

# Problem Gambling Counselor Certification

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[www.igccb.org](http://www.igccb.org)

# Background



- National Gambling Counselor Certification Board founded 1984 largely through the efforts of Joanna Franklin
- Legalized gambling expanding throughout the United States
- Efforts to define the field and assure competency – 1980 Pathological Gambling 1<sup>st</sup> included in Diagnostic and Statistical Manual III of the American Psychiatric Association
- Few treatment programs and few counselors with focus and expertise in problem gambling treatment. Appreciation that treatment of pathological gambling a distinct specialty.

# Background

- Create specialty certification comparable to that used in field of Substance Use Disorders
- Allow for those with both professional licensure and certification (social workers, psychologists, substance use disorder counselors, etc) and those with lived experience in recovery (peer counselors) to be eligible for problem gambling certification.
- Development over the years:
  - Increased levels and types of certifications
  - Increased baseline education level
  - Developed state and International partnerships and certifications

# Background

- National Gambling Counselor Certification Board
- American Compulsive Gambling Counselor Certification Board
- American Academy of Health Care Professionals in the Addictive Disorders Certified Addiction Specialist (alcohol, drug, eating disorders, sexual addiction, gambling addiction)
- Gambling Counselor Certification through state certification or licensing boards (11 identified in 2009)
- International Gambling Counselor Certification Board = Merger National Gambling Counselor Certification Board and American Compulsive Gambling Certification Board - 2016

# Gambling Counselor Symposium

Ft. Mitchell, KY Sept. 2008

- Responses from 14 state and national certification boards
- Gambling Specific Training
  - # Hours Required – most common 30 hours (30-72)
  - Critical Domains
    - Assessment
    - Finances
    - Treatment approaches/methodologies
    - Case Management
    - Ethics
    - Special Populations

# Gambling Counselor Symposium

Ft. Mitchell, KY Sept. 2008

- Formal Education (HS- BA/BS)
  - Some require BA degree or equivalent
  - None required MA/MS degree
  - Peers – Recovering individual with HS diploma
- Clinical Supervision (0 – 2000)
  - Nearly universal agreement that clinical supervision key component
  - Clinical supervisor for certification purposes must have problem gambling experience
  - Remote supervision acceptable to gain access to experience problem gambling supervisor

# Gambling Counselor Symposium

Ft. Mitchell, KY Sept. 2008

- Examination (11/13 required)
  - Examination alone not sufficient evidence of competency
  - Examination should be problem gambling specific (not complete consensus)
  - Measure of knowledge and basic clinical competency
- Continuing Education
  - Agreement 6 – 10 hours per year
  - Traditional trainings/workshops as well as alternatives such as research and publication
  - Ongoing clinical supervision in addition

# Gambling Counselor Symposium

Ft. Mitchell, KY Sept. 2008

- Best Practices/Critical Pieces
  - Appropriate training and clinical supervision with access to both
  - Working relationships among Boards and interested groups
  - Exam that is totally focused on gambling treatment developed by gambling treatment experts
  - Establishment of minimum training and supervision
  - National Exam
  - Requirement of a qualifying credential
  - No cost for renewal/application
  - State government/agency support of process
  - Ensure that certification is serving and protecting the public – not serving the profession



# IGCCB Goals

- To assure that Gambling Counselors nationally possess high standards of training, competence, skills and knowledge.
- To develop and operate a system of evaluation, screening, certification and a national registry for gambling counselors nationally and internationally.
- To assure that this certification and registry process is available to all interested applicants.
- To establish and endorse a professional code of ethics.
- To maintain coordination and liaison with state officials, professional associations and educational institutions to keep current developments in the field of gambling treatment, and to periodically review, modify, update and improve current standards of competence, skills and knowledge.
- To establish a central registry of certified gambling counselors and maintain all necessary records of applicants.
- Certification and registry of gambling counselors internationally is a voluntary process conceived by professionals

# Issues to be Considered

- Provide for realistic and attainable entry into the field while
- Providing baseline standards to assure competency at all levels and for a broad range of needs
- Utilize evidence based standards for training and exam
- Keep costs reasonable
- Make sure adequate and accessible supervision is available

