

Women and Problem Gambling: Intersectional Complexities and Opportunities for Success

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**21st Annual Midwest Conference on Problem
Gambling and Substance Abuse**

“Connections: The Key to Recovery”

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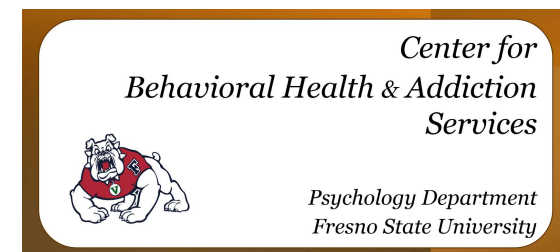
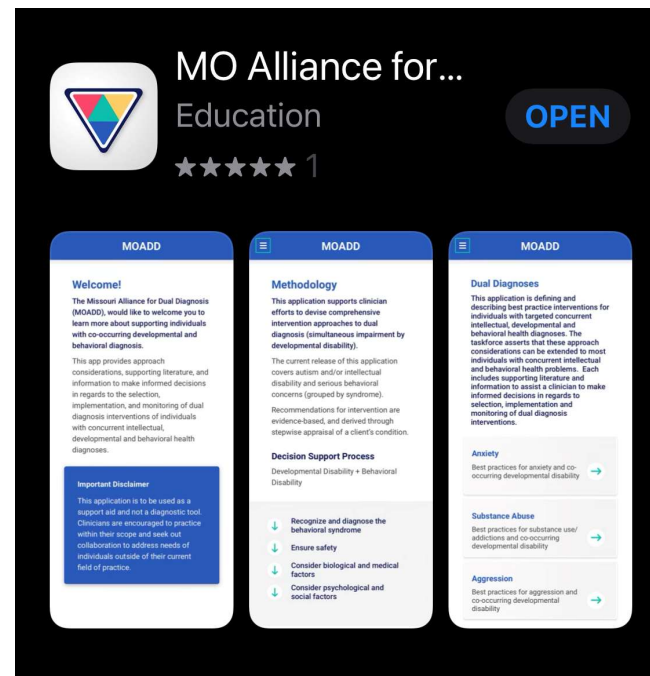
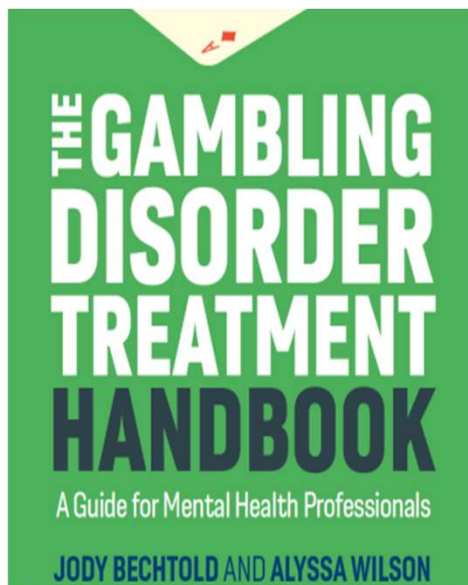
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Acknowledgements



COUNCIL ON COMPULSIVE GAMBLING
OF PENNSYLVANIA



Big THANK YOU

Christina Cook & her online community
of women impacted by gambling related
harms



Christina Cook - Founder and Advocate



Molly Ecrol, CCPG



COUNCIL ON COMPULSIVE GAMBLING
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Objectives

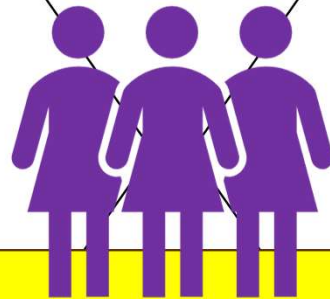
1. Describe differences in gambling prevalence rates between men and women (and inherent issues that come with this binary idea!)
2. Describe intersectionality
3. Identify key features of risk factors for women to develop problem gambling



**Some content may be sensitive
to those in recovery.**

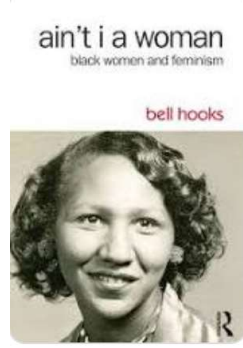
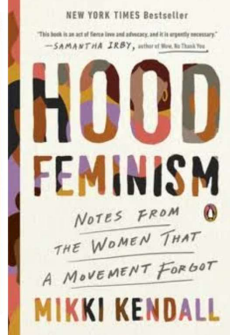
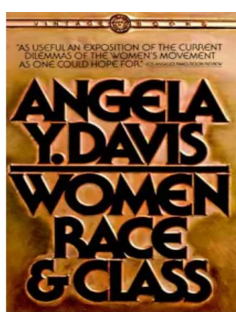
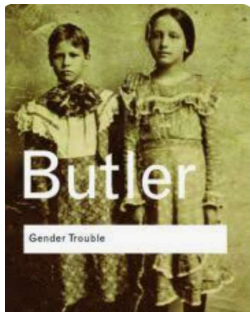
**Please take care of yourself and
do what you need throughout
this presentation.**

Sex



Gender

CONSTRUCT!

