Gambling Disorder is a Family Problem: The Impact on Families and Best Practices for Treatment

Presented by Cheryl B. Almeida, Ph.D.

The Substance-related and Addictive Disorders chapter in the DSM 5 now includes a non-substance related disorder: Gambling Disorder. This disorder is characterized by an individual experiencing persistent and recurrent pattern of gambling behavior that disrupts personal, family and/or vocational pursuits. PG is often referred to as the “Hidden Disorder” masked by other co-morbid addiction and compulsive behaviors and is often overlooked when doing the initial diagnostic (Menchon, 2018). The prevalence of PG is 10X higher in substance abuse populations. It is inexcusable to omit screening for Problem Gambling with this population. Nevertheless, what about other populations vulnerable to this problem including the elderly, veterans, adolescents, lower SES groups and at-risk groups. Considering the predominance in multiple populations, it makes sense to integrate screening questions for Problem Gambling into all our assessments. The power of gambling has far-reaching impact. The costs to the individual and the family are high. "Almost all compulsive gamblers... have issues at home with their family because of their addiction. Gambling problems affect the functioning of family members including children, parents, siblings and grandparents and intimate relationships. Impaired family relationships, emotional problems and financial difficulties are some of the most common impacts on family members of people with gambling problems. There is consistent evidence of an association between gambling problems and family violence. The children of problem gambling parents are at a much higher risk of developing gambling problems than the children of non-problem gambling parents" (Neg. Effects) Through early screening and therapy, we can help families to identify the issues, cope with the loss and develop skills for facing the problem effectively. Looking at the signs and symptoms of this disorder, the impact on the relationships and the treatment options available will allow practitioners the opportunity to turn Problem Gambling behaviors into a new way of life for the Problem Gambler and for the family. Menchon, J. (2018). Prime recommendation of early risk and protective factors for problem gambling: A systematic review and meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. Post-Publication Peer Review of the Biomedical Literature. Negative Effects of Gambling Addiction. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://theoakstreatment.com/gambling-addiction/negative-effects-of-gambling-addiction/.
Thursday, June 25, 2020

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM Breakout Session Number 1
Couples & Family Track
To Be Released From Debt: An Experiential Model of Forgiveness and Healing for Couple Infidelity
Presented by Steven R. Vensel, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.

Couples who have experienced an infidelity come to counseling in considerable brokenness and assisting them in the healing process is complex and challenging. For the offended the infidelity is traumatic with deep visceral and emotional wounds. For the offender who is remorseful there seems to be no remedy or end to their guilt and shame. This innovative intervention addresses both experiences leading the way for forgiveness, reconciliation and healing. Despite the traumatic impact of an affair many couples choose to remain in the relationship and seek help in recovering from the infidelity (Heintzelman, Murdock, Krycak & Seay, 2014). A first step in treating couple infidelity is to help the couple navigate the initial impact of the extramarital affair (Baucom, Gordon & Snyder, 2005). This workshop outlines an approach that utilizes both cognitive and experiential interventions leading to forgiveness and reconciliation. Forgiveness is most often viewed as a spiritual or justice-oriented practice that places the responsibility of the forgiveness on the victim. However, forgiveness, as a financial term, means to be released from debt. As a financial construct it would include itemizing the debt and determining how recompense is to be structured or a declaration of bankruptcy leading to the debt being forgiven with no further payment required. There is a deep literature on the role of forgiveness in couple infidelity (MacIntosh, Hall, & Johnson, 2007) with the bulk of the literature indicating forgiveness as an ongoing process that has no definitive end point other than the passage of time. The model presented in this workshop leads to an experiential event whereby the offender is present to the partner’s painful experience, shares that pain, which leads to an informed request for forgiveness and a subsequent declaration of forgiveness and release of any further debt. It is a deeply intimate and powerful event in the lives of couples recovering from an infidelity.

