

DEALING WITH PROLONGED GRIEF AND GAMBLING ADDICTION

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INTRODUCTION

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CAADC, ICOGS

I have been working with clients with compulsive gambling disorder for 10 years using integrated methods to address not only gambling but the emotional issues that accompany the disordered gambling.



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INTRODUCTION

Since 2020, I have been working as a Critical Incident Response Specialist with corporate partners and their employees navigate grief and loss in the workplace.



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INTRODUCTION

In today's presentation, I'll be merging those two specialties as we focus on the emergence of gambling in the lives of people dealing with Prolonged Grief Disorder.



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INTRODUCTION

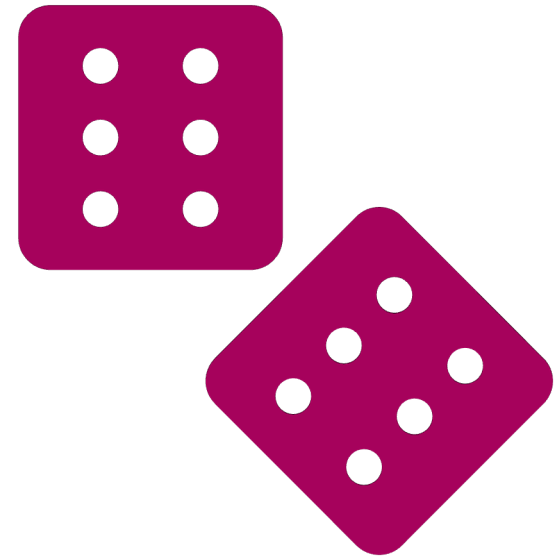
Why gambling and grief?

Because there has been an uptick in the occurrence of compulsive gambling in seniors and others impacted by the trauma of grief.

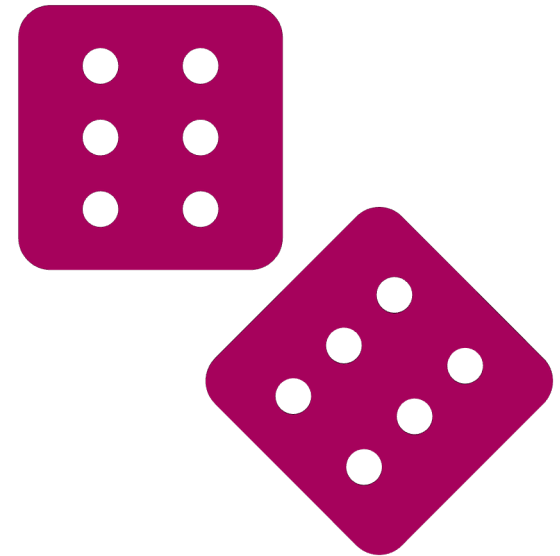
- Before we get into the heavy stuff and start talking about grief.
- I want to ask some of you to share one self-care practice or activity that helps you relax and recharge.



- We all know that gambling can be a form of self-care too.
Responsibly, gambling can be a great release and a lot of fun.



- But for someone with a distant or non-existent history of self-care, coupled with extreme emotional distress, identifying and implementing positive self-care is not so easy.



OBJECTIVES



By the end of my time with you today, you'll have:

- A better understanding of Prolonged Grief Disorder and the growing connection Gambling Disorder within that population.

OBJECTIVES



- An increased knowledge of effective strategies for treating both simultaneously.

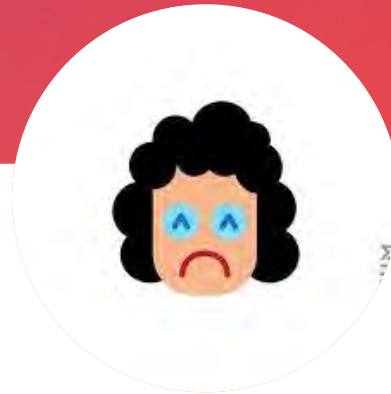
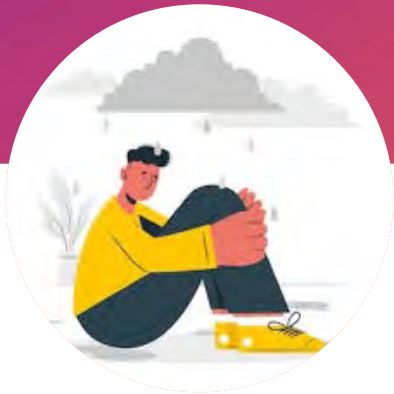
OBJECTIVES



- Viewed recorded testimony from a client diagnosed with Prolonged Grief and Gambling Disorders.

