Recovery Supports

The role of Peers in Gambling Recovery

Steven Matos, ICGC-II, RSS
smatos@mccaonline.com

Valerie Tebbetts, ICGC-II, RSS
valeriet@ccpg.org
Please assess your current knowledge level with respect to problem gambling?

What is a peer support?

- Someone with lived experience that can share that perspective with others
- A peer is someone that can be with a client and guide not lead
- Provides a link between clinical services and “outside” supports
- Fosters trust in a healthcare system that has often disenfranchised many of those whom it serves

A peer support is a person in recovery but a person in recovery is not necessarily a peer support.
Core Competencies

Standards include criteria for:

- Knowledge
- Relationships
- Mentorship
  - Strength Oriented Approach
  - Guidance in the Change Process
  - Support for Affected Others
  - Safety and Crisis Support
- Advocacy
- Core Values
- Professional Role
  - Personal Wellness
  - Ethics and Professional Responsibilities

Developed by a National work group led by researchers from the US and England through the Oregon Health Authority - Standards Released Sept. 2023

Need for peer supports in treatment for gambling disorders

- Issues with Self Help access – GA/GamAnon
- Shame and Stigma are significant treatment barriers
- Fewer trained clinical staff than SUD

- Provide a path to in person self-help groups (GA, GamAnon, SMART recovery, All Recovery)
- Financial issues/pressure-relief
Peer Supports are Integrated in Bettor Choice Gambling Treatment Programs

• Peer counselors promote and create a community atmosphere within the “medical” service where clients can transition easily between clinical and non-clinical care

• Recognizes the importance of long-term support and wellness and provides transition throughout stages of recovery

• Accepts that stigma, as it relates to gambling addiction, is significant and promotes greater connection by reducing shame

Similarities to clinical staff

- Bound by ethical guidelines and agency and program expectations for professional behavior
- Support client change and “meet clients where they are at”
- Can utilize clinical techniques such as mindfulness and motivational interviewing
- Schedule appointments and meet with clients in individual and group settings. Peers can also meet clients in the community.
- Responsible for maintaining relationship boundaries
- Timely and complete documentation
- Motivated to help others
- Clinical Training
Differences from clinical providers

- Share more personal experiences
- Sessions can be conversations and not “clinical interventions”
- Power/role differential is not as great
- Take treatment process “beyond office walls” - allows access to community resources
- Lead by example
- Services not determined by medical reimbursement

Gambling Peer Activities and Skills

- Groups
  - Phone Contact (including afterhours)
  - Voice of those in recovery regarding programmatic decisions/changes

- Family groups
  - Meet clients in the community

- Individual counseling
  - Present/Teach/Train
  - Provide a connection to “Recovery Community”
  - Support with negotiation of Criminal Justice System

- Financial counseling
  - Integrate 12-step principles into the program
  - Support to family members of those with PG issues
Gambling Recovery Support Services are available to Bettor Choice participants, individuals in recovery, and those affected by problem gambling.

- Connecticut Recovery Support Services are available to Bettor Choice participants, individuals in recovery, and those affected by problem gambling
- Speakers Bureau
- Scholarships for Recovery Coach Academy and Recovery Support Specialist Training with Advocacy Unlimited
- Link treatment and recovery support services
- Provide Training for Behavioral Health Agencies

Gambling Recovery Support Services is coordinated by MCCA, Inc through funding from the State of Connecticut’s Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, Problem Gambling Services Division
MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY
Responsible Gambling Campaign

WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING?

Gambling responsibly means taking steps to reduce risks or harms to yourself that can occur when gambling. There are those that can get themselves into trouble financially, for others their gambling can cause issues with friends and family, or some may drink too much and/or use other substances while they play. It's important to remember that all gambling activities have risk and to enjoy a safer playing experience, you must be aware of the risks and how you can minimize them. Using strategies when you gamble like setting a budget before you leave your house, taking breaks, and educating yourself on how the games work are just a few tips on being the safest and smartest player that you can be.

