

Gambling & the Family

A Mindful Approach

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In Memory Of...

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Workshop Objectives

- ▶ **Conceptualize Family Needs**
 - Impact of Gambling Disorder on the...
 - Gambler
 - Children of the Gambler
 - Family of the Gambler

- ▶ **Conceptualize Family Strengths**
 - Use Skillful Interventions to Support Spouse & Family
 - Integrative Behavioral Couples Therapy
 - A Mindful Approach

Impact of Gambling Disorder On The Gambler

- ▶ Long History of Research...
 - Gender Based Differences
 - Pre-Morbid History
 - Post-Morbid History
 - Suicide
 - Substance Use Disorders

Gender-Based Differences Game Preferences (Walsh, 2001)

Game	Gender	Frequency of play		
		Not at all	Less than once a week	Once a week or more
Casino table games	men	13 (22%)	25 (42%)	22 (37%)
	(women)	31 (78%)	5 (13%)	4 (10%)
Horse/dog race betting	men	20 (33%)	22 (37%)	18 (30%)
	(women)	30 (75%)	8 (20%)	2 (5%)
Sport betting	men	21 (35%)	21 (35%)	18 (31%)
	(women)	36 (90%)	4 (10%)	0 (0%)
Slot machines	(men)	15 (25%)	23 (38%)	22 (37%)
	women	1 (3%)	6 (15%)	33 (83%)

Note. N = 100.

Gender-Based Differences Age-Based Data (Walsh, 2001)

<u>Variable Name</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>t</u>
Mean Age	45.18	48.33	1.22
Age 1 st Gamble	14.64	29.35	6.86***
Age Gamb Reg	25.55	39.15	4.98***
Age Recog Pro	34.53	44.85	3.85***
Age 1 st Tx	38.33	46.60	3.22**
Yrs Gamb Reg	17.09	8.00	-3.92***
Last Bet	25.15 ¹	14.13 ¹	-1.44
¹ Time in Months			

Comorbidity Study

▶ Moore (2003)

- 100 Pathological Gamblers
 - 51 males; 49 females
- Interviewed on several occasions by clinicians
- Recruited through newspaper ads, treatment programs, website invitations
- Males = 47 y.o.; Females = 49 y.o.
- Males endorsed 8.4 DSM-IV items
- Females endorsed 8.8 DSM-IV items

Comorbidity Study

Pre-Occurring Disorders

▶ Males

- Abuse/neglect = 62.2%
- Emotional Abuse = 48.7%
- Physical Abuse = 45.9%
- Sexual Abuse = 18.9%
- Neglect = 13.5%

▶ Females

- Abuse/neglect = 84.2%
- Emotional Abuse = 65.8%
- Physical Abuse = 63.2%
- Sexual Abuse = 47.4%
- Neglect = 31.6%

Comorbidity Study

Pre-Occurring Mental Illnesses

▶ Males

- Any condition = 78.4%
- Dissociative d/o = 38%
- Mood d/o = 22%
- Anxiety d/o = 8%
- Personality d/o = 5%
- Psychotic d/o = 5%
- Other = 14%
- Alcohol abuse/dep = 49%
- Drug abuse/dep = 38%

▶ Females

- Any condition = 84.2%
- Dissociative d/o = 68%
- Mood d/o = 40%
- Anxiety d/o = 8%
- Personality d/o = 3%
- Psychotic d/o = 0%
- Other = 5%
- Alcohol abuse/dep = 16%
- Drug abuse/dep = 13%

Comorbidity Study

Family History

▶ Males

- Any condition = 78%
- Problem gambling = 60%
- Substance abuse/dep = 70%
- Mood d/o = 22%
- Other = 27% (not classified by gender)

▶ Females

- Any condition = 84%
- Problem gambling = 41%
- Substance abuse/dep = 82%
- Mood d/o = 37%

Mood Disorders

- ▶ McCormick et al. (1984)
- ▶ Suicidality
 - 12% Lethal Attempt with Intent to Die
 - 18% Extreme/Severe Attempt
 - 40% Moderate/Mild Suicidal Ideations
 - 10% Minor Suicidal Ideations
 - 20% No Suicidality

