



HÔTEL-DIEU GRACE

ESTD HEALTHCARE 1888

Centre for Problem Gambling and Digital Dependency

Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare
Windsor, Ontario



Land Acknowledgement

I am meeting with you today from the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, which includes the Anishinaabe (Ah-nish-inah-bay), the Odawa (O-da-wa), and the Potawatomie (Pon-A-Wata-Me) people.



Learning Objectives

- ❑ Identifying signs and symptoms of gambling addiction
- ❑ Understanding gambling addiction using the bio/psycho/social model
- ❑ Explore the impacts of gambling addiction and digital dependency
- ❑ Present harm reduction strategies and treatment options



Types of Gambling

- Sports gambling
- Online gambling
- Casino gambling
- Gambling with the stock market
- Gambling on outcomes of events
- Lottery and scratch tickets
- Bingo
- Raffles



Types of Digital Dependency

- Social media
- Video games
- Video streaming
- Information gathering
- Chat rooms, blogs

Note: Online pornography addiction requires it's own specialized training due to the sensitive nature of the issue and sometimes legal implications.



Intersection of Digital Dependency and Gambling Disorder

- Gamification: the application of typical elements of game playing to other areas of activity, typically as an online marketing technique to encourage engagement with a product or service.
- Videogames incorporate a monetary component and elements of chance i.e. “loot boxes” akin to slot machines
- Similar negative impacts
- Both are forms of entertainment, accessible, and normalized



Treatable Behavioural Addictions

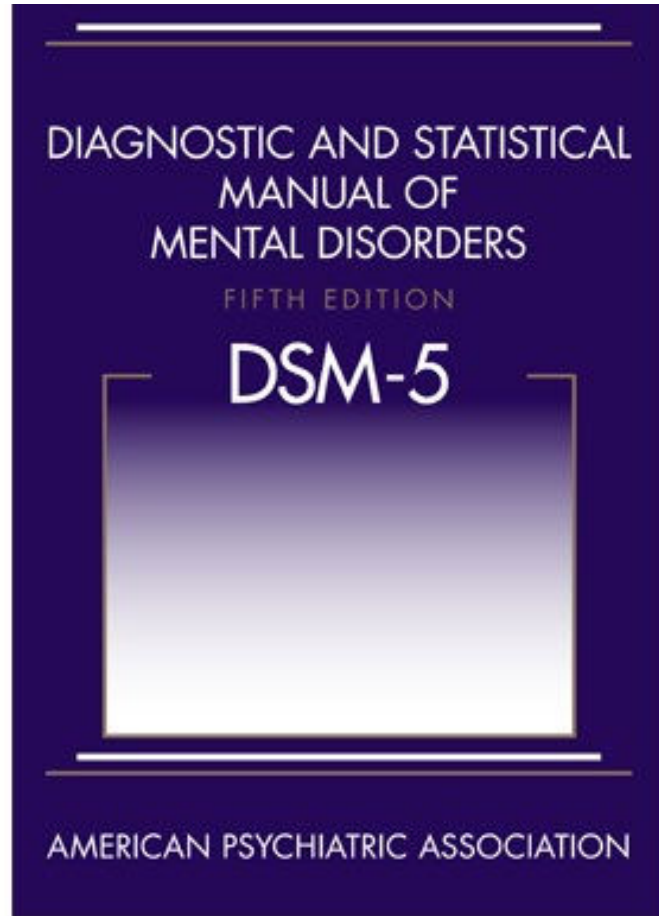
- **BEHAVIOURAL ADDICTIONS** (otherwise known as *process addictions*) are an illness.
- Mutual Aid Support Groups refer to these process behaviours as a “Disease”.



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS



DSM-5



- The scientific community refers to problem gambling within the Diagnostic Statistical Manual 5th Edition (DSM-5) as a mental health disorder.
- The DSM defines gambling disorder as “persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behaviour leading to clinically significant impairment or distress.”



DSM-5 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:

PART A

Circle answer

1	Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement.	YES	NO
2	Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling.	YES	NO
3	Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling.	YES	NO
4	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).	YES	NO
5	Often gambles when feeling distressed (e.g. helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed).	YES	NO
6	After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even ("chasing" one's losses).	YES	NO
7	Lies to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling.	YES	NO
8	Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling.	YES	NO
9	Relies on others to provide money to relieve desperate financial situations caused by gambling.	YES	NO
TOTAL SCORE			



Screeners for Digital Dependency

- Internet Addiction Test
 - Smartphone addiction test
 - DSM-5 Internet Gaming Disorder
 - GAIN-SS
-
- Screeners demonstrate the intersection of behaviours for gamblers and digitally dependent people.



