

Don't Forget About the Power of the Unconscious: A Psychodynamic Approach to Working with Problem Gamblers

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

Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling

Learning Objectives

- Develop a greater understanding of various psychodynamic theories and how they explain the development of gambling disorder.
- Learn to apply the concepts of defense mechanisms, fantasy life and transference as they apply to problem gambling.
- Develop a deeper understanding of how to apply the principals of psychodynamic psychology to the treatment of gambling disorder.

BREATHE

RELAX

Early Recollections

Reflection

- What was the memory that came to mind?
 - Who else was involved with this memory?
 - What were the thoughts that came to mind?
 - The emotions? How did you experience the memory in your body?
 - What are the themes, issues and symbolism as you brought up this memory?
-
- Does the recollection connect to any themes or issues in your life? Presently or as you have developed over the years?

The Foundations of Psychology

Unconscious Determinates of Human Behavior

- Levels of Awareness

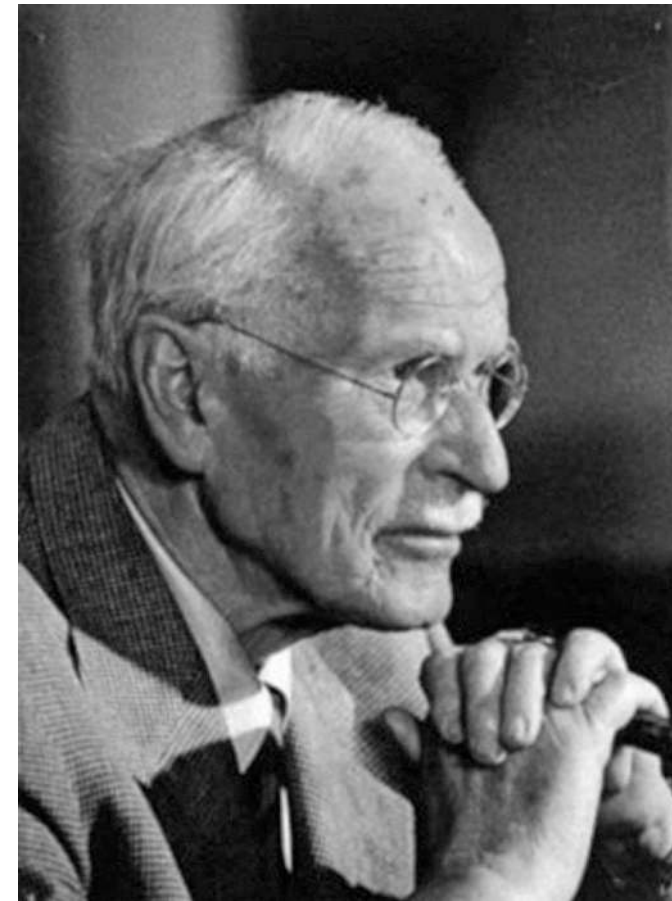
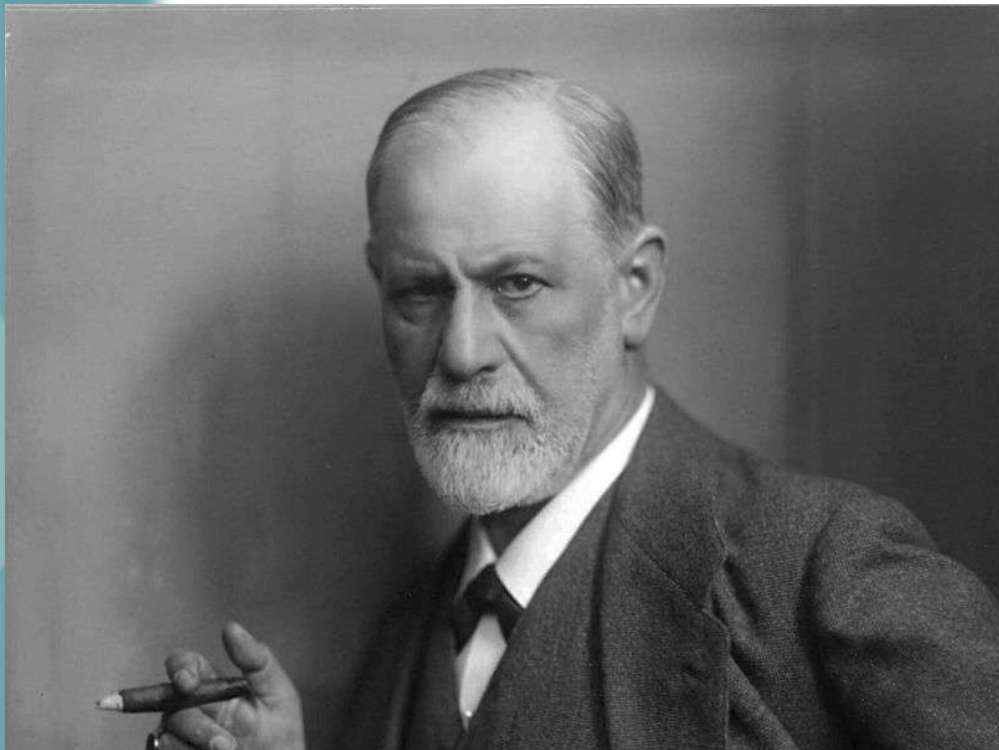
Conscious