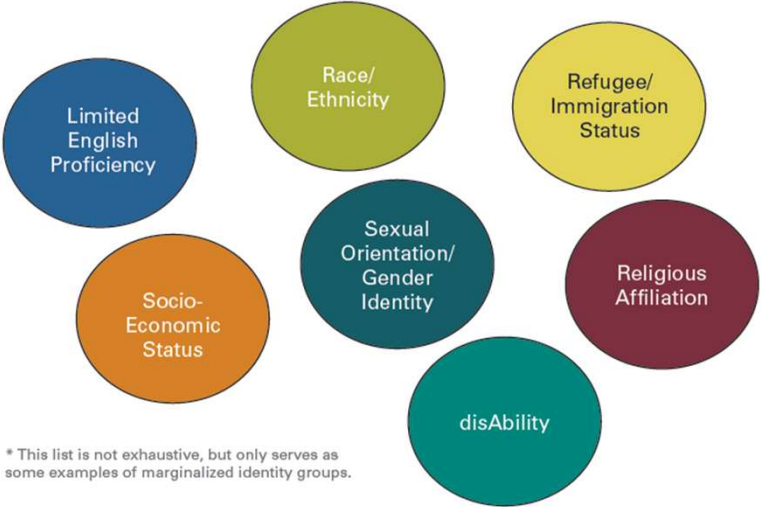


**Take a quick
conceptual walk...**

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Intersectionality

Who experiences the impact of intersectionality?
Individuals who identify as members of historically oppressed groups



* This list is not exhaustive, but only serves as some examples of marginalized identity groups.

What does intersectionality look like?
An individual who identifies as a member of multiple historically marginalized groups



Joey is a White youth with a learning disAbility who is eligible for free and reduced lunch services due to a family income below the poverty line.

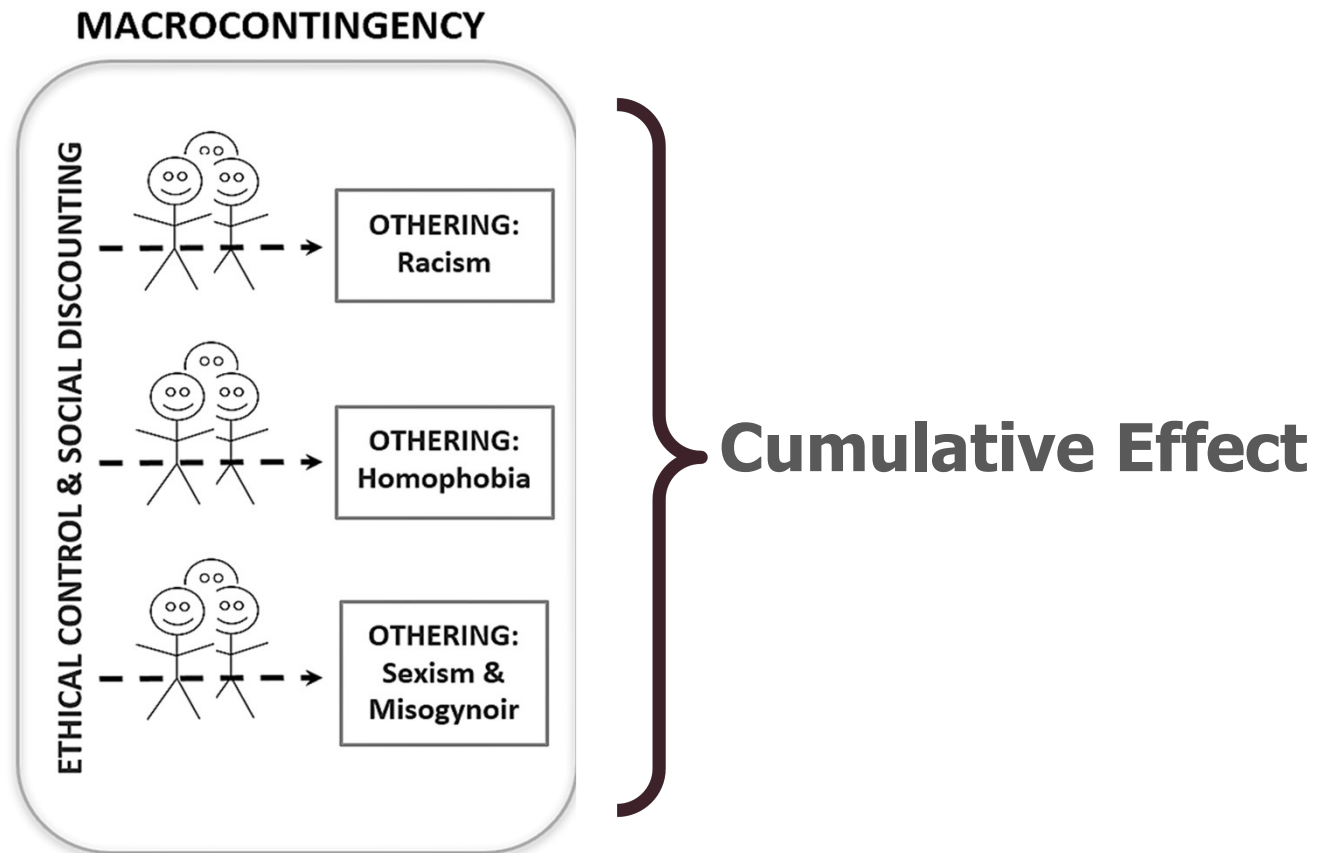
Ameera is a Muslim youth of refugee status who identifies as gay.



