

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling

Lost in Space...

“What you Need to Know.....but Have not Asked about Gambling, Gaming and Cyberspace Addictions.”

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- Increase understanding of what defines Gambling, Gaming and Cyber addictions. What it does mean and what it does not mean.
- Learn how habits form and their impact on the brain and behavior.
- Improve participants understanding of the signs and symptoms of gambling, gaming and cyber dependency.
- Learn what we can do for family and friends who we suspect may have dependency on gambling, gaming or cyber dependency.

Learning Objectives



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What Is Addiction?

What does it mean to be
Addicted?

What it is and what it is not.

What Do
You See?



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Addiction

Behavior based on
pathological need for
substance or activity.

What can an individual be
addicted to?

Addictive
Behavior



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Substance abuse/Behavioral addictions generally involve pathological use of substances or activities resulting in:

- Potentially hazardous behavior
- Continued use despite persistent social, psychological, occupational, or health problem
- Physiological need for increasing amounts of a substance

Addictive
Behavior

- What it is not?
 - Not an issue of self-control/choice
 - Not a morality issue
 - Not a socio-economic/societal issue
 - Not a purely medical issue

A Look at Addiction

What does it mean to be Addicted?

Word Association....What are some images that come to mind?



What is it?

- There is a genetic component that can predispose someone to problems. **STRESS** >>> negatively impacted life issues/environmental issues >Expression
- Develops over time – progression >>> **CHRONIC**

Addictions:
Alcohol/Drugs,
Gambling,
Gaming and
Cyber

What is it?

- It has biological, psychological, social/environmental, behavioral, and emotional causes.
- Leads an individual to develop obsessive (thoughts) and compulsive (behaviors) tendencies toward something.

Addictions:
Alcohol/Drugs,
Gambling,
Gaming and
Cyber

What is it?

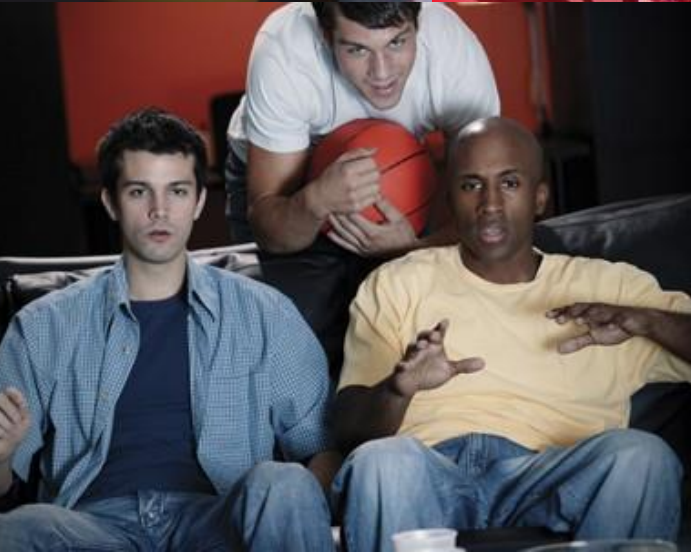
- All these issues combined lead to the >>>>>

***"PERFECT STORM" of
ADDICTION!!!***

Addictions:
Alcohol/Drugs,
Gambling,
Gaming and
Cyber



The New Face of Gambling



If you bet on a horse, that's gambling.

If you bet you can make three spades,
that's entertainment.

If you bet cotton will go up three
points, that's business.

If you play bingo at your church,
that's charity.

What's the difference?

*Gambling is any activity or game
where you risk something of value or
money on an outcome that is not
guaranteed.*

What is
Gambling?



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Gambler's Anonymous Definition:

“Any betting or wagering for self or others, whether for money or not, no matter how slight or insignificant, where the outcome is uncertain or depends on chance, or skill constitutes gambling.”

GA Handbook 1994

What is Gambling?



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- Gambling is Older than Alcohol
- Before prehistoric people learned about making “joy juice” from rotten grapes they were gambling
- Gambling was Historically the way people communicated with the Gods. It was a way to the Divine Future.
- The Bible has several references to gambling. Tossing of Lots were how decisions were made.
- Roman soldiers gambled at the foot of the cross for Christ’s robe.

