From Social Gaming to Internet Gambling: Identifying the Connection, Addressing the Issues and Establishing Meaningful Recovery Principles.

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Agenda

1. Welcome
   a. Overview and Landscape

2. The Connection
   a. Gaming and Gambling
   b. Emerging Trends

3. The Issues
   a. Factors / Predictors
   b. Convergence
   c. Co-Occurrence

4. Recovery Principles and Barriers

5. Closing Thoughts and Q&A
The Marshmallow Test

- The ‘Ultimate Test’ in Delayed vs. Instant Gratification for a child!!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX_oy9614HQ
Q: WHAT CAN EARLY EXPOSURE TO GAMING OR GAMBLING DO TO A CHILD?

A: THINK OF WHAT IS BEING LEARNED:

- Immediate gratification
- Inability to develop patience or control
- Early exposure or a Big Win can be a predictor in future problems for gambling
- For gaming, speed and action dominate the brain (Overdrive)
- If coupled with unresolved trauma in childhood, can lead to multiple issues in the future
Facts and Figures

♩ Illegal sports gambling...HUGE and GROWING!
♩ $14 billion spent on Super Bowl and March Madness in 2015.
♩ Game 7 of NBA Finals most heavily bet in history!
♩ 97% of that was illegal!!
♩ Illegal sports betting in the US is 5 times bigger than the legal sports betting in the UK.
♩ Over $1 Billion wagered illegally on Rio Olympics 2016.
♩ Sports fans want to see a change in the sports betting laws.

American Gaming Association, 2016
Landscape

◊ eSports is gaining in popularity
◊ Skill-based gambling is already at a casino near you!
◊ Internet gambling legalized in NJ in 2013 continues to grow.
◊ DFS is not legally considered gambling but it centers on wagering on player performance and is popular!
What are eSports???

✧ A global industry!
✧ Audience of 225 million people
✧ Revenue of nearly $325 million in 2015
✧ Competitive gaming in real time
✧ 93 million Americans play video games
✧ Twitch streams tournaments live and 9.7 million people watch daily...now owned by Amazon who bought it for $1 Billion in 2014

What about the Tournaments???

✧ Just as impressive!
✧ Over 3,200 tournaments
✧ Over 12,500 players
✧ Over $89 million in prize money in 2016
✧ eSports lounges are opening in Casinos
✧ The future of eSports is all about the market, content, delivery, and wagering!
✧ Prevention, Treatment, and Regulators be ready...
Emerging Gameplay Trends

Here are 5 Emerging trends that are starting to shape the video gaming market in an effort to continually advance technology to the most realistic gameplay experience...
Emerging Trend #1

- More immersive digital entertainment and quality....Virtual Reality Gaming.
- Allows the escapism or action component to feel more real.
- Aspects of gameplay and fantasy may carry over reality for ultra hardcore gamers.
Emerging Trend #2

- Secondary screens within gameplay to access items while remaining connected and interacting within the game (Smart Glass).
- Allows the gamer to install an app on his or her mobile device that will interact with the gaming console for more control.
- Also allows the gamer to transition the game from the console to his or her mobile device in the middle of the game.
- Portability allows for 24/7 interaction and flexibility (Nintendo Switch)
Emerging Trend #3

- Open-source gaming leading to cheaper games and homemade games
- Allows novice game building and access to more options at a fraction of the cost.
- Increases competition, reduced monopoly, and more free-to-play options to appeal to almost any demographic.
- Not as tightly regulated or reviewed for age appropriate content.
Emerging Trend #4

- Augmented Reality (AR) gaming.
- Think Pokémon!!!
- Virtual objects appearing in the real-world.
- Allows the gamer to interact with objects from the real world in real-time.
Emerging Trend #5

◊ Look to the Clouds!!!
◊ Allows games to be stored and accessed quickly.
◊ Updates can occur quickly.
◊ Portable
◊ Less storage needed on gaming consoles allows for larger graphics engines and improved quality.
◊ Explain the link from Emerging Trends to Gambling (EA Sports and Madden)
Areas of interest in Online Gaming and Gaming Addiction

• DSM-5
• Funding Streams
• Data and Surveys need updating
• Update Assessment Tools

• Tracking Player Behavior
• In-game Feedback provides functional reinforcement
• eSports and media monetization
• Feminization

Griffiths, Mark D. 'Online Games, Addiction, and Overuse of' (2014)
Q: COULD MY CLIENT BE A PROBLEM GAMBLER?

