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Administrative Office Hours

Mondays – Thursdays
9:30am – 6:00pm

Fridays
10:30am – 4:30pm

Weekends by appointment



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Problem Gambling

adapted from the NCPG and OAPCG websites

Every March organizations across the world come together to talk about the impact of problem gambling. “The theme for Problem Gambling Awareness Month 2020 is Awareness + Action,” National Council Executive Director Keith Whyte said in a news release. “This month is all about taking action and having conversations about problem gambling issues and directing people to the help they may need,” Whyte added.

The goals of the national campaign are:

- To increase public awareness of problem gambling and the availability of prevention, treatment & recovery services.
- To encourage healthcare providers to screen clients for problem gambling.

This awareness campaign brings together a wide range of stakeholders, including the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, treatment providers, the Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association (OIGA), and gambling operators. They work collaboratively to let people know that hope and help exist.

According to the Oklahoma Association on Problem & Compulsive Gambling, 3.2% of adult Oklahomans have a gambling disorder. Approximately 73% of adults with problem gambling disorders also suffer with a substance use disorder.

Many people gamble simply for fun and entertainment. For some, gambling has become an issue in their lives. “Problem gambling describes gambling behaviors that begin to cause harm to the gambler and/or to family and friends. When gambling behavior interferes with finances, relationships, and the workplace, a serious problem already exists.

The problem gambler gets the same effect from gambling as someone else might get from taking a drug or having a drink. The gambling alters the person’s mood and the gambler keeps repeating the behavior attempting to achieve that same effect. But just as tolerance develops to drugs or alcohol, the gambler finds that it takes more and more of the gambling experience to achieve the same emotional effect as before. This creates an increased craving for the activity and the gambler finds they have less and less ability to resist as the craving grows in intensity and frequency.

Signs of Gambling Addiction

Given the subtle nature of gambling problems, how can you identify someone who is at risk for compulsive gambling? Here are eight warning signs of a gambling problem:

1. Increased frequency of gambling activity
2. Increased amount of money gambled
3. Gambling for longer periods of time than originally planned
4. Bragging about wins, but not talking about losses
5. Pressuring others for money as financial problems arise
6. Lying about how money is spent
7. Escaping to other excesses (alcohol, drugs, sleep, etc.)
8. Denying there is a problem

Understanding & Overcoming Fear

by Cody Shoemaker, MSC, NCGC-2, LADC/MH

Whether in recovery or not, everyone experiences fears. Debbie McGauran stated, "Fear is said to be the most powerful emotion known to humankind. More powerful even than love. Our very survival depends on it." People often struggle to deal with their fears. We have found that it is often the way you *think about* the things you fear that leads to success or failure in trying to overcome them.

Sometimes the fears that we have are directly related to our need for treatment. Chris Barnes noted, "In 2011, 21.6 million people needed treatment for addiction and only 10 percent received some kind of specialty treatment. In contrast, more and more people are dying every year due to overdose or other reasons related to substance misuse."

Even when people seek treatment, it does not expel all our fears. In fact, we may find that we actually see more fears than we knew we had. Rita Milios advises you can address the specific fears and concerns that are related to recovery. Below is an excerpt from her article at the www.recovery.org website.

Fear of Facing Feelings:

When you stop hiding feelings and face them head on, they can seem overwhelming. But if you focus on the outcome that you are trying to achieve—sobriety and a more fulfilled, authentic life—the promise of these rewards will provide the motivation you need to do the difficult work.

Fear of Loss and Loneliness:

When you are forced to make sober lifestyle changes – forging new supportive friendships and replacing dysfunctional "using" friendships

– 12 step and peer support groups are great places to find more appropriate linkages.

Fear of Failure/Relapse:

This fear is appropriate and reasonable. It often does take multiple attempts, rather than one single attempt, to gain lasting sobriety. But you learn from each setback and gain insights that help you in repeat attempts, making them easier and more likely to hold. The key is to never give up. The goal is worth it.

Fear of the Responsibilities of Sobriety:

The fear of responsibility and accountability can be unnerving. You may fear that you won't be able to handle the requirements of a job, or your family responsibilities. But remember the strength and determination that you had to call on in order to get sober in first place. Use these same character traits to deal with daily duties, and with a bit of practice, any challenges you face will be easier to handle.

The following strategies will help you calm a fearful mind:

Recognize and Acknowledge Your Fears:

You can't fix what you don't know is broken. Start by admitting to yourself what it is that you are really afraid of. Sit quietly for a few minutes and attempt to fully feel what you fear most, without resisting it. Remember, fear is an imagined perception, not a real thing. In truth, fear is an illusion; therefore, it cannot hurt you, even though it feels awful. Recognize that you can feel awful – you can feel afraid – and still be okay.

Differentiate Between Rational and Irrational Fears:

A healthy fear response is an evolutionary survival strategy. However, some fears are irrational and exaggerated by our own minds. It's often these fears that cause us the most difficulty and emotional

distress. If a fear is irrational, stop allowing it to influence your behavior.

