

Gambling and Seniors: Perspectives on Prevention

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Objectives

- Overview of disordered gambling
- Why seniors gamble
- Vulnerability of seniors
- Signs of disordered gambling
- Prevention efforts
- Responsible gaming

Overview of Disordered Gambling

- Maladaptive pattern of wagering / behavior.
- Continues despite attempts to control or stop
- Exists despite negative consequences in areas such as relationships, finances, employment, social, and psychological health.
- DSM-V moved from 'impulse control' to 'substance related and addictive disorders.'

Why Do Seniors Gamble?

- Gambling may provide:
 - Social support to older adults who are often isolated
 - Excitement
 - Entertainment
 - Supplement to Income
 - Challenge
 - A way to pass time
 - Disposable Income
 - Relieves Physical Pain or Discomfort

Why Do Seniors Gamble?

- Older adults may turn to casinos or lottery to deal with loneliness
- Older adults, particularly women, favor slot machines over 'action' type gambling
- Older gamblers were more interested in the amount of action available, rather than the amount of money won
- For some, it is an addiction that can cost them their retirement nest egg

VULNERABILITY OF SENIORS

- Loneliness
- Isolation
- Physical or mental illness
- Boredom
- Cognitive impairment affects decision making
- Coping with big changes or losses
- May have disposable income
- Independence and self-esteem

VULNERABILITY OF SENIORS

- Limited financial resources, seek big payoff to overcome limited income
- Moved to new area for retirement
- Want to be with peers in fun activity
- Do not understand addiction, less likely to seek help
- Hide gambling because of stigma attached to it
- Emotional escape

Reasons for Concern

- Targeting of elderly by the gaming industry
- Marketing strategies
 - Senior citizen discounts
 - Free transportation and meals
 - Companionship from group outings

Reasons for Concern

- Casino is the new senior center!
 - May supply wheelchairs, scooters, oxygen
 - Greet you by name
 - Remember your birthday
 - Send cards saying you are missed.
 - Field trips, buffets, quarters!

SIGNS OF DISORDERED GAMBLING:

- Loss of interest and participation in normal activities with friends and family
- Blocks of time unaccounted for
- High priority on gambling
- Changes in attitude and personality
- A sudden need for money or loans
- Missing possessions or assets

SIGNS OF DISORDERED GAMBLING:

- Neglect of personal needs (food, utilities, medical)
- Secrecy and avoidance when questioned about time and money
- Decline in health
- Withdrawal and depression
- Poor diet, lack of exercise, inactivity

Prevention Initiatives:

- Educational initiatives to change internal attitudes, knowledge, beliefs and skills to deter individual from problem gambling
- Policy initiatives to prevent problem gambling through altering external environmental controls on availability and provision of gambling

Why is Prevention Important?

- Significant life changes to lead to increase in vulnerability to developing a gambling problem.
- Lack of addiction understanding among older adults.
- Older adults may be less willing to seek help.
- Increase in cognitive impairments.

Prevention Efforts: Delivery

- Remain neutral in being neither for nor against gambling.
- Keep message consistent, non-judgmental, non-blaming, while providing hope and reducing stigma.
- Utilize multiple strategies (education, information, activities, etc.) across various groups (individual gambler, friend, family member, colleague, community, society.)

CCGNJ Prevention Efforts:

- Partner with local, regional and county organizations or coalitions (i.e. Health Dept., W.I.S.E program.)
- Educational sessions at senior centers and living facilities.
- Partner with the National Foundation on Aging to discuss elder abuse and risks facing seniors.
- Local community policing organizations that run 'Senior Police Academies.'
- Updated brochures and literature.
- Post 'Responsible Gaming' guidelines around senior centers, bingo facilities, and living facilities.
- Partner with the private casino bus operators for literature distribution.