Sub-conscious

Unconscious

- Defenses Mechanisms – Fantasy/Dream Life
- Transference Reactions
- Insight/Awareness/Catharsis/Change

The Giants



The Psychology of Human Nature

- Freud
 - Pleasure Seekers – Avoid Pain
 - Sexual Experiences
- Jung
 - Archetypes
 - Pathogenic Secrets
- Adler
 - Feelings of Inferiority
 - Compensation
- Psychological Needs – Safety and Security

Anxiety is Basic
The Talking Cure

Case of John

John is a 47 yo divorced Caucasian male, who is the father of 2 adult daughters.

Hx of gambling and S UD. Bipolar disorder. Alcohol inpatient 1 year ago and has been sober since attending a 28-day rehabilitation center. Gambling activity increased after alcohol abstinence.

Recently hospitalized for suicidality - Psychosis

Gambling led to suicide plan. Used money from social club fund, retirement and daughters wedding fund.

Family Hx of Alcoholism – Gambling Disorder - Mental Illness – Domestic Violence – Trauma

Worked hard to keep family dysfunction a secret – HS friend Died by Suicide

Childhood history of gambling – Family gambling – Veteran –

Unable to control the impulse to gamble daily – lotto – EGD – Casino – 2+ years of daily gambling

Gambling Debt and threat of criminal charges -

The Unconscious Mind of the Gambler

- What are the themes, issues and experiences of the gambler?
- How do defenses serve the gambler?
- Fantasy Life
 - Hero archetype – Anxieties –
- Behavior Patterns
 - Transference

Psychodynamic Applications

Psychodynamic Therapy is most suitable for...

- Those who have coexisting psychopathology with their SUD or GD
- Those whose recovery is stable
- Those who do not have Organic Brain Disorder or other limitations due to their mental capacity

The usefulness of Psychodynamic Concepts

- The Therapeutic Alliance
- Insight
- Defenses and Resistance
- Transference/Countertransference

Defense Mechanisms

- Denial
- Rationalization
- Repression
- Projection
- Displacement
- Minimization
- Safeguarding tendencies –
Excuses - Aggression – Withdrawal

Protect the Self – AT ALL COSTS

Unconscious Processes to Explore

- Triggers
- Displacement
- Projections
- Feelings of Insecurity
- Safety and Satisfaction of Needs
- Connections of past to present
- Awareness and Catharsis

The Case of Ron

Ron is a 53 yo single Caucasian male. High level of stress and anxiety. Family history of Gambling Disorder. Dad in treatment and GA for many years. History of alcohol and drug use. Never received treatment outside of family therapy when he was 15 yo. Used work to address debt and credit problems. Borrowed from a friend to cover the loss.

Dad passed away 25 years ago.

