

Trauma and Pathological Gambling: Search for Invulnerability

“Healing the Generations”

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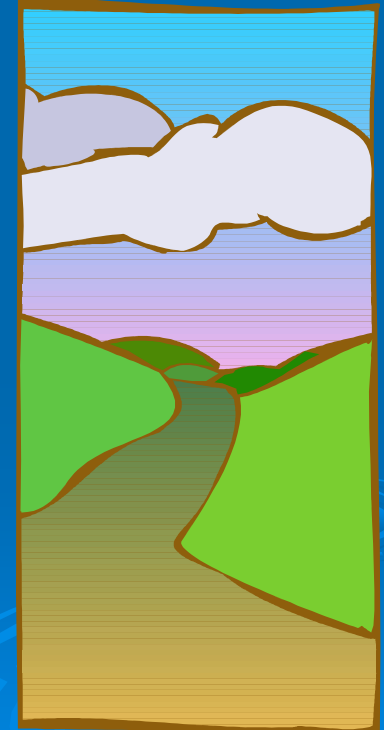
Welcome!

- Introduction/Overview
 - “Damage Done”
 - Case Studies: Financial Trauma, Abuse
 - Implications for Treatment
 - Where Do We Go From Here?
- 

Problem Gambling Services Subscribes to the Public Health Model for Gambling Awareness:

**Protect *vulnerable groups*
from gambling related harm,
foster and promote *personal
& social responsibility* in
all populations.**

Shaffer, 1999)



Family History Plays a Role

Problem gamblers report growing up in a family with:

Alcohol abuse:	38%
Gambling problem:	30%
Drug Abuse:	26%
Abusive behavior:	25%

These rates far surpass the national average

Gambling: the act of risking something of value, including money and property, on an activity that has an uncertain outcome.

Problem Gambling: gambling behavior that results in problems with work, school, family, or finances, but does not meet the number of criteria to be recognized as:

Compulsive/Pathological Gambling: meets the APA Diagnostic & Statistical Manual IV criteria for the impulse disorder of pathological gambling.

Pathological Gambling

- Recognized as Psychiatric Disorder since 1980.
- Chronic failure to control impulses to gamble despite negative consequences.
- Pathological Gamblers behave like Addicts.

Pathological Gambling: DSM-IV Criteria

➤ Preoccupation

- Is preoccupied with gambling (e.g., reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, or thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble)

➤ Tolerance

- Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement

➤ Withdrawal

- Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling

Pathological Gambling: DSM-IV Criteria

➤ **Escape**

- Gambles as a way of escaping from problems or relieving dysphoric mood (feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety or depression)

➤ **Chasing**

- After losing money gambling, often returns another day in order to get even

➤ **Lying**

- Lies to family members, therapists, or others to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling

Pathological Gambling: DSM-IV Criteria

- **Loss of control**
 - Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling
- **Illegal acts**
 - Has committed illegal acts (forgery, fraud, theft, or embezzlement) to finance gambling
- **Risked significant relationship**
 - Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, education or career opportunity because of gambling
- **Bailout**
 - Has relied on others to provide money to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by gambling

THE IMPACT OF PROBLEM GAMBLING ON THE FAMILY: TALES OF FINANCIAL TRAUMA

- “DAMAGE DONE”: How to understand the impact on the family: no one is spared.
- Spouses: “The opposite of love is betrayal.” (Toni Morrison). How do you as helper talk to someone whose trust has been broken? How do you as helper gain an insight into the power of the victim?
- Children: The need for protection is complex. Does this mean talking to them about the gambling or does this mean keeping it away from them so their lives can be more “normal?”

WHAT IS “FINANCIAL ABUSE”?

- What happens when the person you trust the most in the world betrays you?
- Why do partners of gamblers not see the problem and deal with it?
- How is financial abuse different from verbal and/or physical abuse?
- Does financial abuse cause trauma to the person who is experiencing the abuse?
- How do therapists deal with these issues? Do they deal with it at all?

