

Effective Screening for Gambling Disorder

Presenter: Loreen Rugle, PhD, ICGC II

Since the DSMV now categorizes Gambling Disorder under substance related disorders is it ethical to treat gambling disorder?

A: I believe, it is ethical for a substance use disorder counselor to treat gambling disorder only if they have had training (at least 30 hours is the national standard) specifically on gambling disorder and they are being supervised by someone who is certified or otherwise credentialed in gambling disorder counseling.

If Gambling is the primary Dx and medication/alcohol use is associated with the gambling is it considered an enhancement to the Dx and can the client be treated in IOP program ethically? Legally? Or is it considered out of my scope of practice?

A: These are great questions and are dealt with on a state by state basis. I would say that to admit someone with a gambling disorder into a SUD IOP, the IOP program should be problem gambling integrated and the counselor(s) facilitating that group should have had adequate training in gambling disorder.

In reality since in many areas there are no gambling disorder specific IOP's, therefore we have worked with SUD IOP's to provide this level of care and supervised and educated counselors about how best to incorporate gambling issues or provided supplemental individual therapy to address the gambling issue more specifically. I would encourage SUD programs at all levels to work towards becoming problem gambling capable and as a matter of course address the impact of gambling on SUD recovery, including gambling as a relapse risk factor and just routinely talking about alcohol, other drugs and gambling.

Do you know of any studies about the Youth population, given their access to virtual gambling?

A: Yes, there are a number of youth studies. Most prevalence studies that have included youth find that they have higher rates of problem gambling than adults. Young adults (18-25) generally have the highest rates. They not only gamble through internet, social media, but also sports betting, card playing and lottery. They rarely come into treatment, though as with adults, young people in treatment for substances have higher rates of problem gambling and are at higher risk. Again we encourage awareness of the risks of gambling be included in treatment programs and that prevention programs integrate problem gambling prevention into their work. As with substances, the younger a person starts gambling, the more likely they are to develop a problem. I have listed resources below including an ebook from the NY Council on Problem Gambling about youth gambling.

What resources are available for clients who participate in activities that are problematic to them and the impact is affecting children?

A: That is a great question. We know having a parent who gambles problematically is a risk factor. There is a genetic as well as learned vulnerability. There is very little available material addressing the impact on children – see resource listed below for some videos. I've also included a nice summary statement from folks in Canada.

In families with a parent who has problem with gambling, do you know of any ways to help reduce the child's risk of developing a problem herself?

A: I can refer you to the article "Children and Parents of Problem Gamblers" by Rosemary Hilbert. You can find the article at the following link:

<https://www.problemgambling.ca/en/resourcesforprofessionals/pages/childrenandparentsofproblemgamblers.aspx>

Resources:

For videos on teen gambling and family impact:

<http://www.nevadacouncil.org/programs-resources/public-awareness-prevention/>

Lists two videos Damage Done and Given the Chance

http://knowtheodds.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/NYCPG_ebook_YouthGambling_052114.pdf