The 12 steps

Recovery Program

Here are the steps which are a program of recovery:
Purpose of Gam-Anon

1. To welcome and give assistance and comfort to those affected by someone else’s gambling problem.
2. To communicate Gam-Anon's understanding of compulsive gambling and its impact on our lives.
3. To share our experience, strength, and hope in coping with the gambling problem.
4. To use the Steps and Tools of the Gam-Anon program which nurture our spiritual and emotional growth and recovery.
The Principles of SMART Recovery are:

- Building Motivation
- Coping with Urges
- Problem Solving
- Lifestyle Balance

The "SMART Toolbox" is a collection of various MET, CBT and REBT methods, or "tools", which address the 4 Points.

Principles include:

- Renunciation (abstinence)
- Meditation
- Growth
- Teachings on the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path (Book in reading and listening formats)
- Inquiry and Investigation
- Meetings
- Mentors
Voluntary Self Exclusion

What is voluntary self-exclusion?
Self-exclusion allows a person to request to be excluded from legalized gaming activities in Connecticut. Individuals who enroll in self-exclusion are prohibited from collecting any winnings, recovering any losses or accepting complimentary gifts or services or any other thing of value from a licensee or operator. Operators may choose to exclude participants in the Connecticut Self-Exclusion list from their services in other states or countries.

How can voluntary self-exclusion be helpful?
Voluntary self-exclusion can be a beneficial and empowering tool for those who feel they may be developing or have a problem with their gambling. By creating a barrier, it allows those who want to decrease or stop their activity, reduce the harms associated with gambling.
Peer Support for VSE across CT, MA, RI

CT VSE: Online forms at DCP, FW, MS, PGS, or CCPG. Online exclusion can be completed by individual for themselves (only). Tribal casinos require notary if form is completed and mailed. Can be done in person by security.

MA VSE: Statewide only and managed by Gamesense. In person required, but can happen off site. Some peers in CT are certified to perform the function.

RI VSE: Bally’s casinos say they require the individual to go in person, but RI PGS can perform the function if requested. Call John at 1-877-942-6253. Peers are often your best option for VSE support.

Increasing the pathways to recovery

Natural Supports
- Shared Activities
- Valued Roles
- Real Relationships
Resources for Support

- CT Council on Problem Gambling (CCPG)- [www.ccpg.org](http://www.ccpg.org)
- Responsible Play the CT Way- [https://responsibleplayct.org/](https://responsibleplayct.org/)
- CT Gaming & Gambling- [https://ctgamblingandgaming.org/](https://ctgamblingandgaming.org/)
- Gambler’s Anonymous (GA)- [http://ctwmaga.org](http://ctwmaga.org)
- Gam-Anon- [http://gam-anon.org](http://gam-anon.org)
- Advocacy Unlimited (AU)- [http://advocacyunlimited.org](http://advocacyunlimited.org)
- CT Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) [http://ccar.us](http://ccar.us)
- DMHAS Problem Gambling Services (PGS) [www.ct.gov/dmhas/PGS](http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/PGS)
- National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) [www.ncpgambling.org](http://www.ncpgambling.org)

Other Recovery Supports

YouTube has extensive content/videos about addiction and recovery.

In The Rooms.com
- Podcasts: All In – The Addicted Gambler’s Podcast; Broke Girls Society; Hello, My Name is Craig; Beyond the Bet (England); All Bets are Off; Fall In – The Problem Gambling Podcast for Military Service Members and Veterans
- Facebook Recovery Groups
- Recovery 2.0 – Tommy Rosen
- Y12sr.com – Yoga of 12 Step Recovery
- For Mindfulness: Calm, Insight Timer, Headspace, Happify
“The opposite of addiction is not sobriety... The opposite of addiction is connection.”
Steven Matos, ICGC-II, RSS
smatos@mccaonline.com

Valerie Tebbetts, ICGC-II, RSS
valeriet@ccpg.org