An addiction is an addiction...or is it?

Problem Gambling and Substance Use Disorders

The American Psychiatric Association added "Gambling Disorder" to the "Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders" section of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5, published in May 2013) stating "*This new term and its location in the new manual reflect research findings that gambling disorder is similar to substance-related disorders in* ***clinical expression, brain origin, comorbidity, physiology, and treatment***." (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

Similarities of Gambling and Substance Use Disorders	Differences of Gambling Disorder
• Loss of control • Denial • Depression • Progressive/Tolerance • Craving, preoccupation/fixation • Blackouts • Escape • Simiar Highs/Rush • Brain effects and neurotransmitter changes • Withdrawal • Continuing despite negative consequences • Genetic Vulnerabilities	• Hidden addiction • No "overdose" • Huge financial problems, hit quickly • No "UA" test • Does not require ingestion • Fewer resources available • Public perception • Higher rates of suicide • Less funding

(American Society of Addiction Medicine, Inc. , 2013) (Grant, Brewer, & Potenza, 2006) (Rash, Weinstock, & Van Patten, 2016)

"The links between GDE and alcohol and drug use disorders (AUD/DUD) are numerous and include **analogous diagnostic criteria, high comorbidity rates, shared genetic underpinnings, similar neurobiological effects, and common treatment approaches.**" (Rash, Weinstock, & Van Patten, 2016)

Genetic Vulnerability

Consistently, family studies have demonstrated that pathological gambling subjects have elevated rates of first-degree relatives – parents, children or siblings – with substance use disorders, suggesting a possible **shared genetic vulnerability between pathological gambling and other addictions.** (Shah, Potenza, & Eisen, 2004)

Addiction and the Brain

"**Biochemical, functional neuroimaging, genetic studies, and treatment research** have suggested a strong neurobiological link between behavioral addictions and substance use disorders. Given the substantial co-occurrence of these groups of disorders, improved understanding of their relationship has important implications not only for further understanding the neurobiology of both categories of disorders, but also for improving prevention and treatment strategies." (Grant, Brewer, & Potenza, 2006) (Winstanley & Reilly, 2011)

Research reviewed by Rash et al. reveals that chronic exposure to either substances or gambling, results in damage to a part of the brain that controls **stress tolerance**, which causes the person to "experience stress more intensely and for longer periods than others and lead to a long-term increase in their susceptibility to the negative effects of stress." (Rash, Weinstock, & Van Patten, 2016)

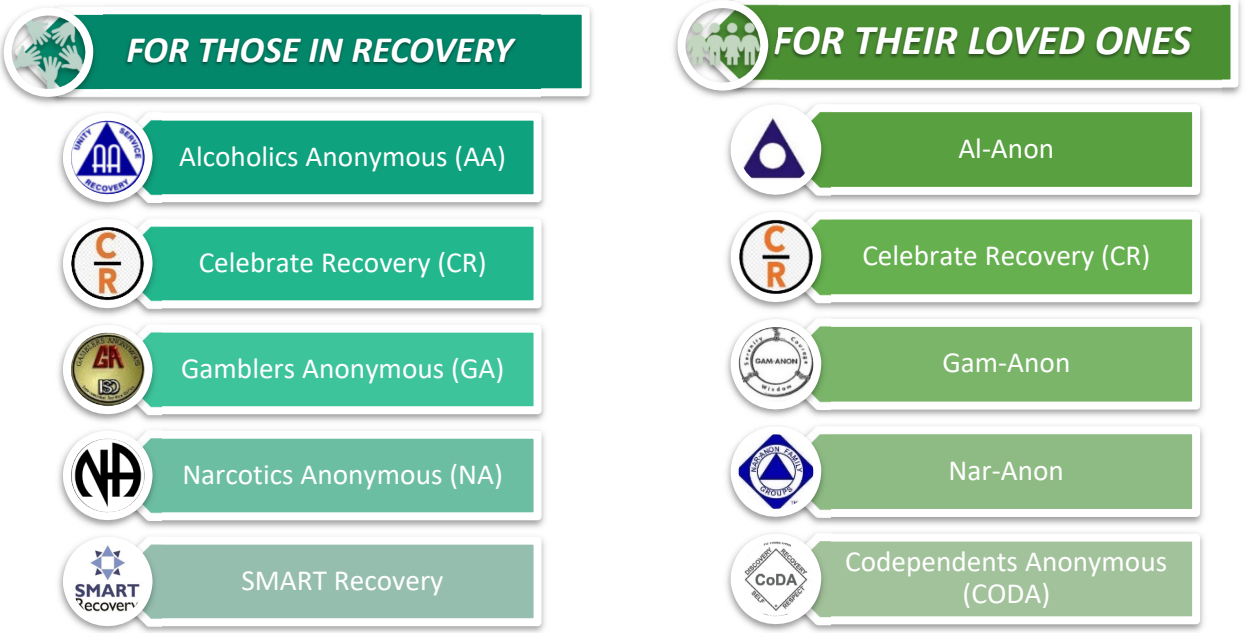
Rash et al also note that people with prolonged substance use and gambling have been shown to have deficits to their executive functioning such as decision making, inhibitory control, and mental flexibility. Some studies show that these traits may be preexisting, while others suggest that addictive behaviors induce or exacerbate deficits to executive functioning through damage to the pre-frontal cortex.

