What Does the Future Hold for PG? – Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery

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Goals and Objectives

- Emerging trends in treatment for gambling disorder
  - sports bettors who gamble online and in non-traditional markets,
  - digital recovery tools and digital therapeutics
- Barriers
  - reduction in treatment funds
  - managing workforce capacity
  - demand for treatment.

The Present Situation

- No FDA-approved meds
- Lots of therapy and counseling available
- 12-step support
- State-funded treatment (no national)
- No established “Treatment Guidelines” from any professional society
- What’s been innovative since 2010-2020?

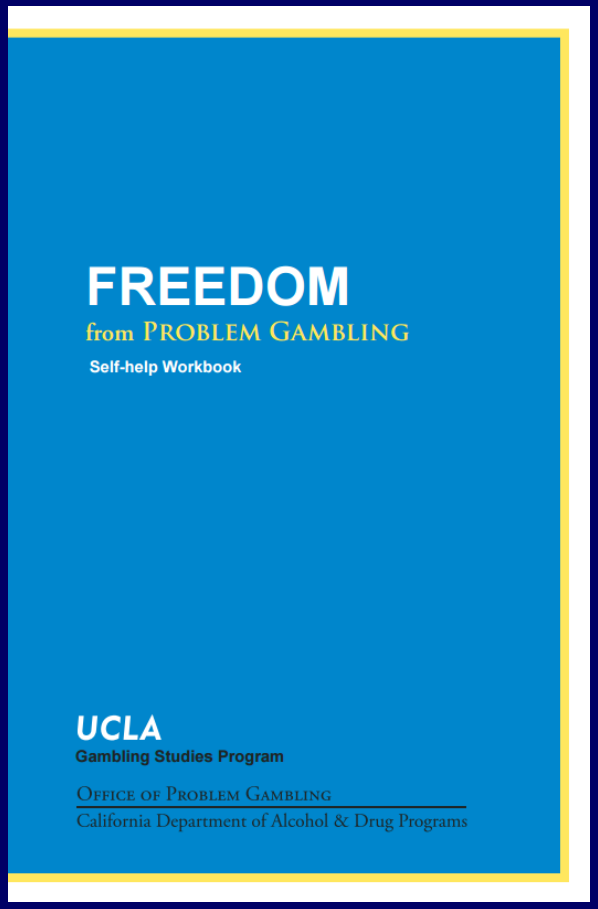
Prevention

Evidence-Based Prevention Practices

- Primary
  - Extend date of first gambling
  - Limit availability, access , demand for gambling
- Secondary
  - Education about risks and consequences
  - Screening programs
- Tertiary
  - Support groups
  - Harm reduction principles

Treatment

Freedom From Problem Gambling Workbook



Workbook

- Available in 22 languages
  - www.problemgambling.ca.gov
  - Can be handed out to client for self study or used together with client
  - Used in CalGETS Problem Gambling Telephone Interventions (phone counseling)

Individualized Treatment for Problem Gamblers

Therapist Manual

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Individualized Treatment for Problem Gamblers

Patient Workbook

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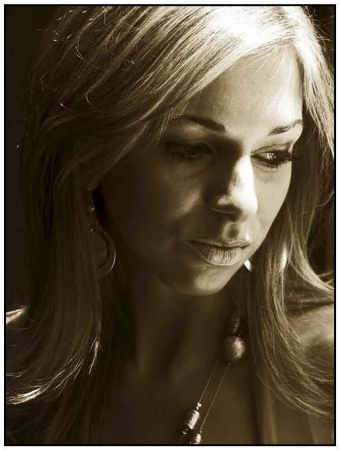
Helping Partners in a Relationship with a Problem Gambler

Therapist Manual



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Treatment Issues
For Future Consideration

Predictors of Treatment Success

- Well-established:
  - Length of time in treatment
  - Involvement of family
  - Limited number of co-occurring disorders
  - Multidisciplinary approach
  - Less symptoms and distress at intake

Future Consideration: Predictors of Success?

