

UNDERSTANDING PROBLEM GAMBLING AND GAMBLING ADDICTION



Four Directions Tree of Healing Conference

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PRESENTATION PURPOSE

- Defining Addiction, Problem Gambling and Gambling Addiction
 - Addiction Components
 - Types of Gambling
 - What are people actually addicted to
 - Dependency [physical vs. emotional]
 - Types of Compulsive Gamblers
 - The role of emotional injuries / emotional illness
 - Myths
 - Densmore evolution of gambling addiction
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DEFINING ADDICTION

ADDICTION

The continued use of a mood altering substance or behavior despite adverse dependency consequences, or a neurological impairment leading to such behaviors. Addictions can include, but are not limited to, drug abuse , exercise abuse, sexual activity and gambling.

Wikipedia

DEFINING ADDICTION

ADDICTION

A term used to describe a chronic illness / disease

A progressive Emotional Illness that causes harmful mental disturbances, physical dependency or side effects, and often involves cycles of relapse and remission that can result in disability, prison or premature death if untreated.

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ADDICTION COMPONENTS

- SALIENCE
- MOOD MODIFICATION
- TOLERANCE
- WITHDRAWAL
- CONFLICT
- RELAPSE



THE PROBLEM WITH DEFINING THE PROBLEM



- We have NO National Definition
- The debate for a National Definition continues
- There are numerous definitions used by states, clinical associations, recovery organization, and councils
- There is confusion in separating problem gambling from gambling addiction

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

PROBLEM GAMBLING

Is gambling activity of any type that **DISRUPTS** or causes **PROBLEMS** in other areas of your life, or the lives of the people around you. This includes school or work activities, relationships, or your own physical, mental or emotional health. Problem gambling, can lead to

PATHOLOGICAL / GAMBLING ADDICTION

where **GAMBLING ACTIVITY INTENSIFIES** and the **NEED** to continue to gamble rises despite destructive, **NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES**, or the **DESIRE TO STOP**.

TYPES OF GAMBLERS

There are FOUR common types of gambler

- Professional gambler
- Social gambler
- Problem gambler
- Addicted gambler

Be aware that the problem gambler will often believe themselves to be, or pretend to be, a social or professional gambler

Professional Gambling

Professional gamblers are the rarest form of gambler, and depend on games of skills rather than luck to make money. They have full control over the time, money and energy they spend on gambling.

Social Gambling

Social gamblers consider gambling to be a valid form of recreational activity, and maintain full control over the time, money and energy they expend on gambling. They consider the cost of gambling to be payment for entertainment.

Problem Gambling

Problem gambling involves the continued involvement in gambling activities, despite the development of negative consequences. **All gambling addicts are problem gamblers, although not all problem gamblers have a gambling addiction, and problem gambling often leads to gambling addiction if not addressed.**

Addicted Gambling (silent killer)

Gambling activities intensify regardless of consequences, and the need to continue to gamble rises despite the desire to stop. Gambling addicts will continue to do what is necessary to gamble despite dangerous emotional and financial strain. Gambling addiction is progressive and the cycle often turns life threatening with control completely lost. If not treated, gambling addiction will end in prison or suicide.