# Current Status

- Number of Certifications since 1984 = 1278
- Current Number of Certified Counselors = 873
  - ICGC-I 298
  - ICCGC-II 478
  - ICOGS 11
  - Clergy 6
  - BACC 62

# Credentials

- Internationally Certified Gambling Counselor – I
  - Bachelors degree or equivalent in the behavioral health field such as license or certification in a recognized behavioral health field (i.e. psychology, addictions, clinical social work)
  - 30 hours of gambling specific training and education
  - 100\* hours clinical experience treating gamblers and/or family members in an approved setting
  - A minimum number of 4 case consultation sessions with a International Gambling Counselor Board Approved Clinical Consultant (BACC)
  - Passing the IGCCB Problem Gambling Counselor Examination
  - Work and competency verification forms completed by
    - 2 co-workers
    - 1 onsite supervisor
    - BACC

# Credentials

- Internationally Certified Gambling Counselor – II
  - Bachelors degree or equivalent in the behavioral health field such as license or certification in a recognized behavioral health field (i.e. psychology, addictions, clinical social work)
  - 60 hours of gambling specific training and education
  - 2000\* hours clinical experience treating gamblers and/or family members in an approved setting
  - A minimum number of 24 case consultation sessions with a International Gambling Counselor Board Approved Clinical Consultant (BACC)
  - Passing the IGCCB Gambling Counselor Examination
  - Work and competency verification forms completed by
    - 2 co-workers
    - 1 onsite supervisor
    - BACC

# Credentials

- Internationally Certified Co-Occurring Gambling Specialist
  - Bachelors degree or equivalent in the behavioral health field such as license or certification in a recognized behavioral health field (i.e. psychology, addictions, clinical social work)
  - 30 hours of gambling specific training and education
  - 100\* hours clinical experience addressing the issue of problem gambling among clients with behavioral health disorders
  - A minimum number of 4 case consultation sessions with a International Gambling Counselor Board Approved Clinical Consultant (BACC)
  - Work and competency verification forms completed by
    - 2 co-workers
    - 1 onsite supervisor
    - BACC

# Credentials

- Board Approved Clinical Consultant
  - 1. Have obtained a graduate degree or equivalent (advanced certification in addictions or mental health including their recognition at a supervisors level by a state or national certification organization), from the human service/behavioral health field from an accredited institution of higher education.
  - 2. Maintain both an ICGC-II (International Gambling Counselor Certification) and appropriate state licensure or certification as a qualified health professional or equivalent that allows for independent practice.
  - 3. Demonstrated experience of at least three years as a supervisor in a clinical setting.
  - 4. Completion of at least 6 hours of course work, class, in-service education or seminar on “how to do clinical supervision”.

# Credentials

- Board Approved Clinical Consultant
  - 5. Have expertise and experience in the content area of disordered gambling as demonstrated by both of the following:
    - a. Minimum of 4,000 hours of direct contact clinical work with problem gamblers and/or persons affected by problem gambling. This may include 2000 hours required for ICGC-II and in addition at least one year of clinical work with gamblers and/or concerned others post attainment of ICGC-II.
    - b. Written analysis of the supervision case example provided by IGCCB that demonstrates knowledge of case conceptualization, clinical supervision theory, current treatment approaches to problem gambling, transference, countertransference and other therapeutic relationship issues, any relevant ethical issues and cultural issues.
  - 6. Two letters of reference, one of which is from a current BACC, that address supervisory and clinical competence in the field of problem gambling treatment.
  - 7. IGCCB reserves the right to require an oral interview to further assess an applicant's qualifications.



