



Promoting Resilience in Times of Adversity for Gambling Clients and Professionals

Anthony S. Parente, MA, LCPC, NCC, MAC, ICGC II, BACC



Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling

Mission Statement

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling promotes healthy and informed choices regarding gambling and problem gambling through *treatment, prevention, training and education, outreach and public awareness, research and public policy*. It does so by working closely with appropriate state stakeholders and bringing together experts from a variety of disciplines including psychiatry, medicine, epidemiology, social work, law and others.

Key Initiatives and Resources

- ▶ Helpline Service: **1-800-GAMBLER**
- ▶ Referral List/Network
- ▶ Peer Recovery Support
- ▶ Public Awareness
- ▶ Training
- ▶ Technical Assistance to Treatment Providers
- ▶ Prevention Programs
- ▶ Public Policy
- ▶ Research



Learning Objectives

- Review the factors that make the pandemic stressful for gamblers.
- Learn the definition of Resilience and how to promote its development.
- Learn clinical and self-care strategies specifically related to the current stressors in our lives.



BREATHE

The 3 Minute Breathing Space

Resilience

- ▶ Handout

 - Self-assessment – Brief Resilience Scale

- ▶ Think about what types of adversities have your clients endured?

 - What challenges have they faced over the course of their lives?

- ▶ What adversities have you endured?

 - Have you ever thought how am I going to get through this?

Resilience

Resilience is the ability to withstand adversity and bounce back from difficult life events.

STRESS

- ▶ How have the lives of our clients been impacted by the pandemic?
- ▶ What are the stressors that have been most impactful and challenging over the last 10 months?
- ▶ What are the ways that pandemic stress has manifested itself?
- ▶ What are the risks factors for gambling disordered individuals and those in recovery?
- ▶ What challenges are you experiencing?

Stress Defined

*A physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral response to **a REAL or PERCIEVED** challenge, demand, change or threat.*

Challenges

- Fear of COVID-19
- Working remotely & Transitioning back to Work
- Loss of Employment
- Feeling isolated and/or changes to support systems
- Children out of school/Childcare
- Eldercare concerns
- Cabin fever
- Technology
- Economic concerns
- Racial injustice and social unrest
- Managing anxiety of others (e.g. family members)



Challenges for the Gambling Disordered Individual

- Increased Anxiety
- Need to Escape
- Isolation/Less Support
- Fear of the future
- Loss
- Need for Control
- Family conflict/issues
- Change of Routine
- Relapse Risk





Emotional Reactions

Uncertain

Anxious

Fearful

Frustrated

Lonely

Angry

Optimistic

Grateful

Motivated

Accumulation of many feelings

Overwhelmed



BEHAVIOAL REACTIONS

- Eating more/less
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Procrastination, neglecting responsibilities
- Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
- Nervous habits (e.g., nail biting, pacing)
- Teeth grinding or jaw clenching
- Overdoing activities (e.g., online shopping, fixating on the news, binge watching)
- Overreacting to unexpected problems
- Tendency to cry
- Difficulty concentrating or memory issues

Building Mental Energy: Resiliency

The Art Of Bouncing Back

Resiliency is the ability to modify behaviors, thoughts and actions to handle a situation or challenge.

Characteristics of a resilient person:

- Optimistic
- Resourceful
- **Curious**
- **Flexible**
- **Empathic**

Self-compassion break





Optimism

- *Optimism is a hopeful, positive outlook on the future, yourself and the world around you.*
- *It is a key part of resilience, the inner strength that helps you get through difficult times.*

Learned Optimism

Optimism vs Pessimism

- ▶ Can Control the direction of life
- ▶ Addresses issues proactively
- ▶ Sees setbacks as temporary
- ▶ Finds the benefit in setbacks
- ▶ Focuses on the positive
- ▶ Believes in self

- ▶ Helpless to control life
- ▶ May give up more easily
- ▶ Views setbacks as global
- ▶ All or nothing thinking
- ▶ Negative magnet
- ▶ Blames self for all setbacks