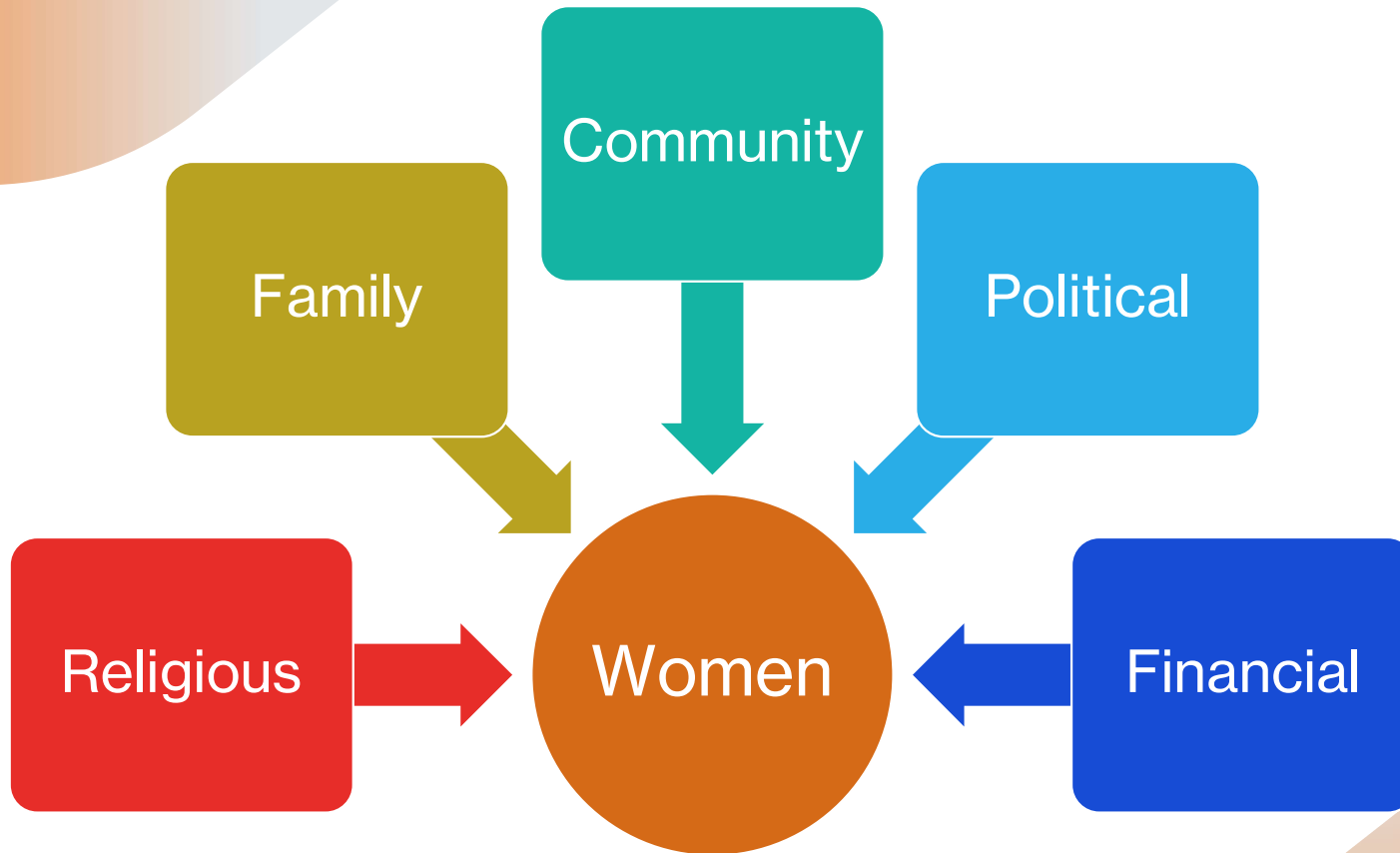
(NASP, 2017)

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Microaggressions and “Othering”

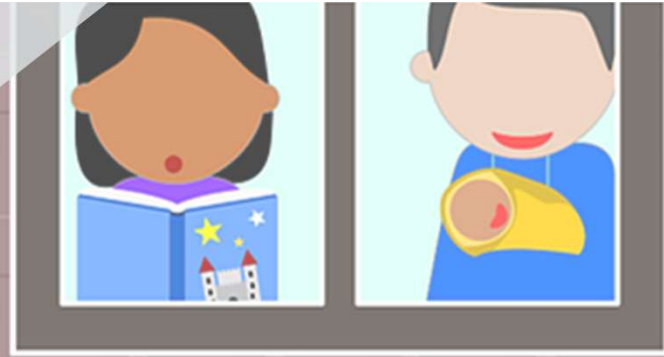


Danquah-Brobby (2022)



Sociocultural Influence

Family Roles and Dynamics



**Reflection 1:
How do YOU define
women?**

**How do you “other”
women?**





Dispelling Myths: Gambling Preferences



My dad's rock bottom came in December 1979, when he left the racetrack to find his car windows smashed by a loan shark.

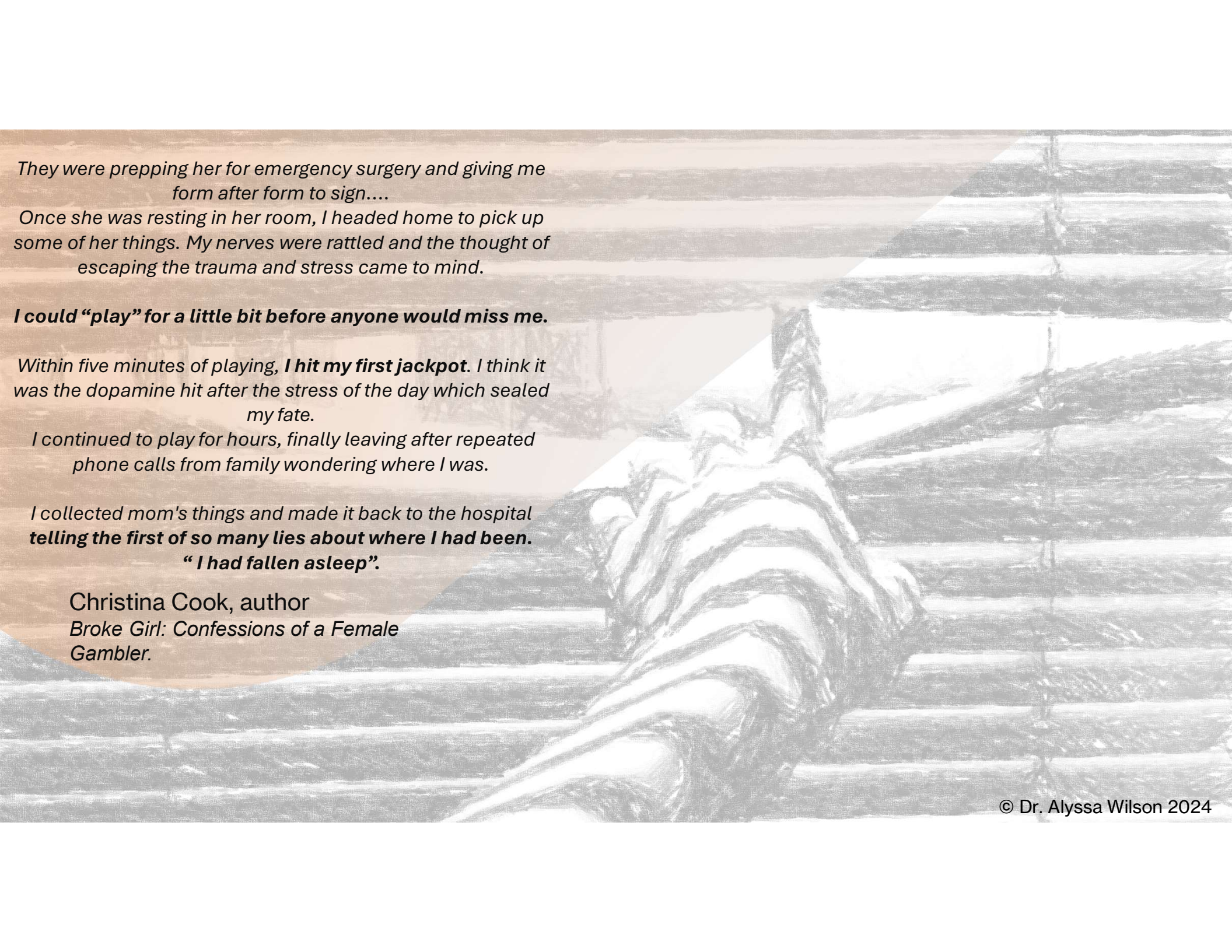
He returned home to my mom and threatened suicide that day – he was a police officer and had his service weapon in hand.

My mom, exhausted from years of his lying and broken promises of quitting, told him to “go ahead.”

Thankfully, he did not follow through on his threats and found Gamblers Anonymous instead. For the next thirty-nine years, he worked his recovery (half of which he spent paying off his gambling debts).

My dad passed away in 2018, and until his final days, still carried so much guilt about what he had put my mother through and the long-term impact it had on our family.

Molly Ercole, daughter



They were prepping her for emergency surgery and giving me form after form to sign....

Once she was resting in her room, I headed home to pick up some of her things. My nerves were rattled and the thought of escaping the trauma and stress came to mind.

I could “play” for a little bit before anyone would miss me.

*Within five minutes of playing, **I hit my first jackpot.** I think it was the dopamine hit after the stress of the day which sealed my fate.*

I continued to play for hours, finally leaving after repeated phone calls from family wondering where I was.

*I collected mom's things and made it back to the hospital **telling the first of so many lies about where I had been.***
“ I had fallen asleep”.

Christina Cook, author
Broke Girl: Confessions of a Female Gambler.



Myth: Women Don't Gamble*



~~Gina Wilson~~

In our society, I think when people say "alcoholic" or "gambler," the first image that comes to mind is a man. In fact, more so for gambling. We don't fit that preconceived notion of a what a compulsive gambler looks like. It's bad enough dealing with this horrible addiction, but to have to convince people we really have an addiction?

Etiological Overview

Frequency



Age of Onset

18-24yo

65+yo

Lara-Huallipe et al., 2022; Calado and Griffiths, 2016;
Karlsson and Håkansson, 2018; Slutske et al., 2015


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Gartner et al (2022) Journal of Behavioral Addictions



Myth Buster: Women TOTALLY Gamble!

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A man in a red shirt is shown from the chest up, covering his face with his hands in a gesture of distress or despair. The image is set against a dark background and is overlaid with a large, semi-transparent circle. A diagonal line, light blue on the left and light orange on the right, bisects the circle and the man's image. The text 'Myth: Men have higher levels of gambling severity than women' is positioned on the right side of the circle.

**Myth:
Men have higher levels
of gambling severity
than women**



~~Angela McManey~~

Personally I had a hard time convincing the people around me that it was a problem. I think some men (not all) view us as some sort of hormonal mess and that this wasn't an addiction it was just a symptom of that.

Myth Buster:



Moderator effect of sex in the clustering of treatment-seeking patients with gambling problems

Susana Jiménez-Murc
Bach · Teresa Mena-N
Isabel Baenas-Soto ·
González · José M. M

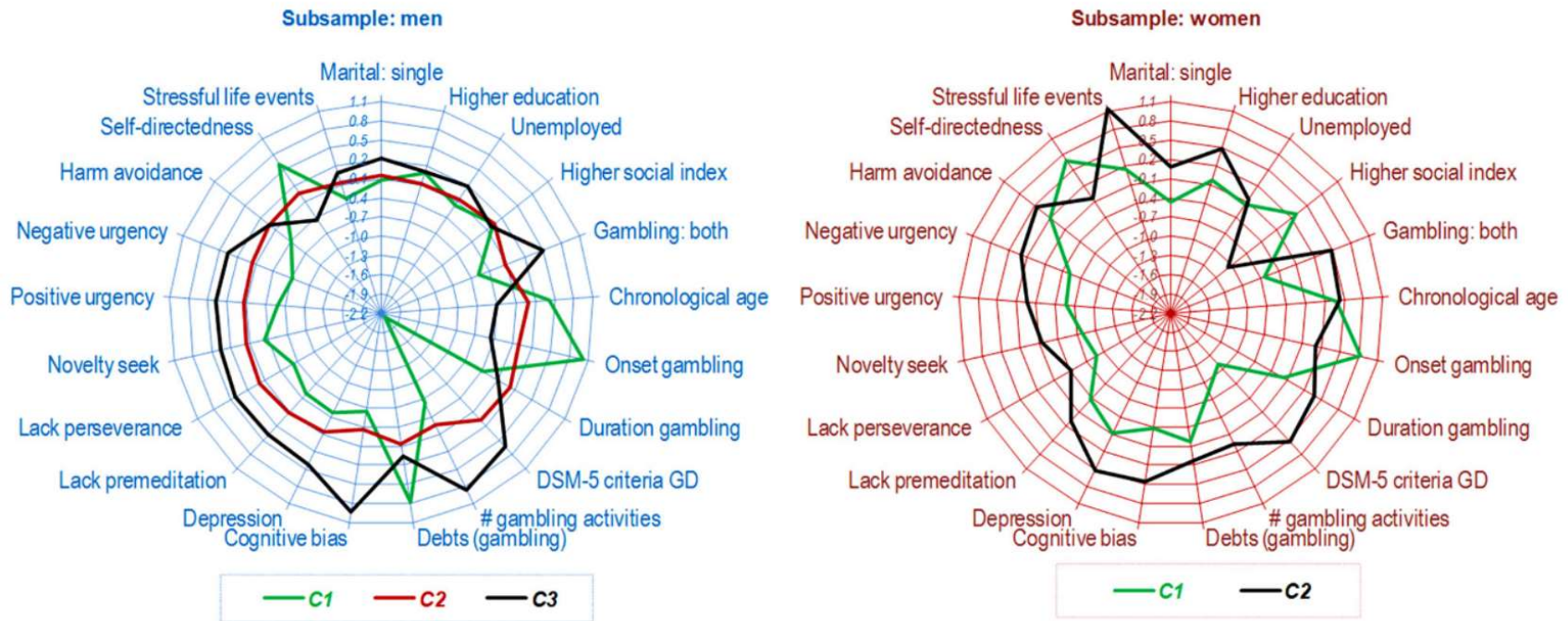


Fig. 2 Radar chart displaying the main differences (standardized mean plotted) between clusters (C). *GD* gambling disorder, *DSM-5* Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

Myth Buster: Mixed Research Outcomes

**Myth: Women ONLY
gamble to escape or
avoid, NEVER action
seeking**



Myth Buster: Mixed Research Outcomes

Escape/
Avoidance

Action
Seeking

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Grant, et al., 2012a, 2012b; Hing et al., 2016a, 2016b;
Mathieu et al., 2020; Moragas et al., 2015



Myth: Men report higher rates of gambling and co-occurring disorders

Myth Buster: Mixed Research Outcomes

- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Anxiety
- ✓ Psychiatric conditions
- ✓ ~~Substance use Disorders~~

Håkansson et al., 2018; Hartmann and Blaszczyński, 2018; Haw & Holdsworth, 2016; Sundqvist & Rosendahl, 2019; Ronzitti et al., 2016; Ronzitti, Soldini, et al., 2016; Sundqvist & Rosendahl, 2019; Tackett et al., 2017

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Myth: Women don't gamble online



Myth Buster: Mixed Results

70% of women who gamble use apps and websites

Gambling Commission, 2017; Håkansson et al., 2018; Håkansson & Widinghoff, 2020 © Dr. Alyssa Wilson 2024

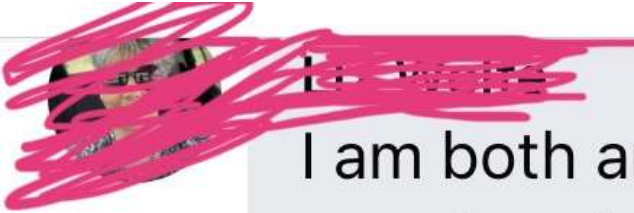


**Myth: Women don't
get into large debt
from gambling**



Myth Buster: Debt and Financial Loss

Hing & Breen, 2017; McCarthy et al., 2019

A red scribbled-out area in the top left corner of the page, partially obscuring a small image of a person's face.

I am both an alcoholic (clean and sober 31 years) and a compulsive gambler (bet free 2 years) - I have shared on both my Facebook posts and in this private group I am an alcoholic - I however have NOT shared on my facebook post that I am a compulsive gambler - for me I believe that I would be heavily judged and not trusted with finances. I only have told my closest friends of my gambling and they have been supportive but on a whole - I just feel waaayyy to vulnerable to share that with the outside world. It is truly a different stigma to me.

We Can Do It!

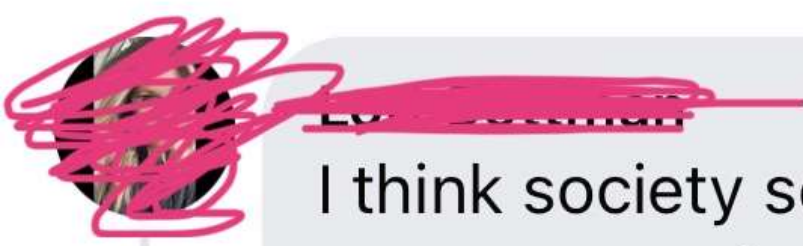


Myth: Women are resilient

We Can Do It!



**Myth Buster:
Women DON'T
WANT TO HAVE
TO BE resilient**

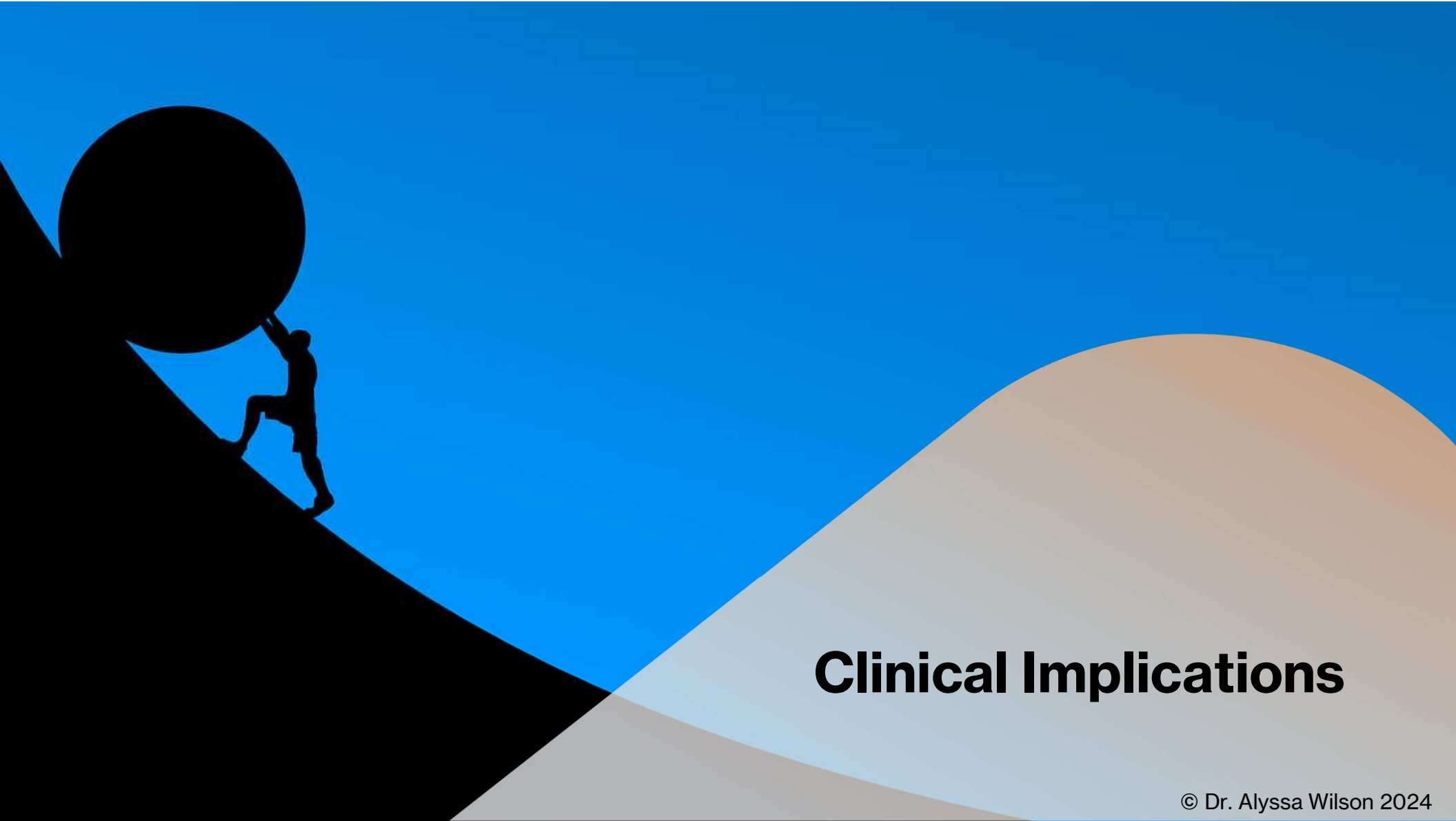


I think society sees women as needing to present a perfect persona - like we have it all together all the time. Men do not have that same expectation, so when we face similar struggles, women are often held to a higher standard. It's feels like a flaw of character or willpower, rather than an addiction, which is an equal opportunity affliction.

**Reflection 2:
How many of these myths
did YOU believe in?**

**Where did those beliefs
come from?**





Clinical Implications

Social Determinants of Health



Economic stability



Neighborhood and built environment



Social and community context



Health care and quality



Education access and quality

Social Determinants of Gambling

Family composition

Age of onset

Race/Ethnicity

Gender/Sexual Identity

Residence proximity to gambling
venue

Socioeconomic status

Gambling Activity



Clustering Treatment Outcomes in Women with Gambling Disorder

Milagros Lizbeth Lara-Huallipe¹ · Roser Granero^{2,3} ·
Fernando Fernández-Aranda^{1,3,4,5} · Mónica Gómez-Peña¹ · Laura Moragas¹ ·
Amparo del Pino-Gutierrez^{3,6} · Eduardo Valenciano-Mendoza¹ ·
Bernat Mora-Maltas¹ · Isabel Baenas^{1,3,4} · Mikel Etxandi¹ · José M. Menchón^{1,4,5,7} ·
Susana Jiménez-Murcia^{1,3,4,5}

CBT was implemented in this study as a time-limited technique across 16 weekly individual sessions lasting 90 min each. The main objective was to achieve full abstinence from all types of gambling. To achieve this purpose, different strategies were implemented to regulate the patients' negative emotions, to reduce arousal levels in the presence of any stimuli that trigger the urge to gamble, and to increase self-control of gambling. Throughout the process, women received feedback regarding the improvement of their self-efficacy and all efforts made to achieve recovery are reinforced

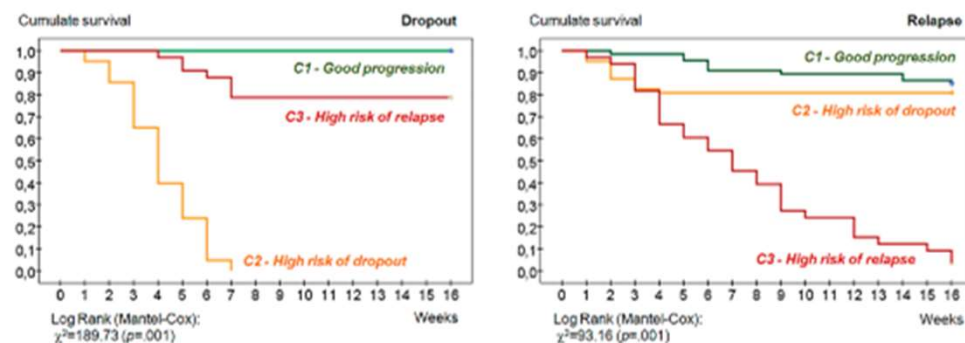


Fig. 2 Kaplan–Meier functions for the rate to dropout and relapse ($n = 163$)

