Brain Connections Workshop – Clinical Case Simulation

Pair up with someone else in the workshop. You will each have the opportunity to play the role of the counsellor and the client. If there is a third person in your group, he or she can act as an observer of the session and offer assistance to the person in the counsellor role, if appropriate.

Scenario 1: Using Handout 4: “Since I’ve stopped gambling, why does nothing else feel fun?”

Instructions for the ‘Client’ role:
Read your background information in the scenario below. Use the information to answer your counsellor’s questions.

You are a client who came home a few weeks ago from problem gambling residential treatment. You went there to stop gambling on cards (blackjack) as well as to quit using alcohol and cocaine. When you first came home, you felt on a ‘high’ from the positive treatment experience. You were motivated and working on your aftercare plan. A few weeks later, though, you have lost your motivation. You are interested in even doing some basic activities of daily living like making your bed, eating a healthy breakfast or doing chores. Last weekend, you went to a party where everyone was drinking and playing cards. You didn’t do either of these things but you also didn’t feel like you fit in and you didn’t have any fun. In fact, nothing feels fun anymore.

You say to your counsellor: “Since I’ve been back from treatment, I haven’t felt happy. I’m doing all this work on my goals but I just feel ‘blah.’ The things I used to like doing, like hanging out with my friends, just don’t feel right anymore. I’m working hard to hang onto my abstinence but I wonder what I’m fighting for. Is this what it’s going to be like without gambling and substances? Boring, boring, boring? Am I ever going to have fun again?”

Instructions for the ‘Counsellor’ role:
Read the background information on your ‘client.’ To answer the question the client asks you, find a natural way to introduce the idea of the handout and then take the client through the information in Handout 4 (Since I’ve stopped gambling, why does nothing else feel fun?), including the Going Further, Activity and Take-Home Message sections.

Discussion:
- How did the handout change your answer to this typical client question?
- What are the benefits and/or drawbacks of the handout?
- Was there anything in the handout that you were not sure about or was difficult to use?
Scenario 2: Using Handout 5: Why do people sometimes switch from gambling to another addiction?

Instructions for the ‘Client’ role:

Read your background information in the scenario below. Use the information to answer your counsellor’s questions.

You have been abstaining from gambling (online casino games) for the past 4 months. It’s been a hard road, but you are clearing up your debt and earning trust back from your loved ones. One of the hardest things has been dealing with negative emotions such as boredom, stress and feelings of depression. Last month, you were introduced to World of Warcraft (WOW) – a continuous online roleplaying game that you felt was really fun to play. You particularly enjoyed building your character, going on missions and ‘levelling’ up quickly. You found it to be a great distraction from the challenges you have been facing since quitting gambling (debt, broken trust, boredom). However, you have found yourself to have become quickly absorbed by WOW. You are now gaming every day for several hours – you work and then you game. You have lost sleep, you have ‘disappeared’ from family events to game and you are thinking about WOW all the time.

You say to your counsellor: “I think I might have switched addictions. I’m not gambling anymore, which is great, but now I think I’m hooked on WOW. It’s getting more intense than I ever wanted it to be but I feel obsessed with it like I did with gambling. Why is this happening?”

Instructions for the ‘Counsellor’ role:

Read the background information on your ‘client.’ To answer the question the client asks you, find a natural way to introduce the idea of the handout and then take the client through the information in Handout 5 (Why do people sometimes switch from gambling to another addiction), including the Going Further, Activity and Take-Home Message sections.

Discussion:

- How did the handout change your answer to this typical client question?
- What are the benefits and/or drawbacks of the handout?
- Was there anything in the handout that you were not sure about or was difficult to use?