Family History of Addictions and Mental Illness –

Family moved 9x in 12 years – Dad covering up or hiding from collectors – Impersonating to secure student loan -

Serious car accident – Loss the use of a limb –

Lost Job – unemployed

Primary Gambling Activity – Slots

Repression – Displacement – Loss – Unresolved Grief

Self soothing activities – Internal Conflicts

Psychodynamic Therapy

- Psychotherapy – Carl Jung (Four Stages)
 - Confession of a pathogenic secret
 - Interpretation, explanation, and elucidation
 - Education as social beings
 - Transformation
- Individual Therapy – Adler
 - Engagement
 - Assessment
 - Insight
 - Reorientation

Brief Psychodynamic Therapies

Dynamic Supportive Psychotherapy (Pinsker, Rosenthal, and McCullough) Up to 40 sessions
Increase self-esteem, adaptive skills, and ego functions.

Self-esteem boosters: reassurance, praise, encouragement

Reduction of anxiety

Respect adaptive defenses, challenge maladaptive ones

Clarifications, reflections, interpretations

Rationalizations, reframing, advice

Modeling, anticipation, and rehearsal

Brief Psychodynamic Therapies

Interpersonal Psychotherapy (Klerman) Time limited; for addictive disorders, Eliminating or reducing the primary symptom; improvement in handling current interpersonal problem areas, particularly those associated with addictive disorders.

Exploration, clarification, encouragement of affect, analysis of communication, use of the therapeutic relationship and behavior-change techniques.

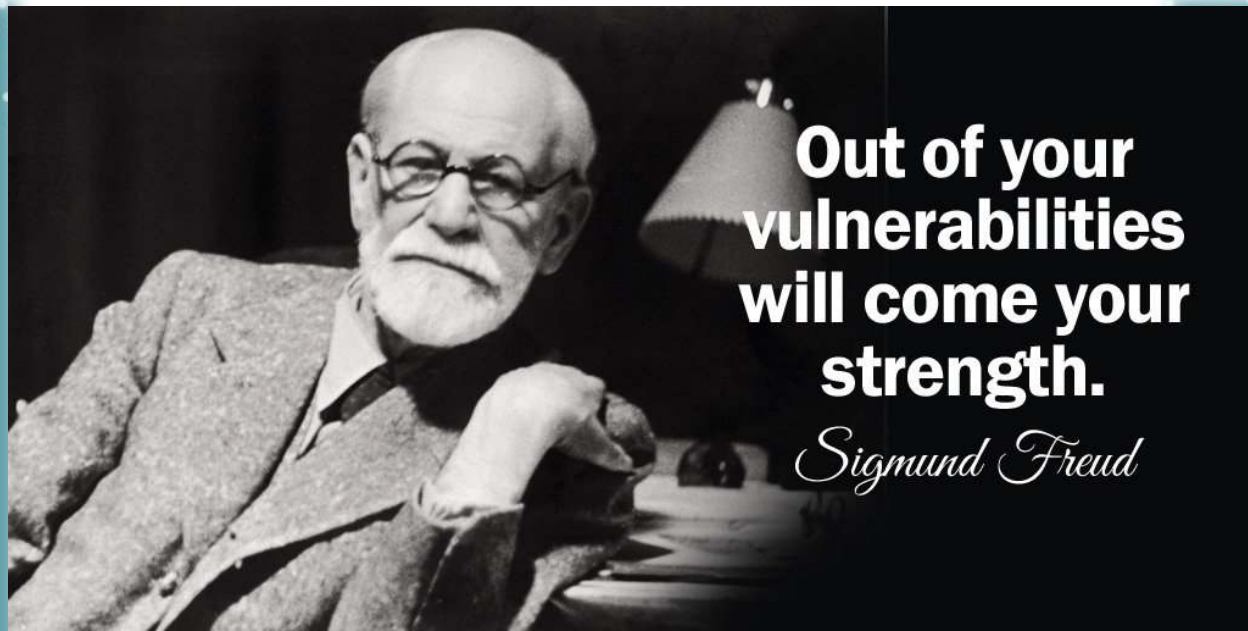
Brief Psychodynamic Therapies

Time-Limited Psychotherapy (Mann) 12 sessions. Central issue related to conflict about loss (lifelong source of pain, attempts to master it, and conclusions drawn from it regarding the client's self-image)