- Slope of treatment response
  - (steep or slow and steady)?
- In-person treatment measures
  - attention / participation / engagement / comprehension
- Types of psychotherapy to match types of gambling

Medication Development

- Will there ever be an FDA-approved medication for gambling disorder?
- What would it take for one to be developed?
- Why hasn't there been one developed yet?

Medication Development

- What are the potential strategies and targets?
  - Urges / cravings?
  - Loss of control?
  - Reduce reinforcement properties of gambling?
  - Diminish strength of triggers?

Treatment for Sports Bettors

- What are unique treatment principles?
  - Casino vs Mobile
  - Fantasy Sports (treatment)
    - Slowed pace of play?
  - Betting Experience
    - What's different?
      - "knowledge-based" – skill?
      - Part of entertainment / culture
      - Constantly having new games to look at

Treatment for Financial Traders

Case Example

- 48 year old male
- 15 year history of “trading”

Up and Down but not harmful

Since start of Pandemic, lost more and actually asked to borrow from family

conflict, stress, worry, cognitive distortions created.

Case Example

- No traditional forms of gambling
- Refuses to call it gambling
- Family calls it gambling
- Presents for intake at FIRM request of family

Case Example

- 12-step?
- Says it's not gambling but admits "mistakes" but persists in belief in the markets
- Uses a lot of financial jargon

Funding Sources for Treatment

- Current State
  - No federally, dedicated funding
  - States:
    - Too Much, Too Little?
  - Health Insurance Coverage
    - Not nearly enough consistent data

Ideas for Sustainability

- Must involve insurance industry, regulators and commissioners
- Cases of lack of parity must be made known
- The case of treatment saving healthcare costs must be shown

Workforce Capacity

- How do we build next generation of gambling treatment providers?
  - Gambling certification programs
    - How to make them more impactful
  - Student involvement
  - Total number of providers NOW vs. total number of providers NEEDED
  - How do we increase diversity?

How To Increase Demand For Treatment

- More advertising and marketing?
- More integration during the gambling experience?
- Mandated screenings from insurance?
- Louder advocates?
- Better portrayals of what recovery process looks like?