FINANCIAL TRAUMA: ITS ROOTS AND ITS EFFECTS

- Discovering which comes first: many problem and pathological gamblers are themselves victims of abuse. Many have lived with addictions, sometimes gambling, often alcohol.
- Many family members/spouses of problem gamblers have had a history of trauma. Can this account for how hard it is for them to recognize the issue in their own family?
- Children often know the problem is there, but hardly ever know what to call it and how to understand its meaning.

CASE EXAMPLES

- Marissa: her background and her life with her family and how this affected her dealings with her husband and his gambling.
- Susan: her early years and how her contact led her directly to a problem gambler.
- Jennifer: the void that gambling filled from her childhood and the “escape” she felt when she gambled.
- Wendy: her father’s gambling problem and its place in her life.

Intimate Partner Violence and Problem Gambling

(Korman et al., 2008)

- 248 Problem Gamblers (43 women, 205 men)
- 63% experience physical assault, injury and/or sexual coercion in the past year
- 55.6% perpetrated IPV
- 25.4% perpetrated severe IPV
- 59.7% victims of IPV
- 64.5% clinically significant anger
- Presence of lifetime substance use disorder + anger problems increased likelihood of IPV

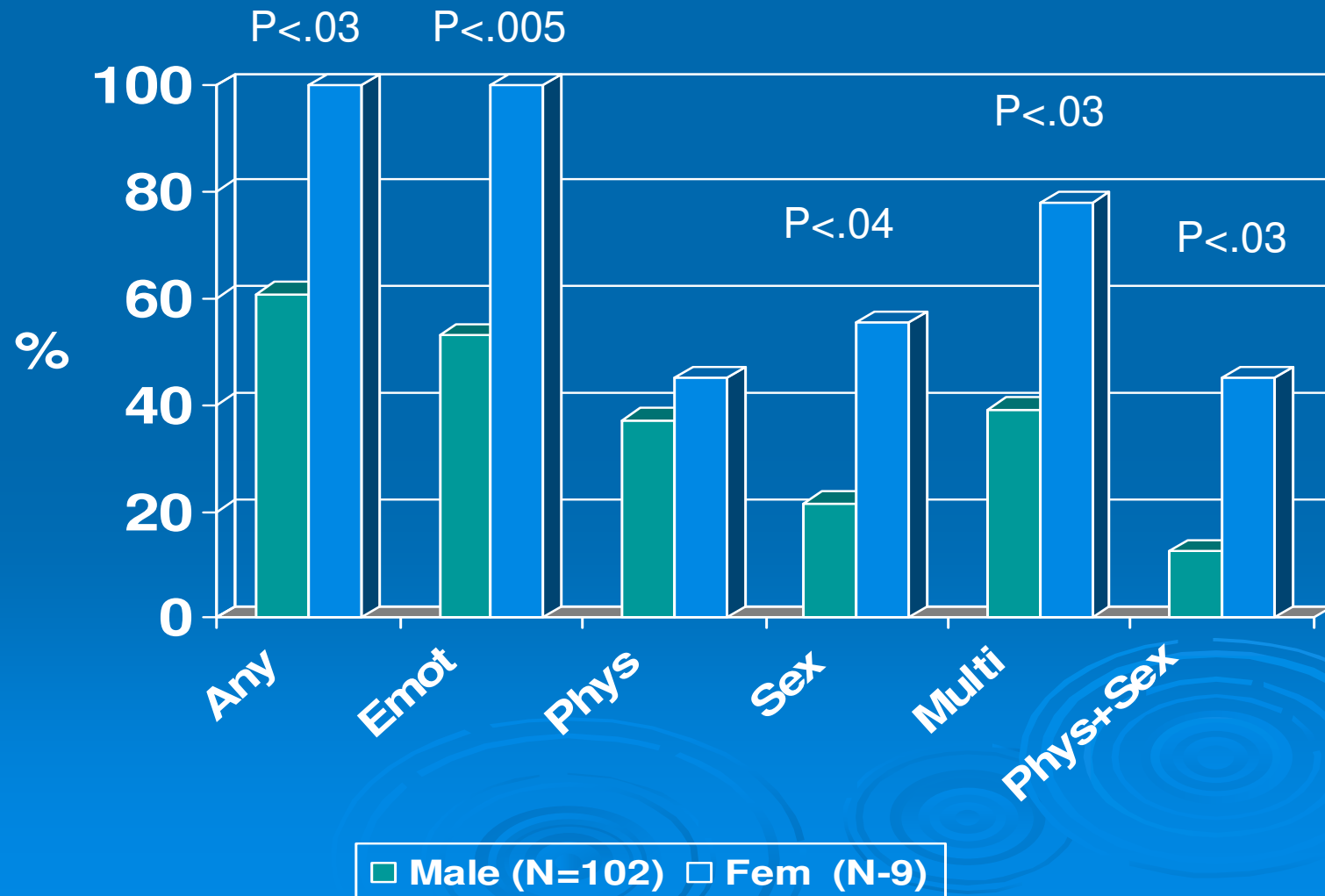


Trauma and Gamblers

- Petry et al., (2007)
- 149 Treatment seeking pathological gamblers from 7 states
- Childhood traumatic events:
 - Women - 67.5%; Men - 51.4%
- Sexual abuse
 - Women – 32.4%; Men – 16.7%
- Childhood maltreatment associated with age of onset and severity of gambling problems

Gender and Trauma History

(Kausch & Rugle, 2004)