Behavioural Addiction and the Brain

Behavioural Addiction has an effect on the dopamine and serotonin levels within the individual's brain. Research has shown that gambling/gaming/internet use results in the release of dopamine that stimulates the feelings of excitement, pleasure, and relief.

[Play video clip on BBC – stop at 3:22](#)



Understanding Vulnerability/Susceptibility to Behavioural Addiction

Vulnerability/susceptibility to a behavioural addiction is related to:

- Past traumas
- Relationships
- Learned messages
- Learned behaviours
- Core beliefs
- Values



Examples of Predisposing Factors

Boredom

Loss of finances

Depression

Fear of death

Loss of house

Loss of youth

Empty Nest

Loneliness

Chronic pain

Lack of identity

Abuse

Stress

Isolation

Health problems

Grief

Controlling spouse

Anxiety

Relationship Difficulties



Process Addictions

- Invisible and indiscriminate illness (no visible symptoms, social acceptability)
- Clients range from low to high executive skills functioning
- No saturation rate - there is no limit so long as you have access to time and money
- Gambling is just as devastating as any other addiction. E.g. your family's home is lost, health is compromised, highest rate of suicidal ideations compared to other addictions.

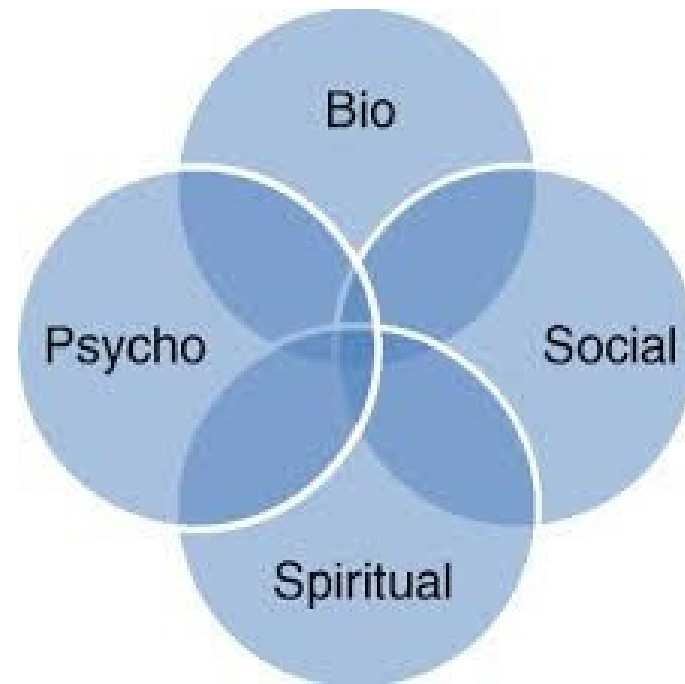


BIO/PSYCHO/SOCIAL/ SPIRITUAL MODEL



The Biological/Psychological/Social/Spiritual Model of Behavioural Addiction

There are 8 major areas of a person's life that are affected by behavioural addiction.





Family:

Loss of time with family, isolation, deterioration of communications, loss of trust, embarrassment of family because of behaviour, increased relationship stressors; decreased intimacy, use of family savings; borrowing from extended family, providing bailouts or enabling the behaviour.

Social:

Borrowing from friends, loss of friends, more isolation, arguing in public, loss of interest in hobbies and social activities.



Legal:

Indebtedness, bankruptcy, divorce or separation, embezzlement, writing bad cheques, stealing, borrowing with intent to pay back, jail or prison time.



Financial:

Loans, maxing out credit cards, bankruptcy, loss of family funds and retirement funds, borrowing from friends and fellow employees, missing work. **Video games are increasingly incorporating a monetary component.**





Spiritual:

Cheating, lying, stealing (change of values), loss of faith, belief only in self, money or online persona becomes God, going against values, feel omnipotent when gambling, superstition, guilt, shame.

Mental:

Depression, confusion, feeling desperate, think you're going crazy, consider suicide, continue to gamble/game despite adverse consequences, lose touch with reality, preoccupation with gambling/gaming, nightmares, isolation, increased symptoms of anxiety/panic.





Physical:

Depression, withdrawal symptoms which may include hypertension, tremors, cold sweats, insomnia, nightmares, nervous stomach, anxiety, increase in eating and drinking, cardiovascular problems, lack of exercise, poor nutrition, neglecting health concerns (diabetes, etc.)

