



Not All Bets Are The Same- A Clinical Intervention Guide for Different Types of Bettors

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Learning Objectives

-Identify specific interventions for different types of Bettors

-Learn engagement strategies for working with Persons Affected

-Identify 2 financial interventions to implement with gamblers in recovery

-Learn 3 different treatment plan goals to use for clients who are gambling



A Little About Me



2011 Graduate from the UCONN School of Social Work

Worked as a Therapist in a Gambling Treatment Program from 2011-2016

Supervisor for a Gambling Treatment Program from 2017-Present Day

LCSW, ICGC-II, BACC

EMDR Therapist

Acudetox Specialist

Adjunct Professor For UCONN SSW from 2014-2018

Treatment- Phase 1 Stabilization



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Motivational Interviewing and Gambling

Engagement

Gamblers are “different”. Shame and guilt, family issues, financial difficulties. Are you capable of handling what I am going through?

The Most Important Part of Treatment

Focusing

What are the presenting problems? Debts, marital/family issues, legal

What do they want? Harm Reduction or abstinence?

Evoking

What are the reasons you need to stop? Illicit change talk through psychoed. What might happen if you keep gambling? Why do you think your spouse is so concerned?

Treatment Planning

Planning for future gambling episodes is very important

Planning

Types of Gambling- Game of Choice

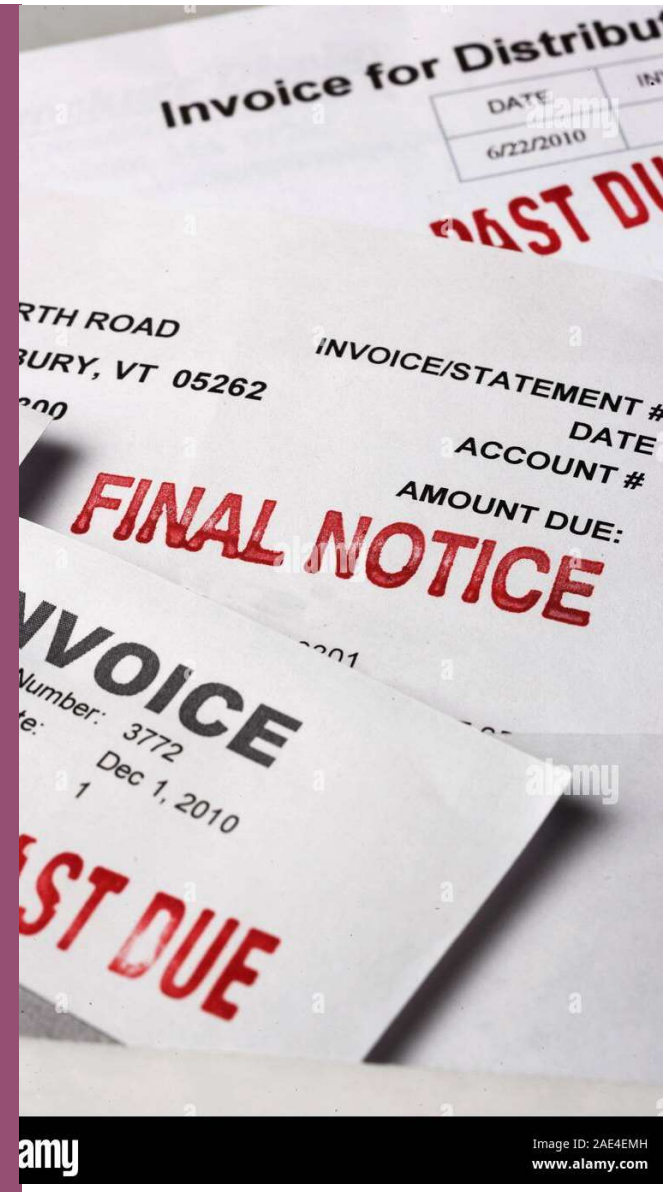
Blackjack	Poker	Roulette	Baccarat	Pai Gow	Sports Betting	Fantasy Sports
Lottery	Scratch Tickets	Bingo	OTB – Off Track Betting	Bracketology	Keno	Craps
	Raffles	Stock Market	Charitable Events (50/50)	Slot Machines	Video Games (Loot boxes)	



Let's Talk Money! But Proceed With Caution...