OBJECTIVES

THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE FURTHER WITH PRESENTER AND ASK QUESTIONS.



PART ONE

- Understanding Prolonged Grief Disorder and the intersection between Gambling Disorder within that population.





PART ONE

- Prolonged grief disorder is defined as intense yearning or longing for the deceased (often with intense sorrow and emotional pain), and preoccupation with thoughts or memories of the deceased (Association, 2022).

Symptoms of Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD)

Identity disruption

Emotional numbness as a result of the death

Difficulty engaging in ongoing life

Intense emotional pain related to the death

Intense loneliness as a result of the death

Marked sense of disbelief

Feeling life is meaningless because of the death

Avoidance of reminders



SOURCE: DSM-5-TR (AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION, 2022)

Clinical Considerations for Gambling Disorder (GD)

High-Risk Populations

- **Adolescents and emerging adults**
- **Men**
- **Disadvantaged racial groups**
- **Those living at lower income levels**
- **Unmarried individuals**

Treatment Issues

- **70-90% of clients never receive treatment for GD**
- **In their lifetime, 95% of clients with GD will also have a co-occurring disorder**
- **Few practitioners are given an opportunity to learn about gambling during academic or clinical training**

Correcting Clinical Misconceptions

- **GD is caused by bio-psychosocial factors, rather than bad choices or character flaws**
- **GD shares similar symptoms with SUDs, even without the ingestion of a substance**
- **GD, like SUDs, often leads to severe consequences**

Lister, J., van der Maas, M., & Nower, L. (2020). Shedding light on gambling disorder as an addiction. *ATTC Messenger*.



RUTGERS

Center for Gambling Studies
School of Social Work



PART ONE

- Problem gambling has been defined as “difficulties limiting money and/or time spent on gambling which leads to adverse consequences for the gambler, others, or for the community” (Neal et al., 2005; 125).

DSM-5 MODEL (BASED ON THE GAMBLING DISORDER DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA)

- (A) Persistent and recurrent gambling behavior leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as indicated by the individual exhibiting four (or more) of the following in a 12-month period
1. Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement NO
 2. Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling YES
 3. Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling YES
 4. Is often preoccupied with gambling YES
 5. Often gambles when feeling distressed YES
 6. After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even YES
 7. Lies to conceal the extent of involving with gambling YES
 8. Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling YES
 9. Relies on others to provide money to relieve desperate financial situations caused by gambling YES

PART ONE





PART ONE

- Late-onset problem gambling has characteristics that are distinguishable from lifetime or earlier onset problem gambling and are more commonly associated with women aged of 55 years and older. (Petry, 2002)



PART ONE

- While older adults share several risk factors with younger people, risk factors in older adults have a couple of major distinctions, loss of a spouse/partner and retirement.



PART ONE

- They are also more likely to have more significant medical or psychosocial comorbidities than are reported in nongamblers, or non-problem gamblers and their younger counterparts.



PART ONE

- They were significantly more likely to suffer from anxiety issues stemming from numerous stressors but predominantly from grief, loss and trauma. (Grant, Kim, Odlaug, Buchanan, and Potenza, 2009)



PART ONE

- The lifetime prevalence of Gambling Disorder in the elderly (i.e., those over 60 years old) is reported to range from 0.01 to 10.9%.
- With an increase from 23% to 50%, between 1975 and 1998



PART ONE

- Some studies have examined the potential benefits of gambling, and suggest that older recreational gamblers have lower depression scores, and greater social support compared to older non-gamblers



PART ONE

- Researchers have also suggested that some forms of gambling may help with memory, problem-solving, math skills, concentration skills, and hand-eye coordination.



PART ONE

- For older adults who gamble recreationally, and do not have problems with gambling, gambling can be a positive activity.



PART ONE

- Other studies have shown that the extreme stress that people endure at the loss of a loved one may have a measurable biological effect on hormone and brain functions.