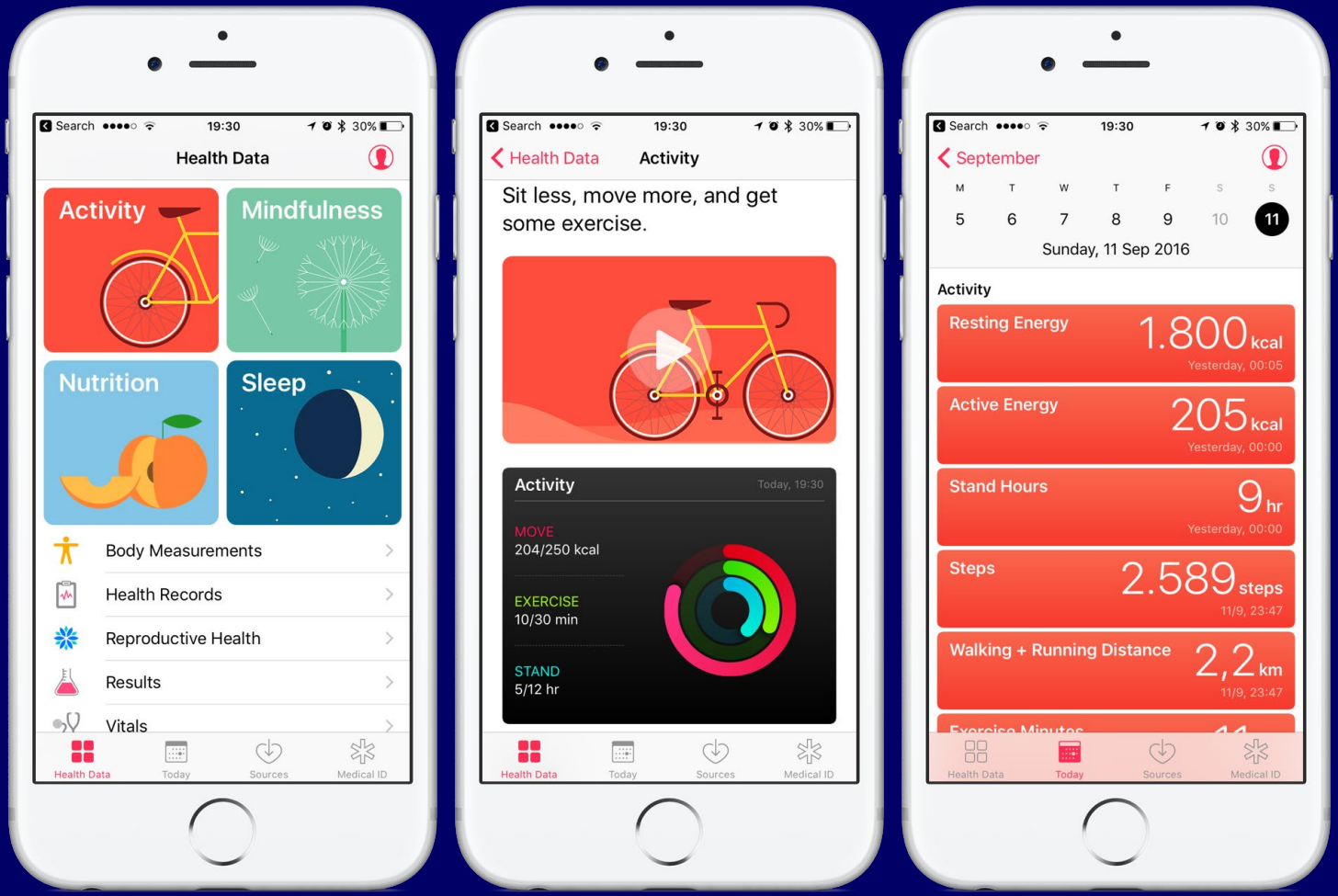
Digital Tools

Turning digital experiences into a tool **FOR** recovery not a tool to recover **FROM**

Digital Health Information / Collection

- Wearables
  - Track activity / location / behaviors
- Self-Report
  - Thoughts / Feelings /Behaviors
- Linkage to Medical Records
  - Send and Receive
  - Incorporate

The Present Situation



How can we use this in gambling treatment?