Money Is Triggering In Many Ways

- Having money can trigger a gambling episode
- Not having money can trigger a gambling episode
- The amount of debts a person has can be very overwhelming to them
- Money/Bills/Debt is triggering for EVERYONE



Financial Interventions



- We need to know the debts just approach with care.
- Pull credit reports in sessions. Have client bring in bills debts
- Get them organized! Planners, calendars, whatever works for them. Prioritize bills and help them get them out of their head and down on paper
- Budgeting/Financial Spending plan
- Financial Advisor or Lawyer
- Trusted Family or Friend
- Money Management International- MMI
- Truelink Visa Card

Spending categories

- ALLOW Grocery stores
- BLOCK Bars and liquor stores
- ALLOW Pharmacies
- BLOCK Online and phone purchases

Access to cash

- BLOCK Cash-back at time of purchase
- BLOCK ATM withdrawals

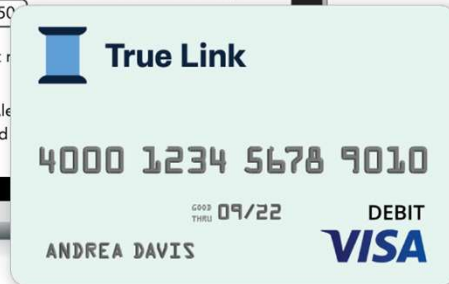
Funding

SVB 1234567891 *****1234 **CONNECTED**

- Scheduled recurring transfers
- Make one-time transfer

Top-line alerts

- Balance: Alert me when card balance drops below \$ 50
- Cash: Alert me when cash is used
- Funding: Alert me when funding transfers are initiated



True Link
www.truelinkfinancial.com

**Now That We Learned How to
Talk About Money, I Have a
Secret to Share...**

Gambling Is NOT About The Money



What is the draw?



Lottery – Hopes and Dreams



Casino – Lifestyle/Status



Sports Betting-
Connection

Gambling Is A Maladaptive Behavior (Handout)

Positive Adaptive

- When a person is able to adjust to a situation or experience that leaves them feeling happy and healthy



Maladaptive

- The Opposite. Pattern of behavior that prevents people from adapting to situations. Usually in the form of short term gains and long term consequences.



Action Gambling “Augmenters”



- Typically, male
- “Skill-based” games
- Horses, casino card games, sports bettors
- Gambles to feel “alive”/Important
- VIP Status
- Thrill seekers
- About 50% have experienced a big win
- Often started gambling at a young age
- Higher levels of depression
- Negative Cognitions of not being good enough, important enough

Escape Gamblers “Reducers”

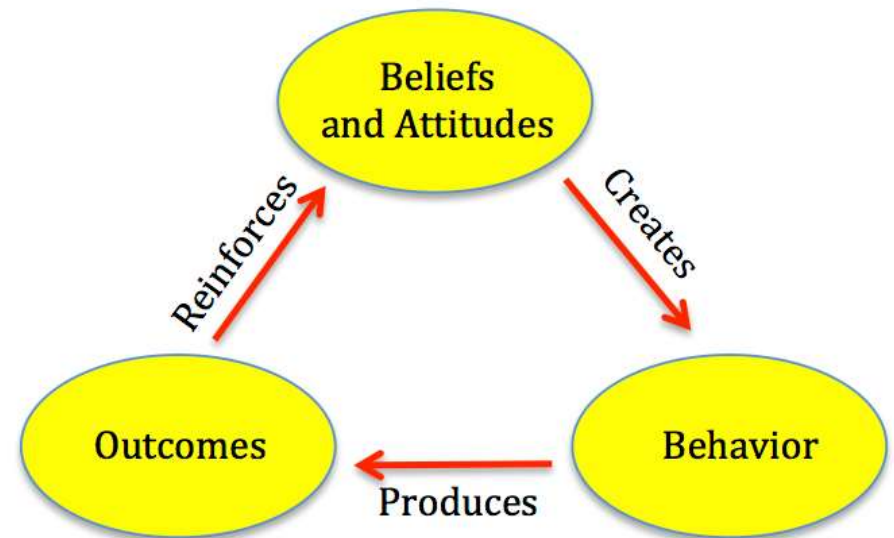


- Typically, female
- Gambles to escape stressors or to relieve dysphoric mood
- Escape from trauma or abuse
- Prefers to gamble alone
- Onset is later in life
- Don't need a “big win” to get hooked
- Prefer activities that create a dissociative state
Blaszczynski et. al (1986)
- Higher levels of anxiety



Gambling
Treatment
involves a
LOT of CBT

Cognitive Distortions
Myths
Illusions of Control



Pop Quiz Time!