Prevention Efforts: Types of Prevention

- Primary- prevent general population from becoming problem gamblers
- Secondary- prevent at risk individuals from becoming problem gamblers
- Tertiary- stop and reverse existing problems

Primary

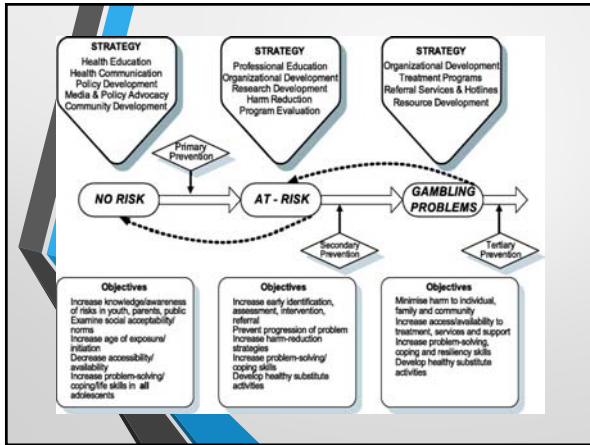
- Prevent onset of at-risk gambling, increase knowledge and awareness of risks and consequences of problem gambling
- Public education: Social marketing and media use
- Advocacy for healthy public policy regulation and limiting gambling expansion
- Information programs for retailers on importance of enforcing age regulations

Secondary

- Divert from escalation into problem gambling
- Early identification strategies
- Education and training of primary care health providers (physician, school counselors, social workers)
- Standards of care for community health centers and staff training
- Harm reduction strategies to remain in control, inform of risks and dangers and help develop skills to remain in control

Tertiary

- Increase access and availability of treatment services and support
- Develop programs specifically for gambling or incorporate into existing addiction programs
- Market services as free, confidential and youth friendly
- Promote referral services and telephone help-lines



Protective Factors for Senior Gamblers:

- Availability of support network
- Supportive family relationships
- Involvement in community activities
- Sense of purpose and identity
- Ability to live independently
- Access to resources like housing and health care
- Solid guidelines for gambling
- Good diet, movement and exercise

Responsible Play

- It means a shared responsibility with collective action by the gaming industry, government, individuals and communities. The aim is to achieve outcomes that are socially responsible and responsive to community concerns. The principles that govern responsible gaming are grounded in science and driven by collaboration. (RISE Services, Jamaica)

How do we keep it fun???

- Play for Entertainment!
- Only Gamble with money you can afford to lose!
- Set limits and stick to them (time, \$)!
- Do not gamble while drinking excessively!
- Do Not Chase your losses!
- Do Not gamble to avoid pain or problems!
- Do Not gamble if you are upset, depressed, tired or angry!
- Do Not be pressured into gambling!

Thank you

**Hope and Help are Available
24 Hours per Day!**

Visit www.800gambler.org

OR

Phone: **800-GAMBLER**

OR

Text '800GAMBLER' to 53342

Resources

- <http://www.ncrg.org>
- <http://www.problemgambling.ca/EN/ResourcesForProfessionals/Pages/GamblingandSubstanceAbuseAComparison.aspx>
- <http://ibhbc.org/gambling>
- https://www.nbc.com/addiction/understanding_addiction/142_co-occurring_disorders.html
- <http://gamingsc.com/pho/board.nsa.gov/?p=62>
- <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/Researchers/fif-res-problem-gambling-mental-health-suicide.pdf>
- American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition. Arlington, VA, American Psychiatric Association, 2013.
- <http://www.pts.org/pts/pages/FrontPage.aspx?panel=etc&panelid=1234567890>
- California Council on Problem Gambling 2. National Council on Problem Gambling 3. Prof. John Warren Kindt Bankruptcy Developments Journal, volume 19, No.1.4. National Research Council, The Guardian 5. Atlantic City Rescue Mission and Association of Gospel Rescue Missions in Kansas 6. National Opinion Research Center survey 7. CT Department of Mental Health
- <http://www.ncpgambling.org>