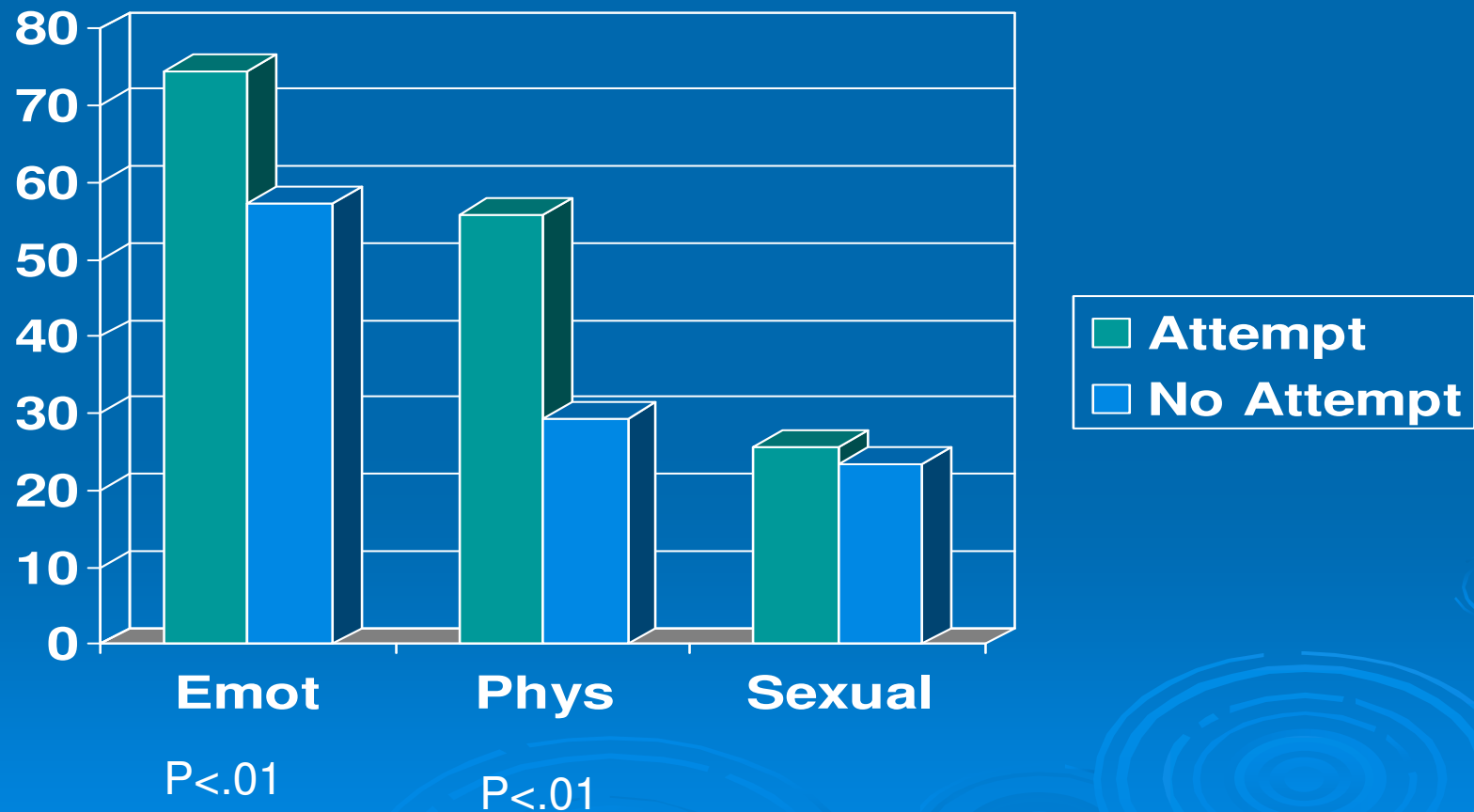
Trauma Histories

(Kausch & Rugle, 2004)

- Many of the patients came from disruptive homes with much domestic violence
- Emotional abuse: 38.5% father; 33.3% mother
- Physical abuse: 43.2% father; 27.0% mother
