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# Fostering Financial Empowerment within Behavioral Health, Problem Gambling, and Other Clinical Settings

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*STRENGTHENING SOCIETY*

**FSWI**

FINANCIAL SOCIAL WORK INITIATIVE

*An Integrated Approach to Financial Well-Being and Economic Justice*

# FIRST POLL

Do your clients struggle with any of the following issues related to finances?

- Not enough income and/or trying to stay afloat
- Difficulty getting economic stimulus, Unemployment Insurance
- Too much debt and/or credit problems
- Pretty much all of these
- None of these

# FINANCIAL SOCIAL WORK INITIATIVE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

- Founded in 2008
- Research, training, policy and practice advocacy in the areas of financial capability and financial empowerment
- Focus on vulnerable populations and communities



# FINANCIAL CAPABILITY IS...

- According to Margaret Sherraden...
- Combines a person's **ability to act** with their **opportunity to act**
- More than financial education
- Must have access to financial products and services that allow them to act in their best financial interest
- Leads to improved financial well-being and life chances



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# FINANCIAL CAPABILITY CONCEPTS IN CLINICAL PRACTICE

- Need to:
- Integrate financial and psychosocial aspects of counseling
- Recognize that a host of problems contribute to financial & emotional distress/devastation (life-threatening illness, aging at times, interpersonal violence, foreclosure, job loss)
- Address problems in a comprehensive, holistic way
- Recognize that financial and emotional stress are closely intertwined
- Identify helping professionals to be skilled in/comfortable with these areas with assessment and intervention
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## CONCEPTS *(continued)*

- Development of interventions that address financial and psychosocial realities
- Development of new surveys measuring financial realities, capability, knowledge, self-efficacy
- Addressing poverty and income inequalities through policy and legislation
- Establishing partnerships among schools, agencies, practitioners, macro social workers, and others



# BACKGROUND

- Addressing financial distress in human service programs
- Connections between financial well-being and overall psychosocial well-being
- Beyond income, amount of rent, obligations, etc., are there struggles around debt, insufficient income, credit or banking problems, predatory lenders, other stressors?

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# CLIENTS' ASSESSMENT

- What to consider:
- Does monthly income cover ongoing expenses?
- Is income stable every 2 weeks or month?
- Are they receiving any public benefits?
- Are they eligible for any public benefits that they are not receiving?
- Is there an impact on working ability?





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# FINANCIAL DISTRESS AND RELATED ISSUES DURING PANDEMIC

- Drastic loss of work and income
- Workers on the front lines
- Hourly workers
- Self-employed; gig workers
- Telework challenges and changes
- Stress and balance with child care and school responsibilities
- Housing instability; now looming evictions

# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

- Health and economic impacts are especially profound
- Systemic racism and inequality and poverty ravage communities of color
- Workers are more frequently on the front lines and exposed



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# PERSONAL FINANCE ISSUES WITHIN GAMBLING AND PROBLEM GAMBLING

- Financial strain and stress
- Chasing wins; chasing losses
- Greater risk of bankruptcy
- Relationship strain



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## Talking about money

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Why is it so hard to talk to clients about money and why is important to do it?

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Are there cultural aspects to talking about money?

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How do money, money problems, and money management fit into therapy?

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How far should a therapist go in making suggestions about money issues to their clients?

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How does talk about money issues fit into crisis management and ongoing counseling?

# Experiences with Money

- What was your first experience with money?
- What are your earliest memories of money in your family?
- What is your best and worst memory regarding money?
- What feelings do these memories generate?
- Was money viewed as good, bad, scary, dirty, or neutral for you as a child?
- Did anyone help you to understand these feelings as a child? Were there any family stories about money?

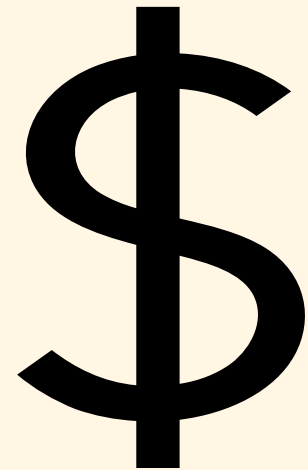




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## Managing Money

- How do you feel when you go to a bank?
- How do you feel when you pay your bills?
- How do you feel when you balance or review your accounts?
- How do you feel when/if you meet with a financial advisor or accountant?
- How do you feel when you have conversations about money with family members?





# Gambling and Financial Wellness

- How much do you budget for fun, recreation, entertainment?
- What part of that do you budget for gambling?
- How do you make those decisions?



# Gambling and Financial Wellness

- What role does gambling play in your financial planning?
- Do you see gambling as a solution to financial problems?
- Do you see gambling as a way to supplement your income?





