; no saturation point, just financial exhaustion
- Tremendous financial consequences which require immediate attention in treatment
- Pathological gamblers can function at the work place
- There is no form of testing such as drug testing for pathological gambling
- Does not require ingestion of chemicals
- Fewer resources available to gamblers and their families
- Prevention messages not easily accepted by communities

Suggestion: Don't counsel a Gambler!!!

TREATMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Gamblers have a remarkably low tolerance for frustration.
- They need/want a quick learning curve.
- They want immediate gratification/the quick fix.
- Treatment needs to be concrete and reality-based.
- They need visuals/something to take home with them.

PRACTICAL POINTS OF TREATMENT

- Maintain firm but empathetic control of the therapy session
- Discuss reasonable expectations
- Avoid getting caught up in discussions about gambling
- Establish a clear policy in regards to missed appointments
- Require partial payment at each session (if not a member and always CASH!!!)
- Remain alert for substitute addictions
- Anticipate, plan for anxiety, depression, and conflict
- Keep early sessions goal-oriented and structured
- Avoid talking about odds of winning
- If possible, keep family involved, explain the benefits to the gambler

CO-MORBIDITY OF OTHER ADDICTIONS

- Alcohol
- Drugs-early use of stimulants
- Eating
- Sex
- Overspending, shopping
- Smoking
- Simultaneous or sequential
- Motivation for abstaining from other addictions—focusing on other addiction rather than dealing with gambling issues
- Rationale for treatment at same time

INDICATORS OF COMPULSIVE GAMBLING

- How much time is spent gambling?
- Increase in time gambling
- Increase in size of bets (sudden and dramatic)
- Working up special occasions for gambling (canceling other plans)
- Intensity of interest in gambling (constant high tension and excitement)
- Boasting (about winnings); evasive (about losing)
- Exaggerated display of money and other possessions
- Gambling when there is a crisis
- Drop-off in other activities and interests
- Frequent absences from home and work
- Excessive phone use
- Withdrawal from family
- Personality changes (increased irritability/hostility)
- Diversion of family funds

DID YOU GROW UP WITH A COMPULSIVE GAMBLER?

- Are you obsessive about money?
- Did family activities revolve around gambling events?
- Have you ever been missing money?
- Have you ever been paid or been asked to pay parent's debts?
- Do your parents often argue about money?
- Were you ever forced to form an alliance with one parent against another?
- Did your parents use you as a sounding board for their marriage?
- Are you afraid to be alone with a gambling parent?
- Do you feel anxious when the phone rings, mail comes, or doorbell rings?
- Do you confuse pity for love?
- Have you had problems with compulsive behavior?
- Do you lie when it would be just as easy to tell the truth?
- Do you feel more alive in a crisis?
- Do you think that more money would solve your problems?
- Do you have trouble with an intimate relationship?
- Do you find it difficult to identify and express your feelings?

WHY OLDER ADULTS?

- Many do not understand addictions
- Older adults may be drawn to gambling to fill their time or to be with other people
- Older adults may have gambled away their life savings and will have little chance of getting their money back

- ❑ Older adults may be more likely to hide their gambling addiction because of stigma associated with it
- ❑ Some older adults may have cognitive impairment that interferes with decision making
- ❑ Casinos provide a safe environment and good cheap food.
- ❑ Casinos make older people feel welcomed

RESEARCH REFLECT OLDER ADULTS VULNERABLE:

- ❑ Fixed Incomes
- ❑ Social Isolation
- ❑ Declining Health
- ❑ Targeted market for Casino Operators
- ❑ Feelings/Opinions of “this is my money, I’ll spend as I see fit”
- ❑ Some will show signs of Positive Health Benefits

60% of older adults report if you take away the money, they would still gamble. 12% gamble to socialize. 7% state they really need the money.

TREATMENT TIP-OFFS OFTEN SEEN IN OLDER ADULTS

- ❑ Gambles at beginning of month (corresponds to SS check)
- ❑ Declining or hesitation to attend family events/celebrations
- ❑ Neglecting affordable care/home repairs, telephone/utility bills
- ❑ Disinterest in old friendships
- ❑ Secrecy or double talk about extent of trips to casinos, bingo, etc.

WHY ADOLESCENTS?

- ❑ Most children start gambling at age 6
- ❑ Games and videos natural progression to other gaming activities
- ❑ Internet availability and parent’s credit card availability
- ❑ Cognitive/reality not fully developed—does not understand consequences

Last year percentage of adolescents that gamble:

- ❑ New York—59%
- ❑ Georgia—40%
- ❑ Texas—55%
- ❑ Washington—57%
- ❑ Nevada—42%

It is estimated that 60% of high school students gamble every year with 15% having a serious gambling problem.

GENDER DIFFERENCES (ALL GRADES):

Males Last 30 days—22.9% Last year—45.8%
 Females Last 30 days-- 7% Last year—19%

It is not uncommon for an adolescent to acquire a debt of over \$25,000 that parents have to “bail” them out.

SURVEYS ITEMS TO ASK:

- ❑ Determine youth access to and availability of: alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs
- ❑ Discover locations where youth were most likely to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs
- ❑ Determine incidence and prevalence of the use of methamphetamines by youth
- ❑ Determine the incidence and prevalence of problem gambling, as well as correlations between gambling and other youth risk behaviors
- ❑ Ask school counselors to look for signs of affluent children who should have money for lunches and nice clothes, doing without.

How can this affect the church?

- ❑ People will be coming to the church for assistance. How will the church respond? By providing for groceries, utilities, and other help, does that bring validation for the gambler to continue gambling because others are providing assistance?
- ❑ Gamblers are very good manipulators!!! Substance abusers are mere child's play compared to gamblers. They will tell anything you want to hear in order to get what they want—money. Money is their drug of choice. They will steal and borrow from anyone in the church and even the church itself. They will come to the altars, confess and cry, but are they sincere? Time will tell the difference! Many will expect you to unconditionally forgive them and trust them again—immediately! Please note: Trust is earned!!!
- ❑ How will the others within the community observe the church if it denies helping people with gambling addictions? One possible solution--offering church-sponsored meetings on gambling issues—education, prevention, and where to go for treatment and what to expect in treatment. Let the community know that the church really cares.
- ❑ This can be a great opportunity and challenge for the church. Pastors are not equipped with dealing with such a manipulated type of addiction and behavior. The consequences of providing the wrong treatment plan are dangerous. Gamblers are 6 times more likely to commit suicide than with any other type of addiction or disorder.
- ❑ The church is very much needed to “pick up the pieces” whenever the families are devastated by the consequences of a loved one who has gambled everything away—their home, relationships, retirement, total financial ruin, credit cards maxed out, suicide or perhaps committed a criminal act in order to “get back” what they have lost.
- ❑ Remember gamblers are impulsive. They may call you and tell you that they are going to commit suicide. Take that seriously!!! Most suicides are done with cars, driving head-on with another vehicle or driving off the road. Have a plan in place! Meet them personally and call the police. This may be the only hope you can provide.

Copyright © 2020 Pastoral Care Inc. All Rights Reserved. All material is intended for individual use only. Any other use, such as distribution, promoting one's ministry or adding to websites, is prohibited unless written permission granted by Pastoral Care Inc.