



UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Gambling Disorder

Self-help Recovery Supports

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The Maryland Center of
Excellence on Problem Gambling



Objectives

- Talk about the nature and recovery orientation of a variety of self-help groups and how to offer effective options to their clients.
- How self-help options can be integrated into clinical recovery planning.
- Utilize motivational strategies to encourage client utilization of self-help resources.

Twelve Step Approaches

Social Support and Fellowship

- Understanding and Acceptance
- Decrease Shame and Isolation

Structured Recovery Program

Amends and Restitution

Spirituality as Recovery Tool

Self-Change and Self-Forgiveness

VA Study – 74% of pts. Attending GA abstinent vs. 42% of those not attending GA (Taber et al 1987)

12 Step = CBT (Toneatto & Dragonetti, 2008)

Nature of GA Meetings

Open

Closed

Cross Comment

Clean Date

Ask to respond to 20 Questions

Often everyone is asked to talk or read

Budget and Pressure Relief

AA and GA Meetings

Fewer meetings

Few Lead or Step meetings

Smaller

Down play spirituality

Meetings often longer

Sponsorship not as available

GA is Different from AA

While there is significant literature on effectiveness of AA as a treatment intervention (Tonigan et al), it can't be assume that this automatically translates to effectiveness of GA.

Absence of a disease model

AA members have experienced physiological effects, in ways requiring medical intervention

Harmful effects of the substance are direct, immediate, serious

In addition to the seriousness ("If I drink again, I will die"), is a commonality ("we are all in this together") that promotes community

Unlike GA, AA has active outreach program, physicians and non-alcoholic health-care professionals on its board

GA literature states that compulsive gambling is an illness but doesn't substantiate or explain it

*Preoccupation
with financial
difficulties*

Reality-based financial problems often overwhelming – GA offers “pressure relief” group; financial inventory as part of the 4th step

Newly abstinent gambler may be working multiple jobs, trying to settle with creditors, keep a step ahead

Focus on money as solution to problems resembles mindset while gambling

GA members don’t talk about “serenity,” instead talk about how hard they’re working, goal of “getting back on their feet”

Big differences based on financial potential, ability to work, socioeconomic. Basis for resentment, envy, difficulty identifying

Heterogeneity

Crucial aspect of the 12 step programs – *identification* with one's peers and a sense of *community* when addressing shared problems

“Democracy of the gutter” in AA. Physical symptoms produce a levelling effect. No credit for how much one drank or how long to fall down. Nor do people sit together based on type of poison.

GA newcomer aware of differences

- hierarchy based on type of gambling, luck vs skill-based games, amount of money lost

Difficulty identifying in GA, feeling left out, not understanding what others are talking about



Heterogeneity

- Level of debt varies enormously, and since shares frequently deal with indebtedness, who has money or doesn't is obvious
- Major differences with regard to triggers and necessary life style changes
 - “GA is confusing. Everyone seems to be working a different program.”
 - Even disagreement about what's considered gambling
 - stock market? retirement fund? real estate? business?
 - a young man didn't understand why he couldn't be in a fantasy football league or make small bets while playing golf.
“Outside of poker, I don't have a gambling problem”



Using Motivational Strategies for Attending Support Groups

- Space for Open Discussion
- Use of 20 Questions or other Recovery Materials to elicit curiosity
- Have peer available to meet with client(s)
- Review recovery literature – what fits
- Problem solve obstacles
- Practice meeting
- Buddy system
- Know your local recovery community
- Deeply understand the 12 Steps and other recovery structures



Gam-Anon

“Gam-Anon is a 12-step self-help fellowship of men and women who have been affected by the gambling problem of another . . .

We may have become fearful and uncertain as to how to cope with the deterioration in our lives and our relationships, the financial problems, and the debts caused by the gambling. We know that living with the effects of another’s gambling can often be too devastating to bear without help.

With the help of Gam-Anon, we find our way back to a normal way of thinking and living, whether or not our loved ones continue to gamble. We believe that a change in our attitudes is of boundless help to us as well as to our gamblers.”