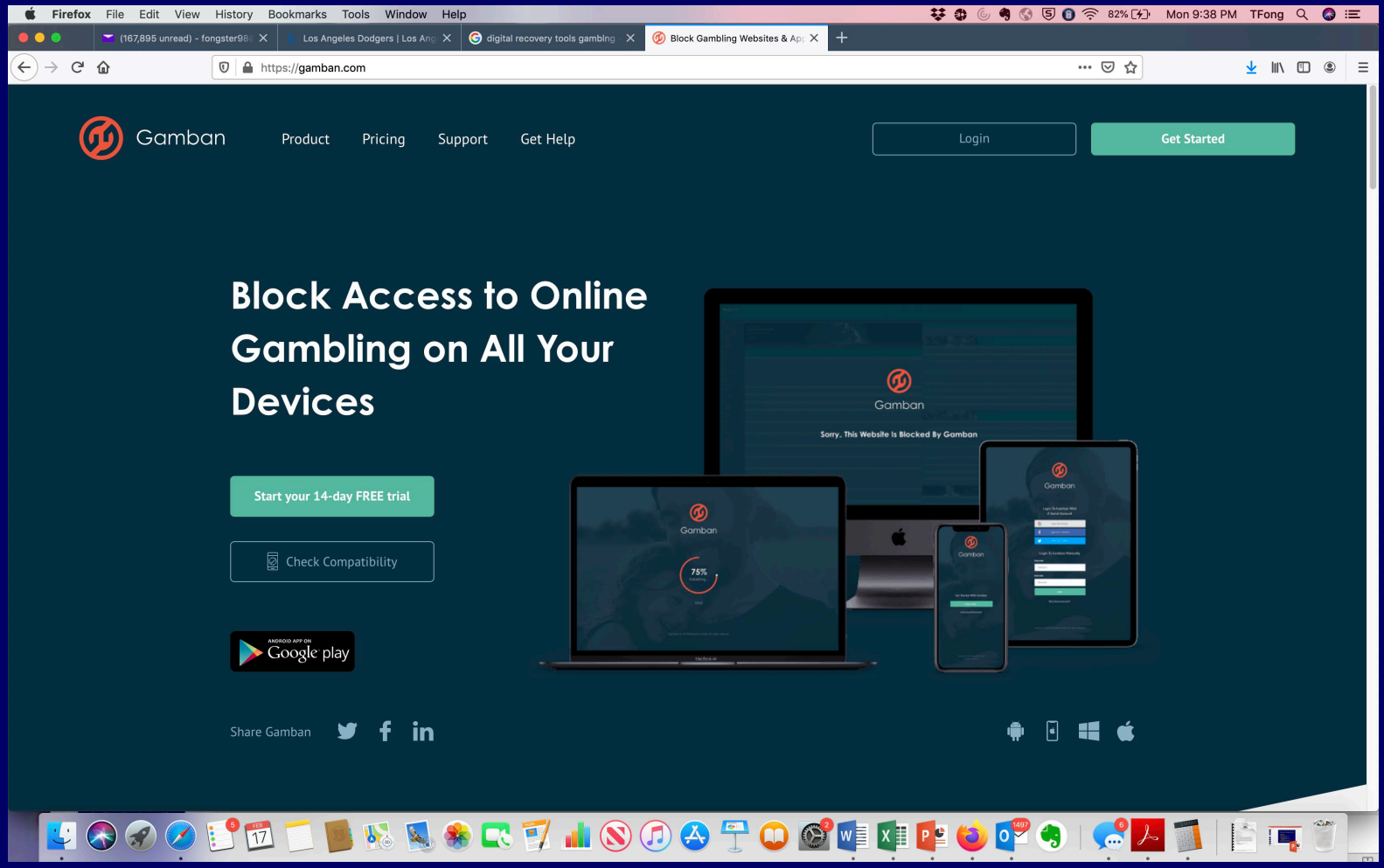
- Office policies need to be set
- Professional societies need to issue guidelines
- Accuracy of information
- More data must support treatment, not replace it or interfere with it
- A few case examples . . .

Meditation Apps

- Calm
- Headspace

- Highly used
- Benefits highly touted
- Affordable
- No significant side effects

Blocking Software



Blocking Software
Who does it work best for?

- Online gamblers
- Early in career
- Less severe
- Highly motivated
- Family involved
- Length of preferred time of blocking is unknown