Formulation, presentation, and interpretations of the central issue

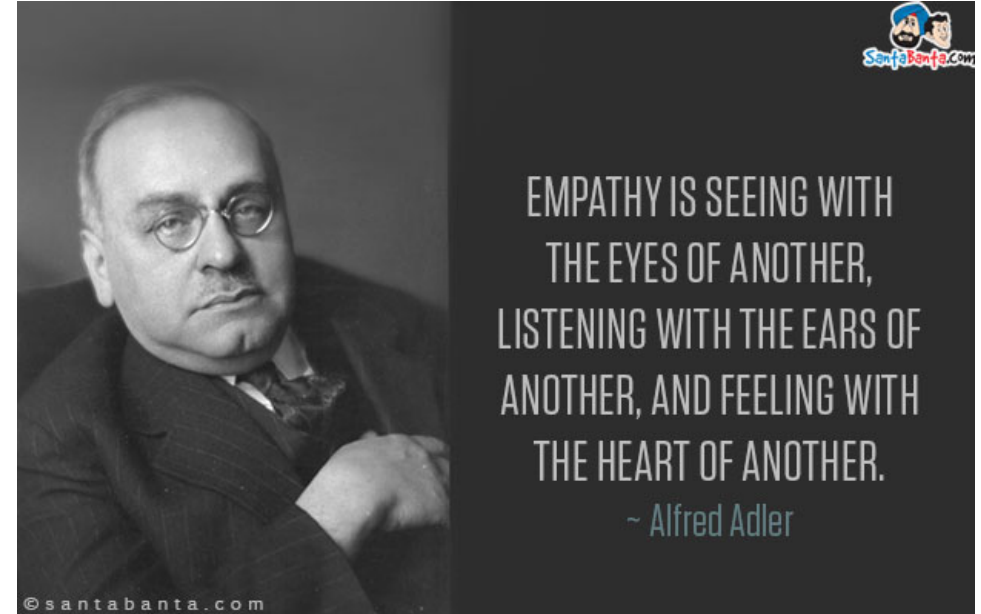
Interpretation around earlier losses

Termination



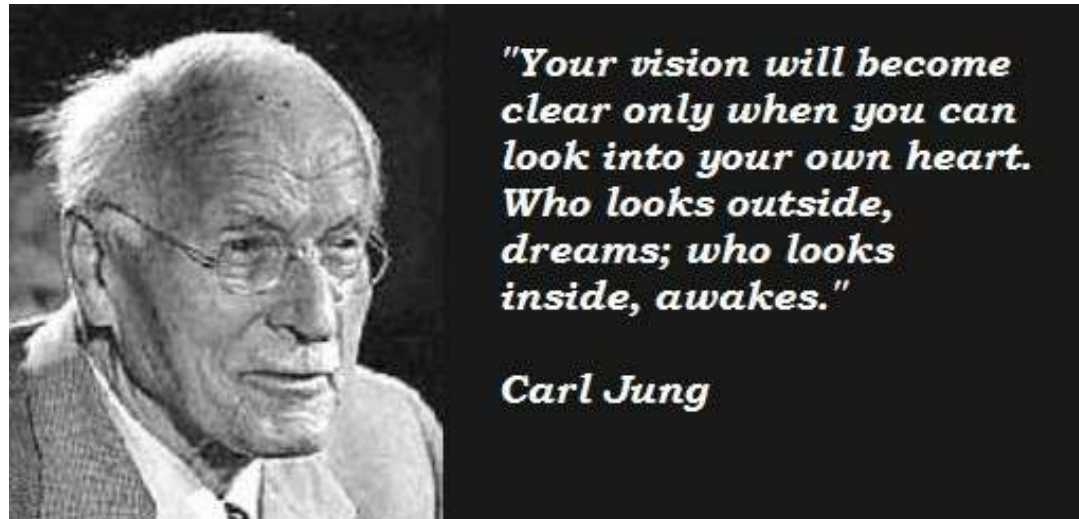
**Out of your
vulnerabilities
will come your
strength.**

Sigmund Freud



EMPATHY IS SEEING WITH
THE EYES OF ANOTHER,
LISTENING WITH THE EARS OF
ANOTHER, AND FEELING WITH
THE HEART OF ANOTHER.

~ Alfred Adler



*"Your vision will become
clear only when you can
look into your own heart.
Who looks outside,
dreams; who looks
inside, awakes."*

Carl Jung



Thank You

PEACE

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

asparente12@gmail.com

410-321-7753