Gamblers in Recovery

- Online Notice Board for those with gambling problems, friends and family
- Links to meetings internationally
- Records of over 300 speaker meetings
- Special focus meetings:
 - Gambling and food addiction
 - Those with serious medical conditions and special needs
 - Women’s meetings
 - Veterans

SMART Recovery

- Based on empirical evidence based strategies
- Uses techniques from:
 - Cognitive Behavior Therapy
 - Rational Emotive Therapy
 - Motivational Enhancement Therapy



SMART Recovery

4-STEP PROGRAM





The Invitation to Change (ITC)

- *The Invitation to Change* is our “science and kindness” approach, using evidence-based methods that have been shown—in studies with real families—to be effective at helping people change.
- The Invitation to Change Approach (ITC) is a holistic helping framework based in science and kindness, designed for the families and loved ones of people struggling with addictive behaviors, as well as the professionals who support them.
- Our trainings and materials invite you to reflect on what it means to help, reimagine the role that loved ones can play in the change process, and learn evidence-supported strategies for helping.



Celebrate Recovery

Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered, 12-step recovery program for anyone struggling with hurt, pain or addiction of any kind.



CELEBRATE RECOVERY'S EIGHT RECOVERY PRINCIPLES THE ROAD TO RECOVERY BASED ON THE BEATITUDES

- **R**ealize I'm not God; I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable. (Step 1)
"Happy are those who know that they are spiritually poor." Matthew 5:3a TEV
- **E**arnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him and that He has the power to help me recover. (Step 2)
"Happy are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Matthew 5:4 TEV, NIV
- **C**onsciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control. (Step 3)
"Happy are the meek." Matthew 5:5a TEV
- **O**penly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust. (Steps 4 and 5)
"Happy are the pure in heart." Matthew 5:8a TEV
- **V**oluntarily submit to any and all changes God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects. (Steps 6 and 7)
"Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires" Matthew 5:6a TEV
- **E**valuate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others when possible, except when to do so would harm them or others. (Steps 8 and 9)
"Happy are the merciful." Matthew 5:7a TEV; "Happy are the peacemakers" Matthew 5:9 TEV
- **R**eserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will. (Steps 10 and 11)
- **Y**ield myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and my words. (Step 12)
"Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires." Matthew 5:10 TEV



***“You are not the worst thing
you have ever done.”
Byron Stevenson***

12 STEP STRUCTURE & PROCESS OF SELF-FORGIVENESS

GA

- Step 1 – “admitted we were powerless over gambling... that our lives had become unmanageable”

HR/Mindful Alternative

- Admitted that my gambling is out of control and my life is suffering
- Mindful Alternative
- Step 1 - “I don’t have power over what desires I have, but I do have power over what actions I take...I am powerless, when I exceed my limits but I also have the ability to [change] my actions of speech, body, and mind through the practice of [skillful] principles” (Noah Levine)
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12 STEP STRUCTURE & PROCESS OF SELF-FORGIVENESS

GA

- Step 2 – “came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to a normal way of thinking and living

HR Alternative

- Step 2 - came to believe that I need help to regain a controlled way of gambling and to restore myself to a healthy way of living



12 STEP STRUCTURE & PROCESS OF SELF-FORGIVENESS

GA

- Step 3 – “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of this Power of our own understanding.”

HR Alternative

- Step 3 – Made a decision to be willing to get/accept the help that I need.
- Made a choice to view my gambling honestly and realistically and let go of any beliefs that gambling would solve my problems or undo the harm it has caused.

12 STEP STRUCTURE & PROCESS OF SELF-FORGIVENESS

GA

- Step 4 – “Made a searching and fearless moral and financial inventory of ourselves.”

HR Alternative

- Step 4 – Made a searching and honest inventory of my gambling risk factors and the harm (and potential) harm my excessive gambling has caused

12 STEP STRUCTURE & PROCESS OF SELF-FORGIVENESS

GA

- Step 5 – “Admitted to ourselves and to
- another human being the exact nature of our wrongs”

HR Alternative

- Step 5 – Admitted to myself and to another person the mistakes I have made and the harm my excessive gambling has caused and could cause in the future

12 STEP STRUCTURE & PROCESS OF SELF-FORGIVENESS

GA

- Step 6 – “Were entirely ready to have these defects of character removed.”

HR Alternative

- Step 6 – I am ready to change my unhelpful ways of thinking, feeling and behaving that have contributed to harmful gambling



12 STEP STRUCTURE & PROCESS OF SELF-FORGIVENESS

GA

- Step 7 – “Humbly asked God (of our understanding) to remove our shortcomings.”