PART ONE

- It has also been shown that the biological changes that stem from the grieving process are like the biological process that leads to compulsive behavior.

PART ONE



PART TWO

- Effective strategies for treating Prolonged Grief Disorder and Gambling Disorder



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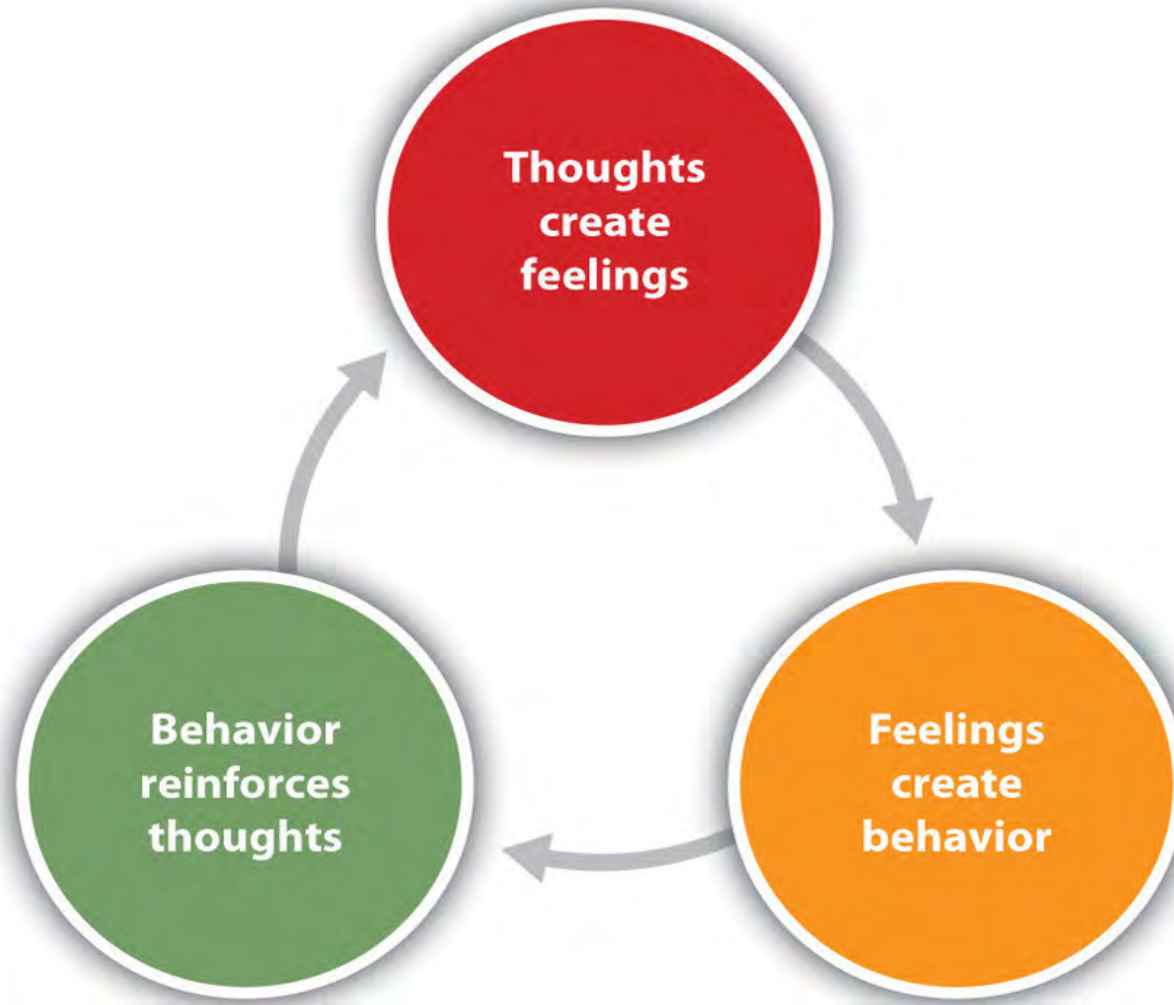
PART TWO

The most frequently studied treatment type for gambling disorder is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).



PART TWO

Not surprisingly, the most frequently used treatment for grief is also Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).





