The Ethics of Gambling: A Case Study of Addiction and Ethical Decision Making

One Individual at a Time
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Disclosure Statement: I have no real or perceived conflicts of interest that relate to this presentation.

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Objectives

1. Define three models of ethical decision making as they relate to the addiction of gambling
2. Recognize 2 ethical issues clinicians should consider when working with individuals with addictions
3. Identify how the role of the reinforcement schedule impacts the ethics of the addictive rationale
Why do we take Ethics seminars?

- Licensure Requirement
- Interest
- We’re unethical?
Risks Leading to Unethical Decisions

- Organizational Culture
- Hierarchical pressure
- Groupthink
- Burnout
Ethical Decision Making

- Ethics Committees
- Consultation

1. Identify the problem
2. Identify the ethical issues raised
3. Review relevant guidelines/regulations etc.
4. Obtain consultation
5. Identify and list possible responses and consequences
6. Decide on the best course of action

Ethics Committees
Ethical Consultation

- Models
  - Adjudicatory
  - Mediation
  - Consultation
Ethics and Gambling

- Historical Roots

- Prevalence

- Social acceptability – gender norm
  - Faith based fundraisers
  - Sports centered
  - Available modalities
The Daily Life of a Compulsive Gambler

![Image of football and money on a betting board]
Impact of Life Stress on Amount Bet

Amount Bet vs. Life Change Index Scatterplot

Linear Regression $p = 0.011$
Amount Bet

Life Change Index

- Life Change Score
- Amount Bet
The Twenty Questions
Clinical Considerations

• Moral and Value Judgments

• Threshold – Entertainment vs. Addiction

• Knowledge – Process Addiction vs. Substance
  ▫ Understanding etiology of this addiction
    • Anxiety reduction
    • Neural stimulation – excitation
    • Relief from Mood Disorder symptoms
    • Impulse control deficiencies
Reinforcement Schedules

- Fixed-ratio schedules
- Variable-ratio schedules
- Fixed-interval schedules
- Variable-interval schedules
Reinforcement Schedules

![Graph showing different reinforcement schedules: VR, FR, VI, and FI.](Image)
Group Discussion

• What are some similarities between problem gambling and other addictions?

• What makes problem gambling different from other addictions?
Summary

- 3 Models
- Ethical and Clinical Considerations in Treatment
- Reinforcement Schedules and Gambling
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