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## Real Money And Gambling Money

Adapted From A Paper By Julian Taber, 1999

- ▶ Gambling money cannot be used for anything but gambling
- ▶ Once money undergoes a cognitive conversion into gambling money it is never converted back to real money
- ▶ Gambling money is never really “lost”



# Real Money And Gambling Money

Adapted From A Paper By Julian Taber, 1999



**ALL ACCIDENT OR UNEXPECTED INCOME IS AUTOMATICALLY CONVERTED TO GAMBLING MONEY: A GIFT FROM LADY LUCK NEEDS TO BE SPENT IN HER WORSHIP**



**REAL MONEY COMING AS LOANS FROM OTHERS IMMEDIATELY BECOMES GAMBLING MONEY**



**WHEN DOES \$20 = \$20?**

# Real Money And Gambling Money

Adapted From A Paper By Julian Taber, 1999



**PAYING FOR TREATMENT WITH REAL MONEY?**



**CAN'T YOU GIVE ME THE ODDS ON RECOVERY?**



**REAL TIME/GAMBLING TIME**



**REAL PEOPLE/GAMBLING PEOPLE**

# Assessment

Begin money conversation

All sources of income

Financial consequences of gambling

Realize this discussion is a process

What are financial goals of person with gambling disorder

What are family's financial goals

# Assessment

Ideally have money conversation with individual with the gambling problem and with family members

Who knows what about family finances

How separate or co-mingled are finances

Who has managed family finances

How have financial decisions been made

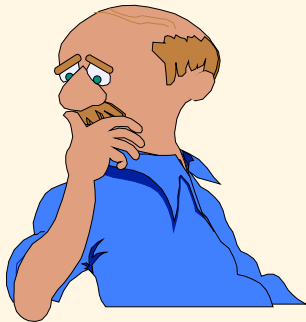
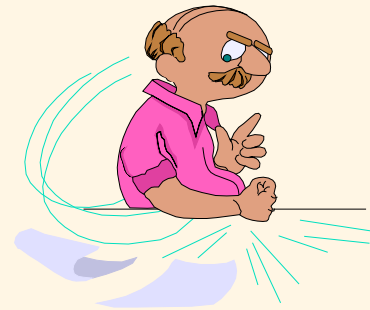
How has extended family been involved or impacted by financial issues



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## Motivation and Finances

“I’ll do whatever it takes”



Except ....

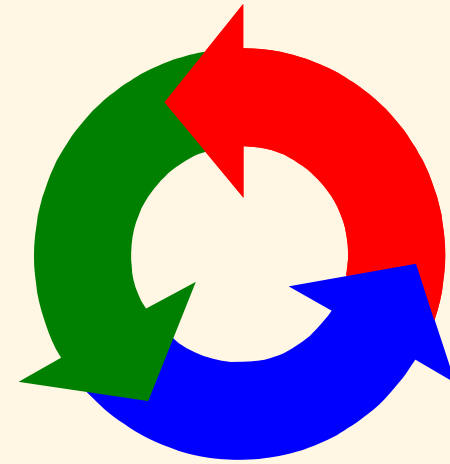
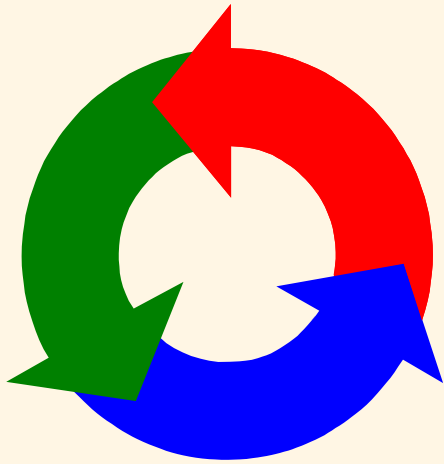




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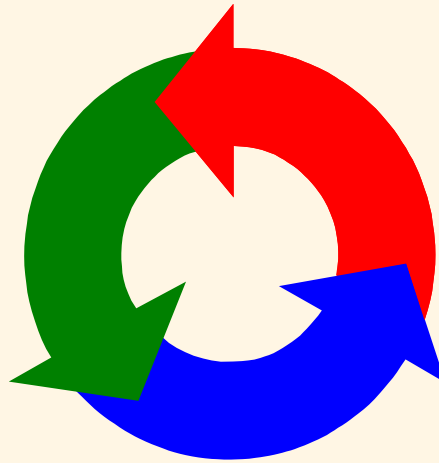
Stop Gambling