Mood Disorders

- ▶ Frank, Lester, & Wexler (1991)
 - 500 members of Gamblers Anonymous
 - 13% Lethal Attempt of Suicide
 - 48% Some Form of Suicidal Ideation
 - 21% No Suicidal Ideation

Substance Abuse Disorders

- ▶ Lesieur, Blume, & Zoppa (1986)
- ▶ 458 Inpatients in a Drug/Alcohol Treatment Facility
- ▶ 9% Diagnosable as Pathological Gamblers (11% of males; 2% of females)
- ▶ 10% Problem Gamblers
- ▶ Gambling-related emotional, financial, family, occupational, legal disruption

Substance Abuse Disorders

- ▶ Ciarrocchi & Richardson (1989)
 - 186 Inpatient Pathological Gamblers (172 males; 14 females)
 - 28% of parents had a gambling problem
 - 43% of parents alcoholic
 - 8% parental suicide
 - 29% physically or sexually abused
 - 19% previous inpatient psychiatric care
 - 62% previous outpatient mental health care

Children of Pathological Gamblers

- ▶ High School Youth with a problem gambling parent were more likely to report:
 - Abusing stimulant drugs
 - Overeating
 - Describe childhood as unhappy
 - Be depressed or Suicidal
 - Have legal action pending (*Jacobs 1989*)
 - More likely to have a gambling problem themselves
 - (*Lesieur and Klein 1987*)

Families of Problem Gamblers

- ▶ 8–10 other people are affected by every pathological gambler. (*Lobsinger & Beckett, 1996*)
- ▶ Consequences include but are not limited to:
 - Financial losses
 - Communication problems
 - Trust Issues
 - Chronic lying
 - Legal problems
 - Domestic violence (*23–40% – Gerstein et al 1999 and Bland, Newman, Orn & Stebelsky 1993*)

Steps in Treatment...

...Getting the Spouse & Family Involved

- ▶ First, what is the motivational status of the gambler?
 - Stages of Change Model is paramount
- ▶ Second, IF the gambler is Pre-Contemplative or Contemplative, and not resolving ambivalence...
 - Then the Spouse/Family needs consultation to protect themselves
- ▶ Once the gambler is clearly in Action Stage...
 - Then the work of relationship healing can begin
- ▶ Reference: Counseling Problem Gamblers
 - By Joseph W. Ciarrocchi

Steps in Treatment...

...Getting the Spouse & Family Involved

- ▶ Initial Skillful Interventions Include:
 - Develop Environmental Controls
 - With cooperation of the spouse & family
 - Focus on Financial Recovery
 - Spouse & family **MUST** be involved

Steps in Treatment...

...Getting the Spouse & Family Involved

- ▶ Initial Skillful Interventions Include:
 - Information Concerning Legal Issues
 - Spouse (and family) MUST be aware
 - A Forum for the Spouse and Family
 - So s/he can learn as much as possible
 - So s/he can ventilate, without causing more harm than good
 - So s/he can receive feedback on the gambler's behavior
 - So s/he can receive emotional support

Develop Environmental Controls

- ▶ Building a Fence around temptation
 - Whatever needs to be done to get \$\$\$ under control; Spouse (and family) involved
- ▶ Establishing Abstinence Control: Relapse Prevention Work (see Marlatt)
 - Full understanding of links in the causal chain to slip/lapse/relapse (the “triggers”)
 - Building the fence around temptation
 - Learning to manage affective and cognitive antecedents to slip/lapse/relapse
 - Spouse (and family) understanding
 - Disease Model (see Psycho-Education)

Focus on Financial Recovery

- ▶ Gambler & Spouse must...
 - Take a hands on approach (together)
 - Identify (spouse/family & gambler) and take control (spouse/family) of assets
 - Develop a budget
 - Spouse/family & gambler together, needs of spouse & family are paramount
 - Develop a repayment plan
 - Spouse/family & gambler together, needs of spouse & family are paramount
 - Ideally this is done in cooperation with GA Pressure Relief

Legal Issues

- ▶ Spouse (and family) awareness is/are essential
 - 32% lifetime arrest history
 - 20% lifetime incarceration history
 - NORC Study, 1999
- ▶ Typical charges
 - Theft, embezzlement, misappropriation of funds, failure to pay taxes, tax evasion, bank/credit fraud, writing bad checks, mail fraud, forgery, securities violations
- ▶ % committing crimes but not arrested?