- Sexual abuse: 22.6% neighbor; 12.9% father – also uncles, cousins, grandfathers, sisters, foster father, boys in an orphanage, family friend, teachers, babysitter, and others

History of Trauma and Suicide Attempts

(Kausch & Rugle, 2004)



Summary

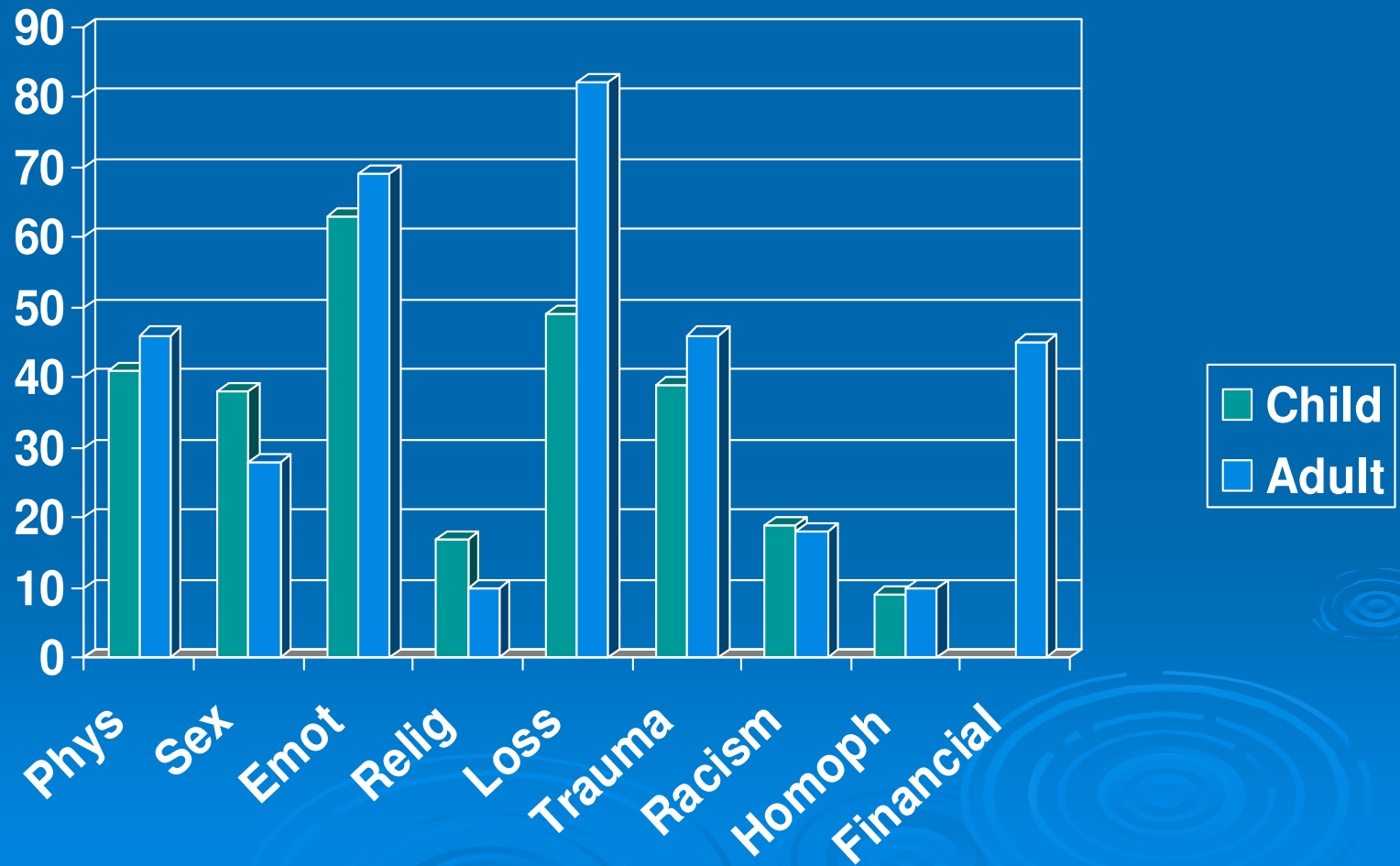
(Kausch & Rugle, 2004)

