



KEYSTONE CORNER

Council Newsletter



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Local 215-744-1880

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Presidents Message

Tony Milillo

Here we are in the middle of our 1997 membership drive. It's through memberships that we continue to do the work that is so important to those citizens in our state that become addicted to gambling. Take a peek at "What's Happening" and you will see some of the activities we were and are involved in. Corporate Sponsors have become a resource to accomplish goals we thought were years away. We thank you all for all your help and support.

For those who hadn't heard our 1996 Statewide Conference held at the Adams Mark Hotel in Philadelphia was a complete success. Mayor Randell stopped by to lend his support. Presenters from all over the country shared their expertise. We are still receiving letters from those who attended. How they were going to use the information in schools, the workplace and in doing assessments of those presenting with issues concerning gambling in their lives. Our luncheon speaker William Pursley did a splendid presentation on Certification of Gambling Counselors. A special Humanitarian award was presented to Mr. Richard Klemp of Harrah's Entertainment Inc. This award is given to those who go a little further in helping Compulsive Gamblers and their Families. Mr. Klemp Surpassed all the criteria needed to qualify for this Award. Handouts and networking, joining together were just a few of the benefits of this conference. The gaming industry supported this conference. By the way for the first time in our History as a council, all Penna. racetrack owners joined and sponsored our conference. Andy Green of Phila Park, Bill Bork of Penn National, John Swiatck, of Ladbroke Racing and Penna. Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association were involved in the conference.

The Casino industry and their responsibly gaming program showed their interest in educating and helping those with a gambling addiction. Harrah's, Caesar's, Grand, Mirage, Epic Horizon, and Foxwoods. Other Sponsors included the Belmont Center for comprehensive Treatment, Hangle, Aronchick, Segal & Pudlin and A Family of a Compulsive Gambler again we thank them all for without their help and support it would not have been possible to put together the type of conference we did. Also special thanks to all those on the conference committee who put time and effort into it's success.

Our Board was hoping to hold our next conference in Pittsburgh, Pa., but our Committee chairman in Pittsburgh has had serious health problems and we agree with him to wait till next year. We are looking at having another conference in the Phila. area in 1997.

Our By-Laws committee is also at work in updating them. One of the articles being looked at is the number of Board Members and possibly adding to the Board so that those more interested in becoming active members can do so.

On our statewide helpline and the expense of these calls are almost beyond our means. If our PSA were released to help our citizens become aware of the services available for them and their families we could be forced to shut down the Helpline. Last year over 7,000 citizens called for help. This number could realistically grow to over 20,000. We are also developing literature concerning Women and Teenage gambling. We would also like to translate some of our literature in Spanish and Chinese. We have been servicing the State of Pennsylvania since 1983 and one of 29 affiliates of our National Council in Washington. We are looking forward to meeting with state legislators in the coming year as they will be addressing issues of gaming in our state. Till next issue have a great summer.

BEYOND THE ODDS

CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY AND PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING

While there are certainly similarities between gambling and chemical dependency there are also several differences. It is important for helping professionals, as well as concerned friends or family members to understand both similarities and differences in order to take appropriate action to help a person suffering from either or both disorders.

A number of professionals in both the gambling and chemical dependency fields were asked to describe the relationship of compulsive gambling and chemical dependency based on their experiences and perspectives. We wish to thank Judy Benson, Bill Bergwall, Lynn Kistler, Mike Marcotte, Loren Novak, and Kelly Reynolds for taking their time to share their thoughts and observations.

Similarities

Most of these clinicians found compulsive gambling to exhibit some of the same features commonly seen in chemical dependency. Included were: progression of the disorder; preoccupation with the problem behavior; chronicity; potential for relapse; tolerance, and withdrawal symptoms.

Both disorders have elements of denial and rationalization for the addictive behavior. Depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, loss of spirituality and life management skills are also regularly observed in both types of client. One expert saw individuals often switching addictions, substituting one drug of choice or a set of addictive behaviors for another while continuing a pattern of addiction.

Differences

A key difference that surfaced was the secrecy of compulsive gambling. Compulsive gambling is simply not as evident or visible as chemical dependency. This fact can allow a compulsive gambler to continue to gamble and experience negative consequences without detection by friends, family members or co-workers. Another difference can be seen in how the person views her/his addiction. "The person who is chemically dependent tends to view his/her drug of choice as remarkable while the person who is caught up in gambling may view himself/herself as remarkable."

The progression of compulsive gambling also seems to be more swift than the development of chemical dependency. Lastly, financial problems are much more severe for the compulsive gambler.

There are also notable differences in society understanding of these disorders. Chemical dependency has become fairly well accepted by the general public as a treatable disease. Compulsive gambling is still considered, by many, to be a moral weakness, reflecting poor judgment, irresponsibility, or greed. The general public seems more informed about, as well as more willing and better able to intervene with chemical dependency, than compulsive gambling. One possible explanation is that gambling is more difficult to understand as an addiction because it doesn't involve the ingestion of any substance. Another reason may simply be that legal gambling options have expanded so rapidly that the general public has not had time to learn about the social costs connected to problem/compulsive gambling.