Focus on the Present Moment:

Remember fears are *future* worries. When in recovery, the goal is to stay sober *today*, and not worry about what happened in the past, or what will happen in the future. It's ok to make plans for the future and to reconcile issues from the past. But you don't have to be anxious or concerned about these things, if you stay focused in the present.

Ask for Help and Support:

Ask for help from people who care about you and your success – friends, family members, a licensed counselor or rehab specialist. Creating and using a support team will help you get results more quickly and easily.

Use Positive Thinking and Affirmations:

Viewing yourself in a strongly negative light is equally as unrealistic as refusing to see your faults. Foster a more positive mindset by catching yourself whenever you detect negative self-reflections. Reverse the negative viewpoint with positive statements or affirmations. For example, when you find yourself chastising yourself and feeling like a failure because you made a mistake, say to yourself instead, "*Now I know that this option doesn't work; so I can try something different. I can re-focus and use this feedback to decide on a better course of action.*"



Happy Birthday!

Cody Shoemaker
3/10

Elenor Kovash
3/28



Happy
Employment
Anniversary!

Alonzo Talton
3/12/2018

Lockdown

by Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM

Yes, there is fear. Yes, there is isolation. Yes, there is panic buying. Yes, there is sickness. Yes, there is even death. But they say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise you can hear the birds again. They say that after just a few weeks of quiet the sky is no longer thick with fumes but blue and grey and clear. They say that in the streets of Assisi people are singing to each other across the empty squares, keeping their windows open so that those who are alone may hear the sounds of family around them. They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound. Today a young woman I know is busy spreading fliers with her number through the neighborhood so that the elders may have someone to call on. Today churches, synagogues, mosques and temples are preparing to welcome and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary. All over the world people are slowing down and

reflecting. All over the world people are looking at their neighbors in a new way. All over the world people are waking up to a new reality. To how big we really are. To how little control we really have. To what really matters. To Love. So, we pray and we remember that yes there is fear; but there does not have to be hate. Yes, there is isolation; but there does not have to be loneliness. Yes, there is panic buying; but there does not have to be meanness. Yes, there is sickness; but there does not have to be disease of the soul. Yes, there is even death; but there can always be a rebirth of love. Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now. Today, breathe. Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic. The birds are singing again. The sky is clearing. Spring is coming. And we are always encompassed by Love. Open the windows of your soul. And though you may not be able to touch across the empty square, sing.

5 Things You Should Know about Stress

by US Dept of Health & Human Services, National Institutes of Health

Everyone feels stressed from time to time, but what is stress? How does it affect your overall health? And what can you do to manage your stress? Stress is how the brain and body respond to any demand. Any type of challenge—such as performance at work or school, a significant life change, or a traumatic event—can be stressful. Stress can affect your health. It is important to pay attention to how you deal with minor and major stressors, so you know when to seek help. Here are five things you should know about stress.

1. Stress affects everyone.

Everyone experiences stress from time to time. There are different types of stress—all of which carry physical and mental health risks. A stressor may be a one-time or short-term occurrence, or it can happen repeatedly over a long time. Some people may cope with stress more effectively and recover from stressful events more quickly than others.

2. Not all stress is bad.

In a dangerous situation, stress signals the body to prepare to face a threat or flee to safety. In these situations, your pulse quickens, you breathe faster, your muscles tense, and your brain uses more oxygen and increases activity—all functions aimed at survival and in response to stress. In non-life-threatening situations, stress can motivate people, such as when they need to take a test or interview for a new job.

3. Long-term stress can harm your health.

Coping with the impact of chronic stress can be challenging. Because the source of long-term stress is more constant than acute stress, the body never receives a clear signal to return to normal functioning. With chronic stress, those same lifesaving reactions in the body can disturb the immune, digestive, cardiovascular, sleep, and reproductive systems. Some people may experience mainly digestive symptoms, while others may have headaches, sleeplessness, sadness, anger, or irritability. Over time, continued strain on your body from stress may contribute to serious health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and other illnesses, including mental disorders such as depression or anxiety.

4. There are ways to manage stress.

If you take practical steps to manage your stress, you may reduce the risk of negative health effects. Here are some tips that may help you to cope with stress:

- **Be observant.** Recognize the signs of your body's response to stress, such as difficulty sleeping, increased alcohol and other substance use, being easily angered, feeling depressed, and having low energy.
- **Get regular exercise.** Just 30 minutes per day of walking can help boost your mood and improve your health.
- **Try a relaxing activity.** Explore relaxation or wellness programs, which may incorporate meditation, muscle relaxation, or breathing exercises. Schedule regular times for these and other healthy and relaxing activities.
- **Set goals and priorities.** Decide what must get done now and what can wait. Learn to say "no" to new tasks if you start to feel like you're taking on too much. Try to be mindful of what you have accomplished at the end of the day, not what you have been unable to do.
- **Stay connected.** You are not alone. Keep in touch with people who can provide emotional support and practical help. To reduce stress, ask for help from friends, family, and community or religious organizations.