Gambling: Some Facts

DSM-5 Diagnostic Criteria: Gambling Disorder

Persistent and recurrent problematic 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:**

- Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement.
- Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling.
- Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling.

DSM 5 Gambling Disorder



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- Is often preoccupied with gambling (e.g., having persistent thoughts of reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble).
- Often gambles when feeling distressed (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed).
- After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even (“chasing” one’s losses).
- Lies to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling.

DSM 5 Gambling Disorder



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- Lies to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling.
- Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling.
- Relies on others to provide money to relieve desperate financial situations caused by gambling.

Specify current severity:

Mild: 4–5 criteria met.

Moderate: 6–7 criteria met.

Severe: 8–9 criteria met.

From the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition* (section 312.31).



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DSM 5 Gambling Disorder

- Nationally gambling revenues are well into the **BILLIONS** of dollars of what is reported.
- Some estimates are that 150,000 Marylander's have a gambling addiction problem.
- Increase in casinos = increased access = increased issues.
- Individuals with gambling problems often do not know they have a problem.

Gambling



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- How do you know?
- Some of the signs.
- Gambling crosses the life span, the young and the old.
- Increasing among college students.
- Military members and Veteran's issues.
- Suicide.

Gambling

A resource for help.

**Maryland Problem Gambling
Helpline: 1-800-GAMBLER**

Text: 1-800-426-2537

Helpmygamblingproblem.org

Website for help seekers

Mdproblemgambling.com

The Center's main online repository

Gambling



How to Identify a Problem Gambler

How to Identify Problematic Gambling: Yes or No

- Do you enjoy betting as a form of entertainment or to relieve stress?
- Have ever found yourself spending more money or time playing games of chance than you originally intended?
- Have you ever kept information from family members or close friends about money spent or won on wagering?
- Have you ever borrowed money to gamble or pay gambling debt from any source?
- Has your gambling or gambling related behavior caused any problems in your relationships with family members/ other important people, or caused stress in your life?

- Friend or Foe?
- Benefits vs Drawbacks
- Today's World and the Internet
- The Internet and Survival

The Internet

- What are they?
- Characteristics?
- Common Withdraw Issues?
- “Acting Out”
- Brain Impacts
- Social Impacts

- The Same
- The Same
- The Same
- The Same
- The Same
- The Same

Other Addictions: Cyber, Gaming, Sexual

Internet and Computer Addictions

- **Cybersex addiction:** compulsive use of internet pornography, adult chat rooms, adult fantasy role-plays.
- **Cyber-Relationship Addiction:** addiction to social networking, chat rooms, and messaging where the virtual/online relationships become more important than real life relationships.
- **Internet Compulsions:** includes compulsive gambling, gaming, stock trading, or online auction sites.
- **Information Overload:** compulsive web surfing, data searching
- **Computer Addiction:** obsessive playing of off-line games, such as Solitaire, etc., or obsessive computer programming

This May Be A Sign



In the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), Internet Gaming Disorder is identified in Section III as a condition warranting more clinical research and experience before it might be considered for inclusion in the main book as a formal disorder.

Internet Gaming Disorder



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- But recent scientific reports have begun to focus on the preoccupation some people develop with certain aspects of the Internet, particularly online games. The “gamers” play compulsively, to the exclusion of other interests, and their persistent and recurrent online activity results in clinically significant impairment or distress. People with this condition endanger their academic or job functioning because of the amount of time they spend playing. They experience symptoms of withdrawal when pulled away from gaming.

Internet Gaming Disorder

Repetitive use of Internet-based games, often with other players, that leads to significant issues with functioning. **Five** of the following criteria must be met within one year:

- Preoccupation or obsession with Internet games.
- Withdrawal symptoms when not playing Internet games.
- A build-up of tolerance—more time needs to be spent playing the games.

Internet Gaming Disorder



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- The person has had a loss of interest in other life activities, such as hobbies.
- A person has had continued overuse of Internet games even with the knowledge of how much they impact a person's life.
- The person lied to others about his or her Internet game usage.
- The person uses Internet games to relieve [anxiety](#) or guilt—it's a way to escape.
- The person has lost or put at risk and opportunity or relationship because of Internet games.

