
Gambling Recovery Ministries: A Faith Based Approach

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First Responder Conference
Helping Those
with Substance Abuse or Gambling Problems
in Your Faith-Based Community

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Gambling Recovery Ministries

2001 ...

THE question ?



Vision Statement:

The vision for Gambling Recovery Ministries (GRM) is that of **life-saving Christian outreach to persons directly affected by compulsive gambling through specialized ministries**



2013 ... WHERE ARE WE?

- **Supportive Consultation** with individuals
- **Clergy training** events
- Community outreach **educational meetings**
- **Health fairs**
- Counseling agency **staff enrichment**
- Local church **pulpit** presentations

more ...



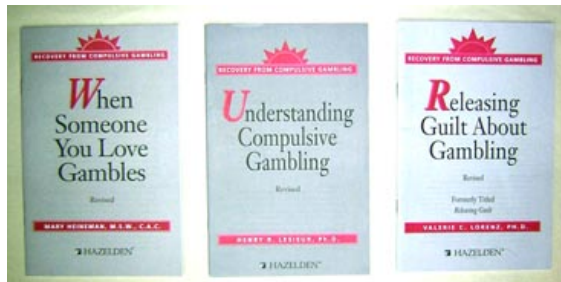
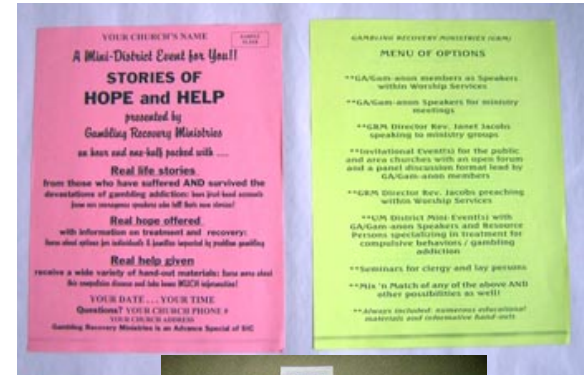
2013 continued ...

- **Youth groups** and teen organizations (SADD)
- Lay **ministry groups** (men's and women's groups, parent groups, Stephens Ministers, parish nurses)
- College **classroom** teaching
- **Providing CEU conferences** on problem gambling
- **Providing workshops** at other professional conferences
- **Website:** www.grmumc.org



GRM provides educational materials about problem gambling

- Treatment Provider info
- **NCPG & State Councils' publications**
- GRM news articles & specialty brochures
- **Many more publications**
- Videos, CDs, DVDs
- **FIRST...Aid Resource Guide**



HOW
may a faith-based
ministry
uniquely fulfill
a role of support?



Filling a Void

(from a faith-based position)

Both outreach & in-reach:

****Service to all persons**

****Denominational Connectional
structure**

>> help beyond parish & IC



Filling A Void ...

in between treatment and support groups

- ** May be viewed as “safer” in terms of anonymity (i.e., talking to a pastor)**
- ** One-on-one: much like an anonymous Helpline Call – in person or on the phone**
- ** Provides a safe testing-of-the-waters-for-help kind of setting**



*Introducing ...
a Continuum of Care*

Serves as the “**moving sidewalk**”
TOWARD treatment and support
groups



Bridging the Gap ...

created
when the issue of sin
AND the simplistic solution to
Just stop it!
is traditionally offered.



Providing spiritual support - as requested

- **Prayer**
- **Spiritually oriented therapeutic literature**
- **Pastoral Counseling**
- **Holy Communion**



Serving as an unofficial advocate

for ...

- **GA / AA / NA, etc.**
- **Gam-Anon/Al-Anon/Narc-Anon, etc**
- **Treatment Providers*****
- **Professional Continuing Education Events, etc.**



Providing professional CEU events

NOTE:

Issues of addiction in the parish (and how clergy can be more effective in handling them) can be specifically addressed **as well as other issues for all professionals concerned with addiction.**



Spiritual Issues in Recovery

Lunch Session

- **Blame**
- **Shame**
- **Guilt**



Blame

- **Blame may be used to deal with one's anger about gambling losses**
- **Gambler may blame God for the losses;
therefore, why pray to the One who brought the “bad luck” ??**



Shame

Prayer: the gambler may think (s)he is not worthy of being:

- **a pray-or**
- **the object of others' prayers**
- **Family members can feel great shame, also.**



Guilt

- **Starts early**, when the lying begins
- Can become **obsessive** (*when in recovery, (s)he can't seem to apologize enough*)
- If loved ones invoke guilt (or it is perceived that this is happening), chronic **anger & fear** can develop.



Guilt

Absolute thinking patterns
can accentuate feelings of
guilt.

E.g., God will never forgive me.



Forgiveness

- **Of oneself**

ALSO, is one even entitled to the forgiveness of others?



Forgiveness

- others' forgiving of the gambler

AND

- the gambler's forgiving others

**Present & past anger issues AND
the need for a scapegoat can cloud
the perception that forgiveness = a
necessary step in recovery.**



Forgiveness

- **Children of gambler parents:**
have a particularly difficult time with forgiveness issues since this **“invisible” addiction** is less concrete and harder to understand.



Forgiveness

God's:

When “Luck” is viewed in the light of God's favoring the gambler's successes, where do the gambler's losses fit into the picture?



God's Forgiveness

- Do the losses reflect God's disfavor / punishment ... and therefore, God's not forgiving the gambler?
- Issues of **God's favor** (love; acceptance)
VS
God's wrath (punishment; abandonment)



Trust

- **As lying becomes habitual and a way of life for the gambler, trusting becomes a major issue with family members, employers, and friends**
therefore ...
- **Trusting each other, in recovery, needs to be a process instead of an automatic step.**
(a process within a process)



Concept of *Hope and a New Life*

When a gambler finally reaches the *hopeless* phase, the concept of “hope” is not real anymore.

That is why **Step 1** is number 1 in the **12 Step** recovery process.

“We admitted we were powerless over gambling – that our lives had become unmanageable.”



Concept of *Hope* and a *New Life*

Step 2 is quite a big step to take for a person in the *hopeless* phase.

Somewhere between Step 1 and Step 2, the ability to trust – even feebly – enters the recovery process.

“Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to a normal way of thinking and living.”



Concept of *Hope* and a *New Life*

- **Step 3 evolves from a conviction that Step 2 has validity for him/her.**

“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of this Power of our own understanding.”



Resolution of Spiritual Issues within the Recovery Process

Remember to Consider ...

Personal Influences:

- ***Spiritual background/upbringing:***
**Gambling = morally wrong (sin) VS
a natural activity**
- **Gambler & others may perceive
problem gambling behavior as a sign of
moral weakness AND the necessity for
treatment/support groups = invalid**



Therefore ...

**The recognition and resolution
of
spiritual issues contribute**

significantly

to the recovery process!



Discussion Question & Sharing

**What kinds of things
are you doing
in your faith-based
community
to support families
impacted by addictions?**