- **Higher levels of psychiatric distress (ASI) among gamblers with trauma histories**
- **High rates of lifetime trauma among treatment-seeking pathological gamblers**
- **Very high rates of trauma among small sample of female gamblers**
- **Trauma may actually be under-reported**
- **Higher rates of substance dependence among gamblers with physical trauma histories**
- **Higher rates of attempted suicide among gamblers with emotional and physical trauma histories**

Trauma Histories: Female Problem Gamblers

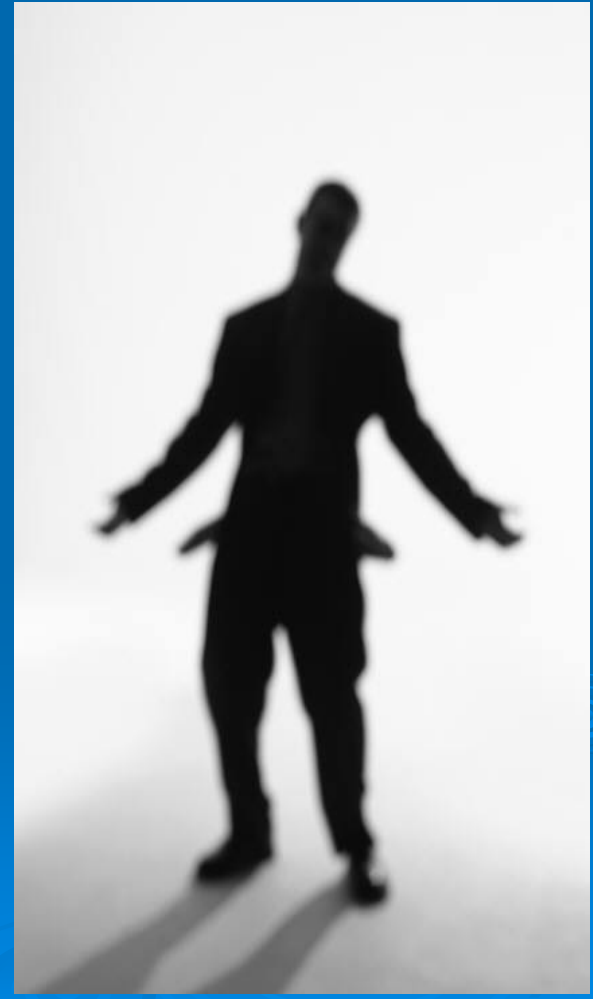
Boughten & Falenchuk, 2007

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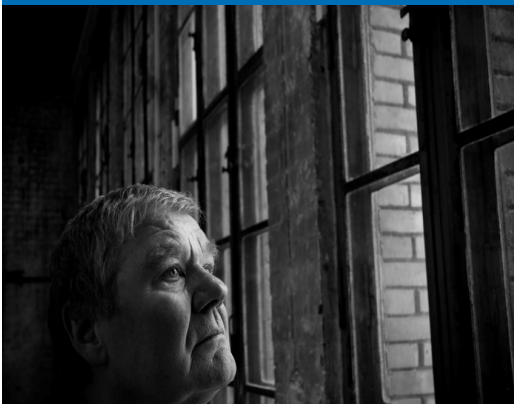
Problem Gambling and Trauma Symptoms

- Gambling losses as traumatic events
 - Reexperiencing
 - Increased arousal (sleep disturbance, irritability, poor concentration, restlessness)
 - Numbing, absence of emotional responsiveness
 - In a daze, on auto-pilot
 - Derealization/Depersonalization – Nothing real, money, people, self, family
 - “Brown” outs and dissociation



Problem Gambling as Solution

- Gambling as “undoing”
- Money = Invulnerability
- Re-enactment
- Dissociation and sense of safety
- Intensity and “Aliveness”



Screening Tool

Three suggested items to add to current screening tool:

- (1) Have you ever tried to stop, cut down, or control your gambling?
- (2) Have there ever been periods lasting 2 weeks or longer when you spent a lot of time thinking about your gambling experiences, or planning out future gambling ventures or bets?