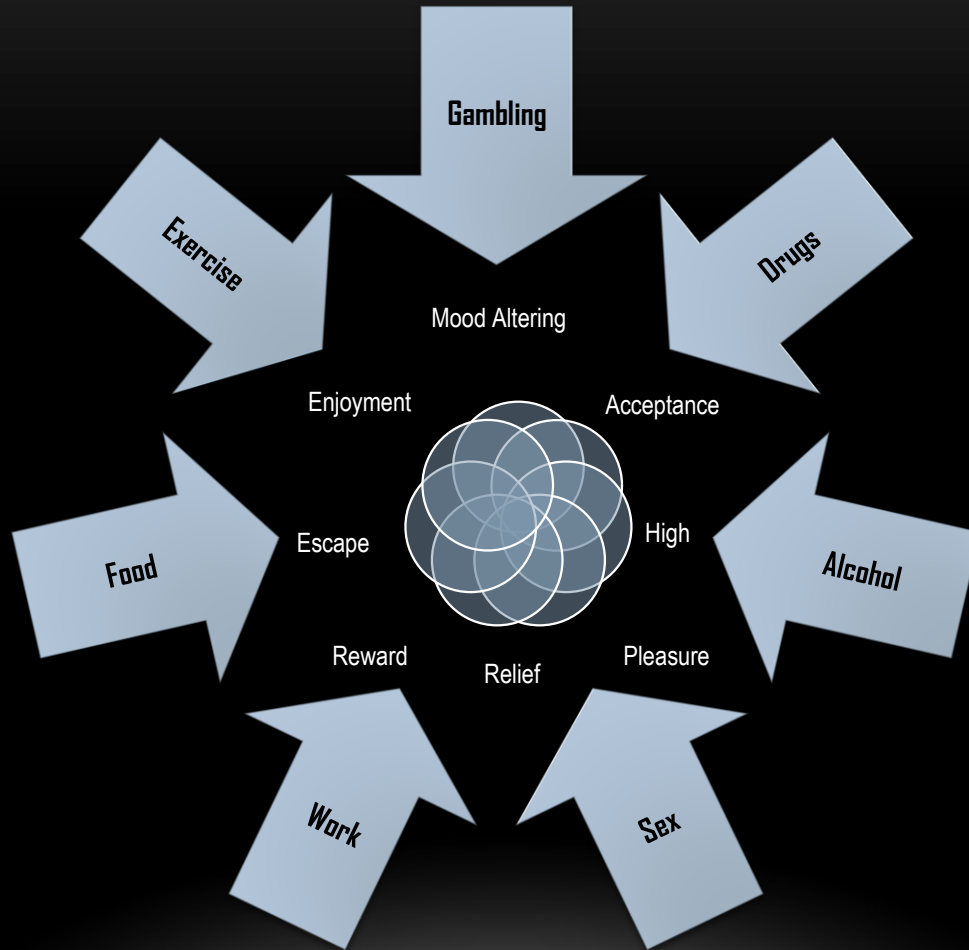
TOP HIGH-RISK GAMBLING ACTIVITIES

- Casino Gambling
- Lottery Tickets / Scratch Offs
- Cards (i.e.) Poker
- Sports Betting
- Horse Betting / Racinos
- Bingo
- Video Gaming (i.e.) quick draw, keno
- Internet Gambling
- OTB (off-track betting)
- Stock Market (Arbitrage Betting) for the purpose of investing

Casino or Internet Video Poker is the Crack Cocaine of Gambling Addiction

“VIDEO CRACK”

WHAT ARE PEOPLE ACTUALLY ADDICTED TO



People do not get addicted to things, but rather to what those things do for them

PHYSICAL DEPENDENCY VS EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

HOW IT RELATES TO GAMBLING ADDICTION

- ❑ Addiction can only exist if the act of doing something or ingesting something provides a REASON to repeat the behavior again and again with no regard to self, loved, society or negative consequences. The initial reason to repeat the behavior is because of the way it makes one feel (the effect) or was mood altering.
- ❑ Physical dependency results from chronic use of a drug that has produced tolerance, and where negative, physical withdrawal symptoms result from discontinuation or attempts to reduce use.
- ❑ Physical dependency is a psychophysical state. When a person is addicted to drugs and alcohol who MUST receive an increasing amount of the substance to prevent the onset of withdrawal symptoms.
- ❑ Emotional dependency is the need to have to rely on something else for emotional satisfaction, support, and to feel better. In extreme cases as what happens with addiction, an individual will lose their ability to function independent of the drug, behavior or action.
- ❑ If drugs and alcohol provided the same altering effect as it currently does, minus the physical dependency dynamic, people would still be as addicted to it. In other words, addiction does not exist solely because of this one dynamic.

With ADDICTION, Emotional Dependency is ALWAYS a factor, Physical Dependency IS NOT

GUARANTEED EFFECTS

INGEST VS. INVEST

Drugs / Alcohol

- You must **INGEST** to get the effects
- If you ingest, effects are guaranteed
- Money is often needed, but not necessary to get the effects
- As addiction progresses, one must ingest more to get the desired effects
- Attempts to reduce dose or use triggers the onset of withdrawal symptoms, which creates a craving, and the addict continues using

Gambling

- You must **INVEST** to get the effects
 - If you Invest, the effects are not guaranteed
 - Money is necessary, and has to be used to get the effects
 - As addiction progresses, one must invest more to get the desired effects
 - Attempts to reduce gambling behavior
-

TYPES OF COMPULSIVE GAMBLERS

Action Compulsive Gambler
Escape Compulsive Gambler

Action Compulsive Gambler

Gambles for action, risk, rush, adrenaline
Is addicted to the “Action” effect

- Gambles on games related more to “skill” than luck
- Men and women can be action gamblers, however; a higher percentage are male
- Considered domineering or egotistical publically, when in reality have a low self esteem
- Often experience a high level of winnings in winning phase and view themselves as professional
- Common gambling activities are , poker, cards, horse or dog races, sports wagering and dice games
- Legal and illegal sports wagering is dominated by this gambler
- Gambles primarily to beat other players or the “house”
- Typically progress through the phases over a 10 to 30 year time span

