

About the course

For myself, before I attended the course, I knew very little about gambling because I neither have knowledge about gambling nor engage into gambling. What's more, I did believe that most of the activities of gambling are win-lose situation between gamblers and the winner must be good at a series of rational calculation. In my point of view, if you want to win at any one gambling e.g. Mark Six, horse racing, football, you have to understand and manipulate all its "Winning chance", which is driven by mass of data analysis. As I do not enjoy the win vs lost situation, I am not interested in gambling at all.

However, the myth was unveil since the lesson of "Myth of gambling", I was quite shock about it. I now understand most of us are cheated by the gamble industries. Moreover, I realize a winner is not the ultimate winner of the gambling games but the dealers. I also realized the real facets of gambling which including what the nature is, how it operates and how it can be existence for centuries.

Nowadays, the prevalence of addictive behavior is relatively common than ever, substance abuse like alcohol, drug, or engages into an activity like shopping, gambling, internet etc. are around us. Drug and gambling are masked by party drug or an entertainment so it is very easy for people to be trapped. More important is the whole gambling industries involved structure, sophisticated calculation, "perfect" programme design, which involved both gamblers' psychological and physical dependence. The elements of rewarding and reinforcing within gambling game make people addicted to into it unconsciously.

Society / Public pay less attention to gambling problem. Gambling in Chinese society exists for centuries and it is estimated that ecological factors contributed much to gambling activities. By observation, gambling addiction is regarded as personal issue rather than social issue. Comparing with the number between those engaging with social gambling and problem gambling, the problem gamblers are in smaller proportion. Furthermore, those addicted behavior are always be attributed to weak self-control, so policy makers would pay less attention to it. Besides, gambling addiction which is always co-morbid with suicide, substance use, mood, anxiety disorder or personality disorder, kleptomania or domestic violence etc., Public may shift their focus to these problems rather than the root of gambling problem.

About the fieldwork practicum

From the participation in gambler group at the Industrial Evangelistic, members bravely and honestly shared their dishonorable days with pathological gambling behavior. They could articulate their physical and psychological state while addicted to gambling. I have more understanding towards problem gamblers. The group dynamic was active, members widely made use of confrontation, challenging to freshman in order to test their motivation and readiness to quit gamble which these skills are seldom use in counselling. Old members were also concerned the risk of relapse of other new ones so they always ask the question within the group “Is it the worst situation in your life?” “How much debt are you having now?” “Have you cleared it?” and “What makes you want to change at this moment?” etc.

In family member group, you can really felt the pain, traumatic of the family which gamble brings to the family. All gamblers’ family members experienced “feel-like” endless emotional suffering days which started with high level of stress, anxiety or emotional overwhelming, especially when facing threatening or disturbance from debtors. Gambling totally destroys trust, integrity between family member, and it really hurts in family relationship.

The applying of CBT is the most common therapeutic model to behavioral addiction and it’s effectively focuses on identifying patterns of abuse and making lifestyle changes to healthier behaviors. On the other hand, religious therapy plays a crucial role to life rebuild, build up new set of values, rebuild interpersonal relationship between gambler & their family member, build up life goal etc. I can visualize more ex-gamblers and their family members rebuild their life through the power of religious combined with CBT.

Conclusion

As gambling in HK is legal, I do believe that the policy makers do understand the benefit of gambling, however gambling is a double-edged sword, the huge amount of revenue derived by gambling may benefit charity or support the expenses of social welfare. Nevertheless, government should not neglect its harm to an individual, a family and the whole society, and thus it is essential for government to pay much more effort to implement responsible gaming measures to minimize the harm.

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