# Credentials

- Problem Gambling Clergy/Lay Ministry Certification
- This program's emphasis targets (1) early intervention through prevention education, (2) awareness/outreach, (3) informed, supportive consultation to accompany referral care, (4) spiritual care and (5) recovery support
- Requirements:
  - Documented completion of 24 hours of IGCCB Clergy/Lay Minister Certification Training requirements
  - Adherence to a Professional Code of Ethics
  - Completion of recommended readings
  - Attendance to at least one Open Gamblers Anonymous Meeting and on Open Gam-Anon Meeting including written reflections on both experiences
  - Successful completion of an approved class project/paper
  - Passing an oral examination based on the Core Training and recommended readings
  - Annual Accountability Attestation
  - Completion of 18 hours of gambling specific continuing education every 3 years

# Re-certification

- Counselors must be re-certified every three years through evidence of 60 hours of approved non-repetitive continuing education, 30 of these hours must be gambling specific approved hours. The remaining 30 hours (nonspecific) can be obtained through a variety of methods including: college courses, conferences, seminars, training programs, etc. in the behavioral health field. All of the continuing education and training requirements **must be new and non-repetitive**, and must also be related to counselor competency areas as listed in the appropriate section.

# Competency Requirements

- Communication
- The gambling counselor shall be able to communicate in a variety of situations to assure that the needs of individuals experiencing or in recovery from disordered or problem gambling, their families and/or significant others' needs are met and that continuity of care is maintained through case collaboration with other health care providers. Applicants will be able to demonstrate the following:
  - Speak, read and write with proficiency, to establish communication readily, and to maintain records and written reports.
  - Knowledge of gambling, problem gambling and gambling disorder: treatment, rehabilitation/recovery, understanding the history, prevalence and social impact of gambling in the United States, as well as the significant literature in the field.
  - Understanding the history and theoretical basis for treatment of disordered/problem gambling, as well as familiarity with current research in the field.
  - The effect of problem/disordered gambling on the gambler personally, interpersonally, financially, as well as management of the disorder, and the recovery process.

# Competency Requirements

- Communication
  - Understanding other addictions and an ability to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of addiction, treatment, relapse and the recovery process.
  - Knowledge of sociocultural values and attitude systems related to: finances; disordered/problem gambling and spiritual concerns.
  - Knowledge of effective medical, psychological social service and spiritual management for individuals experiencing disordered/problem gambling, as well as the recovery process.
  - Knowledge of sociocultural values and effective medical, psychological, social service and spiritual management for the family of the individuals experiencing disordered/problem gambling
  - Knowledge of the effect of disordered/problem gambling on occupational and legal concerns.

# Competency Requirements

- Assessment and Evaluation :To insure appropriate services to meet the needs of clients, the ability to evaluate and assess the needs and problem stage of the client in therapy is a requirement.
  - Knowledge of human growth and development.
  - Knowledge of family dynamics and interaction.
  - Knowledge of pathological and problem gambling
  - Knowledge of stages of change theory with problem and disordered gamblers and families
  - Knowledge of motivational enhancement
  - Knowledge of the signs and symptoms of substance use, abuse and addiction.
  - Analytical skills
  - Case history methodology
  - Ability to recognize appropriate treatment modalities
  - Evaluation of client's progress
  - Goal setting, contracting and problem solving

# Competency Requirements

- Treatment Planning: The gambling counselor shall be able to actively involve clients in the development of the individualized treatment plan.
  - Share information and evaluation results with client and interpret material to those involved.
  - Inform clients of their legal rights regarding acceptance of and participation in a treatment or recovery program.
  - Assist clients in making arrangements to pay for counseling or treatment.
  - Inform clients of their rights and privileges regarding confidentiality

# Competency Requirements

- Information and Referrals: Clients have a multitude of needs and issues that often require a multidisciplinary approach. Appropriate agencies must be recognized and utilized by the counselor in meeting those needs through an understanding of the principles of information and referral.
  - Outreach skills: ability to choose appropriate methods of recruiting clients and mobilizing community resources.
  - Knowledge of referral sources most appropriate for client needs.
  - Skill in interpreting referral sources and their functions to client in relationship to their needs.
  - Ability to follow up and provide advocacy to insure responsiveness of service providers.
  - Ability to evaluate outcome of treatment strategy and determine degree of effectiveness of treatment.