PART TWO

CBT works because:

- (a) correcting cognitive distortions
- (b) developing problem-solving skills
- (c) teaching social skills
- (d) teaching relapse prevention.



PART TWO

Motivational Interviewing has also been effective in treating gambling by lowering resistance and enhancing motivation for change.





- PART TWO
- Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) is based on the idea that negative emotions aren't just from our experiences, but from our reluctance to accept those experiences.



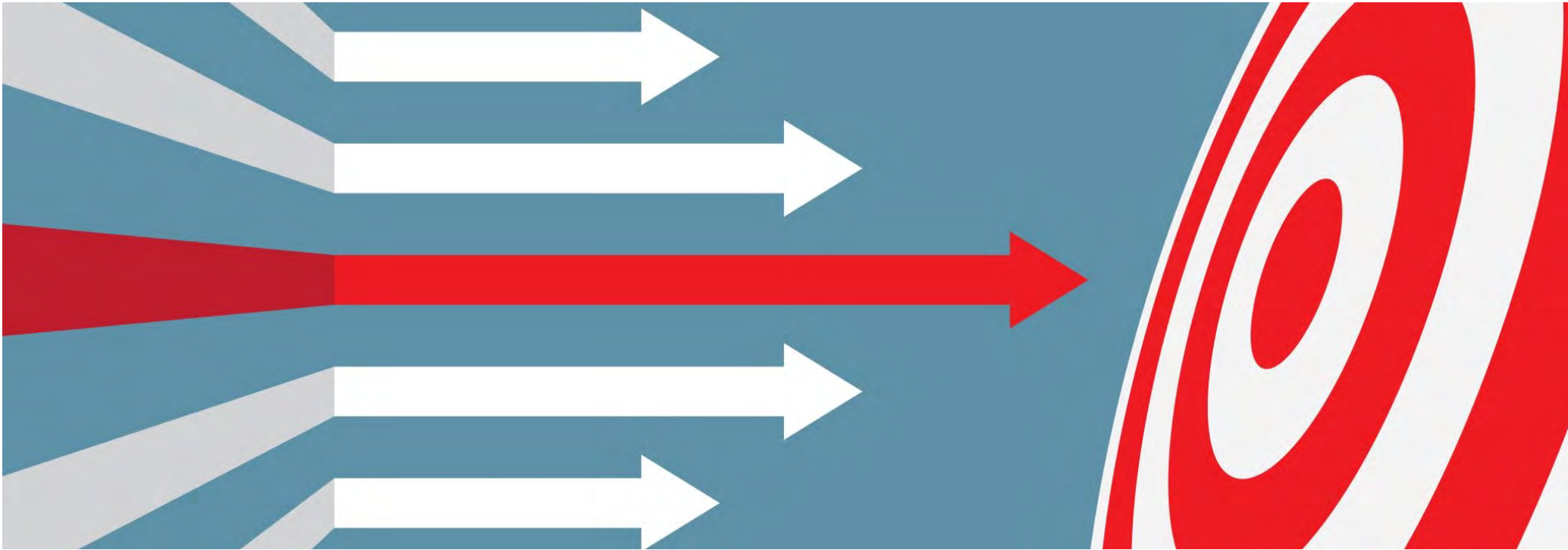
PART TWO

- ACT teaches us to accept negative emotions and to work through them.



PART TWO

- Psychodynamic Therapy looks at how unconscious processes affect your behavior. The goal is to increase your self-awareness and understanding of how past behavior influences present behavior.



- PART TWO

- The goal is to increase your self-awareness and understanding of how past behavior influences present behavior.



PART TWO

- Complicated grief therapy (CGT) is a 16-session evidence-based program for treating the symptoms of prolonged grief disorder.



PART TWO

- CGT incorporates several different treatment approaches, including attachment theory and CBT.



PART TWO

- Group and Family therapies when led by a mental health professional can provide support, and psycho-education, and create a more stable home environment.



PART TWO

- The Gamblers Anonymous 12-Step recovery program is intended to help addicted gamblers accept responsibility for their behavior and do everything in their power to change it.



PART TWO

- Bereavement groups are believed to be beneficial as preventive interventions to reduce the development of complicated grief for people at risk after the death of a significant other.

PART THREE

- Video



SUMMARY



Review key points, obtain audience reflection, and reinforce main learning points

THANK YOU

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