Motivation and Finances



Budget

Money Protection Plan



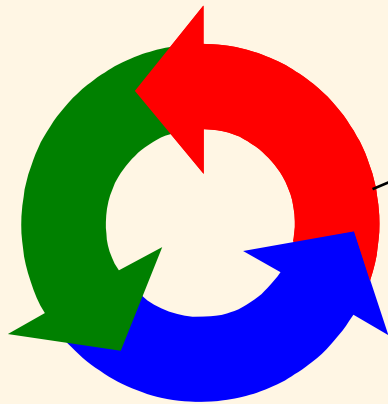


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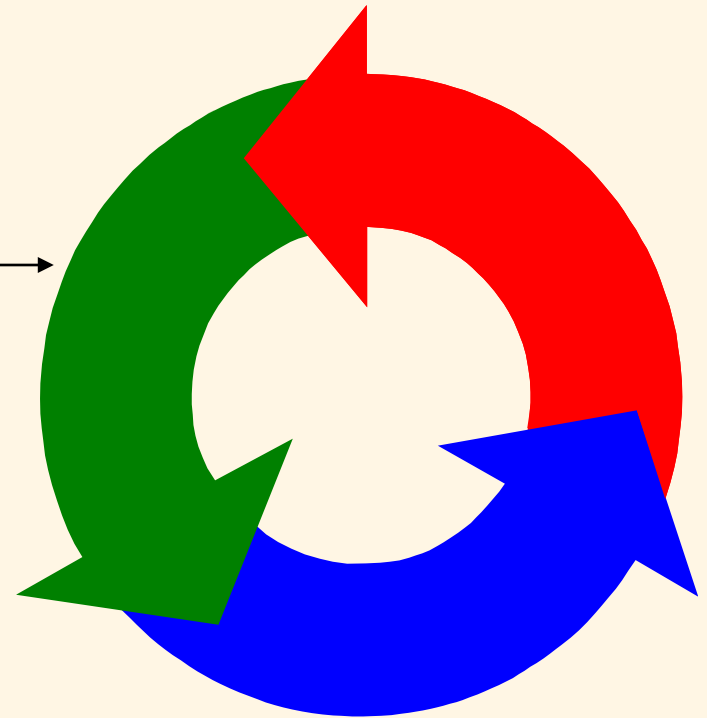
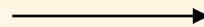
## Finances

Gambling Motivation

Recovery Motivation



List Debt





# Financial Planning for Recovery

- CC Six Stage Model (ala GA Budget and Pressure Relief)
  - Clarify Debt/Current Financial Situation
  - Identify/Predict Income
  - Identify Expenses
  - Create Budget/Make Adjustments
  - Debt Repayment Plan
  - Money Protection Plan

# Assessing Debt

- How much
  - Have you borrowed from friends, family, co-workers (whether or not they expect to be paid back)
  - How many credit cards, how much owned on each? Behind on payments?
  - Loans
    - Home equity
    - Car
    - Home
    - Bank, credit union
    - Payday
    - Other loan companies

## Assessing Debt

- How much
  - Behind on rent/mortgage
  - Behind on utilities
  - Behind on phone, cable
  - Taken from savings, retirement, investments
  - Owe casinos
  - Owe bookies
  - Owe loan sharks



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## Assessing Debt

Owed To	Amount	% Interest	Min. Payment	Respons	Priority

# Assessing Current Financial Situation



Damage to credit ratings/credit score



Limited cash flow, loss of job, business



Foreclosures, repossessions



Loss of medical/other benefits



Reliance on or need for public assistance



Loss of valuables



Harassment from debt collectors

# Assessing Current Financial Situation

## Recommendations for Partners

- Know your legal rights and liabilities
- Get support for beginning to address finances
- Check all accounts (banks, IRAs, Retirement, Investment, etc) and get statements for the last 90 days
- Check credit scores and personal credit reports
- Check status of all payments (mortgage, rent, car, utilities etc)
- Take inventory of all valuables
- Get help and support



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## Defining Income

Income Source	Date Received	Paid To	Amt after Deductions



## Defining Income and Sources for Gambling Money

- Paychecks
- Tips, gratuities, commissions
- Cash Payments
- Selling Property (Ebay, etc)
- Interest Payments
- Insurance Payments
- Retirement Accounts
- Investments
- Cash value in insurance
- Home Equity
- Business equity
- Property
  - Jewelry
  - Car
  - Electronics
  - Art
  - Antiques
  - Collections
- Illegal Sources
  - Access to money on job
  - Dealing Drugs
  - Prostitution
  - Fraud





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## Estimating Expenses

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List only income you can count on. Use lowest estimate of commissions, tips, extra income.

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Use “extra” income for savings or toward special needs or large purchases.

