



The "Dis" Ease of Gambling Addiction & Principles of Recovery



Agenda

- Background and overview
- Dis-Ease of Addiction
- Shapes of Pain
- Adolescents and Addiction
- Principles of Meaningful Recovery
- Trauma and ACE's
- The Recovery Culture
- Support, Treatment, Hope
- Closing and Q&A



Stigma of Addiction


"Just because I am/was an addict, doesn't make me a bad person. Deep down inside we are wonderful, loving people."

"It's not a matter of willpower or a lack of a moral compass."

"Addiction is not the entirety of me. I am me; I am not just my addiction. There is a lot of other stuff to love."


"I wish people saw the time that addicts spent alone. Thinking about everything they've done every time they've lied and stole."


Source: Drug Abuse.com/Stigma Library Page v2



Opening Question:

What do we use to cover the pain in our life?





Thoughts / Observations

- 1) "If I can keep going fast enough, I can, for a little while at least, outrun the fear and the anxiety of the pain."
- 2) Silence is the enemy.
- 3) I can fill with endless activity.
- 4) We all have our armor....some are chosen, some are handed down through generations.

Shauna Niequist author of 'Bread and Wine and Savor'



What ties in with Gambling Addiction?

- Social
- Behavioral
- Emotional
- Relational
- Financial
- Spiritual
- Biological
- Psychological
- Physiological
- Mental

Some number of things are not 'at ease' within.

What is not at Ease?

- Often times, addiction is the SOLUTION, not the PROBLEM.
- A solution to a DEEPER underlying issue that is unresolved.
- Perhaps the individual does not have the tools or was never taught the right way to handle.
- Therefore, unresolved PAIN is a central area of focus

What is Pain?

It serves a purpose to tell us something is wrong.

"Pain is the Megaphone to rouse a deaf world." (C.S.Lewis)

Inner pain may lead one to seek to escape, dissociate, or isolate from others.

Addiction stems from the pain and the drug of choice becomes the SOLUTION for living in a hijacked brain...

Shapes of Pain

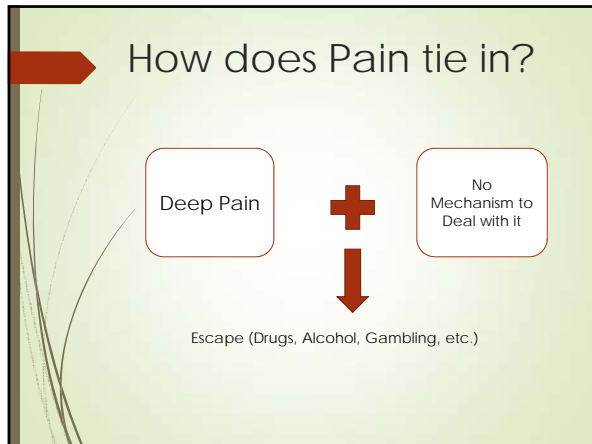
Scarcity – The concept of never having enough; always wanting more. No peace / no rest

Abuse – Nobody is safe (physical, emotional, verbal, violence, trauma.

Loss / Grief – The feeling that you have always been alone and always will be alone.

People seek to soothe and ease the pain first.

Seth Haines, Author, Coming Clean



Observations

- Life will do what life does and when it does, it will HURT and bring PAIN.
- We all go through 'Pain Points'
- Don't simply ask 'why the addiction?' yet also seek to understand 'why the pain?'

Observations

- We are hardwired for pleasure buzz from risky events.
- What is 'risky' to one may not be 'risky' to another.
- The uncertain nature of a 'payoff' and the 'near miss' are both hooks that can perpetuate an addiction to gambling.

How do we begin to Untangle the Web of Pain?



~Sir Walter Scott

Pain in Today's Youth

- "I am NOT enough"
- Social Media overload
- Self-Esteem and Identity Issues
- "Who Am I"
- Who are my "Friends?"
- The very things that keep us CONNECTED with others, is making us more DISCONNECTED from our inner self.

Fear in Today's Society

What are you so afraid of?

% of Americans who say they fear...



Fear	% of Americans
PUBLIC SPEAKING	25
HEIGHTS	22
BUGS/SPIDERS/OTHER ANIMALS	20
SNOW/WEATHER	18
BLOOD/NEEDLES	17
CLAUSTROPHOBIA	16
FLYING	15
STRANGERS	12
ZOMBIES	10
DARKNESS	8
CLOWNS	7
GHOSTS	6

WASHINGTONPOST.COM WASHBLOG Source: Chapman University Survey on American Fears

More on Fear

- Ok to experience fear, but do not let it consume you
- We tend to fixate on the worst case scenario
- When fear hits, ask yourself, "what is true NOW?"
- Don't get pulled back into the past
- Fear has the power of isolation, just like addiction


Anger

- 😊 A Secondary Emotion
- 👁 Used to protect / insulate from deeper vulnerability
- 📎 Primary emotions will underlie the anger
- 🤝 Need life and coping skills to deal with the anger

Anger

What do I feel beneath the anger?






Adverse Childhood Experiences:


- Kaiser's A.C.E (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Study
- Childhood experiences, both positive and negative, have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity. As such, early experiences are an important public health issue.