Internet Gaming Disorder



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- Signs of cyber, sexual, gambling addiction problems include:
 - Losing track of time
 - Having trouble completing tasks at work
 - Thinking about being online often
 - Isolation from family and friends
 - Feelings of guilt or becoming defensive about internet/computer use
 - Feeling a sense of euphoria while on the internet/computer
 - MESA (Machine Enhanced Sexual Arousal)

Signs of a Problem

- 2004 – Study found that at any time there were over 420 million separate pages of porn online
- Income from porn online varies: Industry generates between 2-4 BILLION annually
- 2005 – 72 million visits worldwide to porn or sites with sexual content.

Internet Pornography

- Biological
 - Genetics/Biochemical
- Psychological
 - Learned Behaviors
 - Learned Associations
 - Environmental

The Causes of Addiction

- Neurotransmitters:
 - Dopamine
 - Serotonin
 - Adrenaline
 - Endorphins
- Nucleus Accumbens
- VTA – Ventral Tegmental Area
- Pre-Frontal Cortex – “The voice of reason”

Brain Impacts

- Using the internet is not a problem
 - The problem lies in the abusive relationship with online activities to the point of losing interest in other sources of entertainment
- The abusive nature then creates a cycle of addiction

Addiction: Psychosocial Approach

- If the primary motivation for use is to escape problems associated with work, stress, loneliness, boredom, low self-esteem, identity or mental health problems-the chances of an abusive cycle occurring are high
- A person may be less likely to become dependent when they have other sources of personal and social satisfaction in their life

Suissa, A.J. (2015). Cyber addictions: toward a psychosocial perspective. *Addictive Behaviors*, 43, 28-32.



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Addiction: Psychosocial Approach