Escape Compulsive Gambler

Gambles to escape problems, cope with bad feelings,
and get relief from controlling factors experienced outside of gambling

Is addicted to the numbing, hypnotic “narcotic like” effect
they experience from gambling

- Gambles on games related more to “luck” than skill
- Men and women can be escape gamblers, however; a higher percentage are female
- Considered nurturing, responsible, well-adjusted individuals publically, but generally have low self-esteem
- Common gambling activities are video poker, slots, keno, bingo, lottery, internet
- Does not typically experience the “winning phase” but rather has episodes of winning. No big monetary win has to occur. In other words, the feeling of escape, no worries, no pain that one gets from the gambling experience is the “fix” the escape gambler needs

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COMPULSIVE / ADDICTED GAMBLER

Three important factors to understand regardless of what type of compulsive gambler one may be

1. Gambling addiction is a symptom of underlying issues, an emotional problem with financial consequences
2. A gambling addict will continue to do what is necessary to gamble to achieve the desired effects
3. Once the desperation phase addiction is reached, all compulsive gamblers gamble to escape, medicating the pain they feel from the destruction, shame and guilt created by their gambling behavior, by continuing to gamble so they don't have to feel it, and winning is simply a means of gambling longer

THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INJURIES IN THE CYCLE OF ADDICTION

Emotional Injuries

things that make us feel bad

- Abuse
- Bullying
- Divorce
- Arguments
- Rejection
- Insults
- Neglect
- Stigmas
- Loss
- Manipulation

CAUSE

Bad Feelings

- Loneliness
- Sadness
- Stress
- Irritability
- Uncertainty
- Anxiety
- Nausea
- Pain
- Shame
- Guilt
- Fear

CAUSE

Need to Cope

- Feel Better
- Relax
- Escape
- Relief
- Peace
- Pleasure
- Reward
- Acceptance

COMMON MYTHS



Problem gambling is a financial or money problem

NO

Problem gambling is an emotional problem that has financial consequences. A person will still be a problem gambler even if you pay off their debts. Money is necessary for a gambler to get their fix.

Problem Gambling is a moral weakness

NO

Many people who develop problems associated with gambling have been viewed as well-adjusted, responsible and strong by those who care about them. Underlying emotional factors often lead to a change in behavior. This change can flare as problems or addicted behavior outside of ones awareness, and has nothing to do with a persons morals.

Your only a problem gambler if you gamble frequently

NO

How often a person gambles does not necessarily determine whether or not they have a gambling problem. Some problem gamblers gamble frequently, while others binge gamble periodically. A problem exists if negative consequences are evident in the gambler's life, including the effects on the family, regardless of gambling frequency.

You have to lose a lot of money before gambling becomes a problem

NO

Determining when gambling becomes a problem has nothing to do with the amount of money won or lost. Gambling becomes a problem when it causes a negative impact on any area of the individual's life. However; if problem gambling progresses to gambling addiction, damaging financial consequences are imminent.