Assessment and Treatment

When both disorders occur concurrently, all of the clinicians emphasized the importance of conducting an assessment to determine the primary disorder and develop treatment plans accordingly.

A number of clinicians noted that there was a high degree of shame and diminished self-esteem with the admission of gambling problems. One noted that some recovering chemical dependent clients now in treatment for compulsive gambling were initially unable to transfer the recovery skills they used to deal with chemical dependency. Another therapist noticed that those skills can become useful later on in their recovery from pathological gambling.

Therapeutic strategies and relapse prevention efforts for both disorders are often very similar. Both disorders seemed to be helped by a 12 step mutual help program.

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Gamblers Anonymous Pressure Relief Group was identified as a strategy to deal with debt restitution and financial management issues for compulsive gamblers.

In Conclusion

When dealing with clients who appear to demonstrate characteristics of both &corders, the clinicians offer the following suggestions:

1. Conduct an assessment of both gambling behavior and chemical use in developing a treatment plan.
2. Inform the client about the high prevalence of cross addiction.
3. Incorporate both gambling and chemical use in after care plans.
4. Arrange for immediate transition to other treatment modalities to ensure continuity of care.

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: . . .

Compulsive gambling is, according to the American Psychiatric Association, a diagnosable, treatable illness that affects the gambler, the family, the employer, and the community. It is called the "hidden illness" since there is no smell on the breath nor stumbling of steps or speech. Nonetheless, it is as debilitating as alcohol or drug addiction.

The mission of the CCGP is to provide statewide prevention programs, public education, professional training, and to facilitate treatment and research for this illness.

Current services provided by the Council include:

Treatment Programming — Facilitate development of and provide information on and referral sources to compulsive gamblers and their families.

Professional Training/Certification — Provide knowledge and training in the areas of intervention, assessment, diagnosis, treatment objectives, dual addictions, legal implications, and aftercare, and provide and endorse certification standards for professionals.

Hotline Service — 24 hour access Statewide: 800-848-1880

Public Education—conferences, seminars, and continuing education in-services for mental health professionals, educators, and employee assistance personnel.

Currently CCGP is hoping to involve people from all sectors of diversification of membership we hope to accomplish our mission by utilizing the many talents brought to us by these members.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

We will be speaking at hearings in Harrisburg on a gaming referendum May 28 & 29. Presented at the Compulsive Behavior Conference at the East Stroudsburg Univ. Spoke at Drexel Univ. as they were having a Casino Night for their Students which included Non-alcoholic drinks. Presented at St. Joe's College. Continuing our involvement with Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers and their continuing education program for lawyers. Of the many Compulsive gamblers who have lost their lives, one our board members lost her 30 year son recently a brilliant young son, we all share a part of her grief, but can never fully feel this type of loss. Legislation is being presented to allow Slot machines in race tracks. Councilman in Detroit has ask for information on the issue of compulsive gambling Is they look as casino gambling for their city. The Ohio state Lottery called our Office to say they support the statewide helpline as well as include this number on every lottery ticket in Ohio. Their question was can we suggest anything else they could do to be supportive. We will be presenting at the Next National Conference in New Orleans this August. We will be presenting in Toronto, Canada in June. We presented a 2 day workshop educating those in Nebraska on treating Compulsive Gambling. A 16 year was involved in \$20,000 weekend loss to sports betting. Middle school in Phila. has began a pilot program in teaching their students math by playing NFL games on a computer. (could this be a training ground for interest and betting on sports?) A women (a grandmother) embezzled over \$100,000 dollars from her church to play the Lottery. Every state surrounding Pennsylvania are receiving state funding for their programs for Prevention through Education and awareness of the Gambling Addiction. We are receiving many calls confirming that our youngsters are playing the lottery and the easiest access is those lottery machines at the exits or in the lobbies of many markets. As much as \$20.00 can be bet at a time.

CCGP cordially invites you to get on board and become an active member of our rapidly expanding organization. Little will change until society begins to view compulsive gambling in the same light as drug and alcohol addiction. By working as one of our resources you can help make our community aware that compulsive gambling can be devastating.



Name _____
 Address _____
 City, state & Zip _____
 Phone _____
 Business _____
 Business Address _____
 Business Phone _____

Contributions are tax debudctible!

Membership Application

Please check selected membership type

- Full membership
and PCCG Newsletter \$35.00
- Benefactor \$100.00
- Patron \$500.00
- Institution or Corporate \$1,000
- Special Institution or Corporate \$5,000

Any Donation will be accepted \$ _____

YOU CAN HELP

With Pennsylvania experiencing a gambling explosion the CCGP's work is just beginning. Our focus groups include youths, women, senior citizens, and minorities. Plans are underway to offer compulsive gambling seminars to organizations and institutions that work closely with these target groups.

The CCGP actively seeks concerned volunteers to serve on its Board of Directors, Advisory Board, and other special committees. The Council also welcomes all contributions which are tax deductible. Any contribution entitles you to receive a free one-year subscription to the CCGP newsletter.

To become a member, complete the membership application and return it with your membership fee to:



The Council on Compulsive Gambling of Pennsylvania
 1002 Longspur Rd.
 Audubon, PA 19403



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COMPULSIVE GAMBLING — THE HIDDEN ILLNESS

If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call (800) 848-1880