Strategies

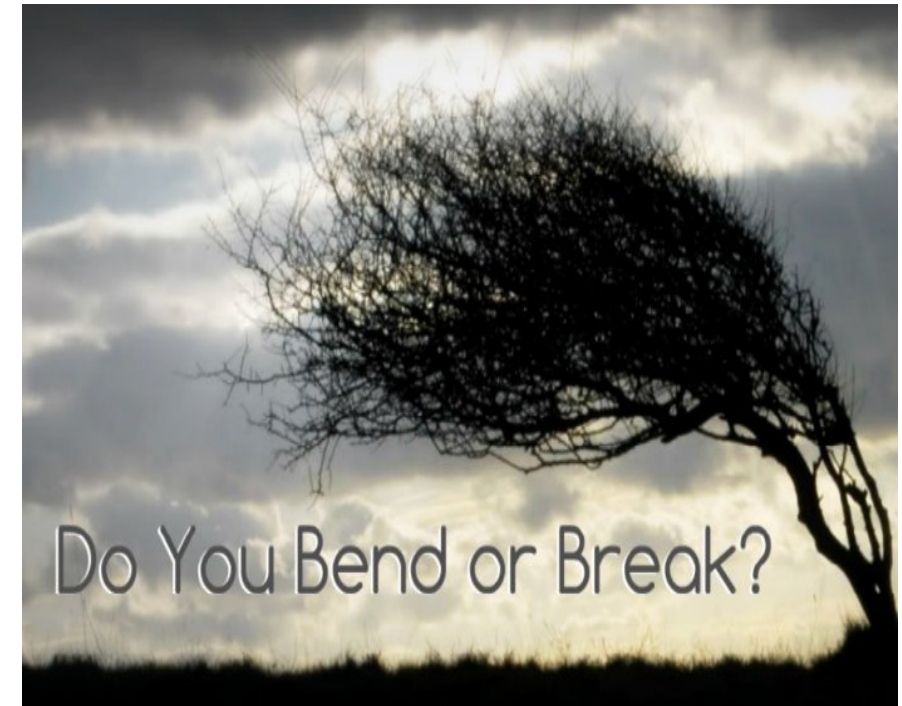


1. Review the evidence
2. Put things in perspective
3. Avoid hasty judgements
4. Give yourself credit

Resilience

Emotional Coping Strategies

- Express feelings/Acceptance of Feelings
- Lean into support
- Offer support to others
- Meaning and purpose
- Practice Empathy – Connect to others
- Challenges provide opportunities for growth





Empathy and Relationships

Reflection question...

What is empathy, and what is the mechanism that enables us human beings to feel empathy for one another?

- ▶ Mindful presence/hovering attention
- ▶ Listen to understand as opposed to being understood
- ▶ Tolerate discomfort – Our emotions and the emotions of others
- ▶ Radical acceptance

Reflection...

In what ways have you found that believing in your thoughts or perspectives can get in the way of connecting closely with others?

Promoting Empathy



Meditation

Mindfulness

Open Monitoring

Open Awareness – Reflexive awareness of the implicit features on one's mental life, such as thoughts or habitual ways of responding.



Living Life Through You

*Hokusai says look carefully.
He says pay attention, notice.
He says keep looking, stay curious.
He says there is no end to seeing*

*He says look forward to getting old.
He says keep changing,
you just get more who you really are.
He says get stuck, accept it, repeat
yourself as long as it is interesting.*

He says keep doing what you love....

*It matters that you feel.
It matters that you notice.
It matters that life lives through you.*

*Contentment is life living through you.
Joy is life living through you.
Satisfaction and strength
is life living through you.
Peace is life living through you.
He says don't be afraid.
Don't be afraid.*

Look, feel, let life take you by the hand.

*Let life live through you.
~ Roger Keyes*

Strive... to Thrive!

Thank you

Anthony S. Parente, MA, LCPC,
NCC, MAC, ICGC II, BACC

asparente12@gmail.com

410-321-7753