Do More People Die from
Strokes or Accidents?

**Do more words start with
the letter "R" or have "R"
as the third letter?**

Confusing Most Often With Most Memorable

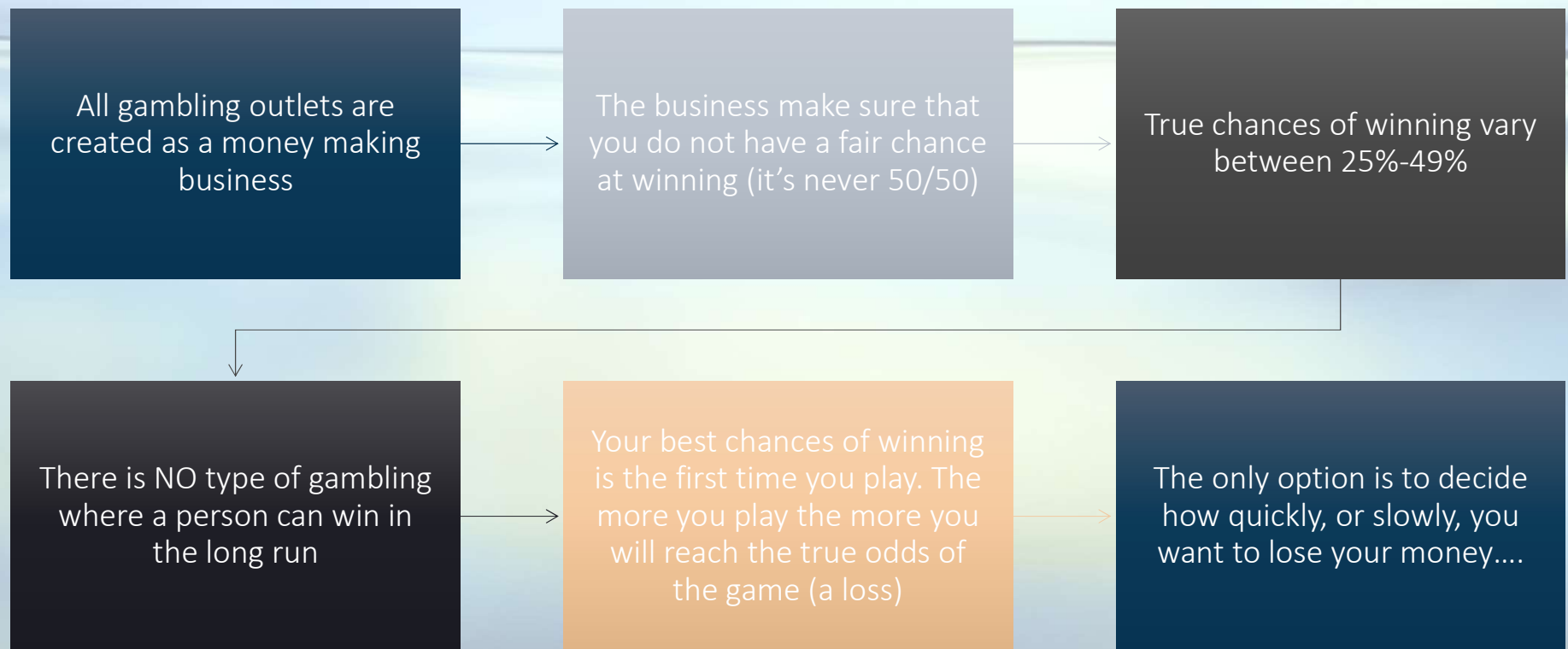
Answer

- More people die from Strokes
- Flying On Airplanes – Irrational Fear
- Trauma response – overgeneralizing

When Gambling

- The losses far outweigh the wins
- As a person spirals when gambling, they hold on to those times they have won telling themselves “it is possible” – Although possible, is it likely
- It’s “possible” to get struck by lightning, but how likely is it?