Occupational:

Poor work habits, excessive telephone use, loss of time from work such as sick leave, loss of time from school, poor study habits, borrowing from company or employee funds, decreasing productivity, dishonesty, job loss, withdrawn from school, missed education opportunities, missed career opportunities

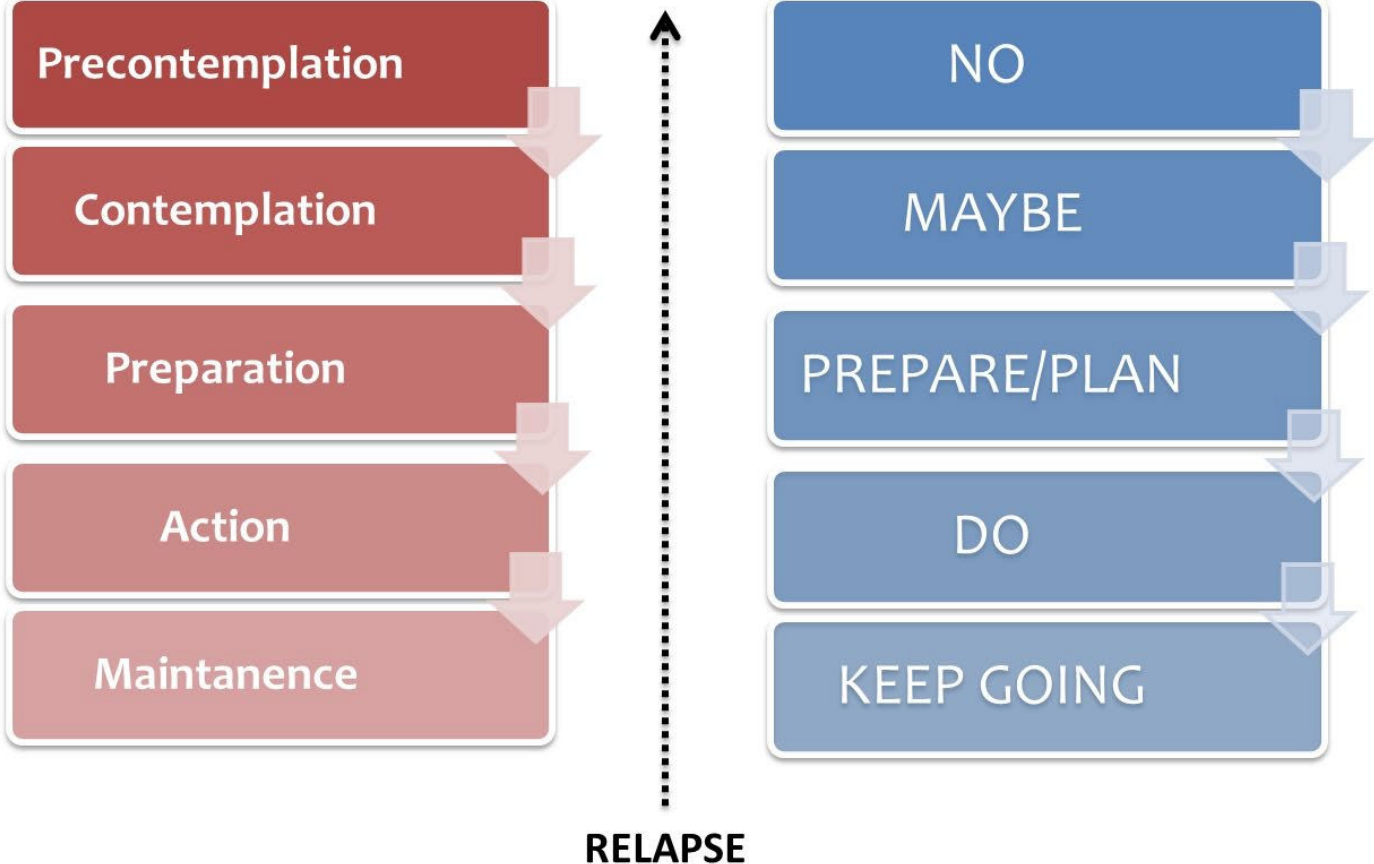


TREATMENT OPTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS



Transtheoretical Model

Stages of change



Enabling Prevents Change

Enabling is a response to addictive behaviours that shield the addicted person from experiencing the full impact of the negative consequences that result from their behaviours.