- (3) Have you ever lied to family members, friends, or others about how much you gamble or how much money you lost on gambling?

What can we do to promote PG Awareness?

- Elevate concern about gambling to a level comparable to that of substance use;
- Raise awareness of all helping professionals to recognize/refer those experiencing gambling problems or the gambling probs of a loved one;
- Infuse gambling into ATOD prevention programs as risky behavior, addiction;

What Can We Do, con't.

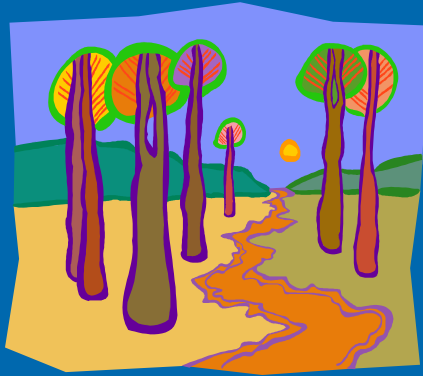
- Integrate gambling questions to all SA/MHD screens/assessment process (financial questions, legal, leisure activities, family history).
- Support problem gambling as a legitimate topic of conversation.
- Review organization policies on gambling.
- Advocate for increased funding for prevention, treatment, research & evaluation.

Important Prevention Alert

- Early science-based data indicates PG Awareness programs build resiliency.
- Promising programs: “GAMES”, comprehensive, community based; and “Taking Charge”, multi-session educational group for at-risk youth.
- Upcoming “Webinar” April 27th.

Contact Susan McLaughlin, 860-262-5983

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Problem Gambling Helpline

800-346-6238

800-34-NO BET

*For people with gambling problems and those impacted by them.
24/7, Free, Confidential, Interpreter services available*

**CT DMHAS Problem Gambling Services: Statewide
“Better Choice Programs” Treatment and Prevention:
www.ct.gov/dmhas/problemgambling**