COMMON MYTHS

Only some types of gambling can cause a problem

NO

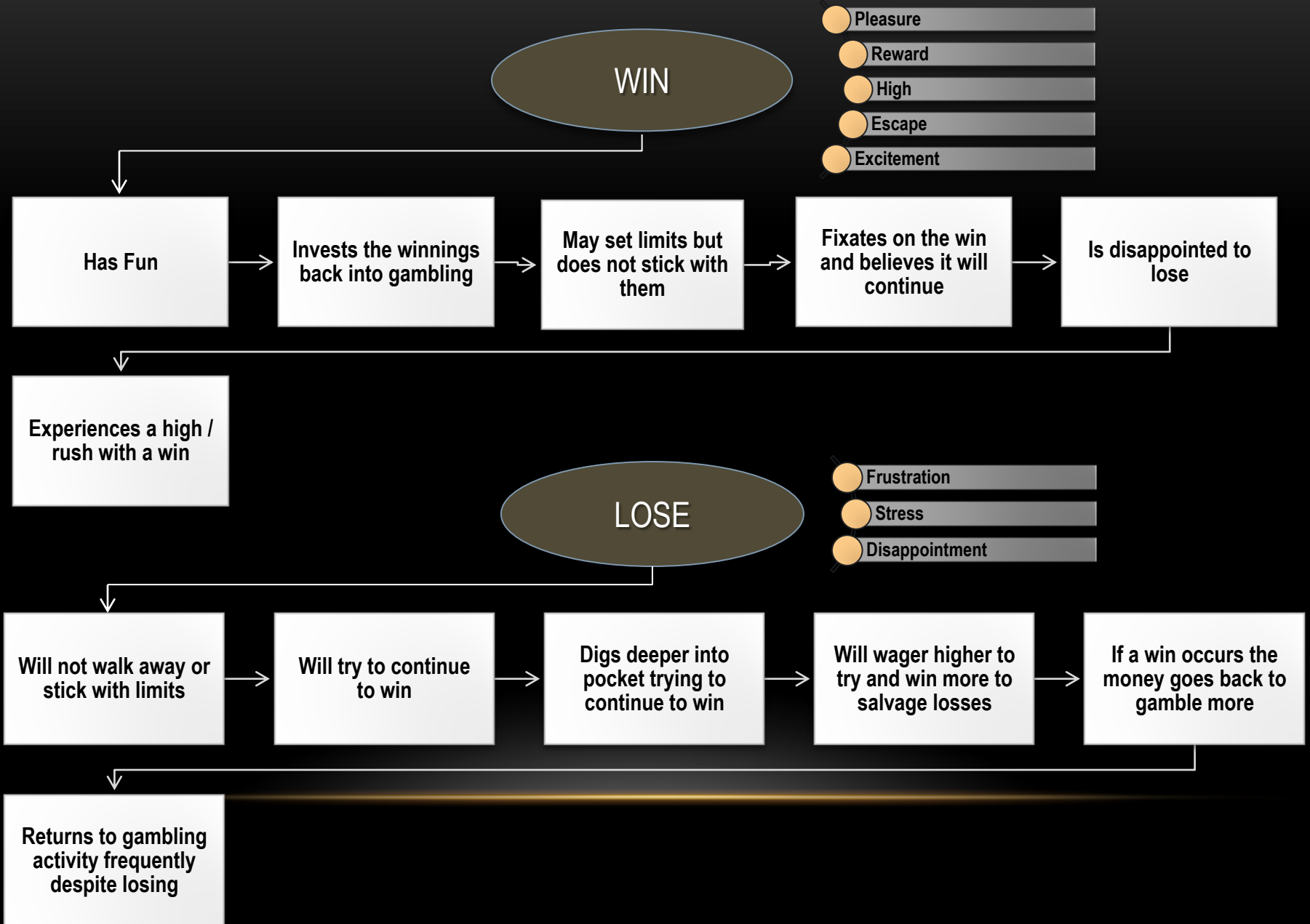
Any type of gambling can become problematic, just as drinking any type of alcohol can become problematic. There are however types of gambling that have different characteristics that can exacerbate gambling problems. For example; speed of play (wager to response time) the action, escape or environment involved.

Gambling isn't addictive because it isn't a substance

NO

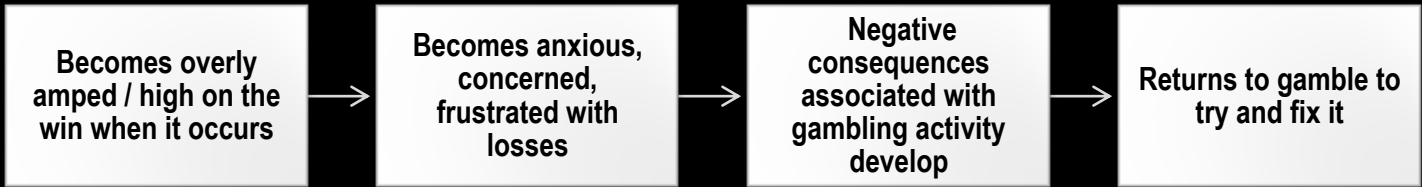
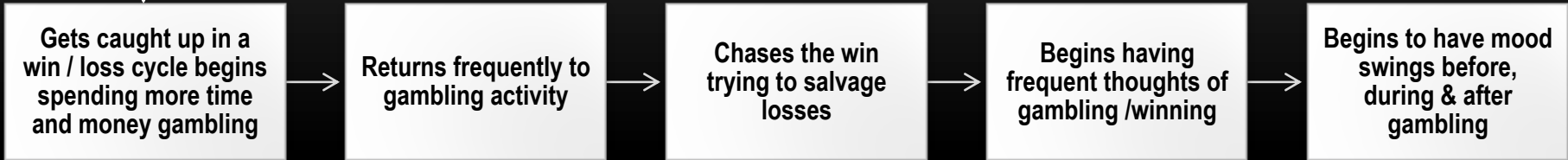
Anything that alters a persons mood and creates escape, reward, pleasure or hope is a high-risk activity to developing an addiction to it. Although no substance is ingested, a problem gambler will get similar effects from gambling as one may get from taking drugs or alcohol. The WIN and the PROCESS in gambling is the drug, it creates an emotional effect and alters the mood. The gambler will continue to gamble, repeating the behavior in an attempt to achieve the effect, which can only be accomplished by winning. Similar to drugs and alcohol, tolerance develops, and it takes more and more gambling activity with higher wagers to achieve the same emotional effect as before. As this cycle continues, an increased craving for the activity occurs and the gambler will invest more time and money as they find they have less and less ability to resist. Gambling activity intensifies as the cravings grow and control is lost.

