HOMELESSNESS AND GAMBLING

It is well known that there are many factors that can contribute to an individual becoming homeless, and that many individuals who experience homelessness can present with complex needs. One behaviour that can be considered when assessing the needs of a person, is gambling.

WHAT IS GAMBLING?

- Gambling can be defined as placing something of value (usually money) at risk, in the hope of gaining something of greater value
- There are many different forms of gambling, including (but not limited to) Lottery, Sports, Machines, Scratchcards, Bingo, Cards etc. Gambling can be in person, online, or mobile.

WHY ASK ABOUT GAMBLING?

- Gambling is often called ‘the hidden addiction’, and can be difficult to identify
- Consequences include health and mental health problems, criminal acts, suicidal intentions and relationship difficulties
- Recent research has shown that gambling can be a significant factor in homelessness
- Problem gambling is 10 times more common in the homeless than the general population
- Rough sleepers are at greater risk of severe gambling problems
- Gambling can contribute to missed rent or mortgage payments, and relationship breakdown

WHAT IS THE APPEAL OF GAMBLING?

- When winning, gambling can stimulate feelings of excitement, happiness and satisfaction
- Gambling offers the chance for life changing wins – particularly to those of lower income
- Some gambling venues offer shelter, a toilet, and if gambling, a hot drink
- Gambling behaviour can be increased when under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Machine gambling in particular can offer an escape from other problems or concerns

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- There is no physical ‘type’ to look for - anyone can be affected by gambling
- Volatile mood swings – negative following losses, positive following wins
- Excessive anxiety or excitement around any kind of payday (wages, benefits etc)
- Lack of support network – gambling often leads to relationship breakdown due to amount of deceit and lies
- Selling items – desperate for even the smallest amount of cash
- Unwillingness to talk about money and how money is spent

BARRIERS TO TALKING ABOUT GAMBLING

- There are some stereotypes around gambling addiction – i.e., not an addiction
- Individuals may feel a sense of shame, embarrassment or judgement around gambling
- Some individuals have concerns about how disclosing a gambling problem will negatively impact on things like hostel placements, housing, and most importantly, benefits.
- Challenges around getting the individual to understand their own problem behaviour – gambling isn’t the solution, it’s the problem.

JUST ASKING ABOUT GAMBLING CAN BE THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP.
# The Lincoln Homelessness and Gambling Scale (L-HAGS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Have you gambled in the last 12 months (including lottery, scratch card, etc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do you think gambling contributed to you becoming homeless?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Have you tried to keep your gambling a secret from friend / relatives?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>In the last 12 months, have you gambled instead of paying rent, or bills, or paying for food or accommodation?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Have you left yourself with no money through gambling?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Has gambling caused relationship difficulties?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>In the last 12 months, has anyone ever been concerned about your gambling, or suggested you cut down?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Have you committed a crime to get money to gamble?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Have you spent more than you intended to when gambling?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Still thinking about the last 12 months, have you gambled more, to win back what you already lost?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Have you gambled to escape from negative feelings like stress or loneliness?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Have you ever felt your gambling was out of control?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scoring: Each ‘YES’ answer = 1 point; a score of 2 or more need to be referred for further support.
Overcoming Gambling

Your answers to the gambling questions show that you might benefit from gambling support.

- You are not alone – there are many different types of support available for gambling problems
- You are not helpless – gambling is something that can be controlled
- Gambling is not the solution – gambling is the problem

WHAT CAN BE DONE IMMEDIATELY?

- Who has control of your money? Could someone else look after your cash / bankcard?
- When are you at risk? For many gamblers, payday is a high risk time. Talk to someone around payday, make a plan for coping
- If you use bookmakers or arcades – ask to complete a self-exclusion form, to ban you from entering the bookies or arcade.
- If you gamble online, install blocking software that stops you entering gambling sites
- Contact the services listed below to find support

LOCAL SERVICES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS</th>
<th>GAMCARE COUNSELLOR / OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NATIONAL GAMBLING SERVICES:

Gamcare - Gamcare can provide live, confidential, one-to-one information, advice and emotional support, and can signpost to further sources of specialist help. Freephone **0808 8020 133**, 8am to midnight, seven days a week, or you can chat to an advisor online. [http://www.gamcare.org.uk/]

National Problem Gambling Clinic - The National Problem Gambling Clinic offers treatments for gambling addiction, depending on the needs of the individual. Individuals can be referred via a referral form. Phone: 020 7381 7722 Email: gambling.cnwl@nhs.net

Gordon Moody Association - Gordon Moody offers a residential recovery programme for those suffering with gambling addiction. They have two centres, one in London and one in Dudley. Phone: 01384 241292 Email: help@gordonmoody.org.uk

**** YOUR KEYWORKER CAN HELP YOU TAKE THE FIRST STEP, TO MAKE THE CALL TO PUT YOU IN TOUCH WITH ANY OF THESE SERVICES****