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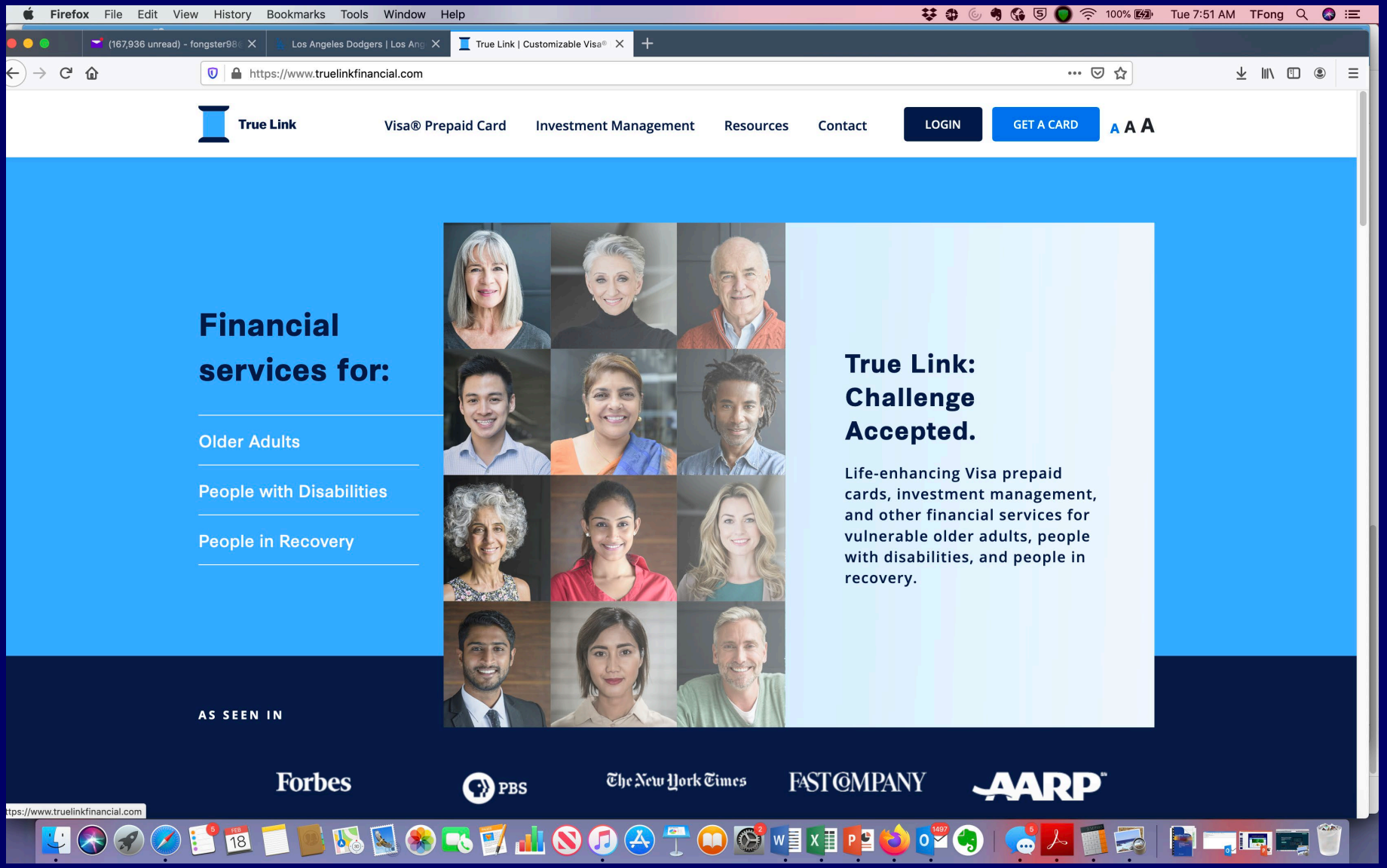

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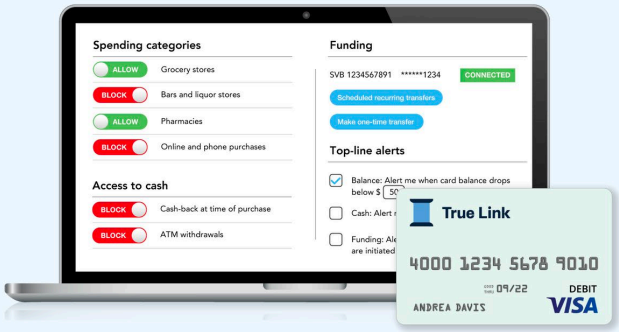

The right tools make all the difference.

- True Link Visa Prepaid Cards you can customize online to work where you need them to – and to block where you don't
- Use the Visa prepaid card at the grocery store or the gas pump but not with telemarketers or at liquor stores
- Can help save time and headaches for families and professionals
- Can help promote independence and quality of life for loved ones and clients

Digital Therapeutics

- Prescription Digital Therapeutics, or PDTs, are software-based disease treatments. PDTs are designed to directly treat disease, tested for safety and efficacy in randomized clinical trials, evaluated by the FDA, and prescribed by healthcare providers.
- PDTs are designed and tested much like traditional prescription drugs with one distinction: rather than swallowing a pill or taking an injection, patients are treated with software.