- Enabling is doing things for people that they are capable of doing for themselves.
- It encouraging dysfunctional or self destructive behaviour.
- Examples include:
 - Financial bailouts
 - Functional bailouts (calling in sick for a person, making excuses for them)
 - Emotional bailouts

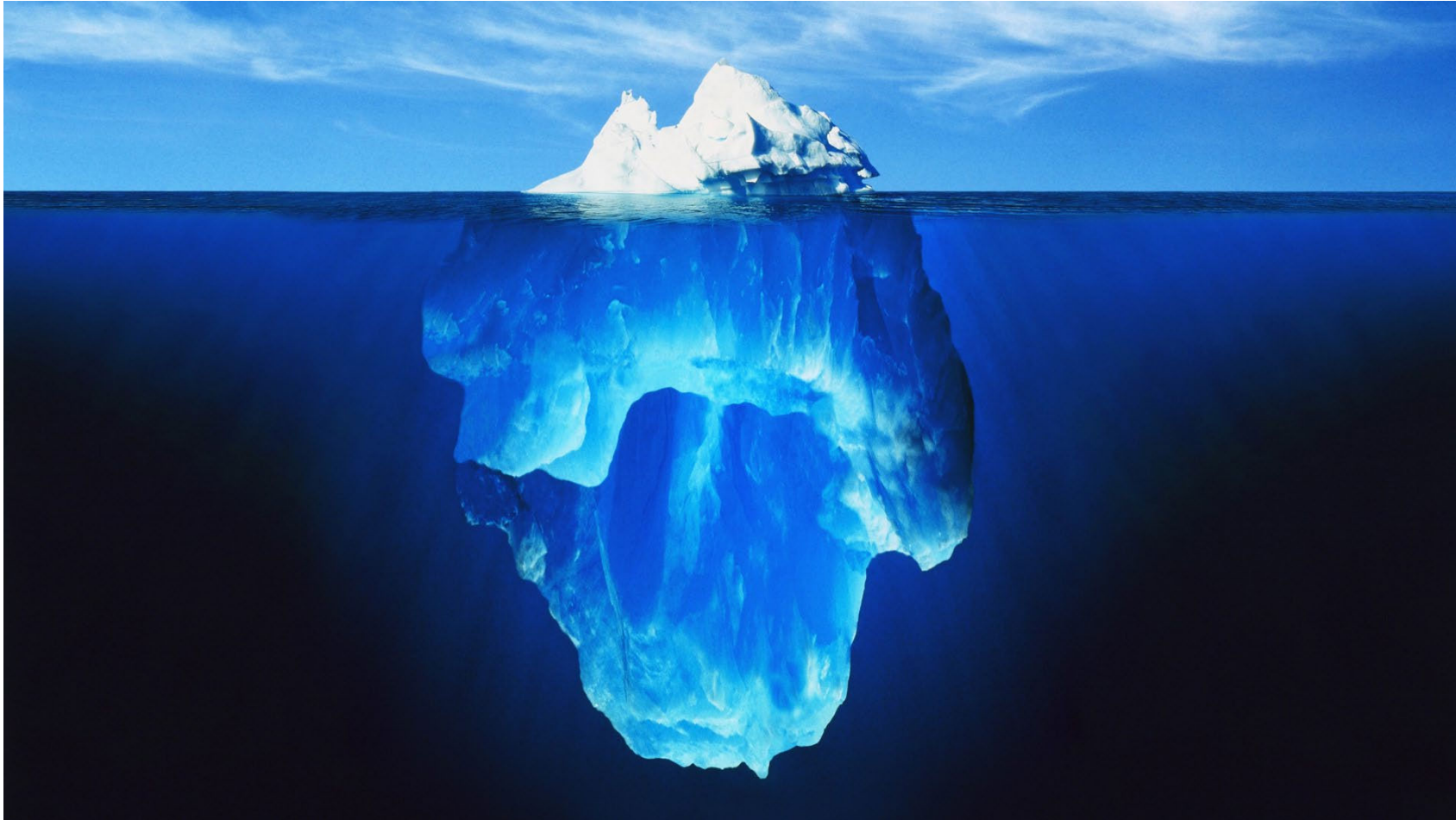


Gambling Disorder x Digital Dependency

- Address any possible underlying mental health disorders.
- Gambling treatment at CPGDD is abstinence-based treatment and DD utilizes harm-reduction strategies. If the gambler is not ready for abstinence then harm-reduction strategies are discussed.
- Discuss the possibility of cross addictions