Treatment of Addictive Disorders

About 30% of those with Gambling Disorder, and about 25% of those with Alcohol Use Disorder will recover naturally without the need for treatment. (Rash, Weinstock, & Van Patten, 2016) This means that approximately 75% of individuals with an addictive disorder are in need of services to help them achieve recovery.

"Self-Help" – Support Groups, 12-Step, and Community Recovery Services/Coalitions

These may take the form of 12-step groups, other non-12-step-based support groups, recovery centers, self-help workbooks, websites, and more. There are support groups both for those seeking to abstain from an addictive behavior, and for the loved ones who have been affected by someone's addiction. Some examples are listed below.



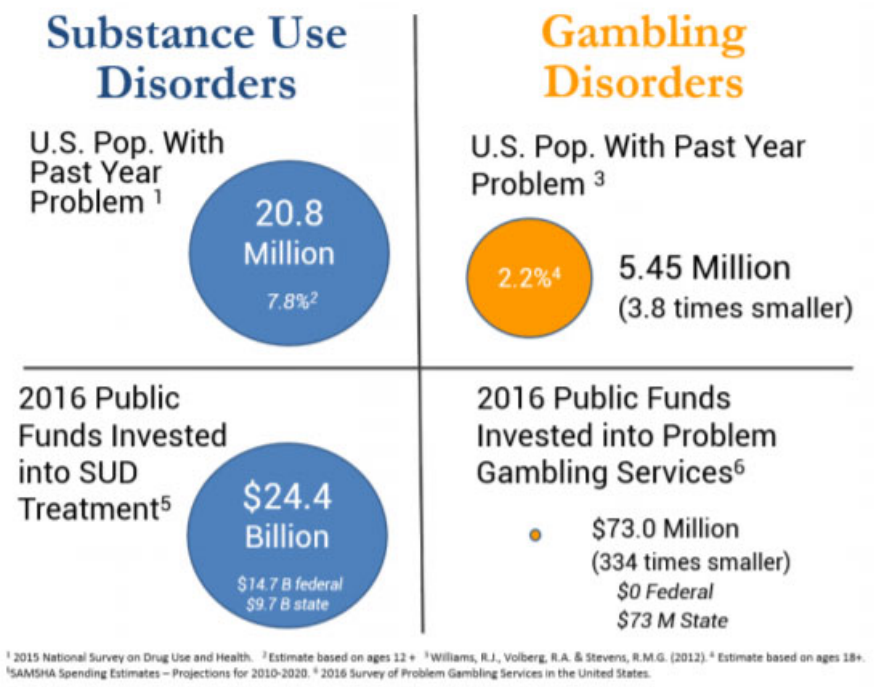
Recovery and Peer Coaches

The Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) has developed a training program for recovery coaches. Their Recovery Coach Academy© (RCA) prepares participants to become recovery coaches, guiding and mentoring others in recovery from addiction. ECPG has become a resource for the CCAR training courses, including the RCA©, as well as their many other advanced trainings.

You can also learn more about Certified Peer Counselors, trained to work with both mental health and substance use disorder consumers.

Professional Treatment and Counseling Services

One similarity between treatment for substance use and gambling disorders is that common styles of therapy (such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) have been found to be effective for both. While there are professional clinicians available to treat both disorders, there is a severe lack of specialty counseling services for problem gambling. There are nearly 4,500 Certified Substance Use Disorder Professionals in Washington state (per Department of Health), but there are only about 35 Certified Gambling Counselors. There is much state and federal funding to support SUD prevention, treatment, and recovery services, but there is significantly less funding for problem gambling. There are no federal dollars for problem gambling.



[1] 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. [2] Estimate based on ages 12 + [3] Williams, R.J., Volberg, R.A. & Stevens, R.M.G. (2012). [4] Estimate based on ages 18+. [5] SAMSHA Spending Estimates – Projections for 2010-2020. [6] 2016 Survey of Problem Gambling Services in the United States.

In the U.S., substance use disorders are about 3.8 times more common than gambling disorders, while public funding for substance abuse treatment is about 334 times greater than public funding for all problem gambling services.
(Marotta, et al., 2017)

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