

Invisible Addicts

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Objectives

- Identify common symptoms of addictions of aging persons.
- Differentiate symptoms of addictions with common medical or health conditions for aging persons.
- Identify the influence of media and organizations that target the aging population in our communities
- Assess the addiction using evidenced-based tools.
- Implement conversations around the topic of addictions with aging adults when appropriate.

What does an addict look like?

- What are we accustomed to looking for?



What does an aging addict look like?

- The same as we just described?
- Homeless
- Brown bag
- Lost and confused
- Talking to themselves



What does an older addict look like?

- Grandma's cold medicine
- A little Brandy at tea time
- Medicine
- One in the cooking pot one drink for the cook
- A glass of wine or whiskey to help them sleep

Invisible Addicts

- Many prescriptions (Doctor prescribed)
- Only one or two drinks with medications
- It is normal to be confused (Older persons get confused)
- Isolation / No family
- No missed work
- Sleeping in okay (They are retired)

What we often see medically

- Cognitive decline
- Self-care deficits
- Missing medical appointments and treatments
- Unstable / poor controlled hypertension
- Recurrent accidents, Injuries or falls
- Frequent ER Visits
- Unexpected delirium during hospitalization
- **AAFP siting**

Aging and Alcohol

- 40% of Adults 65 and older drink
- Increase Sensitivity to Alcohol
- Increased Health problems
- Bad Interactions with Medications

Drinking Guidelines for Older Persons

For 65 + and not in combination with medications

- 3 drinks on a given day (BINGE)
- 7 drinks in a week

With certain prescription medications, a person would have to abstain from drinking

(NIH)

Seniors and Addictions

- People over 65 account for almost 30% of prescriptions
- Over-the-counter medications/ vitamins
- Physicians and bias
- Insufficient knowledge
- Limited research data
- Quick health care visits



Causes

- Loneliness
- Grief due to death of loved ones and friends
- Boredom
- Chronic Pain
- Financial Hardship
- Reduced Cognitive Functioning

What you might notice

- Solitary Secretive drinking
- Ritual Drinking before and after dinner just before bed
- Loss of interest in hobbies
- Drinking with prescription drugs
- Immediate or frequent use of tranquilizers
- Chronic unsupported health complaints
- Memory loss confusion
- Falls

Statistics

2.5 Million Older Adults with drug or alcohol addictions

(NIH,2016)

Iowa

- 1000 + age 50 and older admitted for treatment
- Alcohol substance of choice 75%
- Marijuana 25%
- Cocaine 23% (SAMH, 2012)

The Misconceptions

- Dad's too old to change. He has always consumed alcoholic beverages.
- Drinking is the only thing they seem to enjoy
- Doctor says wine in the evening is good for the heart
- Uncle Joe says a small drink relieves the pain

The Conversation

- Location
- Respect
- Nonjudgmental
- Do say you care or are concerned
- Do state the facts of what you know
- Do try to educate about the effects
- Do be aware of Grief and Loss and Abandonment

- What do you do for fun?
- How are your friends doing?

Evidence Based Tools

- CAGE Questionnaire – consists of 4 direct questions that start the conversation
- MAST – Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test
- DMQ-R-5 / DMQ – R-SF
- ADAI – Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute Library
<http://lib.adai.washington.edu/instruments/>

More Evidence Based Tools

- SBIRT – Screening Brief Intervention Referral & Treatment
 - Screening
 - Brief intervention
 - Referral to treatment
- AUDIT – Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (multi-cultural validated tool)

Gambling

- As of September 2015, there are 19 licensed casinos in Iowa
- 2,400 lottery outlets
- 2,800 charitable gaming licenses (IDPH 2015)

It is everywhere:

- Language: “I bet you a dime to a dollar”
- Games: “Winner takes all”
- Media glamorizes gambling and drinking

When do you know it is a problem?

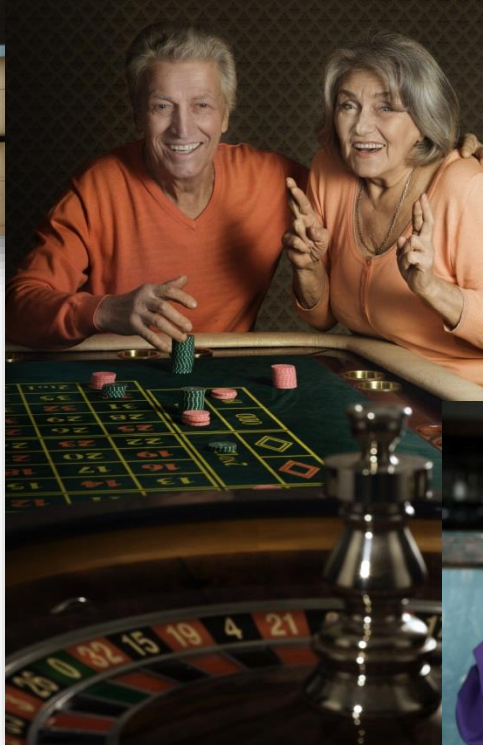
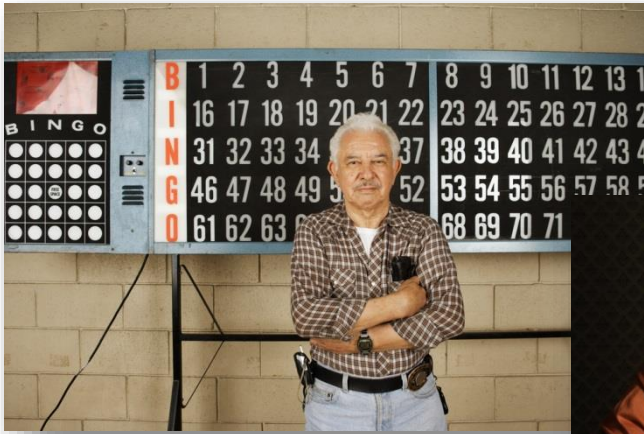
- Spend more money to get the excitement going
- Grumpy or irritable when cutting back
- Says will stop but cannot (loss of control)
- Obsessive talk about gambling experiences
- Gambles, then feels guilty
- Lies to cover up money loss or activities
- Destroys relationships
- Borrows money to survive