Iceberg Theory



Iceberg Theory

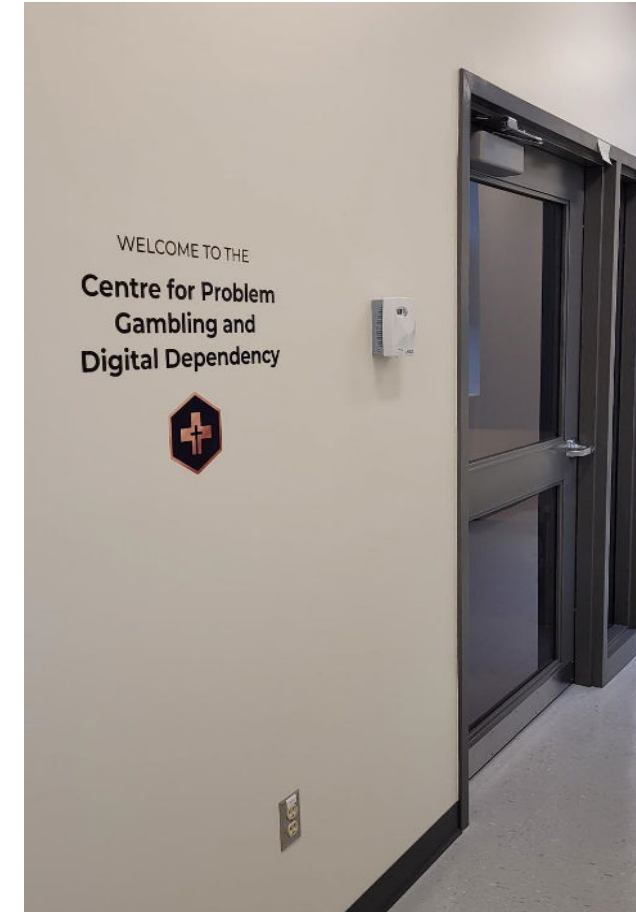
- The **Iceberg** indicates that gambling, gaming, and internet use behavior accounts for only a visible part of an individual's problem.
- The remaining larger mass which is often not addressed by the individual, is usually what leads one back to problematic behaviours. This can be visualized as the bottom of the iceberg, under the water. This includes a person's traumas, core beliefs, regrets, fears, etc...



Who We Are

We are a fully funded service provider who offer support and treatment to those impacted by:

- Gambling Disorder
- Digital Dependency
- Family/Friends
 - Those who have been impacted by their loved one's gambling or digital use



We Provide:

- Assessment
 - Consultation & Referral Services
 - Support and Information
 - Extended Hours
 - Bilingual services
 - Individual Counselling
 - Support Groups
 - Treatment and Aftercare Groups
 - In-patient and Day Treatment
- Programs
- Outreach
 - Offsite Self-Exclusion
 - Two Points of Access
 - We are the provinces' only exclusive Problem Gambling & Digital Dependency treatment bedded program.**



Our Team

- 5.5 Gambling Counsellors
 - CPGC through CACCF
- 8 Support Workers
 - Inpatient program
- 1 Program Manager
- 1 part-time Nurse Practitioner
- 1 Consulting Psychiatrist
- 1 Art Therapist
- Alumni Guest Speakers