Forum for the Spouse & Family

- ▶ Psycho-education for Spouse and Family
 - Signs and symptoms of the disorder
 - Disease and Spiritual Models
 - vs. Moral Model
 - Effective treatments
 - Psychological (e.g. CBT)
 - Medication
 - Gamblers Anonymous & Gamanon
- ▶ Ventilate
 - Empathy & Validation

Forum for the Spouse & Family

- ▶ Feedback on the Gambler's Behavior
 - De-Personalizing the Behavior
 - Understanding Signs & Symptoms of the Disease
 - As opposed to aspects of his/her actual person
 - Beginning of IBCT (done mindfully)
- ▶ Emotional Support
 - Spouse/Family likely needs counseling
 - Stress levels are enormous
 - Many comorbid psychological and/or physical ailments

Once progress is made...

- ▶ The gambling has stopped
 - Action Stage has been sustained
 - Emotional Expressiveness has moderated
- ▶ Time to address long term strengthening of the spousal relationship
 - A Mindful Approach?

Mindfulness Based Treatment

- ▶ The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment to moment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003)
- ▶ MBSR, MBCT, MBRP, ACT...
- ▶ All based on these principles:
 - The Intention to pay Attention
 - All of living occurs in the present moment
 - Not Judging
 - Does not preclude acting judiciously!

Mindfulness Based Treatment

- ▶ Tremendous outcomes in stress management
- ▶ Helps people develop a new relationship with “mental objects”
 - Thoughts are just thoughts
 - Feelings are just feelings
 - Behaviors are just behaviors
- ▶ “Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”
 - Victor Frankl

ACT & Mindfulness

- ▶ **Acceptance of External Events:**
 - Fully Aware of Internal Events
 - Acceptance of Internal Events
 - Which leaves you free to:
 - Respond to External Events
- ▶ **The “Self” in ACT:**
 - Conceptualized Self; always an Illusion
 - Process Self; the “I” that can be noticed
 - Transcendent Self; the “I” that notices
- ▶ **Powerful Counseling acquaints the client with the Transcendent Self**

Integrative Behavioral Couples Therapy (IBCT)

- ▶ Developed by Jacobson & Christensen
 - A roadmap for the therapy
- ▶ After the Flood...
 - A Time to heal the emotional wounds
 - Recreate (Create?) a healthy relationship
 - If there is the willingness to remain together
 - Become forward directed
 - Rather than backward focused
 - Space to learn acceptance is the foundation of change...
 - And the beginning of finding Forgiveness

IBCT Assumptions

- ▶ Operationalized Strategies (i.e. new communication skills) sound great, but...
 - Are usually quickly abandoned once there's a new conflict
- ▶ People have a limited capacity to change
 - Therefore acceptance is essential
- ▶ Successful intimate relationships exhibit a high degree of tolerance

IBCT Assumptions

- ▶ Paradox of Acceptance and Change:
 - We change best when we feel accepted (see Rogers and Linehan)
- ▶ Create natural–feeling response strategies
 - Based on acceptance and tolerance
 - Rather than artificial feeling communication strategies (i.e. empathic listening drills)
- ▶ What IS acceptance?
 - “Ride the road you’re on.”