# Competency Requirements

Counseling and Treatment: The gambling counselor shall have knowledge of and possess skills of various counseling techniques. Applicants shall be able to demonstrate their knowledge of and ability to utilize counseling and treatment skills to include:

- Ability to establish a genuine therapeutic relationship with the client.
- Knowledge and ability to use counseling techniques to educate, elicit feelings, facilitate self-understanding, and motivate the client.
- Knowledge of and ability to locate and develop basic informational support systems (materials, consultation resources etc.).
- Skill in individual and/or group counseling methods including techniques of working with spouses and families.
- Ability to coordinate a client's continuum of treatment and or services.
- Knowledge of and ability to participate in various inpatient and outpatient treatment processes; knowledge of their rationale, relation to other methods, and their limitations.
- Understand the steps, traditions and philosophy of Gamblers Anonymous, its relation to various treatments, and the programs of Gam-Anon and Gam-A-Teen, as well as other Self-Help Groups i.e., A.A., N.A. etc.
- Knowledge of long range rehabilitative processes, including awareness of needs for medical care, post treatment crisis, relapse, and problems of readjustment.



# Competency Requirements

- Counseling Activities
- The following describes the tasks for which the gambling counselor is certified. They are identified here for the understanding of employers and learning institutions. Any clinical position in a treatment program may include gambling counseling as a major role. A gambling counselor may also be a supervisor or administrator if they are qualified in such roles. The NCPG does not certify these positions.
- 1. Intake
- 2. Develop treatment plans
- 3. Facilitate logistics of treatment
- 4. Individual, family and group counseling
- 5. Continuous client evaluation
- 6. Referral
- 7. Crisis intervention
- 8. Case management
- 9. Client follow-up contact
- 10. Work with families and significant others

# Competency Requirements

- Counseling Activities
- 11. Seek and use collateral support (employer, friends etc.)
- 12. Record keeping and reports
- 13. Coordination of treatment plan
- 14. Outreach
- 15. Case consultation
- 16. Identify treatment gaps and overlaps
- 17. Assist in program development
- 18. Identify and coordinate community resources
- 19. Education and efforts towards prevention
- 20. Training and education on pathological and problem gambling
- 21. Program evaluation and consultation
- 22. Assessment

# Examination

The International Certification Examination for Gambling Counselors is a computer-based examination composed of a maximum of 200 multiple-choice, objective questions with a total testing time of four (4) hours.

- The questions for the examination are obtained from individuals with expertise in gambling counseling and are reviewed for construction, accuracy, and appropriateness by the IGCCB.
- 4. The IGCCB, with the advice and assistance of the Professional Testing Corporation, prepares the examination.
- 5. The International Certification Examination for Gambling Counselors will be weighted in approximately the following manner:
  - I. Basic Knowledge of Problem and Disordered Gambling .....20%
  - II. Gambling Counseling Practice ..... 40%
  - III. Special Issues in Gambling Treatment ..... 30%
  - IV. Professional Issues ..... 10%

# Exam Content Outline

## I. BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF PROBLEM AND PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING

### A. Scope of Legalized Gambling

#### 1. Prevalence of Gambling Problems

- a. Among Adults
- b. Among Youth
- c. Among Treatment Populations

#### 2. Definition of Disordered Gambling

#### 3. Operationalized Definition of Problem Gambling

#### 4. Gambling Disorder

- a. Terminology
- b. Progression of the Disorder
- c. Withdrawal Symptoms from Gambling

# Exam Content Outline

## I. BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF PROBLEM AND PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING

### B. Client Evaluations

1. Screening
2. Intake
3. Assessment
4. Diagnostic Criteria

# Exam Content Outline

## II. GAMBLING COUNSELING PRACTICE

### A. Examination of Attitudes/Feelings

1. Real Meaning of Money
2. Deception and Self-Deception
3. Fantasy and Dissociation
4. Spirituality
5. Transference and Countertransference
6. Irrational Thinking
7. Cultural Beliefs and Attitudes

# Exam Content Outline

## II. GAMBLING COUNSELING PRACTICE

### B. Considerations of Alternative Solutions

1. Harm Reduction
2. Natural Recovery
3. Recovery Oriented Systems of Care

# Exam Content Outline

## II. GAMBLING COUNSELING PRACTICE

### C. Skills

1. Individual Counseling
2. Group Counseling
3. Family/Significant Others
4. Interventions
5. Treatment Planning
6. Financial Management Issues
  - a. Restitution
  - b. Budget Preparation
  - c. Pressure Relief Group
7. Legal Issues
8. Multi-cultural Counseling