Friday, June 26, 2020

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM Breakout Session Number 1
Diversity Track | Couples & Family Track | Child & Adolescent Track
Empowering Transgender Youths and Their Families
Presented by April Megginson, PhD

Research indicates that transgender youths that are supported by family and/or school have a tremendous impact on their mental health (Reisner, 2015; Russell 2018). Transgender
youth are far more likely than their non-transgender peers to experience depression at nearly four times the risk (Reisner, 2015). Understanding the unique needs of transgender youths can help mental health counselors effectively work with them and their families. The use of a chosen name being used in multiple contexts (school, home, work, & friends) led to a 29% decrease in suicidal ideation, and a 56% decrease in suicidal behavior (Russell, 2018). Yet, only 26 % of LGBTQ youth feel safe at school (Human Rights Campaign, 2018). For many transgender youth and their families the conflict between safety and living a genuine life is a central dilemma (Kreiger, 2017). Assisting transgender youths and their parents advocate for their needs at the school level can one of the most important treatment goals.

3:00 – 6:30 PM 2 Part Sessions
Trauma Track | Couples & Family Track

Trauma and Eating Disorders: Interventions Utilizing EMDR and Art Therapy Techniques
Presented by Marie Rothman, LPC-S
The presentation titled Trauma and Eating Disorders: Interventions Utilizing EMDR and Art Therapy Techniques, will explore the role that trauma plays in the formation and continuation of Eating Disorders, will provide an outline of the major types of eating disorders (as well as other DSM-V indicated Eating Disorders), will instruct clinicians on how they can assess for each disorder with clients, and will provide knowledge and skills required for clinicians to implement EMDR and Art Therapy technique interventions. The application of art therapy techniques and the extended resourcing in EMDR interventions enables the art created by clients to act as an intervention for body image issues by installing their positive beliefs portrayed in their artwork. Moreover, in managing negative beliefs, the clinician can desensitize the negative beliefs with another creative art technique called Storytelling. The client can draw a series of pictures surrounding the onset of the eating disorder with the emotional experiences and negative beliefs associated with that period of time to be desensitized and reprocessed through the EMDR model of therapy intervention. This presentation will show how this work can be used to assist in treating individuals, families, and couples. Included in this presentation is a practicum section for the clinicians/participants to acquire and strengthen skills learned that can be used when working with their clients who have experienced trauma and resulting Eating Disorders or body image issues. PLEASE NOTE: This breakout spans two sessions (3:00pm - 4:15pm and 5:00pm - 6:30pm). You must attend both sessions to receive full 2.75 CE credit.
3:00 – 4:15 PM Breakout Session Number 2  
Couples & Family Track  
**Building GREAT Relationships, A Dynamic Counseling Paradigm for Couples and Families**  
*Presented by Gray Otis, PhD, LCMHC and Sandi Williams, MA, MS, LMFT*

Clinical mental health counselors often deal with family issues that arise from couples' problematic patterns of interactions. These patterns often arise from each individual's self-beliefs and traumatic reenactment. Underlying traumas cannot be resolved by simply improving the couple's communications. Counselors need to have a comprehensive approach to understand, diagnose, and treat underlying schemas. This program provides an approach to assess individual's levels of distress that are reenacted in their relationships. The program offers an easily applied, quantitative assessment that measures five qualitative factors of relational effectiveness. This GREAT appraisal also becomes the basis for improving relationship quality. When combined with trauma resolution and emotional self-awareness skill building, couples can build on a foundation of empathic understanding that leads to greater personal and interpersonal satisfaction. This same template can also be used to improve parent-child relationships, extended family concerns, and effective workplace interactions. When individuals resolve past distress and learn how to be more interpersonally effective, every aspect of their heath and emotional wellbeing improves. Clinical mental health counselors who can demonstrate how to achieve these outcomes develop greater counseling skills that can be applied in virtually any counseling setting.

5:00 – 6:30 PM Breakout Session Number 3  
Couples & Family Track  
**Infidelity: An Occupational Hazard**  
*Presented by Talal H. Alsaleem, Psy.D, LMFT*

The unique demands of certain occupations as well as the specific workplace culture can be a contributing factor to infidelity behavior. This workshop was created to explore the relationship between occupational stressors and the etiology of infidelity. The talk will also explore the role of socioeconomic factors such as education, income, level, and place of residence on the etiology of infidelity. Special attention will be dedicated to occupations that have high exposure to trauma. Completing this workshop will expand your understanding of the socioenvironmental factors that contribute to the etiology of infidelity and impact it's treatment.