A: RECOGNIZE THE WARNING SIGNS OF PROBLEM GAMBLING:

- Neglecting family and work
- Loss of reliability
- Picking fights more often at school
- Increased levels of anxiety or depression
- Lies or evasiveness around time and money
- Secretive, controlling family finances
- Decrease in grades or interest in activities previously enjoyed
Internet Gaming Disorder

• A condition for further study in DSM-5 (APA 2013)
• Not an “official” disorder in the DSM but one in which the American Psychiatric Association wants additional research done.
• Often called ‘video game addiction’
• What are the findings......?
Cambridge Health Alliance Study

• Study done in 2017
• Performed by Sally Gainsbury and colleagues
• 176 Adult social gamers were interviewed who also reported having a gambling related problem of 3 or higher on the PG Severity Index

Q: Why do people experiencing gambling problems use social casino games?
Cambridge Health Alliance Study

Findings and Discussion:

• More than half use social casino gaming to escape problems or relieve negative moods
• They also tend to play more often and spend money on them
• Continuing to avoid a problem is not coping
• Negative consequences and public health issue
• Conversation needs to be tied in by clinicians
Potential Risks with Gaming

• Can lead to Problem Gambling.
• Bigger concern among the youth.
• The earlier one starts, the higher likelihood to develop a problem.
• The brain develops the “gas pedal” faster than the “braking system.”
• Inability to control impact on time or money.
• Illusions of Control
• Sense of identity and belonging.
Potential Risks with Gaming

- Exposure to constant marketing and advertising.
- “Gateway gambling drug?”
- Free play transitions to real money play.
- Rate of winning declines.
- Free play tends to “pay out” in excess of 100% then transition to real money where odds shift.
- Consumer Protection risk (i.e. fake games, scams)
- Are social games a relapse trigger for disordered gamblers?
Problematic Cognitions with Gaming

• Allows the behaviors to hang around longer
• No amount of time spent is ever enough
• Continue until a level, reward, or feature is completed
• Gaining power and status through the game
• Escaping the real world
• The computer or console is an “electronic friend.”
Motivators and Advantages around Internet Gambling

While prevalence is relatively low, participation is increasing:

• Convenience and Accessibility
• Greater value for dollar spent (i.e. payout rates and bonuses)
• Speed and Ease of Betting
• Variability and Robust Selection
• Comfort and lack of stigma
Disadvantages around Internet Gambling

- Too easy to spend money online
- Too convenient and accessible
- Digital or account safety
Factors Associated with Problematic Gaming and Gaming Addiction:

**PERSONALITY**

- Neuroticism
- Aggression / Hostility
- Avoidant tendencies
- Loneliness and introversion
- Low emotional intelligence
- Boredom inclination
- Lack of agreeableness
- Loss of self-control
- Low self-esteem
- Sensation seeking
  (Adolescent’s need no help with this one!)
- Social inhibition
Factors Associated with Problematic Gaming and Gaming Addiction:

Comorbidity

- ADHD
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder symptoms
- Panic
- Social Disorder
- Depression
- Social Phobia
- Various Psychosomatic symptoms
Factors Associated with Problematic Gaming and Gaming Addiction:

**Biological**

- Through the use of functional MRI, gaming addicts show similar neural processes and increased activation areas similar to behavioral and substance related addiction.