THE CYCLE OF ADDICTION

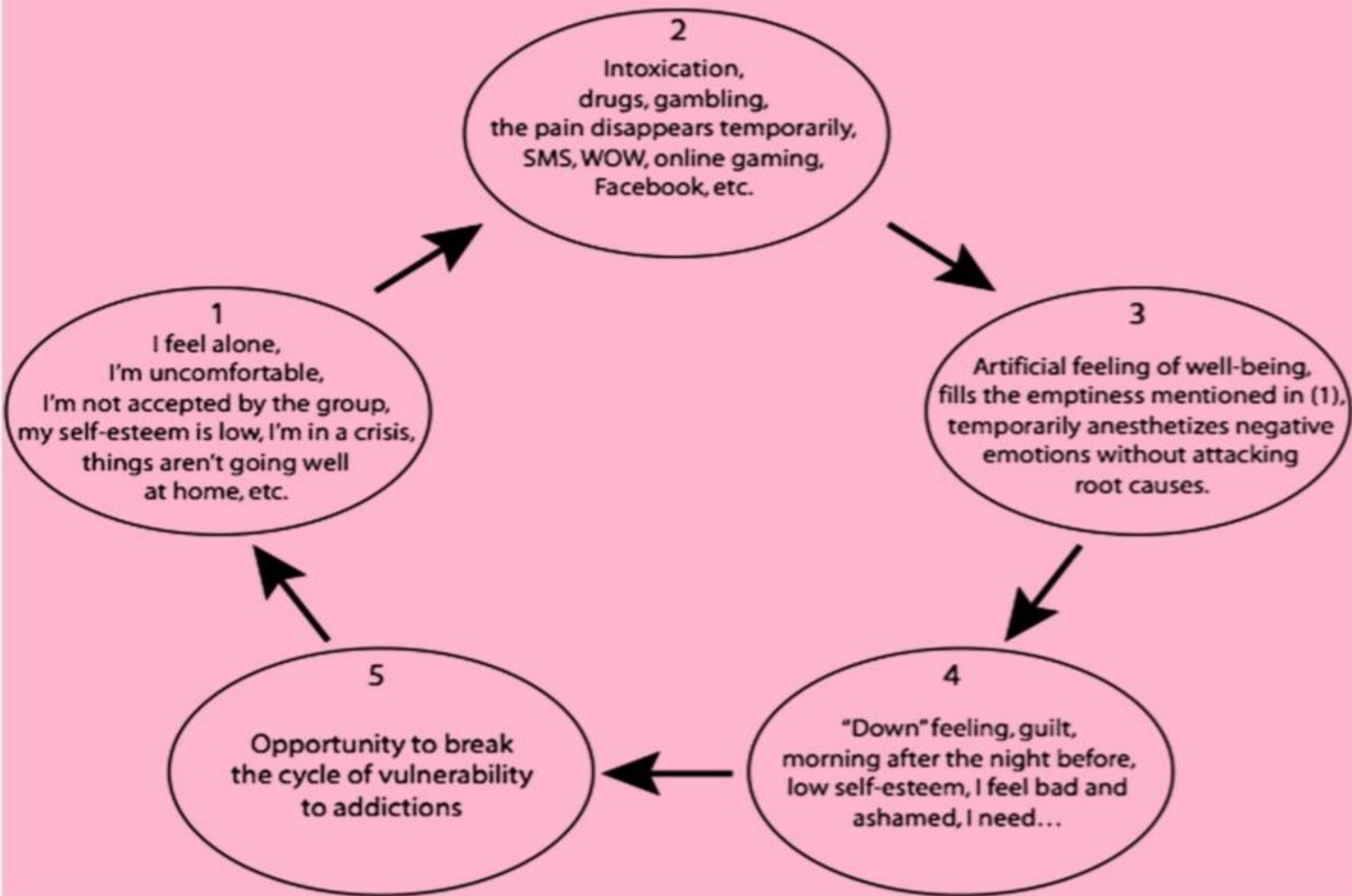


Fig. 1. The cycle of addiction.

- Distress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Restlessness/Irritability
- Anger
- Physiological Issues (blood pressure, ulcers, sweats, headaches (migraines), gastrointestinal issues, jitters/jumpy, muscle and joint pain)
- Suicidal Thinking

Common “Withdrawal” Issues

“Life experience, early exposure and a host of other environmental factors probably play a role in steering a person toward an addiction—the reality is that only a small percentage of people who engage with potentially addictive substances or behaviors end up hooked, and scientists know very little about why.”

“The basics are clear: the brain has circuits that respond to the feeling of pleasure and the anticipation of reward. In some vulnerable individuals, these circuits adapt in response to extreme repetitions of pleasurable activities.”

Food, Sex, Gambling, the Internet: When Is It Addiction?
Are "behavioral addictions" really mental illnesses or just bad habits?
By [Carl Erik Fisher](#) on January 1, 2016 Scientific American - MIND



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Summary

If you suspect someone has a cyber-addiction (or any addiction) problem:

- Talk to the person:
 - Express concern, cite your observations.
 - Be concerned and positive, not critical.
 - Discuss how the problem affects you, how it impacts you (more work to do, emotional impact, less social, etc).
 - Provide support by giving information for help, not advice.
 - Be prepared for denial or a hostile reaction.
- Do not make excuses for the person. Do not enable them.

What to do?



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- Underlying problems support any addiction.
- The brain will crave use.
- Set limits/monitor computer use.
- Identify alternative behaviors/have a relapse prevention plan.
- Non-judgmental description of the behavior to be changed
- Disclosure of your feelings
- Clarification of concrete effect of other person's behavior

Realistic Recovery Expectations

"I have never met a person whose greatest need was anything other than real, unconditional love. You can find it in a simple act of kindness toward someone who needs help. There is no mistaking love...it is the common fiber of life, the flame that heats our soul, energizes our spirit and supplies passion to our lives."

*—Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1926-2004)
Psychiatrist, Author*

What to do?



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Low Risk Gambling is Done:

As a form of recreation, not to make money or make up for previous losses.

With limits on time, frequency, and duration.

In a social setting with others not alone.

With money you can afford to lose.



High Risk Gambling – Situations When You Are:

Coping with grief, loneliness, anger or depression.

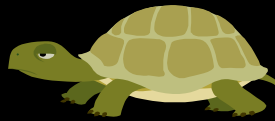
Under financial pressure and stress.

Recovering from mental health or substance use disorders.

Using alcohol or other drugs.

Under legal age to gamble.

KEEP GAMBLING FUN AND PROBLEM FREE



Set a limit on how much time and money you will spend and stick to it

Learn how the games work and how much they cost to play

Balance gambling with other leisure activities

If you gamble and spend more time and money than you can afford, a good strategy is to take a break and look at your gambling. Consider seeking help if this is a concern.

Problem Gambling Helpline, Toll-Free, Confidential, 24/7

1-800-GAMBLER

or

www.helpmygamblingproblem.org

www.mdproblemgambling.com



PEACE

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