IBCT and the Couple

- ▶ Learn about the relationship history (conjoint session)
 - How did you meet?
 - What attracted you to each other?
 - This first session is to help remember why you are together at all
 - Perhaps add positive affect to the negative affect

IBCT and the Couple

- ▶ Individual Sessions with each spouse
 - Assess each partner's...
 - Relationship history
 - Family background
 - Influences on relationship style
 - e.g. Attachment Style, abuse history...
 - Expectations for their relationship
 - Infidelity, DV
 - Understand the relationship dynamic
 - As part of and Independent of the gambling issue

IBCT and the Couple

- ▶ Presenting the Couple with a formulation of how things got the way they are...
 - In the relationship AND the gambling
 - Allows for a tentative hypothesis for which the couple provides feedback
 - Provides a tool for empathic joining
 - Problem is the “IT,” not the “HIM” or the “HER”

IBCT and the Couple

- ▶ Presenting the Couple with a formulation of how things got the way they are...
 - Can reduce Polarization
 - Each tries to change the other, digs in heels, acts out, control battles
 - Can increase Acceptance
 - Each tries to understand the other, yield and engage, respond to the issue(s), work with “what is”

IBCT and the Couple

- ▶ Helps the Couple to...
 - Learn to Discuss their differences
 - They're talking about an "IT" instead of a "HIM" or "HER"
 - Learn to Discuss and Anticipate upcoming events
 - Less conflict about and "IT" after all

IBCT and the Couple

- ▶ Helps the Couple to...
 - Process negative affect
 - Which reduces the strength of the affect
 - Experience and savor positive affect
 - Which amplifies the strength of the affect

Some IBCT Outcomes

- ▶ “Prediction of Treatment Response at 5-Year Follow-Up in a Randomized Clinical Trial of Behaviorally Based Couple Therapies”
 - Baucom, Rowe, Atkins, Doss & Christensen (2014)
- ▶ 5 Year Longitudinal Study
- ▶ 134 Married, Heterosexual Couples
 - Significantly distressed (moderate or severe)
 - Stably distressed

Some IBCT Outcomes

- ▶ Predictors of Clinically Significant Change:
 - Length of Marriage: Longer = Better Outcome
 - Shorter marriage, severely and stably distressed = Probable very bad match
 - Longer marriage, severely and stably distressed = acknowledge the vicissitudes of marriage; philosophical about it
 - Wife Desired Closeness related to good outcome
 - In Moderately distressed marriages
 - Not in Severely distressed marriages

Some IBCT Outcomes

- ▶ Marital Status at 5-Year Follow-Up: Lower likelihood of separation or divorce
 - Length of Marriage
 - Higher Levels of Commitment to the Marriage
 - Wife Desired Closeness
 - For Moderately Distressed Marriages, not Severely

Some IBCT Outcomes

- ▶ Authors opine:
 - Wife Desired Closeness is the strongest predictor variable for improvement in the marriage and staying together
 - “One possible explanation for these findings is that the greater emphasis on emotional acceptance and empathy in IBCT fosters increases in the desired emotional closeness to a (great) extent.”

Some IBCT Outcomes

- ▶ Authors opine:
 - Length of Marriage is also a strong predictor of commitment to the marriage (i.e. not separating or divorcing)
 - “One possible explanation for these findings is that couples who have been married for a longer number of years may have more at stake and therefore greater motivation to fully engage in couple therapy.”

Clinical Implications

- ▶ When a Couple is ready to engage in Couples Therapy:
 - High Levels of Emotional Acceptance are critical to good outcomes
 - Especially in the wife
 - Any therapies that promote Emotional Acceptance will be helpful
 - Focusing on Changing the Problem, rather than the Person, will be helpful
 - Helping Couples clarify their level of commitment to the marriage will be helpful
 - And related to how many years they have been married

Treatment Resources:

Counseling the Problem Gambler: A Self Regulation Manual
Joseph Ciarrocchi PhD.

Don't Leave it to Chance . E.J. Federman, C.E.Drebing & C. Krebs.

Behind the 8 Ball. L. Berman & M.E. Siegel.

Losing Your Shirt. M. Heineman

When Someone You Love Gambles. M. Heineman (Hazelden pamphlet)

Personal Financial Strategies for the Loved Ones of Problem Gamblers. National Endowment for Financial Education and National Council on Problem Gambling.

Thank You!

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