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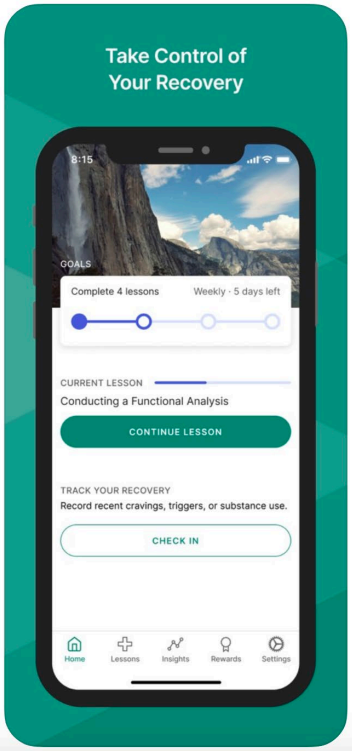
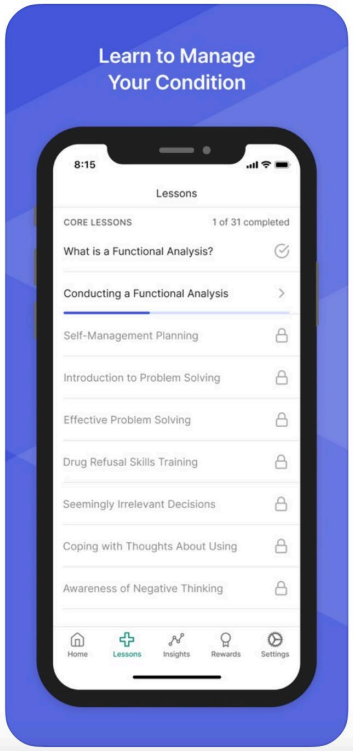
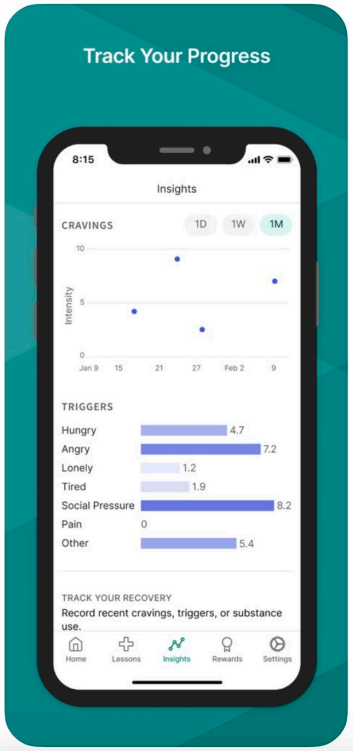
App Store Preview