The Body Keeps the Score, Bessel VanDer Kolk



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.



What are Adverse Childhood Experiences?

- Child abuse and neglect
- Growing up in a home with
 - domestic violence
 - parental substance abuse
 - parental mental illness
 - parental discord
 - criminal behavior

www.michigan.gov 2014 Coordinator Meeting

Adverse Childhood Experiences Findings:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are common.
- Almost two-thirds of study participants in a study done in the late 90's reported at least one ACE.
- More than one in five reported 3+ ACEs.
- The ACE score, a total sum of the different categories of ACEs reported by participants, is used to assess cumulative childhood stress.
- Study findings repeatedly reveal a relationship between number of ACEs and negative health and well-being outcomes across the life course.

The Body Keeps the Score, Bessel VanDer Kolk

Mechanism by Which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan

The Body Keeps the Score, Bessel VanDer Kolk

As the number of ACEs increases so does the risk for the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol Misuse Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease Depression Fetal death Health-related quality of life Illicit drug use Ischemic heart disease Liver disease Poor work performance Financial stress Risk for intimate partner violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gambling Problems Sexually transmitted diseases Smoking Suicide Ideation Unintended pregnancies Early initiation of smoking Early initiation of sexual activity Adolescent pregnancy Risk for sexual violence Poor academic achievement Poor Decision Making
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Recovery from Trauma: Healing the Self

Trauma steals the feeling from being in control of one's self

Goal is to re-establish ownership over self in terms of feelings and emotions without becoming overwhelmed, ashamed, or threatened

In order to regain control over the trauma, one needs to re-visit in a safe and therapeutic manner.

The Body Keeps the Score, Bessel VanDer Kolk

More on Trauma:

Can lead to the concept of 'emotional numbness'


Can change people's perceptions and imaginations

Did not simply happen in the past rather it also leaves an imprint on the day to day mind, body, and brain.

The individual needs to know that the danger has passed and to live in the reality of the present.

The Body Keeps the Score, Bessel VanDer Kolk

Principles of a Meaningful Recovery



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



Treatment and Recovery

- ☐ Negative thoughts keep us trapped
- ☐ Positive intentions set us free
- ☐ Awareness is NOT enough
- ☐ Motivation is needed
- ☐ Awareness WITHOUT equipping does NOT work



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

Sobriety

- What is true sobriety / recovery?
 1. Dealing with pain vs. escaping or switching.
 2. Being properly 'attached.'
 3. Recognizing what forces try to disrupt those attachments.

Principles of a Meaningful Recovery

SAMHSA, 2012

More on Relations and Connection...

- Rules without Relationships leads to Rebellion.

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graph LR
    A[Vulnerability] --> B[Connection]
    B --> C[Recovery]
  
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Brene Brown, The Power of Vulnerability TED Talk 2013



More on Relations and Connection...

- We are made to be connected
- Shame is the fear of disconnection
- Shame says "I am Bad"
- Guilt says "I did something Bad"
- "I am not _____ enough"
- Shame needs Secrecy, Silence, and Struggle

Brene Brown, The Power of Vulnerability TED Talk 2013



More on Relations and Connection...

- Vulnerability is not WEAKNESS but the birthplace of:
 1. Innovation
 2. Creativity
 3. Change
- Vulnerability is Emotional Risk
- Do we have a Drug / Alcohol / Gambling Epidemic or is it a Deeper Shame and Fear Epidemic?.....

Brene Brown, The Power of Vulnerability TED Talk 2013



Cultivate a Recovery Culture

■ Mindfulness	■ Accountability
■ Laughter / Levity	■ Emotional Awareness
■ Identity	■ Others First
■ Life Skills	■ Language
■ Multiple "Tools in the Toolbelt"	■ Presence
■ Resiliency	■ Balance
■ Self-Empowerment	■ "Feeling Safe"
■ Respond vs. React	■ Care and Connection

Why Don't People 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?

www.youthgambling.com

Barriers to Treatment

- Lack of availability
- Attitudinal - Don't see the issue
- Uncertainty - Pre-contemplation vs. Action
- Transportation
- Shame
- Embarrassment
- Stigma
- Privacy
- Denial

www.youthgambling.com

Commonly Cited Barriers to Recovery

Offense (Police involvement, probation or parole violation)

Lack of meaningful activities (includes employment)

Lack of meaningful relationships / community / connection

Best, David et al. "Measuring and Individuals' Recovery Barriers and Strengths." Addiction Professionals, Fall 2016

Commonly Cited Strengths for Recovery

Recovery Group Participation
(Attendance alone is not enough.)

Social Support

Don't focus on keep the addiction OUT, focus on creating a new life where the addiction no longer fits IN!

Best, David et al. "Measuring and Individual's Recovery Barriers and Strengths." Addiction Professional, Fall 2016

Commonly Cited Strengths for Recovery

Meaningful Relationships

Gainful and Meaningful Employment

Commitment to Change / Transformation

Best, David et al. "Measuring and Individual's Recovery Barriers and Strengths." Addiction Professional, Fall 2016

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)

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
- Pleasure is Joy's Assassin (Seth Haines, author)

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