Law Of Averages & The House Edge



Treatment- Phase 2 Interventions



2



Casino Gambling

Casino Gamblers: Assessment of Play

Card Status – Updated every
April and October

Slot/Free Play
Amounts/Giveaways/Points

Win/Loss statements

What is their tolerance?



Casino Gambling

Action Games

- Cards/Roulette
- Maladaptive Positive Affect– importance, validation, acknowledgement, power, social connection
- Clinical focus of treatment
 - Self-esteem
 - Relationship/work difficulties
 - Trauma history (abuse)

Escape Games

- Slots/Bingo/Video Machines
- Maladaptive Positive Affect– reduced MH symptoms or physical pain, alleviates boredom and loneliness and provides “fun”, safe activity for those who are more withdrawn/shy. Provides a “mental break” for high stress life/jobs
- Clinical Focus Of Treatment
 - Mental Health
 - Life Transitions
 - Trauma

Casino Gamblers: Early Interventions

VSE – Voluntary Self Exclusion

- Know your casino
- MA – GameSense Center or Designated Agent (1yr, 3yr, 5yr, Lifetime)
- RI – Present Form to Security Office at Twin Rivers (1yr, 5yr, Lifetime)
- CT- Allow mail in forms that must be notarized (Mohegan – 1yr or 5yrs, Foxwoods – 5yrs or Lifetime)

Debit Card Self Exclusion (NRT and EVERI)

Removal from distribution/ mailing lists – reduce triggers

Win/Loss Statements



Casino Slots

Cognitive Distortions, Myths, and Illusions of Control



Believing a machine is on a “hot streak” - CD

Changing bets believing the payout will change -IC

Stopping the machine while reels are spinning hoping to affect the outcome - IC

Touching a screen for luck- IC

Believing certain machines payout more (End machines)- CD

Believing payout percentages are being altered during live play- CD

Thinking a machine is “due” to win if it hasn’t paid out in a while- CD

Any others?

Casino Table Games

Cognitive Distortions, Myths, Illusions of Control

- Choosing a certain table, seat, or dealer based on past experiences
- Changing bets often thinking you are due for a hit
- Observing other hands that are dealt and believing that mastery of a game will equal winning
- Watching the history of the wheel and believing a certain number or color is due to hit next
- Almost hitting your color/number/exact card needed – brain stimulation



Casinos- What IS True? – It's A Trap!

- It is a business and designed to take your money! (Slots are the biggest money maker)
- Law of averages
- Slot machines use Random Number Generators
- Altered atmosphere to keep you there and keep you playing
- No windows or clocks
- Color Schemes/design
- Floor layout
- Sights and smells
- Clean bathrooms
- Giveaways- Nothing is “free” at a casino
- Slot machines are designed to be comfortable, engaging, and ease of access to losing money
- Casinos feel safe, when they are really anything but that



Treatment Plan Goals for Casino Players



- Reducing number of times you visit the casino in a designated time frame (weeks/months)
- Setting dollar amounts willing to lose
- Setting time limits (difficult to do)
- Bringing a support person
- Stop gifting “free” events/hotel rooms to family and friends
- Reducing player card status over the next 6 months
- Increase credit score over the next 6 months
- Voluntary Self Exclusion

Lottery Gambling

- Scratch tickets
- Daily Numbers
- Keno
- Powerball/Megamillions
- Lucky 4 Life
- iLottery



Assessment



Lottery Gambling- Assessment of Play

- Online or in person?
- How much and how often/Tolerance
- Denomination of tickets
- Routines in play? (Getting their morning coffee)
- When new games are introduced do they also play those?
- Higher jackpots for draw games = increase in play?

Lottery Games – Early Interventions

Ctlottery.org

Masslottery.com

Rilot.com

Revealing true odds and how games work

Limit access to cash

Changes in routines

Work on MH issues

Explore ways to increase income

Learn budgeting strategies and live within means

Click here for IMPORTANT NEWS about the CT Lottery App!