(Rigler,2000)

Community & Media (Enabling)

- The aging are old enough and “have earned the right to enjoy life”
- As long as they do not drink and drive it is okay
- Busses transport them. It is social.
- “Modern Day Care”

(Surface,2009)



Community & Media (Enabling)

- Some casinos started dating services for seniors
- You get extra perks for being over 60
- Snow birds do not have to lose their perks
- Free steak dinner or all-you-can eat buffets
- “It’s your dream...anything can happen!”

VIP even if you lose. You still might win.

- Member Benefits VIP Club
- Use your eligible lotto and non-winning scratch tickets to enter special Play It Again[®] promotions. You'll have the chance to win cash or great merchandise prizes!
- Receive a coupon each month for a FREE PLAY in one of our lotto games.
- Get a chance to enter special member-only contests for prizes.
- Keep up to date on special offers and insider news available exclusively to you as a club member with the VIP Connection e-newsletter.
- Give lottery tickets as gifts with free downloadable and printable gift envelopes.
- Dress up your desktop with custom-made Iowa Lottery wallpaper.
- Express your opinion through club member polls and surveys.
- Did you know you can sign up to get the winning lotto numbers delivered to your inbox each day?

https://www.ialotteryvip.com/Pages/AboutUs/AboutUs_main.aspx



The Attraction of Gambling

- Socialization
- Perks (free rooms, upgrades)
- Alcohol / Gambling / Drugs
- Excitement
- Hope
- Food



The Attraction of Casinos

- They support the community
- You can volunteer self-exclusion
- One casino contributed \$15 million to the Iowa Gambling Treatment fund (now part of the state General Fund)
- Support Schools

**You are helping your community and state.
Gambling is legal.**

Iowa's Aging Gambling Statistics

- Males and females are equally at risk for gambling addictions
- 46% at risk ages 45 and up
- Over 70% were employed
- 27% at risk had less than 25K for income
- 26% at risk had 49K or less for income
- 53% at risk were single and 47% were partnered
- The majority live in rural or small town

(Park & Losch 2016)

Persons at risk said . . .

- 26% wanted to decrease time and money
- 13% wanted to cut back on time
- 18% wanted to cut back on money
- 14% wanted to stop betting or wagering altogether
- 8% of lowans who gambled paid bills late

(Park & Losch 2016)

Significant?

- 1 in 5 have suffered concussions
- 6 in 10 have experienced traumatic events
- 28% use tobacco
- 58% use alcohol
- 1 in 4 become intoxicated with alcohol

(Park & Losch 2016)

When is gambling a problem?

Gambling should be identified as a problem when it disrupts, damages, or limits a person's life. Signs of problem gambling include.... spending more money on gambling than intended; feeling bad, sad, or guilty about gambling; not having enough money for food, rent, or bills; being unable to account for blocks of time; experiencing social withdrawal; and experiencing anxiety or depression.

(Social Work Today)

Invisibility

- Older adults may try to hide or deny a gambling problem
- They may feel hopeless or ashamed about the situation
- They may be unaware that help is available
- Less contact with friends and family, gambling-related problems may go unnoticed.
- Generational addictions are immoral and lack of will power

(Social Work Today)

The Conversation

Location

Respect

Nonjudgmental

- Do say you care or are concerned
- Do state the facts of what you know
- Do try to educate about the effects
- Do be aware that grief and loss often are a part of gambling

- What do you do for fun?
- Do you ever play the lottery or BINGO?

Screening Tools

<http://www.npgaw.org/tools/screeningtools.asp>

- Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBGS)
- NORC Diagnostic Screen for Gambling Problems – Self Administered (NODS-SA)

Summary

- Aging Adults are the invisible addicts
- Are at higher risks
- Can benefit from treatment
- Often have Grief, loss and Abandonment challenges
- Have the conversation
- Use the tools

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Questions

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Iowa Department on

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