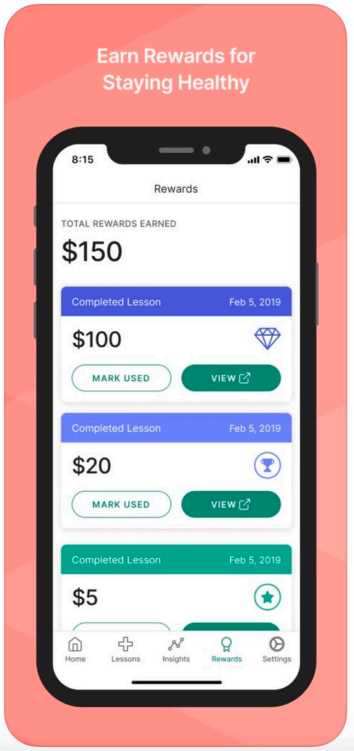
Screenshots

iPhone iPad





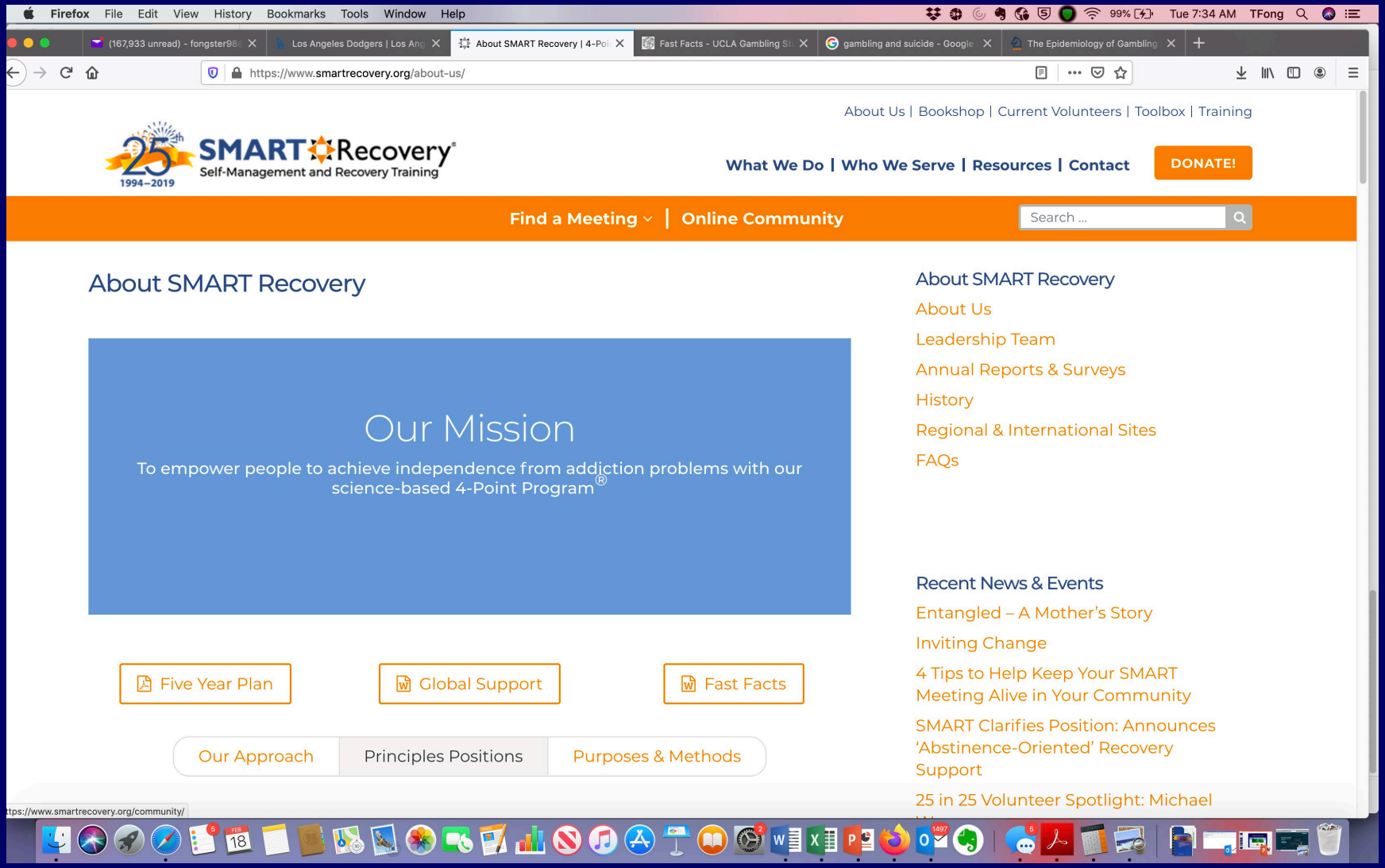




Online Support

- Online Gambler's Anonymous
- Online Recovery Meetings
  - SMART Recovery
- Online Helpline Services
  - Chat room
  - Referrals

SMART Recovery



Getting the Most out of a Virtual Zoom Meeting

- How many meetings are ideal?
- Security / Confidentiality
- Sponsors and boundaries
- How do you get commitments?
- Passive or active
- Focus on fellowship, supports, safety and commitments

List of Clinical tools

- Freedom From Problem Gambling
  (Self-Help Workbook)
- Individualized Treatment for Problem Gamblers
  - Therapist Manual
- Individualized Treatment for Problem Gamblers
  - Patient Workbook
- Helping Partners in a Relationship with a Problem Gambler
  - Therapist Manual

Gambling Disorder Treatment App

- UCLA Gambling Mobile App Development Project (2014)
- Features included
  - Workbooks
  - Directory to therapists
  - Links to GA meeting
  - Geo-location to recovery activities
- What happened?

Summary

- Many different and innovative ways to increase prevention, treatment and recovery activities
- Embrace technology
- Utilize more sources of information to improve quality of care

Discussion

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