

Best Practices in the Treatment of Problem Gambling

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Learning Objectives

- Participants will learn how to apply evidence-based practices in the treatment of Gambling Disorder.
- Participants will develop an understanding of the complexities of the therapeutic processes that are unique to Gambling Disordered individuals.
- Participants will learn various techniques to improve treatment outcomes for those who have a Gambling Disorder.

Overview

- Engagement – Best Practices
- Evidence based therapists or therapies?
- The Usual Suspects:
 - CBT
 - 12 Step
- Reality Therapy
- Therapist Mindfulness Skills
- Self-Care

Obstacles to Treatment – Exercise

- What do you believe are the greatest obstacles for a gambler's engagement in any type treatment?

The belief that Tx doesn't work...

I tried it before, and it didn't work...

I'm not crazy...

No one will understand...

I can do this myself...

It's not that bad...

I just need **ONE BIG WIN!**

STIGMA

BIAS

Obstacles to Treatment

Developing a Gambling Disorder is NOT a CHOICE

It involves a willingness to take a CHANCE...on each bet.

There are Many Choices People make each day.

The misfortune they have experienced in their lives...

We don't know all of it... and they don't understand it's impact.

Priorities

- **Keep the client ALIVE**
- Keep the client in Treatment
- *Make a Difference in How the Client Experiences their Lives*
- *What Works for Who? When?...Many Variables...We try so hard to know...and think we do know.*

Recovery

Working definition of recovery from mental disorders and/or substance use and related disorders:

A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.

What can we do as professional helper to facilitate this process?

Principles of Recovery



- Person – driven ;
- Occurs via many pathways;
- Is holistic;
- Is supported by peers;
- Is supported through relationships;
- Is culturally - based and influenced;
- Is supported by addressing trauma;
- Involves individual, family, and community strengths and responsibility;
- Is based on respect; and
- Emerges from hope.

(SAMHSA, 2012)

Principals of Effective Addictive Disorders Treatment

Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment: A Research-Based Guide (Third Edition)
Principles of Effective Treatment

- **Addiction is a complex but treatable disease that affects brain function and behavior.**
- **No single treatment is appropriate for everyone.**
- **Treatment needs to be readily available.**
- **Effective treatment attends to multiple needs of the individual, not just his or her drug abuse/gambling.**
- **Remaining in treatment for an adequate period of time is critical.**
- **Behavioral therapies—including individual, family, or group counseling—are the most commonly used forms of substance abuse and gambling disorder treatment.**

Principals of Effective Addictive Disorder Treatment

- Medications are an important element of treatment for many patients, especially when combined with counseling and other behavioral therapies
- An individual's treatment and services plan must be assessed continually and modified as necessary to ensure that it meets his or her changing needs.
- Many SUD and GD individuals also have other mental disorders.
- Motivational enhancement and incentive strategies, begun at initial patient intake, can improve treatment engagement.
- Treatment does not need to be voluntary to be effective.
- Drug use and gambling behavior during treatment must be monitored continuously, as lapses during treatment do occur.

(Adopted SAMSHA 2018)