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List all household and family expenses

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Include gambling debt and other debt repayment as an expense

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Include money for savings as a basic expense

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Include money for recreation and fun as a basic expense

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Include GA donation and treatment cost as basic expense

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For expenses that occur less than monthly calculate average monthly allocation

# Example

- Average family annual income \$97,881.00, monthly 8156.75
- Assume family of four (2 children ages 2 and 6)
- Expenses:

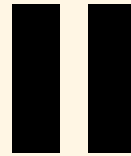
– 3 bedroom apt	2,000
– School & presch	1,000
– Car/Trans	900
– Food	1,500
– Utilities	300
– Internet & Phone	200
– Clothing	400
– tax	500
– Health Care	600
– Entertainment	300
– Total	7,700
– Income – Expenses =	456.75

## Example

Gambling  
Debt: 50,000



Interest rate:  
21%



**\$1375.00/Mo**

# Adjustments

Who is responsible? Who sacrifices?

Work more, spend less or both?

How to save money

- Make coupons your friend
- Avoid Rent-A-Center expenses
- Used cars
- How to eat healthy on a budget
- Bargain shop

## Money Protection Plan

How will we safeguard our money/assets from gambling?

Who can help?

To whom will I be accountable?

# Money Protection Plan

- Issues to consider:
  - Safety issues
  - Knowledge and experience
  - Family dynamics
  - Cultural issues

## Money Protection Plan: When Loved One is Working on Recovery

- Agree to explain their gambling problem to family and friends, makes commitment to restitution plan and asks them for their support in not lending any money.

## Financial Planning for Recovery

- What Makes a Good Financial Plan?
  - All parts of the financial planning process covered
  - Gambler and family committed to using it
  - All involved understand roles and responsibilities
  - Realistic and supports recovery goals
  - No bailouts - Support only with accountability
  - It is clear and committed to writing



# SECOND POLL

Have your clients dealt with any of these issues since the pandemic?

- Financial distress or financial anguish
- Trying to escape problems
- Struggling to care for family, financial obligations
- More anxiety and stress
- More depression

# CONCRETE INTERVENTIONS

- Unemployment Insurance (UI)
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Other Legislation
- Economic Stimulus Checks
- Financial Crisis Counseling
- Connection with Critical Resources

# PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTIONS INVOLVING FINANCES

- Financial counseling
- Financial coaching
- Financial education
- Financial therapy

# FINANCIAL COUNSELING

- One-time session; often “drop-in”
- Client in crisis\*
- Counselor defined
- Ad hoc; often ends with initial session/restarts with next crisis
- More didactic and prescriptive
- Ad hoc; general assumption is client will follow through on intentions
- Referrals common and active (calls placed; appointments made); may take advocacy or mediation role on behalf of client

# FINANCIAL COACHING

- More than 2 regularly scheduled sessions
- Client stable\* but seeking improvement
- Client defined; Active listening and carefully directed questions to guide self-reflection
- Follow up and accountability are explicit and planned for each session
- Client responsible for own advocacy; referrals common but passive

# FINANCIAL EDUCATION

- One to two set sessions
- Client stable but seeking specific information in identified area
- Client defined topic with educator teaching information
- More didactic, prescriptive, and typically with a set topic identified
- Client chooses what to do with information and carries out actions independently
- Referrals for additional information and relevant services provided for clients to act upon
-

# FINANCIAL THERAPY

- Blending of financial counseling and therapeutic intervention techniques
- Multiple sessions
- Different techniques to explore the emotional side of money management, financial decision-making, and interpersonal impact
- Examples: financial genogram, financial landscape, financial mirror
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# OTHER POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS/ TECHNIQUES

- Motivational Interviewing
  - Pros and cons of each spending choice
- Quantify/Use tangible examples
  - Mental accounting
  - Probability discounting
- Open-ended questions

Allison Deitz, LMSW and Jewell  
Banford, LCSW-C, University of  
Maryland, Baltimore



# OTHER TOOLS TO AID INTERVENTIONS

- “What's your money story?”
- The importance of contingency planning/mitigating risk



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# MARYLAND RESOURCES FOR EVICTION, FOOD BANKS, OTHER NEEDS

- CASH Campaign of Maryland
  - [www.cashmd.org](http://www.cashmd.org)
- Maryland Legal Aid
  - <https://www.mdlab.org/>
- Consumer Credit Counseling Services of Maryland
  - [www.cccsmd.org](http://www.cccsmd.org)
- Baltimore City's soon-to-be-launched Financial Empowerment Center
  - [www.oedworks.com](http://www.oedworks.com)



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# OTHER RESOURCES

- Unemployment:  
<https://www.dol.gov/coronavirus/unemployment-insurance>
- IRS: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/economic-impact-payments-what-you-need-to-know>
- Consumer Financial Protection Bureau:  
<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/>
- Prosperity Now:  
<https://prosperitynow.org/resources/covid-19-resources>

QUESTIONS?