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The CT Lottery app requires a mandatory update on Saturday, April 5th, 2025.





Pick One Blade of Grass



Lottery Gambling:

Cognitive Distortions and Illusions of Control

- Believing one retailer is luckier than others/having a favorite (CD)
- Having a favorite game or favorite numbers (CD)
- Believing if there are multiple losing tickets, the next will be a winner (CD)
- Believing that all the winning tickets are stacked in the beginning of games (CD)
- Choosing family birthdays/anniversaries thinking that will produce winning numbers (IC)
- Believing that every time you don't play your numbers they hit (CD)
- Scratching tickets a certain way (IC)
- Following perceived patterns in numbers (IC)

Illusion of control

It is not luck, I did it.

Author: Éliane Simard Desjardins



Lottery Traps

Games are randomized and wins are based solely on odds with no ability to control the outcome of the games.

Marketing strategies are widely used to entice play (Storefront win signs, commercials, the use of focus groups). Yet, another business designed to take your money!

Easy to get hooked due to speed of play

Targets lower income populations



Treatment Plan Goals for Lottery Players

- Eliminating all lottery play each week (Includes PB and MegaMillions)
- Setting dollar amounts willing to lose on a weekly basis
- Reducing/eliminating games that are harmful
- Stop carrying cash
- Taking different routes home from work



Sports Betting/Online Betting

Baseball, basketball, football, soccer, hockey, golf, Fantasy sports, Horses (OTB), Boxing, Tennis

Online Gambling/Sports- Assessment of Play

- What sites?
FanDeul/DraftKings/Fanatics
Bovada.lv
- Phone/Computer/Work/Home?
- What games?
- How much, how often/Tolerance
- How did it start?
- What form of money to access play?
Cryptocurrency? Credit Cards?



Sports/Online
Gambling –
Early
Interventions

Gamban

Gamblock

Betfilter

*Self Exclusion CT.gov

Sports/Online– Early Interventions

Depending on the type of play, blocking software may need to be implemented (Online and apps)

Fanduel VSE

Draftkings VSE

Paying of debts to bookies and deleting/blocking phone numbers

Avoiding watching sports (if necessary) and making mind bets



Sports Betting:

Cognitive Distortions and Illusions of Control

- Believing they know all about a certain sport so they can choose the right bets a lot better than others (CD)
- Researching on social media and podcasts by “experts” and trusting their advice (Bet The Board) (Both?)
- Sitting on the same spot on the couch or chair (IC)
- Eating the same foods during the game (IC)
- Watching or not watching is bad luck (IC)
- Exploring weather related factors and travel that could impact player outcomes (IC)
- Wearing “lucky” articles of clothing or other superstitious acts thinking it will change the outcome of the game (IC)