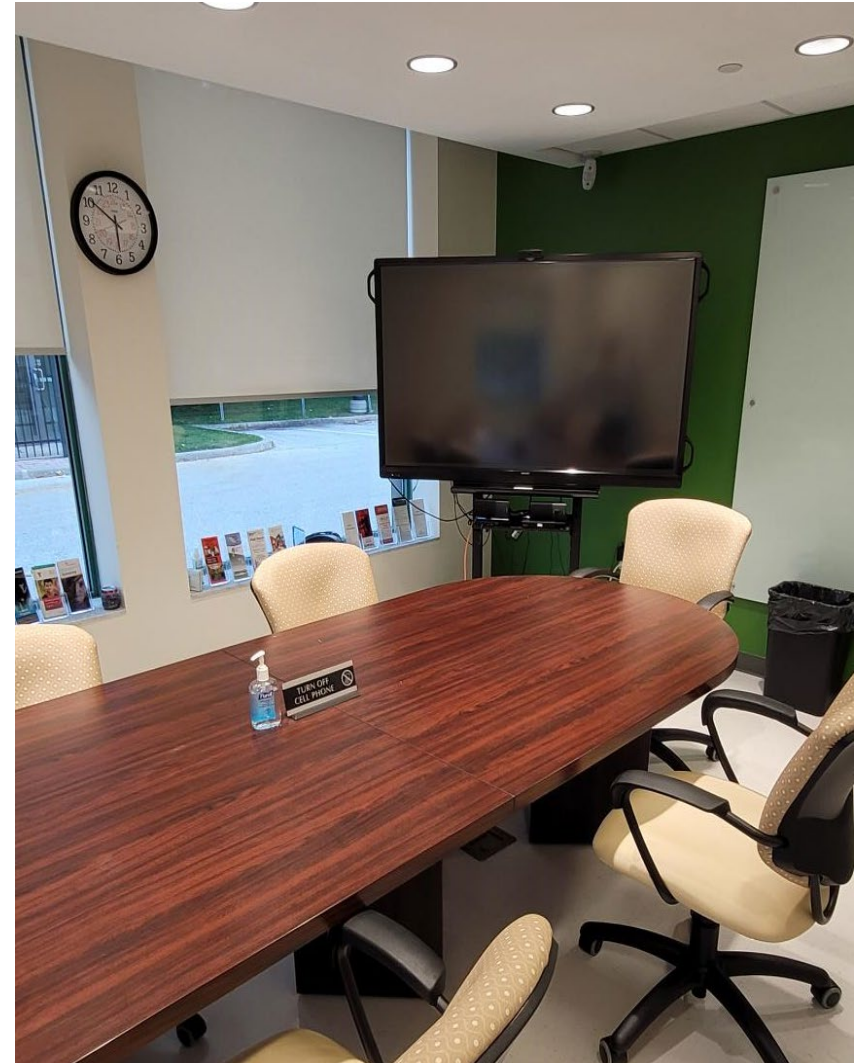
Bed-based Program Referral Info

- **Referrals accepted through:**
 - Certified Gambling Counsellors (CPGC); or
 - Registered mental health professionals offering PG/DD specific counselling (trial 2024)
- **Requirements:**
 - Actively engaged in PG/DD counselling and have had minimum of 4 one-on-one sessions with counsellor
 - Ability to abstain from substances
 - Tx goal is abstinence (in-patient only)
 - Housing upon discharge
 - Completion of intake screening with CPGDD intake worker
- **Exclusion Criteria:**
 - Pressing mental health concerns
 - Inability to abstain from substances
 - Homelessness



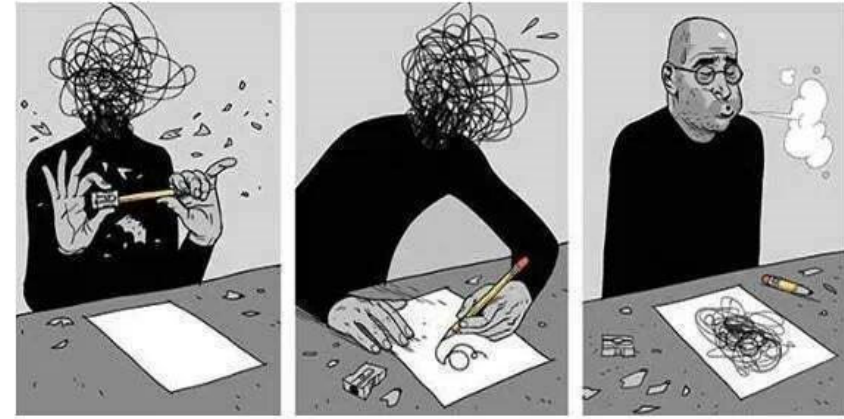
Treatment Approaches

- Trauma-informed care
- Stages of Change
- Motivational Interviewing
- Strengths-Based Programming
- Educational Group Sessions
- Mutual Support Groups/Programs
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Applied Positive Psychology
- Strengths Focused



Holistic Approach

- Fitness workouts
- Art therapy
- BANA to promote healthy eating and nutrition
- Credit Canada to help address financial concerns
- Meditation a.m. & p.m. to promote mindfulness.
- Clients are kept on a schedule to teach and re-establish balance & routine



Prevention Measures

- Greater public education
- Early intervention
- Restricted access/exposure – much like cigarettes
- Prohibit advertisements esp. during family times and events
- Installing blocking software on digital devices
- Installing apps preventing access to problematic platforms. E.g. Lock tight
- Stricter self exclusion options – relapse prevention and consequences for transgressing.
- Greater accountability for finances, time, and day to day lifestyle



**Thank you for your
time today.**

Any Questions?

