

SPECIALIZED GROUPS: GAMBLING GROUP

TARGET POPULATION

- Addiction Centre patients with a diagnosis of pathological gambling and another major psychiatric and/or physical disorder who are interested in addressing issues related to gambling, including becoming abstinent.

GOALS

- To introduce a cognitive-behavioural approach to the understanding and treatment of pathological gambling.
- To discuss the relationship between gambling, substance abuse, mental health problems and personality traits.
- To encourage practical application of knowledge gained (self-monitoring, problem-solving, relapse prevention).
- To encourage and promote attendance at community support groups.

ACTIVITIES

- Group facilitators discuss the cognitive aspects of treatment: address irrational beliefs and cognitive distortions and realistically appraise the consequences of gambling.
- Treatment consists of identification and discussion of the relationship between emotional states and gambling triggers, urges and behaviours and focuses on problem solving skills, relapse prevention, relaxation techniques and weekly homework.
- Group members are expected to regularly attend all group sessions.

OUTCOME

Patients attending this group will:

- Monitor gambling behaviour and understand how gambling is connected to cognitions and emotional states.
- Increase awareness and decrease cognitive distortions related to gambling.
- Understand the connection between gambling and mental health issues
- Learn a five-step problem-solving method to address gambling-related problems.
- Create an individualized relapse prevention plan.