Sports Betting

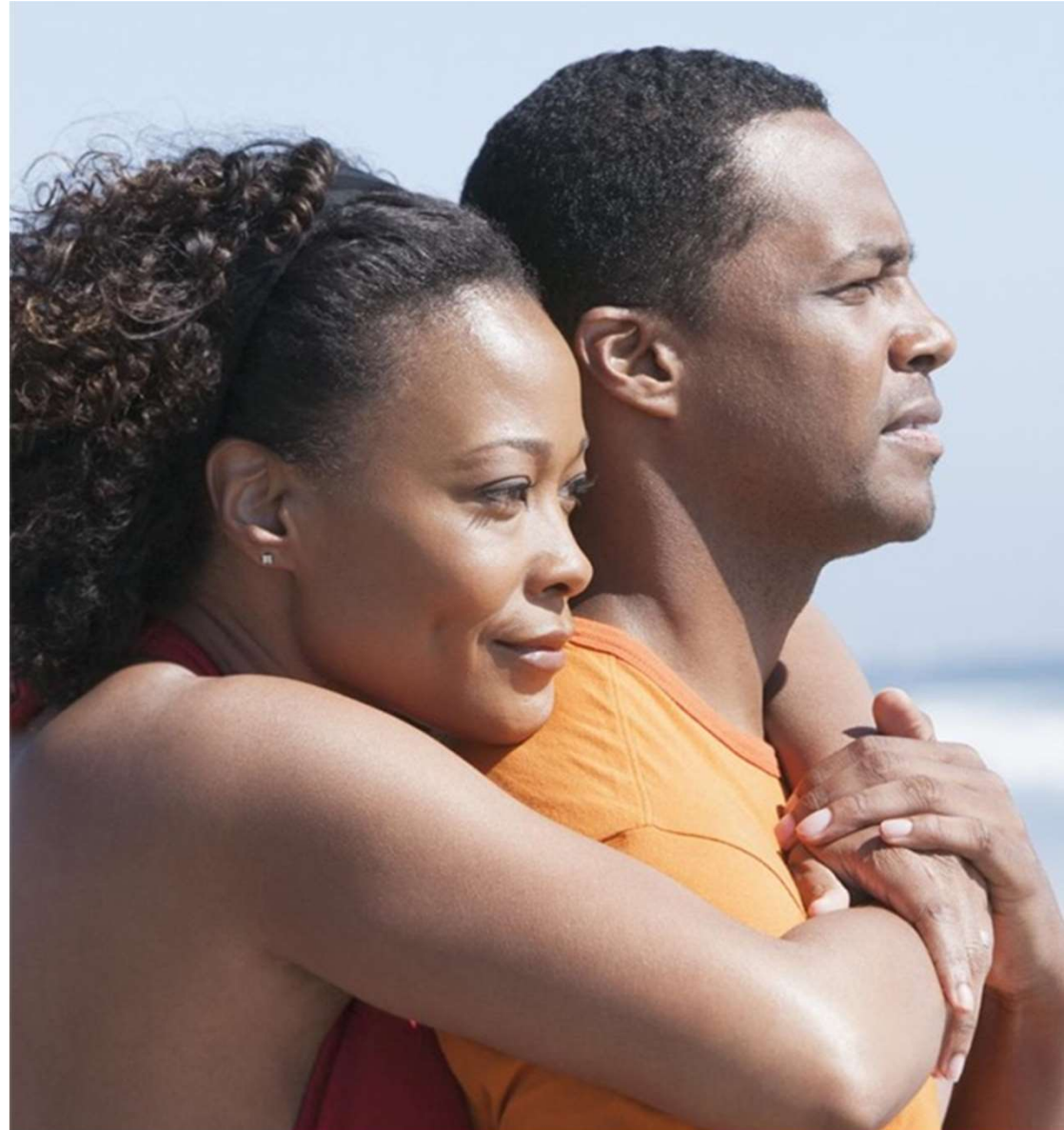
Clinical areas of Focus

- Typically younger males (except horses)
- Former athletes – grief
- Dissatisfied with current life circumstances
- Low self-esteem/self-worth
- Gamble to feel inclusive
- Status
- Enjoys the competition (mostly against themselves)
- Feel important and validated by others when they win



Family Interventions

- Bring in family early on
- Provide psychoeducation about gambling
- Anger, resentment, lack of trust –
Betrayal Trauma
- Help them learn their role/enabling
behaviors
- Help with finances
- Do not support bailouts
- Healthy Boundary setting (Financial,
Emotional, Physical)
- V Charts