HR Alternative

- Step 7 – Sought help and support with humility and willingness to change my unhelpful thoughts, feelings and behaviors and to develop a healthy way of living

12 STEP STRUCTURE & PROCESS OF SELF-FORGIVENESS

- Step 8 – “Make a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.”
- Step 9 – “Made direct amends to such people Whenever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.”

12 STEP STRUCTURE & PROCESS OF SELF-FORGIVENESS

GA

- Step 10 – “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it. “

HR Alternative

- Step 10 – Continued to take personal inventory and when I made a mistake, promptly admitted it.

12 STEP STRUCTURE & PROCESS OF SELF-FORGIVENESS

GA

- Step 11 – “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.”

HR Alternative

- Step 11 – Sought through mindful awareness, prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with myself, others and highest truth, wishing only for knowledge of the greatest good and the power to carry that out



12 STEP STRUCTURE & PROCESS OF SELF-FORGIVENESS

GA

Step 12 – “Having made an effort to practice these principles in all our affairs, we tried to carry this message to other compulsive gamblers.”

HR Alternative

Step 12 – Having made an effort to practice these guidelines in my life, I try to be of help to others who may benefit from my experience



”Final stage of healing is using what happened to you to help other people.”

-Gloria Steinem

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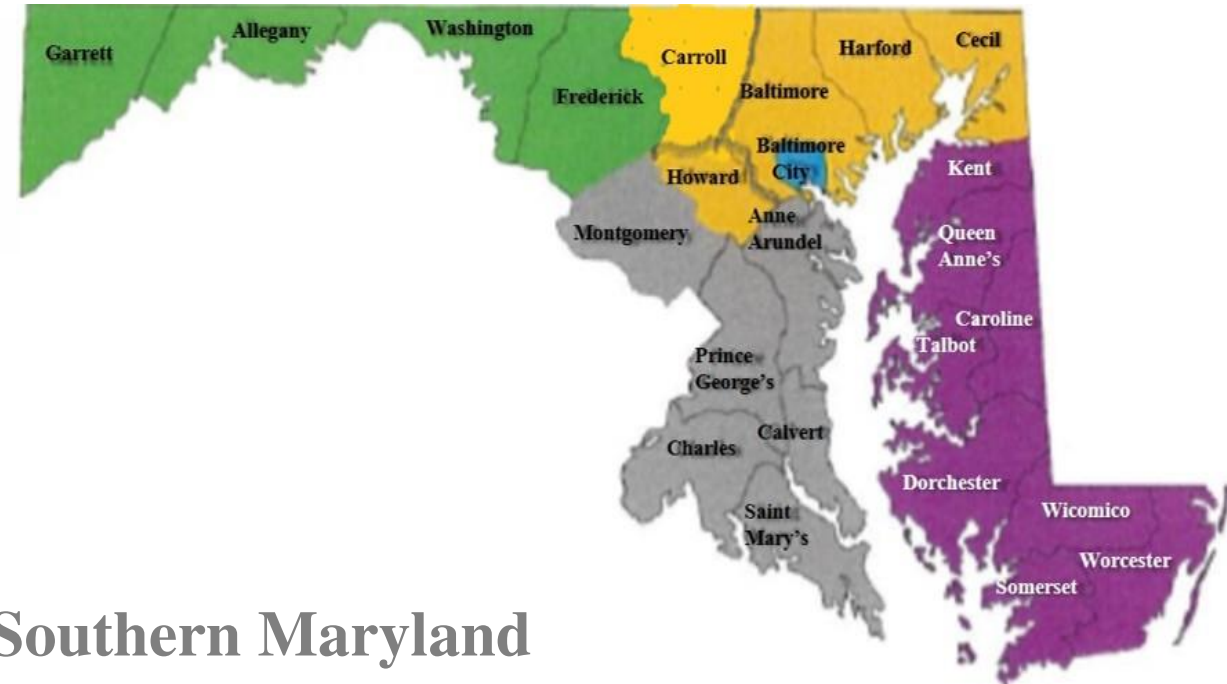
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Resources

- <https://celebraterecovery.com/> 18 meetings throughout MD
- <https://cmcffc.org/approach/invitation-to-change>
- <https://gam-anon.org/> 2 meetings in MD
- <https://gamblersanonymous.org> 15 meetings in MD
- <https://gamblersinrecovery.com/>
- <https://www.smartrecovery.org/about-us/> 50 meetings in MD