Gambling Treatment: The Significant Other’s Perspective

Randy Stinchfield, Ph.D., LP
Department of Psychiatry
University of Minnesota Medical School

Gambling Therapist Panel Members:
Kristine Wolff, Jeff Cottle, Bob Gruber
The purpose of this presentation is to have a discussion of what Significant Others say about their experience with treatment and to improve services for them and clients.

Discussion will be generated by:

- Responses from significant others who were involved in treatment recently
- Panel of therapists
Significant Other Data Source

- Gambling treatment evaluation funded by MN DHS
- Clients were recruited from one residential and ten outpatient gambling treatment programs between January 2006 and September 2007
- 455 clients gave consent
- 47 significant others completed the Significant Other Discharge Questionnaire (SODQ)
Eleven Treatment Providers

- Fairview Recovery Services, Minneapolis
- Gambler’s Choice, Robbinsdale
- Gambler’s Intervention Services, Duluth
- Vanguard, Granite Falls
- Recovery Plus, Saint Cloud
- Club Recovery, Edina
- Arrowhead Center, Virginia
- Gambler’s Relief, Savage
- Jeff Cottle, Mahtomedi
- Susan Johnson, Apple Valley
- Lutheran Social Services, Fargo
Completed Significant Other Discharge Questionnaire by Provider

- Fairview
- Vanguard
- GIS
- Jeff Cottle
- Recovery Plus
- Susan Johnson
- LSS
- Gamblers Choice
- Club Recovery
- Gamblers Relief
- Arrowhead

Bars indicate the number of completed questionnaires for each provider.
At discharge, significant others were asked about:

- Their relationship with client
- Extent of their participation in treatment
- Ratings of Treatment Component Helpfulness
- Ratings of Satisfaction with Treatment
- Responses to Open-ended Questions
  - What types of services did you need?
  - What was most helpful about treatment?
  - What would you change about treatment?
Significant Other Characteristics

- Relationship to client:
  - 34 spouses/partners
  - 11 other relatives (4 mothers; 2 fathers; 2 daughters; 1 son; 1 sister; 1 brother)
  - 1 friend
  - 1 other (fiancé)
Significant Other Characteristics

- How much contact do you have with the client?
  - 40 Daily
  - 5 Weekly
  - 1 Monthly
  - 1 Less than monthly

- 42 participated in client’s treatment (5 did not)

- If you did not participate, why not:
  - 3 My schedule did not allow me to participate
  - 1 I chose not to participate
  - 1 No couples sessions were set up
Significant Other Perspective

- Were you involved in treatment to the extent you wanted?
  - 32 Yes
  - 11 No

- Did you receive the types of services you needed?
  - 58% yes, all the services
  - 26% some, but not all
  - 16% no, I did not receive any of the services I needed

- All significant others would recommend their treatment provider to a friend or relative in need of similar help
### How helpful was each service?

**Rank ordered by Much Help**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Service Component</th>
<th>Much Help</th>
<th>Some Help</th>
<th>Little Help</th>
<th>No Help</th>
<th>DNR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group counseling</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family counseling</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer support group</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual counseling</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Films/videos</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework assignments</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to GA/GamAnon</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial counseling</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Assistance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions for Discussion

- What services do you provide to significant others?
- What additional services do you think significant others need and can you provide them?
- What is the role of significant others in treatment?
What types of services did you need?

- Information about gambling addiction
- Information about what to expect during and after treatment
- Information on the treatment process and methods
- Orientation to treatment and treatment options
- Knowing how many people this problem affects
- Support, information, education
- Family members need services specifically for them
- Financial plan and family counseling
- Staff be available to answer questions
What types of services did you need?

- What to do to restore trust in our relationship
- I needed someone to voice my fears to
- Interaction with other spouses who had similar concerns
- I wanted to see the program in operation
- I wanted to know what I could do to help?
- Visit with counselor without the client present
- How to be supportive of the client without being co-dependent
- Family group
- What can we expect from treatment?
- Feedback from counseling staff about how client was doing in treatment and what our role would be in the client’s recovery after discharge
- Counseling, ideas, direction
What was most helpful?

- Open communication with counselor
- Family group
- Family group was a safe place and it was helpful to talk to other families
- Realizing we were not alone
- Lectures, videos and financial advice
What would you change about treatment?

- I needed more support
- I wanted more communication and contact with the therapist
- Longer treatment
- Include individual therapy for clients
- More information (more classes for families)
- I needed more help with how to deal with the debt
- Start program with lecture on the brain. It puts everything else into perspective and helps you understand that addiction is an illness
- Make sure one family member does not monopolize therapy
- Make sure family members are offered time to discuss issues even if it is a lecture or video night
- Nothing
Suggestions for improving treatment

- Family groups on weekends so more families can participate
- Individual counseling
- Aftercare plan for family
- Give families an overview of the program and encourage them to participate
- Family members should be made aware of services available to them
- Have families continue to meet once a month for a couple of years. It’s easy to forget to practice what I learned
- Provide treatment to family without client
- Help with how to pay bills brought on by gambler
Significant others want to learn about the disorder. What causes it and how is it treated?

Significant others want to have their questions answered.

Significant others want to know their role in the treatment process.

Significant others want to know what services the treatment provider can offer them, as well as what resources are available in the community.

Significant others would like more attention from the treatment provider and more communication about the treatment process.
Limitations of the data

- Small sample size (n=47)
- Small number of providers (Fairview, Vanguard, and GIS) were source of most of the data
- Sample limited to those clients who had significant others that participated in treatment
- Sample limited to clients who completed treatment, that is, we are missing data from clients who dropped out of treatment
For more Information

Randy Stinchfield, Ph.D., LP
stinc001@umn.edu

References: