

The image shows a spiral-bound notebook with a light-colored, textured cover. The spiral binding is on the left side. The text is centered on the cover.

Debt Management and the Compulsive Gambler

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Outline

- why address financial issues in treatment
- how to screen for, and assess, financial problems
- how to address debt problems in treatment planning
- strategies for rebuilding financial balance in families
- when and where to refer for professional debt counselling



Why Address Financial Issues in Treatment

- debt problems are an underlying issue for many problem gambling clients
- debt problems are often the reason that gambling clients initially seek help
- financial pressures may lead to relapse if not addressed

Stats

- 27% spent \$500-1000/month
15% spent \$1001-2500/month
- 73.6% financed their gambling by using household money
- 78.7% reported being in debt
- 66.4 couldn't pay their bills
- 25.9% committed a crime as a result
- 40% had suicidal thoughts
- of the 40%, almost half attempted suicide more than once



CAPE Screen for Financial Problems

- Are you concerned about your financial situation?
- Are you more than two months in arrears with any of your payments?
- Are any of your creditors pressuring you for payment?
- Are there more bills than money at the end of the month?



Financial Assessment

- determine monthly cost of living (budget)
- list assets
- determine monthly income
- list creditors (how much is owed to who, how far behind in payments)
- **what is the 'Bottom Line'**



Helping the Client Deal with Family Issues

- help the client explore how they may have hurt family members by their financial decisions
- encourage the client to be honest with their partner about their financial situation
- help the client and their partner clarify their roles in the debt management plan
- help the client find ways to allow their partner to feel 'financially protected'
- Help the client to identify ways they can start to rebuild financial trust



Debt Management Planning

Help the client:

- identify most pressing concerns
- identify steps to be taken
- identify resources
- prioritize and identify time frames

Professional Help - When

- there is not enough to cover payments after covering basic living expenses
- the client is 3 or more months in arrears with any payment
- creditors are threatening or have started legal action
- the client needs help assessing their finances or can't decide what to do
- the client is considering Bankruptcy or a formal repayment program (OPD, Consumer Proposal)

A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook with a brown cover and a white page with horizontal lines. The spiral binding is on the left side. The text is centered on the page.

Professional Help - Where

- Confidential, professional debt counselling is available in most provinces and states through government or non-profit agencies