# Exam Content Outline

## II. GAMBLING COUNSELING PRACTICE

### D. Relationship to Substance Abuse and Mental Health

1. Integration of problem gambling into substance use disorder and mental health treatment
2. Impact of gambling on recovery from substance use and mental health disorders
3. Impact of substance use and mental health disorders on problem gambling treatment and recovery

# Exam Content Outline

## II. GAMBLING COUNSELING PRACTICE

### E. Client Care

1. Case Management
2. Crisis Management
  - a. Identification
  - b. Resolution
3. Referral Resources
4. Reports and Record Keeping
5. Consultation
6. Levels of Care
7. Peer Counseling and Recovery Support Systems

# Exam Content Outline

## II. GAMBLING COUNSELING PRACTICE

### F. Education

1. Orientation to treatment and recovery
2. Gambling Information
3. Co-Occurring Disorders
  - a. Mental
  - b. Emotional
  - c. Psychological
  - d. Recreation/Leisure

# Exam Content Outline

## II. GAMBLING COUNSELING PRACTICE

### F. Education

#### 4. Self-Help Programs

- a. Gamblers Anonymous
- b. Gam-Anon
- c. Other 12-Step Resources for Gambling Clients

#### 5. Research

- a. Neurobiology, medication and psychopharmacology
- b. Treatment

### G. Continuing Care

# Exam Content Outline

## III. SPECIAL ISSUES IN GAMBLING TREATMENT

- A. Adolescence
- B. Older Adults
- C. Female Gamblers
- D. Cultural Minorities
- E. Relapse and Relapse Prevention
- F. Suicide
  - G. Dual/Multiple Diagnosis
- H. Trauma and Survivors Issues
- I. Chronic Illness
- J. Criminal Justice
- K. Military

# Exam Content Outline

## IV. PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

### A. Law and Regulation

#### 1. Client Rights

a. Confidentiality

b. Informed Consent

c. Reporting

1) Child/Other Abuse

2) Duty to Warn

#### 2. Discrimination

#### 3. Continuous Quality Improvement

#### 4. Managed Care

a. Utilization Review

b. Outcome Studies

# Exam Content Outline

## IV. PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

### B. Ethics

1. Non-Discrimination
2. Counselor Responsibility
3. Competence
4. Legal Standards
5. Media Statements
6. Publication Credit
7. Client Welfare
8. Confidentiality
9. Client Responsibility
10. Interprofessional Relationships
11. Remuneration
12. Societal Advocacy

# Exam Content Outline

## IV. PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

### C. Supervision

1. Administrative
2. Clinical
3. Gambling Specific Consultation



# References

- The International Gambling Counselor Certification Board has prepared a suggested reference list to assist in preparing for the International Certification Examination for Gambling Counselors. These references contain journals and textbooks which include information of significance to gambling counseling practice. Inclusion of certain journals and textbooks on this list does not constitute an endorsement by the IGCCB of specific professional literature which, if used, would guarantee candidates' successful passing of the certification examination.

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# Reciprocity and Collaborative Agreements

- Use of the IGCCB gambling counselor examination
- IGCCB administration of state or agency problem gambling counselor certification.
- Development of joint state/agency and IGCCB certification.

# International Partnerships

- Iceland
- Singapore
- Japan

# Future Directions and Challenges

- Educator/Preventionist Certification
- Peer Support Specialist Gambling Disorder Specialty Certificate
- Exam study guide and practice exam
- Increase pool of exam items

# Writing Exam and Study Guide Items

- Multiple choice
- Only one correct answer (i.e. not all of the above, etc)
- Items you would expect the average problem gambling counselor to know
- Put most of the words in the question stem
- Keep the answer choices the same length
- Make the “wrong” choices plausible
- Keep the number of options constant
- Avoid double negatives
- Make questions challenging not tricky



# Thank You



Anyone can slay a dragon, he told me,  
but try waking up every morning and  
loving the world all over again.



That's what takes a real hero.