DENSMORE EVOLUTION OF GAMBLING ADDICTION



WIN / LOSE

- Competitiveness
- Pressure
- Anxiety
- Mood Swings



PROBLEM GAMBLING

- Irritability / Concern
- Shame / Guilt
- Anger
- Stress / Anxiety



Gambling Addiction

- Hopelessness
- Despair
- Desperation
- Pain
- Suicidal

Gambling becomes the single most important thing in life

Gambler will do whatever is necessary in order to get their fix

Those close to the gambler are directly affected, in pain, confused and live a life of fear and financial uncertainty

Gambling intensifies regardless of consequences

Formerly law abiding, one turns to crime to support gambling. Stealing, fraud, embezzlement, writing bad checks

The need to gamble, and gambling activity increases despite repeated attempts to stop

Desperation sets in with dangerous mental, emotional and physical disturbances present

Severe indebtedness / financial ruin looms as gambling continues

Homes, assets, relationships and jobs are lost and work or school performance is jeopardized

Day to day life becomes chaotic with dangerous emotional strain for the gambler and those involved

The gambler experiences extreme depression, guilt and despair

Gambler escapes deeper into the addiction and gambling intensifies

Hopelessness sets in and the condition turns life threatening with control completely lost

Legal and criminal issues due to gambling rise and may lead to prison.

With no hope for escaping the destruction, the gambler considers suicide as the only answer.

THE ROLE OF THE GAMBLING INDUSTRY

ARE THEY RESPONSIBLE

Do casinos, lotteries and other types of gambling “cause” problem gambling?

Gambling becomes a problem when an individual is unable to control gambling activity. The problem is caused by underlying issues in which the effects of gambling can satisfy. Those who provide opportunities for people to gamble, such as casino's and lotteries do not, in and of themselves, create the problem, just as a liquor store does not create an alcoholic.

UNDERSTANDING THE GAMBLING INDUSTRY

The Purpose

- Profit

The Message

- Create revenue
- Lower Taxes
- New Jobs
- Provide funding for a cause
- Provide entertainment

The Practice

- To create a system that allows them to make as much money, from their customers as quickly and often as possible

The Result

- Profits in direct proportion to the losses of its customers
-

FACTORS IN THE RISE OF PROBLEM GAMBLING

AS THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE GAMBLERS INCREASE, SO WILL THE NUMBER OF PROBLEM GAMBLERS

Why are more people gambling now than ever before

- **Marketing**

Mass marketing entices people to gamble through clever advertising and ingenious methods of promoting it

- **Increased Opportunities**

Gambling venues and activities are increasing nationwide

- **Accessibility**

With an increase in venues and activities, comes an increase in accessibility, making it easier and more convenient to gamble

- **Believability**

Because the reality of gambling gets distorted with fictional marketing spins, people have a fictional belief that money can be made from gambling or that their money is going to a good cause

THERE IS A GAP BETWEEN WHAT WE KNOW AND WHAT WE DO

WE CAN DO BETTER

Those who promote gambling, a product that is known to be addictive or cause a public health issue, should be responsible for providing better, and more accurate information about the risks associated with, and support and provide funding through its profits for programs that are dedicated to prevention and awareness, as well as treatment for those who suffer from the negative effects use of the product can cause.

WARNING Gambling is addictive and can cause harmful negative consequences in your life and those around you. Serious financial, mental and emotional problems have been known to develop for some people who gamble. If negative consequences develop due to gambling activity, and attempts to stop fail, seek help **IMMEDIATELY.**

Recovery is not a destination it is a journey. A personal journey. A path that is often hard to find, and at times hard to follow once you find it. It is a personal and unique process in the restoration and development of new meaning and purpose in life. Recovery is growing beyond the negative effects of an illness, even with the limitations that have been caused by it. The path is never straight, and it will never end, but it is always a choice, and it is always ones own.