



Fall 2014

COLUMBIA
ADDICTIONS
C E N T E R

Problem Gambling and Treatment

The growth of the gambling industry has spawned new research aimed at the effects of gambling on the brain. Gambling was historically viewed as an impulse disorder, but the DSM 5 has now categorized problem gambling as an addictive disorder. Recent studies in psychology, neuroscience and genetics suggest similarities between gambling addiction and drug/alcohol addiction. In other words, Tom's brain at the craps table functions much like John's brain when he is under the influence of a euphoria inducing drug.

Dr. Charles O'Brien, Chairman of the Substance Related Disorders Work Group for the DSM 5, states that imaging studies and neuro-chemical tests support the notion that gambling activates the brain's reward system in much the same way a drug does. Both gambling and drug usage can stimulate the brain to release up to ten times more dopamine than normal.

Evidence shows that pathological gamblers respond well to medications and therapy typically used for addictions. For instance, naltrexone is an opiate antagonist used to treat alcohol and opiate addiction. Though this medication is not yet approved as a treatment for gambling disorders, studies have shown its effectiveness in suppressing the 'rush' experienced while gambling, thus reducing compulsive gambling behavior. Cognitive behavioral therapy, frequently used to treat addictions, has become a treatment of choice for compulsive gamblers.

For help and resources, contact:

Gamblers Anonymous www.gamblersanonymous.org

National Council on Problem Gambling www.ncpgambling.org

SMART Recovery www.smartrecovery.org

University of Maryland Center on Problem Gambling www.mdproblemgambling.com

CAC remains committed to higher education

Columbia Addictions Center has an ongoing commitment to higher education and the development of young professionals. For this reason, we have served as a training center for a number of local universities and colleges including Loyola University, Towson University, Stevenson University and Bowie State University. This year we are pleased to have three bright students from the University of Maryland and Edinboro University.



Lauren Spivey, ADT and Erin Maskell

Lauren Spivey holds a BS in Human Services and is currently working towards her Masters in Social Work at Edinboro University.

Erin Maskell earned her BA in Economics and Hispanic Studies. She is studying at University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Lauren and Erin focus their internship work on opiate addiction and the teen/young adult population. They recently attended lectures at the 2014 Mid-Atlantic Behavioral Health Conference on the Heroin Epidemic and Emerging trends in Illicit Drug Use in Maryland. Lauren and Erin are creating a resource guide to help young adults and their families deal with the challenges of opiate addiction.



Judith Jakubowski, MAC, CAC-AD and Tiara

Tiara Anderson earned her BA in Sociology. She is a Master's level student at University of Maryland School of Social Work. Tiara is currently conducting research on DUI recidivism rates for clients who attended Operation Breakthrough, our Weekend Early Intervention Program.

Tiara is also developing a model Gambling Addiction Program under the direction of Judith Jakubowski, CAC-AD, MAC.

Judith received advanced training from the Maryland Council on Problem Gambling. She has been with CAC since 2011 and is dedicated to continuing education. Judith serves as an excellent mentor to our students!

