

DiGIn: Disordered Gambling Integration Project



Staff Comments:

“I never thought much about gambling and my clients’ recoveries, but as soon as we started talking about it, I noticed all the scratch off tickets in hallway wastebaskets.”

“Now that I am aware of it, I realize how often I hear our clients talking about playing their lucky numbers.”

“I always just rushed over the one gambling question in our intake. Now that I know how to ask about gambling in different ways, I’m finding out a lot more information about my clients’ gambling.”

“It’s not just my clients’ gambling that is coming up, but they are talking about how their family members’ gambling is affecting them.”

Client Reactions:

“Gambling gives me the same kind of rush cocaine did.”

“I never made the connection, but when I win gambling, I always went and got high.”

“When I was first sober, I went to the casino. I won a jackpot and before I knew it I was drinking and celebrating.”

“I never talked about this, but my husband has a real gambling problem and when he loses, he gets mean and abusive.”

“My kids came home and took the dice and money out of the monopoly game. I asked them what they were doing and they said they were shooting craps like the guys on the street. I didn’t know what to do.”

DiGIn Participating Programs:

Chemical Abuse Services Agency
Community Mental Health Affiliates
Ct Renaissance
The Connection
Eastern Connecticut Health Network, ECHN
McCall Foundation
Midwestern CT Council on Alcoholism
Morris Foundation
Recovery Network of Programs
S.E.CT Council on Alcohol & Drug Dependence
Trinity Glen
United Community and Family Services
Wheeler Clinic

PGS

**PROBLEM
GAMBLING
SERVICES**

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CT Department of Mental Health & Addiction
Services

DiGIn: Disordered Gambling Integration Project

Mission:

To increase the capacity of substance use disorder and mental health treatment programs to address gambling and problem gambling through enhanced screening, assessment, awareness, intervention, recovery and health promotion strategies. To make gambling problems and behaviors a relevant topic of conversation within the broader substance use and mental health disorder treatment communities.



Project Components:

- Agency Problem Gambling Awareness and Readiness Surveys
- Problem Gambling Integration Training
- CT Certification Board Specialty Certificate in Problem Gambling Competency
- Case Consultation Conference Calls
- Problem Gambling Integration Capability Site Reviews

Importance of Integrating Gambling Issues

Individuals in Substance Use and Mental Health treatment are at significantly higher risk for having gambling problems.



Canadian Epidemiological Study (Rush et al., 2008)

Individuals with a lifetime history of a mental health disorder (MH) have **2-3 times the rate** of problem gambling (PG).

The more severe the past year substance use disorder (SUD) the **higher the prevalence** of gambling problems.

Connecticut Study (Desai & Potenza, 2009)

19% of individuals in treatment for schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder met criteria for problem or pathological gambling.



Gambling Problems Go Untreated

(Kessler et al., 2008)
(National Comorbidity Survey Replication)

- Although nearly half (49%) of those with lifetime pathological gambling received treatment for mental health or substance abuse problems, none reported treatment for gambling problems.

Untreated Gambling Problems lead to decreased treatment effectiveness and increased costs.

PG in Methadone Maintenance

- 28% meet criteria for PG
- PG group more positive tox screen for cocaine
- PG group was over 2.5 X more likely to drop out of treatment early.



Untreated Gambling Issues adds to Cost of Treatment

Use of High Cost Services (Kaplan & Davis, 1997)

Individuals with SUD and co-occurring PG had double the admission rates for detoxification and significantly more admissions for psychiatric stabilization

Health Problems and Medical Service Utilization

(National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions, Morasco et al., 2006)

Gambling **even 5 times a year** (at risk) is associated with adverse health consequences, **increased medical utilization and health care costs.**

At risk gamblers more likely to receive emergency room care and to be diagnosed with:

**Hypertension
Obesity
Severe Injury
Mood Disorder
Anxiety Disorder
Alcohol Use Disorder
Nicotine Dependence**