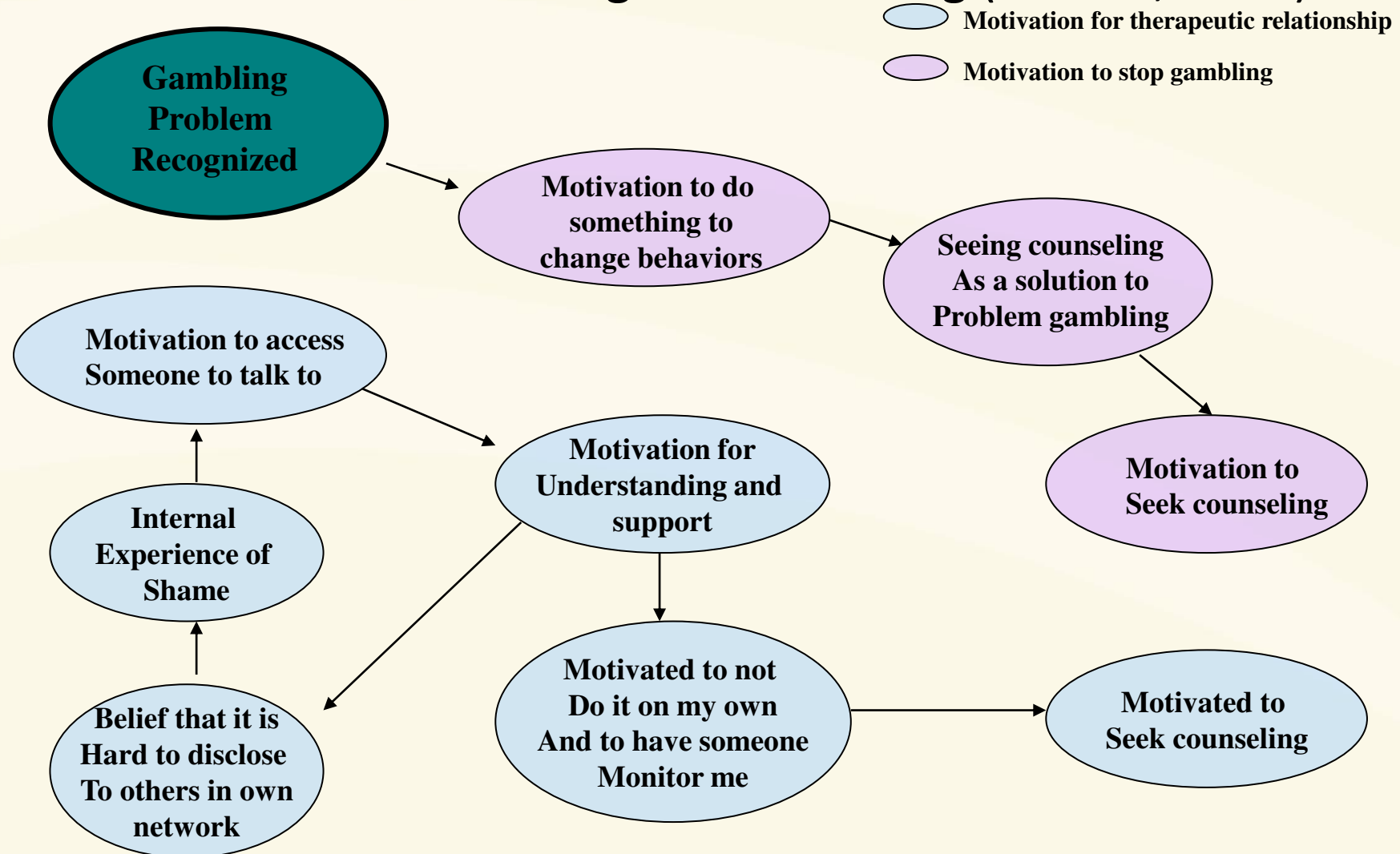
Barriers to Help Seeking

- Person-Centered Factors Predominant
 - Want to resolve problem on own and pride
 - Shame and embarrassment
 - Reluctance to admit problem
 - Too overwhelmed to get help
- Service Centered Factors
 - Bad help seeking experience
 - Being treated like “addict” or mentally-ill person
 - Couldn’t get service at time or place wanted

Therapist Challenges

- Compassionate Honesty
- Tolerating client's emotional discomfort
- Balance between empathic support and helpful feedback
- Acknowledging counter transference reactions
- Patience and Self-Forgiveness

Dual Motivation for Seeking PG Counseling (Carnie, 2007)



Redefining Best Practices

- *Meta-analysis establishing association between alliance and outcome (Horvath et al., 2011; Tryon & Winograd, 2011) even in structured CBT (Waddington, 2002) and pharmacological treatment (McKay et al 2006)*
- *Ensuring the application of specific guidelines and approved or “**empirically validated**” psychotherapeutic methods does not lead to improved treatment outcome. Differences in treatment methods, diagnoses, and even length of treatment account for less than 5% of the variance in outcomes (Bowen, Dries & Nace, *The Heart and Soul of Change: What Works in Therapy* 1999.)*



Redefining Best Practices



- Development of evidence-based therapists is at least as much as, if not more, [important] than the dissemination of specific therapies
- “No amount of theory, coursework, continuing education, or on-the-job experience will lead to the development of ‘experienced judgement’ required for superior performance... For that it appears that practitioners must be engaged in the process ..[of] continuously reaching for objectives just beyond their current ability.” (Miller, Hubble & Duncan)

Treatment Approaches

- What are your beliefs about the curative factors that lead to change?
- What are your theoretical underpinnings related to the approaches you use?
- What type of approaches do you practice?

There are many approaches to
counseling/psychotherapy/treatment

Eclectic

Action Paradigms

Old action paradigm:

Change is dramatic and discrete, and the client must enroll in an action program.