Clustering Treatment Outcomes in Women with Gambling Disorder

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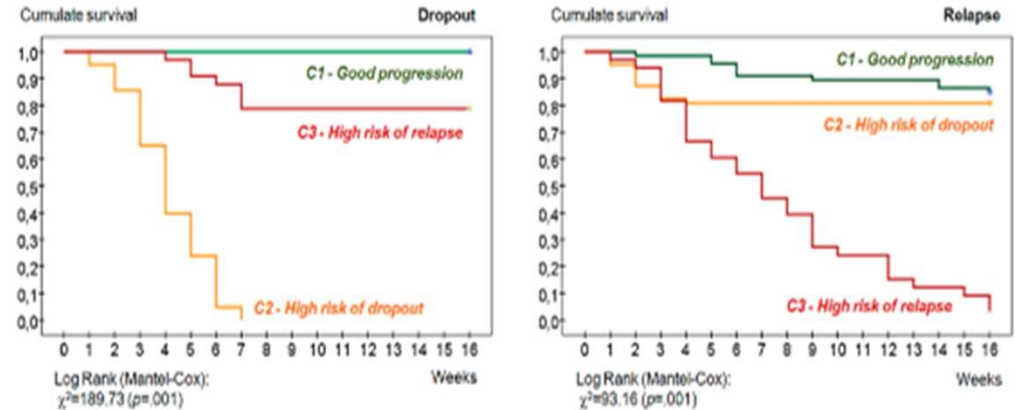


Fig. 2 Kaplan–Meier functions for the rate to dropout and relapse ($n = 163$)


Cluster 1:

- Low rates of dropout and relapse
- Married, high social status, employed, medium gambling severity, highest level of debts

Cluster 2:

- High risk of dropout (all dropped out of CBT), with moderate risk of relapse (19%)
- High proportion of unmarried without a stable partner, low social status, lowest mean criteria for GD, and medium levels for debts

Clustering Treatment Outcomes in Women with Gambling Disorder

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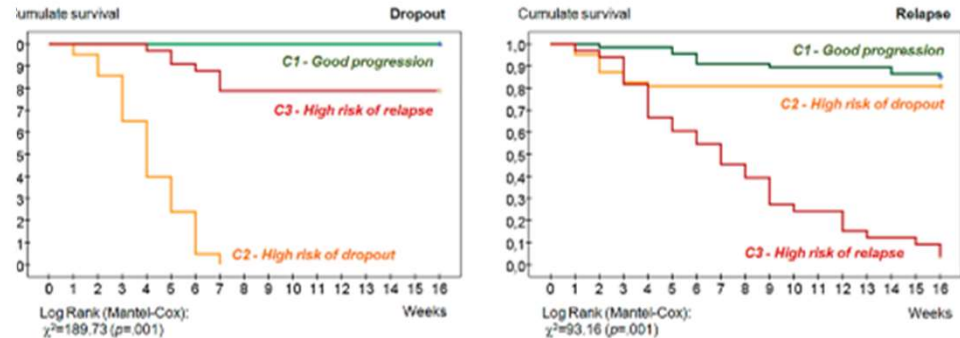


Fig. 2 Kaplan–Meier functions for the rate to dropout and relapse ($n = 163$)

Cluster 3:

- Highest risk of relapse
- Highest proportion of unmarried (single or divorced/separated), not actively working, highest severity for GD, lowest level of accumulated debts

Treatment Considerations



Given that, ALWAYS:



Ask about marital/relationship status, including quality



Ask about current and past debts, including amounts and loan type



Ask about employment



De-stigmatize relapse: TRACK RELAPSE



Adjust treatment approach and focus on GD severity and co-occurring considerations



Assessment Considerations

How often do you gamble?

For example, buy lottery tickets, go to the casino, play cards with friends?

(endorsing any gambling activity at all – ask next series of questions)

In the past 12 months:		
1. Have you tried to hide how much you have gambled from your family or friends?	Yes	No
2. Have you had to ask other people for money to help deal with financial problems that had been caused by gambling?	Yes	No
3. Have you ever felt restless, on edge or irritable when trying to stop or cut down on gambling?	Yes	No
If yes to any of these 3 questions, continue with the next 6 questions.		

GBIRT: Having the Conversation

In the past 12 months:

4. Have you tried to cut down or stop your gambling?	Yes	No
5. Have you increased your bet or how much you would spend, in order to feel the same kind of excitement as before?	Yes	No
6. Did you think about gambling even when you were not doing it? (Remembering past gambling experiences, or planning future gambling?)	Yes	No
7. Did you go to gamble when you were feeling down, stressed, angry or bored?	Yes	No
8. Did you ever try to win back the money that you had recently lost?	Yes	No
9. Has your gambling caused problems in your relationships or with work?	Yes	No
Total "YES" responses:		

GBIRT: Having the Conversation

PROBLEM GAMBLING SEVERITY INDEX (PGSI)

(Ferris, & Wynne, 2001)

This self-assessment is based on the Canadian Problem Gambling Index. It will give you a good idea of whether you need to take corrective action.

Thinking about the last 12 months...

1. Have you bet more than you could really afford to lose?
0 (never) 1 (sometimes) 2 (most of the time) 3 (almost always)
2. Still thinking about the last 12 month, have you needed to gamble with larger amounts of money to get the same feeling of excitement?
0 (never) 1 (sometimes) 2 (most of the time) 3 (almost always)
3. When you gambled, did you go back another day to try to win back the money you lost?
0 (never) 1 (sometimes) 2 (most of the time) 3 (almost always)
4. Have you borrowed money or sold anything to get money to gamble?
0 (never) 1 (sometimes) 2 (most of the time) 3 (almost always)
5. Have you felt that you might have a problem with gambling?
0 (never) 1 (sometimes) 2 (most of the time) 3 (almost always)
6. Has gambling caused you any health problems, including stress or anxiety?
0 (never) 1 (sometimes) 2 (most of the time) 3 (almost always)
7. Have people criticized your betting or told you that you had a gambling problem, regardless of whether or not you thought it was true?
0 (never) 1 (sometimes) 2 (most of the time) 3 (almost always)
8. Has your gambling caused any financial problems for you or your household?
0 (never) 1 (sometimes) 2 (most of the time) 3 (almost always)
9. Have you felt guilty about the way you gamble or what happens when you gamble?
0 (never) 1 (sometimes) 2 (most of the time) 3 (almost always)

TOTAL SCORE

Total your score. The higher your score, the greater the risk that your gambling is a problem.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| score of 0 | no problem with gambling |
| score of 1 or 4 | low level of problems with few or no identified negative consequences |
| score of 3 to 7 | moderate level of problems leading to some negative consequences |
| score of 8 or more | problem gambling with negative consequences and a possible loss of control |

The PGSI (Ferris & Wynne, 2001) was developed as an alternative to the SOGS (Holtgraves, 2009).