- Some genetic predisposition has to be considered
Factors Associated with Problematic Gaming and Gaming Addiction:

**External**

- Game design (world, characters, goals)
- Colors
- Aesthetics
- Speed of play
- Where the reinforcement of bonus and levels occur
Predictors of Problematic Online Gambling Behaviors:

- Gambling on Unregulated or Offshore sites
- Setting up multiple accounts
- Many different forms of gambling activity
- High variability of bets
- Multiple bets per day and days per month
- Increasing bet size
- Chasing losses
Internet Gaming /Gambling and Problem Gaming / Gambling Connection

- Digital Currency versus Paper
- Privacy
- Fully Submersive
- Interactive / Rapid Feedback
- Game Specific Characteristics
Internet Gaming / Gambling and Problem Gaming / Gambling Connection Continued

- Speed of Play / Faster Reinforcement
- Continuous Action
- Ease of Access
- Linked Accounts for Speed of Deposits
- Large Wagers
How Counter Strike turned a teenager into a disordered gambler
First...We have to acknowledge some of the challenges...

- Difficulty in differentiation between “Gaming” and “Gambling” activities in addiction research
- Many common features in terms of speed, aesthetics, and structure
- Both can create harm through excessive involvement
- Boundaries and lines are getting blurred (digital games with free and paid virtual currencies or items, as well as the capacity for wagering)
- Delay of gratification
First...We have to acknowledge some of the challenges...

• Gaming tends to be defined by its interactivity, skill-based play, and success or progress measured in a contextual / relative manner

• Gambling tends to be viewed through betting or wagering mechanics, predominantly chance oriented outcomes, intermittent reinforcement, and monetization involving risk and payouts.
Convergence of Gaming and Gambling

• Yet language has converged and now some casinos refer to electronic gambling machines as “gaming.”
• Puts the emphasis on the entertainment component.
• Easy example to consider....social casino gaming (i.e. Zynga Poker and Double Down Casino)
• Simulate many features of gambling machines while allowing the opportunity for players to spend money.
• **Availability** is a constant but the **delivery** changes over time.
Convergence of Gaming and Gambling

• Global Access
• Large Markets
• Increased exposure and interaction with gambling themes; promoted on social media and online games (eSports, VR betting, and betting on virtual items)
• Research often lags behind the technological offerings due to the fast release

5 Primary Types of Convergence of Gaming and Gambling

1) Introduction of gambling elements to games on social media
2) Cross-selling or marketing of online or land based gambling sites to social gaming consumers
3) Introduction of social gaming sites to online gambling consumers
4) Consolidating similar games on non-monetary social gaming and online gambling sites by the same operator
5) Creating “gambling” opportunities on non-gambling games so consumers can win items of value (Red Dead Redemption.)
Potential Pathways to Adolescent Gambling

• Social media advertising by gambling operators and social casino games.
  - Limited capacity by adolescents to analyze and discern the messaging.

• Social Networking Sites (SNS) using You Tube, Twitter, Facebook contains free to play games linking social components such as leaderboards and competitions.

Potential Pathways to Adolescent Gambling

- Social Casino Games: Easy, short duration, multiple devices, fun or competitive, isolation or social.
- Constant exposure normalizes the experiences
- Availability and Supply
- Positive experience + social interaction
- In game purchasing normalizes the habit of spending money on games....may carry to adulthood.
- Rewards and leveling up carries may carry over to comps in adulthood.

The 5 E’s of Why People Play Games or Gamble!

◊ Excitement!
◊ Entertainment!
◊ Escape life’s problems or pain
◊ Economics....It’s all about the Benjamin’s!
◊ Ego....Pride, reputation, or identity
CO-OCCURRING DISORDERS
Areas looked at with gambling:

• Substance use disorder
• Suicide
• Obsessive-compulsive
• Eating disorders
• Smoking

• Suicide
• Mood
• Stress
• ADHD
• Impulsivity
Co-Occurrence with Mental Health Issues

- Depression and anxiety most commonly associated.
- Can become the cause of a problem or the result of the problem
- Up to 3 in 4 of gamblers suffered from depression
- Up to 2 in 5 suffered lifetime anxiety
- 1 in 4 - Bi-Polar Disorder
- 1 in 5 – ADHD
- 1 in 5 - Attempt Suicide (Reported only)
TREATMENT RESOURCES AND RECOVERY PRINCIPLES
Attitude of Recovery

