

Bridging The Gap

Bridging the Gap Between Formalized Treatment & Self Help

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Treatment

- Therapist – Individual Counseling – One on One Sessions
 - Motivational interviewing
 - CBT (Rod)
- Group Counseling (Kathleen)
- Psychiatrist (Kathy)

Self Help

- GA (Joe)
- GAM-Anon (Mara)

Putting It All Together (Barbara)

Tips (Mara)

Treatment

Therapist – Individual Counseling

Therapists might use these two tools to counsel a gambler:
CBT

Encourage clients to identify important events, feelings, thoughts and behaviors related to gambling.
Questioning and testing cognitions, assumptions, evaluations and beliefs that might be negative and unrealistic • Taking part in activities that may have been avoided in the past • Testing out new ways of behaving and reacting.

MI meets the client where they are at. For these individuals, MI can be used to explore positive and negative perceptions of gambling.

Treatment

Group Counseling

■ Some Advantages of Group Treatment:

- Offer members education about the recovery process.
- Provide support and motivation from peers to maintain recovery goals.
- Learn new problem-solving methods.
- Identify and relate to other problem gamblers.
- Empower group members.
- Teach healthy coping skills.
- Build a sense of optimism, self-worth, and belief in the group members.
- Utilize therapeutic tools (such as challenging irrational beliefs and confronting poor decision-making) to modify behaviors

Treatment Psychiatrist

- A Suggested Diagnostic and Treatment Approach
- Screen all patients for pathological gambling. For those who screen positive a psychiatric evaluation might be recommended.
 - If the person is reporting urges or cravings to gamble, possible considerations include a trial of an opioid antagonist, i.e. Naltrexone
 - If the person is having a co-occurring substance use disorder, consider a trial of an opioid antagonist, i.e. Naltrexone
 - If the person gambles because of depression or anxiety, or has co-occurring depressive or anxiety symptoms, consider an SSRI trial, i.e. Anti-depressant
 - If the person gambles when hypomanic or manic or has symptoms of (hypo)mania, consider a trial of lithium.
- A psychiatric evaluation would best determine the needs of the client and how they might be best treated from a pharmacology perspective.
- Grant, J. E., & Kim, S. W. (2006, September). Medication Management of Pathological Gambling. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1857322/>

Gam-Anon

- Fellowship for loved ones of a compulsive gambler
- 12 Step of Recovery
- Sponsorship
- Help towards finances
- Healthy Coping Skills
- Breaking Co-Dependency

Self Help

- Find self-help ways that work for you. Gamblers Anonymous, Bettors anonymous, SMART Recovery are some organized self-help organizations
- Support for Recovering gamblers/fellowship
- Develop a pressure relief budget
- Sponsorship
- Help with Creditors
- Working the 12 Steps
- Self Improvement

Putting It All Together

- The disease of gambling wants you alone, it wants you isolated. Developing a community of friends, family, and activities will keep you from a natural inclination to isolate. Get involved in your community. Make the effort to reach out to others. You are not alone — but it takes effort to remember that.
- An example of a Recovery Plan might look like this:
 - Spend a half hour each day in quiet meditation and read an inspirational quote.
 - Attend therapy.
 - Attend GA meetings or other self-help groups.
 - Find a sponsor and call them weekly.
 - Exercise and eat three meals a day.
 - Volunteer for a community organization.
 - Make at least one call a week to a friend.
 - Have fun — relearn how to appreciate the simple things in your life.
 - Long term recovery is about balance. The recovering person seeks to grow holistically.

Tips on Building Bridges

- Attend an Open Meeting
- Having Informative Workshops
- Therapist/Treatment can give a meeting list out.
- Educate about the benefits of going to a meeting
- Asking a GA &/or Gam-Anon member to share their experience, strength and hope during a group.
- Look on the NYCPG website to locate treatment providers, therapist, and Self-Help support groups in your area.