Gambling Addiction and the Implications for Treatment in Custody

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Overview

- PG in Prison Populations
- Role of Gambling in Prison
- Implications of Re-Categorization for Corrections
“Inmate gambling is a common, perhaps a normative, aspect of prison life”
Shift in Nomenclature

- Problem Gambling
  - Impulse Control Disorder NOS

- Gambling Disorder
  - Behavioural Addiction
Implications for Corrections

1) Is there a gambling addiction?

2) Is it relevant to their criminal behaviour?

3) How can it be managed to reduce risk of recidivism?
Gambling and Crime Relationship

Gambling-Related Offending is Not Common in the General Population *(Abbott et al., 2005)*

Gambling-Related Offending Appears within More Severe Cases of Pathological Gambling

Common Cause Explanation
Patterns of Gambling in Prison
Problem Gamblers in Prison

Williams et al. (2005)

27 Prevalence Studies in AU, UK, NZ, US

Pathological Gambling ~ 33%
Gambling in Prison

Prohibited (CCRA in Canada) (Beauregard & Brochu, 2013)

Lower than on outside (Abbott & McKenna, 2005; Abbott et al., 2005; Williams et al., )

COs Unlikely to recognize or intervene (Beauregard & Brochu, 2013)
Types of Gambling in Prison

- Betting on anything
- Card Games
- Organized Sports Betting Less Common
- Betting Drink, Food, Push-Ups, Favours, or $
Positive Aspects of Gambling in Prison

Leisure, Boredom  (Beauregard & Brochu, 2013)

Regain Control of Choice  (Beauregard & Brochu, 2013)

Networking and Protection  (Williams & Hinton, 2006)
Risks of Gambling in Prison

Violence? (Plecas, 2013)

Threats Yes, Physical is Rare (Beauregard & Brochu, 2013; Turner et al., 2012; Wiliams & Hinton, 2006)

Debt → Segregation and/or Transfer

Re-Triggering / Perpetuating the Addiction?
Subtypes of PGs
Blaszczynski & Nower (2002)
Nower & Blaszczynski (2017)
Discussion

Present a case study to your group

- Which pathway describes them?
- How might the pathway model provide insight for treatment or other interventions?

Which pathway will be most prevalent in prison samples?
Adverse Childhood Experiences

https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=95ovlJ3dsNk

Lotzin et al. (2018), Poole et al. (2017)

~80% have at least One ACE

Higher # ACEs, Higher Levels Pathological Gambling
Treatment in Custody

- Captive Audience
- High Rates of PG
- Low Rates of Recognition and Help-Seeking
Identifying Triggers for Gambling

Head off urges to gamble with prosocial substitutions

Inventory of Gambling Situations *(CAMH)*

Fan et al. (2017) Subscales relate to PG Screen
IGS Subscales

- Urges and Temptations*
- Social Pressure
- Pleasant Emotions
- Negative Emotions*
- Confidence in Skills
- Winning and Chasing*
- Conflict with Others*
- Worried about Debt*
- Testing Personal Control
- Need for Excitement
Relapse Prevention

Cycle of Addiction – Most will Relapse

Identify and Replace Triggers

Contingency Management

Workbooks
Relapse Prevention Workbooks

169 Pathological Gamblers

Mailed One or More Workbooks

Urges, High Risk, Managing $, Leisure Activities

Goal Attainment and Abstinence
Discussion Questions

- Should PG be assessed at intake?
  - Which tools seem most useful for this?

- Should access to PG services/treatment be offered?
  - Given the high rates of PG in custody, should this not be part of a standard of care?
  - Does the transition to an addictive disorder change anything?

- Should gambling in custody be stopped?
  - Or, how would you otherwise minimize the impact on PGs?

- Should COs be trained to recognize problem gambling?

- How can PG be factored into case management?
  - What can be done to reduce recidivism?
Recommendations

Gambling Screen at Intake (*PGSI*)

Provide Regular GA Sessions and PG Tx Access

Assess Relationship of PG to Crime

Assess Triggers for Gambling (*IGS*)

Assess Gambling Subtype (*GPQ*)

Case Management to Reduce Recidivism

Offer Alternative Activities/Programs
Relevant Tools

- ACES
- PGSI Screen
- Gambling Pathways Questionnaire
- IGS
- DSM Diagnosis
Copies of the tools are available many places online. Here are some sample links (not endorsed by the presenter):

• ACE Questionnaire - https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Finding%20Your%20ACE%20Score.pdf


• Gambling Pathways Questionnaire - https://socialwork.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/gpq_final_instrument.pdf