This 9-item questionnaire is used to measure the severity of gambling problems. Cutoff scores determine four subgroups of gamblers: non-problem (0), low risk (1-2), moderate risk (3-7), and problem gambler (8+).

The PGSI has been shown to have good test-retest and internal reliability (Ferris & Wynne, 2001), and has been shown to be positively correlated with frequency of gambling (Holtgraves, 2009).



A Functional Analytic Approach to Understanding Disordered Gambling

Mark R. Dixon¹ · Alyssa N. Wilson² · Jordan Belisle³ · James B. Schreiber⁴

Gambling Functional Assessment Revised

Gambling Functional Assessment II

Answer the questions below using the provided scale. Write the corresponding number next to each question.

Never	Almost Never	Seldom	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

1. I tend to gamble most frequently when there is nothing else going on or I have nothing better to do. _____
2. I often gamble after fighting with my spouse or significant other. _____
3. I enjoy the social aspects of gambling such as being with my friends or being around other people who are having a good time and cheering me on. _____
4. If I have a hard day at work, I am likely to gamble. _____
5. When I gamble, I like to accumulate points at a casino so they will offer me incentives and bonuses. _____
6. I often gamble when I feel stressed or anxious. _____
7. I feel more alive when I am gambling than when I am doing other types of activities. _____
8. I really enjoy the complementary perks that come along with gambling, like free points, drinks, comp coupons, etc. _____
9. I gamble to get a break from work or other difficult tasks. _____
10. After I gamble, I often find comfort from other people to help me deal with my losses. _____

SCORING:

Write the number for each question in the following columns. Sum all items, and divide each by the total number of items, for the total score. Circle the column with the highest total score.

SENSORY	ESCAPE	ATTENTION	TANGIBLE
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	5. _____
7. _____	4. _____	10. _____	8. _____
	6. _____		
	9. _____		




**'I thought gambling affects males.
I shouldn't be an 18-year-old girl
with an addiction.'**

Addressing Guilt & Shame



Next Steps: Advancing Clinical Effectiveness

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**Golden Rule:
ALWAYS screen
for suicidality**

**7. New Rule:
STOP comparing
BINARY GENDERS!**





6. New Rule: **HAVE** the **CONVERSATION**

(Bechold & Wilson, 2021)

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~~Barry Hoover~~

I think we get judged harsher. It's assumed we're terrible mothers (care-givers) where I don't hear the same thing of men for men it seems to just focus on strictly the gambling problem. People want to help men, women get judged.

5. New Rule: Person-Centered Approaches

Include client/family in assessment and treatment decisions, progress, and planning



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The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of overlapping organic shapes in shades of blue, pink, purple, orange, and grey. It features various patterns including white wavy lines, a grid of small white dots, a grid of small white pluses, and a circular pattern of small black dashes. The overall aesthetic is modern and artistic.

4. New Rule: Lean into Cultural Humility, Acknowledgement, and Responsivity

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- Our labor in **creating culturally responsive evidence-based practice** then comes to create what Barrera and Kramer (2009) called a “third way,” **an outcome that is a process of taking seemingly divergent and sometimes contentious positions to create a new, provisional approach**. That is, in the case of evidence-based practice and culture, **it means crafting a new way that harmonizes the family cultural values and contingencies, the child’s immediate and long-term growth and happiness, the research evidence, and the sources of knowledge from other areas, such as sociology, anthropology, public health, and education** (Miller et al., 2019). We can do this, in part, by perspective taking and making, a set of skills that is intertwined with humility, ongoing learning, and care

(Alai-Rosales et al 2022, p 9)




**3. New Rule:
Incorporate family systems
and cultural importance of
gambling, mental health, etc.
(Bechold & Wilson, 2021)**



**2. New Rule:
Look for misogynoir and
sexism ALL AROUND you!**

**1. New Rule:
Lean into your OWN
biases
(women, race, class,
ableism, nationalism...)**



The background features a series of overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes, primarily octagons and squares, in various colors including orange, blue, green, and red. These shapes are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and reflection, with some shapes appearing to be stacked or layered. The overall aesthetic is modern and abstract.

**Reflection 3:
How will you use these
rules in your work?**

**How will you interact with
women **DIFFERENTLY**
when you return?**



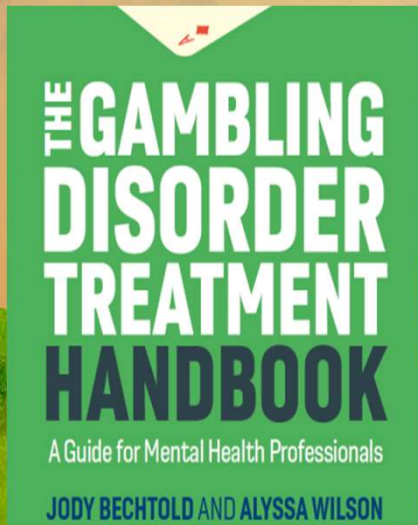
Discussion

What is ONE thing you will do DIFFERENTLY when you return to work?

Women and Problem Gambling: Intersectional Complexities and Opportunities for Success

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Questions?

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