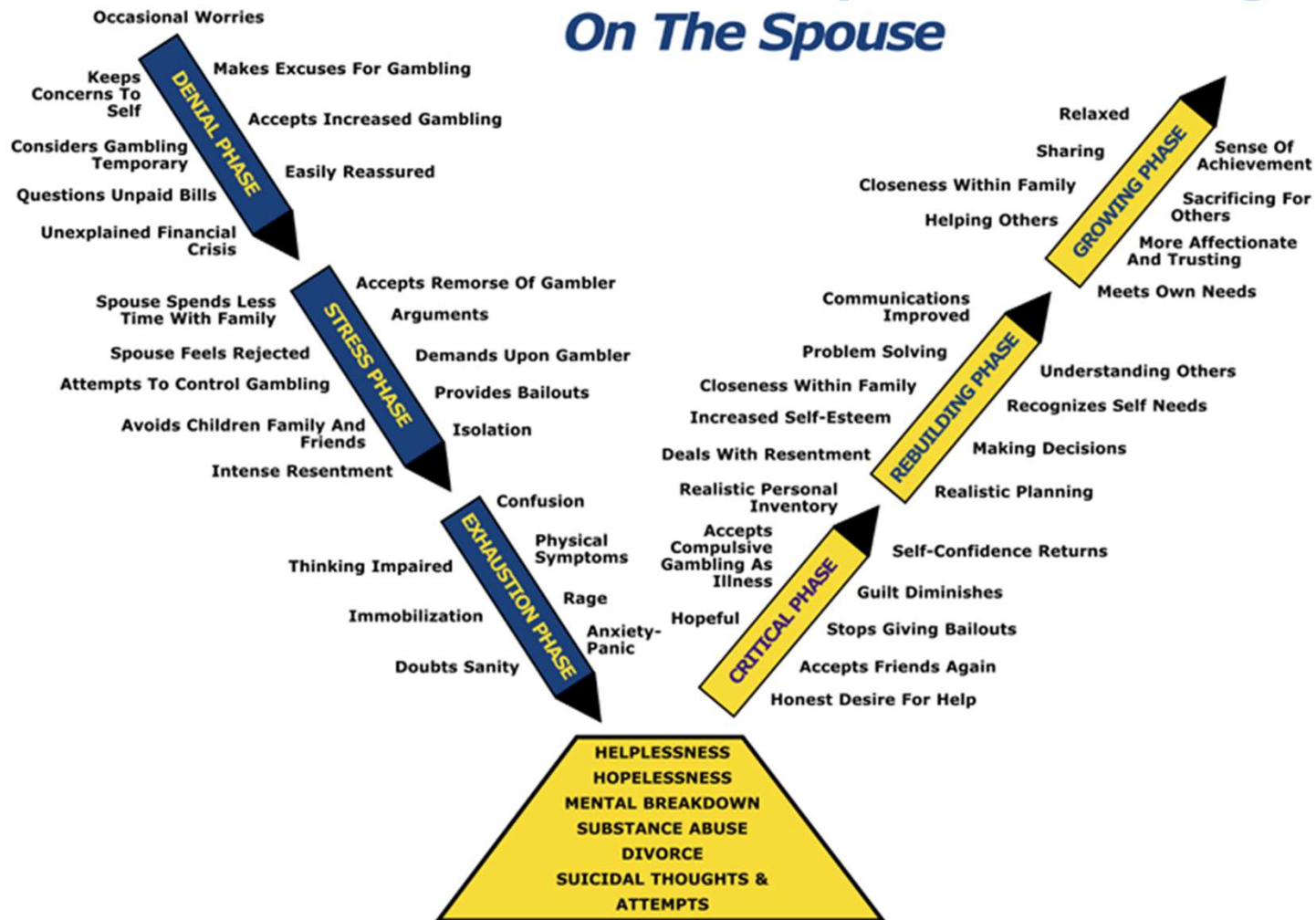
Couple's Counseling

- **Functional Family Therapy (FFT):** This type of therapy focuses on improving family interactions and relationships to address and correct dysfunctional behavior patterns. FFT is goal-oriented and typically short-term, with an emphasis on changing negative behavior through positive reinforcement and effective communication.
- **Structural Family Therapy:** Focused on reorganizing the family structure, this type of therapy seeks to establish clear boundaries and roles within the family. By restructuring the family dynamics, it aims to create a more balanced and supportive environment for the individual struggling with gambling addiction.
- **Systemic Family Therapy:** This approach views the family as an interconnected system and addresses the patterns of interactions that contribute to the addiction. It emphasizes understanding the underlying issues and dynamics within the family, fostering change through improved communication and relationships.
- **Strategic Family Therapy:** This approach involves designing specific strategies to address the family's issues and changing problematic behavior patterns. It is highly structured and directive, with the therapist playing an active role in guiding the family towards healthier interactions.

A Chart of Compulsive Gambling and Recovery



A Chart On The Effects Of Compulsive Gambling On The Spouse



Other Interventions

- GA <https://ctwmaga.org>;
<http://newenglandga.com/>
- Treatment Groups
- Peer Counselors
- Triggers
- Maladaptive Positive Affect
- Avoidance
- Harm Reduction
- Know the odds/House advantage for games
- Asking questions certain times of the year



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