- Humility vs. Pride
- Gratitude vs. Blame
- Mindfulness vs. Denial
- Determination vs. Incompetence
- Respect vs. Ignorance
- Relation vs. Isolation
- Love vs. Hate
- Attention vs. Neglect
- Being Present vs. Being Absent
“The Body Keeps the Score”

- Even in recovery, the addiction “switch” does not shut off. It stays on and needs to be managed daily.
- For parents, even with genetic vulnerability, with proper support in recovery, and because of epigenetics (reshaping), can pass on protectors to offspring.
- Children who start early don’t see or personally experience severe consequences among peers. Because they do not see the adverse consequences, the message of prevention may miss the mark but the body keeps the score.
Adverse Childhood Experience

- Childhood trauma or adverse experiences need to be addressed!
- Important to connect A.C.E with addiction
- Safe and protective early relationships are CRITICAL to reduce / prevent children from long-term or later-term issues.
Barriers to Treatment

• Lack of availability
• Attitudinal – Don’t see the issue
• Uncertainty – Pre-contemplation vs. Action
• Transportation
• Shame
• Embarrassment
• Stigma
• Privacy
• Denial
Why Don’t Problem Gamblers Seek Treatment?

**Challenge to Identity and Resistance to Change:**

- Changes are related to gambler’s thoughts, behaviors, and emotions.
- Intermittent rewarding outcomes are difficult to abandon.
- It is their sense of purpose and identity providing fun and excitement.
- Realization of wasted time, energy, money, and personal losses (relational, emotional)
- How does a person re-define themselves?
Treatment and Recovery

“The end goal of treatment is working toward a sustained and meaningful long-term recovery.”

Dr. Robert DuPont, founding president of Institute for Behavioral Health
Cultivate a Recovery Culture Within

- Mindfulness
- Laughter / Levity
- Identity
- Life Skills
- Multiple “Tools in the Toolbelt”
- Resiliency
- Self-Empowerment
- Respond vs. React
- H.A.L.T
- Accountability
- Emotional Awareness
- Others First
- Language
- Presence
- Balance
- “Feeling Safe”
- Care and Connection
Importance of Language

1) Using the proper language can impact one’s recovery
2) Language can be stigmatizing
3) Can influence how a person is viewed outside
4) Can influence self-identity
5) Labels and perception (Abuse vs Use Disorder)
Taking a Look at ‘Recovery Capital’

• 2008, Granfield and Cloud defined ‘recovery capital’ as “the sum total of one’s resources that can be brought to bear on the initiation and maintenance of substance use cessation.’

• Four components include: social, human, physical, and cultural.

• Also introduced concept of ‘negative recovery capital.’
Negative Recovery Capital

- History of Mental Health Problems
- History of engagement with Criminal Justice System
- Age
- Culture
- Status
- Gender

Commonly Cited Barriers to Recovery

• Housing (eviction, problems, debt)
• Transportation
• Substance Use (Tobacco common)
• Risk Taking (Addiction switch)
• Offense (Police involvement, probation or parole violation)
• Lack of meaningful activities (includes employment)
• Lack of meaningful relationships
Commonly Cited Strengths for Recovery

• Recovery Group Participation (Attendance alone is not enough.)
• Social Support
• Meaningful Relationships
• Gainful and Meaningful Employment
• Commitment to Change / Transformation

Multi-Cultural Counseling

• Respect and be tolerant of differences
• Non-Judgmental
• Increase knowledge and be fluid, not static in your understanding
• Empathy and perspective
• Connection & Compassion vs. Comparison
Summary of Recovery Principles

• Don’t think less of yourself….think of yourself less

• Rules without Relationships lead to Rebellion

• “The greatest sources of suffering are the lies we continue to tell ourselves” (Elvin Semrad, Boston U.)

• For people trapped in a mental prison, they battle between enjoying the pain of pleasure while suffering from the pleasure of the pain

• ‘The Body Keeps the Score’ by Bessel Van Der Kolk

• A ‘Dis-Ease’ of one’s inner being at varying levels
Thank you!

Visit [www.800gambler.org](http://www.800gambler.org)
OR
Phone: 1-800-GAMBLER
OR
Send a Text to ‘800GAMBLER’
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