5. If you're overwhelmed by stress, ask for help from a health professional.

You should seek help right away if you have suicidal thoughts, are overwhelmed, feel you cannot cope, or are using drugs or alcohol more frequently as a result of stress.

2020 Schedule of Office Closures

Please be aware that the offices will be closed for the following holidays:

May 25
Memorial Day
Closed all day

July 3-4
Independence Day
Closed all day

September 7
Labor Day
Closed all day

October 12
Indigenous Peoples Day
Closed all day

November 11
Veteran's Day
Closed all day

November 26-27
Thanksgiving
Closed all day

December 24
Christmas Eve
Closed at Noon

December 25
Christmas
Closed all day

In the event of inclement weather, our offices follow the delay/closure policy for Mid-Del Public Schools.





Professional Development

Intro to MI Training
March 12-13
ODMHSAS

ODAPCA Spring Conference
April 2-3
NCED Conference Ctr

Children's Behavioral Health
Conference
May 20-22
Embassy Suites

Trauma Informed Criminal
Justice Conference
June 4
ODMHSAS

Upcoming Community Events

Norman Addicted - A
Discussion of Generational
Trauma of Substance Abuse in
Our Community: What Is It &
How Can We Help?
May 20
6:30pm - 8:30pm
Norman Regional Education Ctr
901 N. Porter Ave. | Norman
Free

Loaded Baked Potato Casserole

Ingredients

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 6 slices bacon, cut ½ inch thick
- 2 ¼ pounds russet potatoes (about 4), scrubbed clean and cut into 1 inch chunks
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 6 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 2/3 cup sour cream
- 2 scallions, white and light green parts only thinly sliced



Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F and spray a 3 quart casserole dish with nonstick spray. Set aside.
2. Cook the bacon in a medium nonstick skillet over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until brown and crispy, 6 to 7 minutes. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate. Reserve 2 tablespoons of the bacon drippings.
3. Put the potatoes into the prepared casserole dish. Toss with the reserved 2 tablespoons bacon drippings, 1 teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper. Roast until the potatoes are soft and begin to brown, about 45 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, mix together the cream cheese and 1 cup cheddar cheese in a bowl until well combined. Dollop over the potatoes, then sprinkle with the remaining cup of cheese and bake until the cheese is melted and bubbly and the potatoes are completely cooked through when poked with a knife, 13 to 15 minutes.
5. Dollop the sour cream evenly over the casserole and sprinkle with scallions and bacon pieces.

Staff Spotlight

Eileen Whitson, LCSW Therapist

- Favorite Color is Purple
- Graduated with a BA and MA from the University of Central Oklahoma and an MSW from the University of Oklahoma
- Married 28 years
- Has 3 children and 6 grandchildren
- Has 2 little dogs (Sophie and Princess) and a chocolate lab (Toby)
- Hobbies include reading, crocheting, knitting, and swimming
- Enjoys crime and medical dramas



Current Schedule

Appointments are generally scheduled Monday through Friday from 9:30pm – 6:00pm. Early morning, evening, and weekend appointments are available upon request as staff schedules permit. No appointments are needed on Tuesdays from 9:30am – 3:30pm.

Mondays:

11:00am – 12:00pm Cognitive
12:00pm – 1:00pm Substance Abuse

Tuesdays:

2:00pm – 3:00pm Cognitive
3:00pm – 4:00pm Substance Abuse
4:00pm – 5:00pm Domestic Violence

Wednesdays:

11:00am – 12:00pm Substance Abuse
12:00pm – 1:00pm Cognitive
3:00pm – 4:00pm Anger Management
4:00pm – 5:00pm Recovery Support

Thursdays:

4:00pm – 5:00pm Cognitive
5:00pm – 6:00pm Substance Abuse
6:00pm – 7:00pm Parenting
7:00pm – 8:00pm Anger Management

Saturdays:

11:00am – 12:00pm Cognitive
12:00pm – 1:00pm Substance Abuse



Services Available

We currently offer individual, couples, family, and group sessions.

Our staff members provide trauma-informed services both in the office and in various confidential settings within the community.

We have staff who speak English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

We offer urine testing, ADSAC assessments, pre-marital counseling, and the co-parenting course for those getting a divorce.

Please call the office to schedule an appointment or visit us on Tuesdays from 9:30am – 3:30pm for walk-ins.

Services Spotlight of the Month

Tele-Health Options

- ✓ Tele-Health enables staff to deliver efficient & convenient care for clients.
- ✓ Whether it is a routine visit or addressing an urgent need, Tele-Health provides face-to-face interaction.
- ✓ Speak with a therapist or certified staff member from the privacy and comfort of your own home via secure video using your computer or smartphone.
- ✓ All sessions are confidential and HIPAA compliant.