- Failure due to lack of willingness
- Failure due to lack of willpower
- Failure due to denial
- Failure due to need to hit bottom

Affirmations

- **Ways to point out the positive aspects of person**
 - Behavior
 - Intention
 - Struggles
 - Thinking
 - Feelings
 - Traits, qualities
- Affirmations are free
 - Used not nearly enough - **PRAISE**

Cognitive Behavioral Approaches

- Irrational Thoughts
 - **Illusions of Control**
Ladouceur et al., 1998; Petry, 2000
 - **Irrational and Distorted Thinking**
Breen et al., 1999; Ladouceur & Walker, 2000
 - **Superstitious Beliefs**
Tonetto et al., 1997;
 - **Interpretive Biases**
Attribution, Gambler's Fallacy, Near Misses
- Structured Interventions/Assignments
 - Insight to Action Connection
- Coping Skills and Relapse Prevention
Sylvain et al., 1997; Petry, 2000

Irrational Thoughts

- Understanding the concept of randomness
- Understanding erroneous beliefs of gamblers
- Changing perceptions to facilitate informed choice and responsibility
- Cognitive restructuring

Cognitive Approach

A- Activating Situation

B- Belief Systems

Irrational Beliefs >>>>>

C- Consequences Emotionally

Irrational Ideas That Gamblers - Gambling

What are they?

What have you heard people say?

Can you think of some?

What are some examples?

How many can you name?

ILLUSIONS/DISTORTIONS

Gambling Myths

- I am smarter than the rest of the gamblers
- I have a money problem, not a gambling problem
- Gambling is the only way out
- The big win is around the corner, next bet
- I can get even, then I will stop
- I am not like drug addicts or alcoholics
- I can stop anytime I want, I just don't want to
- If I had more money, I know I could win

Major Constructs of Reality Therapy

- People are responsible for their own behavior
- People generate behavior and make choices for a purpose
- People can change and live more effectively
- 5 Innate Human Needs; Survival, Love and Belongingness, Achievement or Power, Freedom and Independence, Fun and Enjoyment

Major Constructs of Reality Therapy

- Acting is the what we can control the MOST
- To change what we are feeling emotionally, or physically we **MUST** change our what we are **DOING**.
- If you can't change what you are doing...
change what you are **THINKING**.

Example... You have been frustrated most of the day... Work stress... worrying about bills... must keep many secrets about finances and activities.

So you are **FEELING...**

and you are **THINKING**

and you are **PHYSICALLY**

and how are you **ACTING –**

If you change the acting component - **What will happen?**

Reality Therapy Goals

Help the client to fulfill their needs which will ultimately make the client select better CHOICES that will lead them in the direction of taking effective control of their lives.

This is...

EMPOWERMENT



Twelve Step Approaches

- **Social Support and Fellowship**
 - *Understanding and Acceptance*
 - Decrease Shame and Isolation
- **Structured Recovery Program – Working the steps - One Day at a Time**
- **Amends and Restitution**
- **Spirituality as Recovery Tool – Belief in a Power Greater than Ourselves**
- VA Study – 74% of pts. Attending GA abstinent vs. 42% of those not attending GA (Taber et al 1987)
- 12 Step = CBT

The striking similarities in intention and process between these two approaches are shown for each of the 12 steps despite their differences in their conceptual and linguistic framework. The result of this analysis is to encourage integration of these complementary approaches based on the common ingredients of therapeutic change rather than on ideologically- based differences. (Toneatto 2008)

- Obstacles

Self-Care

Self-care is not selfish.
It's actually one of the
greatest gifts we can give
ourselves and others
because we can not give
from an empty well.

Michelle Maldonado

The Cost of Caring



Resilience

- Recognize the hazards of psychological practice
- Think about broad strategies for self-change instead of specific techniques
- Engage in self-awareness and self-liberation
- Have an assortment of self-change skills from diverse theoretical orientations
- Practice Stimulus control(make your environment work for you) and counterconditioning(i.e. relaxation, assertion, cognitive restructuring, exercise, and diversion)
- Refrain from engaging in wishful thinking and self-blame
- Consider the personal benefits of psychological practice

(Norcross, 2000)

Refuel/Reenergize/Revitalize

- Set Goals & Develop a Plan:

What activities can be done to enhance the quality of your life and those you serve?

Professional

Aerobic

Spiritual

Physical

Emotional

Psychological

Meditation

Cultivation of Joy and Gratitude

Accept and Allow

Loving Kindness – Self Compassion

Imagine what life would be like if we accept life as it is.

Tara Brach

This Day

Look to this Day
for it is life
the very life of life.
In in its brief course lie all
the realities and truths of existence:
the joy of growth
the splendor of action
The glory of power
For yesterday is like a memory
And tomorrow is only a vision.
But today well lived
Makes every yesterday a memory of happiness
and every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day.





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