



Building Professional Excellence- Part 2
Session 9: Identifying and Treating Gambling Addiction
Webinar Follow-up Question and Answer Session with Oscar Flores Sida

1. Question from Melanie Richburg

You spoke of the military community as a special/vulnerable population. Could you speak more of the impact of gambling on this community and restate the financial/economic impact of gambling behavior as related to the military?

Answer from Presenter

“There are thousands of slot machines on military bases overseas. The military says the revenue from the slots - well over \$100 million annually -- is used to fund recreation programs overseas, such as swimming pools, movie theaters and concerts.” (Griffin, D., & Johnston, K 2007, May 23)

“About 2.2 percent of military personnel have indicators of probable pathological gambling.” (Griffin, D., & Johnston, K 2007, May 23).

With the number of active duty military personnel around 145 million that adds up to approximately 3.19 million members with problem gambling issues, it’s important to remember each individual with a problem gambling problem have the potential to negatively impact their family, friends, and community.

2. Question from Ida Duplechin

Does it make a difference with the feedback of excitement of sounds, lights, atmosphere in developing addiction? CA had a regulation that slot machines could not provide stimuli of sound, light, etc. at a casino on a reservation.

Answer from Presenter

While I am a native of Las Vegas I am not a gambler. I will respond by quoting from an interview from Dr. Schull’s book “Addiction by Design”:

‘Daniel, a retired telecommunications engineer, drew a direct link between the removal he feels from his environment while in the zone and design features of that very environment: It starts while I’m on my way to the casino. I’m in the car driving, but in my mind I’m already inside, walking around to find my machine. In the parking lot, the feeling gets even stronger. By the time I get inside, I’m halfway into that zone. It has everything to do with the sounds, the lights, the atmosphere, walking through the aisles. Then when I’m finally sitting in front of the machine playing, it’s like I’m not even really there anymore— everything fades away. In Daniel’s experience, the zone he enters is in some way a function of the same architectural and ambient world that “fades away” within it. Taking his insight as a point of departure, this chapter explores the relationship between the interior design of the casino and the interior state of the zone. Schüll, Natasha Dow (2012-08-20). *Addiction by Design: Machine Gambling in Las Vegas* (Kindle Locations 754-762). Princeton University Press. Kindle Edition.’



I think it is safe to say the game designers add these features to enhance profits. I do believe that intense external stimuli gets people into “the zone”, which keeps you from focusing or using good judgment. I imagine there is a disruption of the functioning in the prefrontal cortex which affords us the ability to plan, reason, and perform complex thinking and problem solving.

3. Question from Timiko Llion

Which personality disorder(s) have you noticed to be more comorbid with gambling addiction?

Answer from Presenter

In my experience I saw three distinct personality disorders with problem gamblers:

- Dependent personality disorder
- Borderline personality disorder
- Narcissistic personality disorder

However you would see subclinical symptoms for a variety of mental disorders. This why a thorough diagnosis is so critical in establishing an appropriate treatment regimen.

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