

European Association for the Study of Gambling

Nova Gorica 1- 4 July 2008

Parallel Session "Experiences in Treatment and Prevention of excessive gambling"

Marzia Lydia Spagnolo

Sidecar: a short residential treatment for pathological gamblers

F. Devietti, P. Jarre, G. Le Foche, B. Mattiazzi, S. Monge,
E. Pellegrini, R. Recchia, F. Salvi

Dipartimento "Patologia delle dipendenze" ASL To 3 Piemonte
Servizio GAP - Gioco d'Azzardo Patologico

Where is Sidecar ?



Sidecar is a pilot project started in Italy in **June 2006**.

Actually this program is offered twice a year. We have completed **5 editions** and in total we have treated **54 gamblers** (39 males and 15 females) coming mainly from the north of Italy.

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In 1972 the Brecksville Unit of the Cleveland Veterans Administration Medical Center **began the first inpatient treatment program for pathological gambling in the United States.**

The 30-day, highly structured gambling treatment program aims for abstinence from gambling, reduction of the urge to gamble, and restoration of a maximum level of social functioning.

The authors report the results of a preliminary outcome study of 60 former patients

..the authors believe that their initial results support the contention that pathological gambling is a treatable disorder

The Gordon House Association (GHA) is the UK's only specialist and dedicated residential facility for problem gamblers.

This paper describes the GHA therapeutic programme which is centred round a nine-month period of residency.

Progression through the programme is described by overviewing each of the phases.

These are initial assessment and **five distinct phases** comprising **'coping with today'** (Phase One), **'coping with yesterday'** (Phase Two), **coping with change** (Phase Three), **coping with tomorrow** (Phase Four), and **'coping on my own'** (Phase Five).

These phases are themselves underpinned within the GHA core therapeutic approach which is also described

Grande Prairie

Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission

January 4, 2005

AADAC opens residential treatment program for problem gamblers *Grande Prairie...*

The Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission is opening **a residential treatment program for problem gamblers** at the AADAC Northern Addictions Centre (NAC) in Grande Prairie.

Starting January 3, 2005, the *NAC Gambling Treatment Program* has four spaces available for adults experiencing problems as a result of their gambling activities.

Clients will live at the Northern Addictions Centre during the **two-week program**.

Living in a treatment centre, away from their normal environment, helps clients recognize the reasons for their addictive behaviour, draw upon their personal strengths and make positive changes in their lives

Intensive 14 Day Compulsive Gambling Treatment

Intensive gambling addiction treatment program combines a fourteen day module of a highly intensive residential treatment experience with planned aftercare in your home area and planned weekend campus experiences.

Should it be determined that you are eligible for this fast track program, you will have to be prepared to put in full and intensely busy days. Your day will begin at 8:30 AM and you can expect to be involved in therapeutic activities till 10:00 PM every evening. In addition to meeting with the Psychiatrist individually, you may expect a minimum of one individual session per day with either your primary and/or gambling counselor. You will be attending groups on **gambling addiction**, life skills and other therapeutic activities. Every hour of every day will be devoted to introducing you to important skills to contribute to your recovery.

Upon completion of the inpatient phase of the program, you will be assigned an outpatient therapist and develop a continuing care plan that continue your treatment while allowing you to pursue your work and other responsibilities.

As part of your ongoing **addiction treatment you will be expected to attend 12 Step meeting in the GA** fellowship, complete written assignments to be submitted either to your new therapist and/or C.A.R.E. staff. Naturally you will be invited to attend Family Weekends, Reunion Weekends and Vacation Seminars.



La fase della comunità residenziale o semi-residenziale

Il programma ha la **durata di 21 giorni** più due incontri di verifica entro l'anno successivo al periodo residenziale

Il programma prevede un **intervento intensivo di due settimane estremamente strutturato e in ambito residenziale.**

A questa fase segue un incontro di 3 giornate dopo 3 mesi dal trattamento intensivo di richiamo per l'approfondimento di problematiche residue o sopravvenute, di 2 giornate di trattamento intensivo di mantenimento a distanza di ulteriori 3 mesi ed in fine di una giornata di verifica di fine programma.

Habitudes de jeu dans la population générale

C
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Absence de jeu

Jeu récréatif

Jeu à Problème (~2%)*

Jeu pathologique sans besoin d'aide per (~0,8%)

Jeu pat que bes d'a (~0

Short, medium and long term residential (TC) program

Risk limitation program (peer education for adolescents)

Outpatient treatment program

“Sidecar”

“Lucignolo”

Thérapies

Approches motivationnelles

“Quando il gioco si fa duro... i duri smettono di giocare”

Réduction du risque et du dommage

“Un bel gioco dura poco”

Promotion de la santé



Our gamblers services offer:

- Educational support
- Individual and Family psychotherapy
- Financial counseling
- Group for gamblers
- Group for family members
- Therapeutic community (medium and long term) – Lucignolo & Co.
- **Sidecar** Short-term therapeutic community

Why Sidecar ?

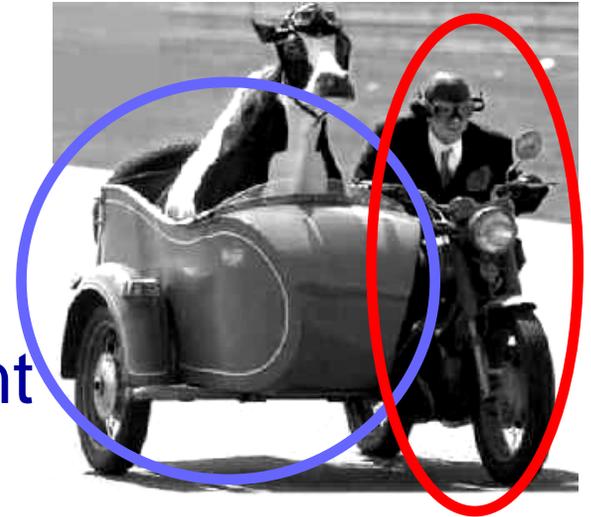
“Sidecar” was chosen as name of this project because...

If motorcycle was a therapeutic treatment...

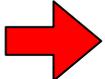
Sidecar -Short residential treatment is something more...

... together with the therapeutic treatment it makes the therapy process more effective

... it can be used at different stages of treatment because it helps to reach various goals...



Characteristics of **Sidecar**

- Residential program designed and built **specifically for gamblers**
- **Short term**  the majority of gamblers has difficulty accepting a long residential treatment. Our program lasts a total of **9 days** (5 working days+2 weekends)
- **Multi professional treatment team**
 including 4 psychologists, 3 community support workers, 1 medical doctor, 1 financial consultant



Sidecar offers a structured environment with a home-like atmosphere for 12 male and female gamblers.

The house is surrounded by woods, at 5 Km from the first town (away from any possibility of gambling!)



Philosophy of **Sidecar**

Sidecar has a symbolic setting, using the metaphore of voyage.. The group of patients starts an experience all together.

Meaning of this “symbolic voyage” is to put distance from ones own usual enviornment and to have an introspective experience about it. *Autobiographical* like a way for one to make experiences of own story, styles of living, type of behavior and relationships.

Group is central in every activity. People in group not only have the chance to compare their life stories with one another but also to experience their own relationship's style (f.e. how they react to conflicts or listening skills)

Goals

- To assess a symptom free situation
- To increase awareness about addiction and the cognitive mechanisms that contribute to the symptoms
- To increase motivation to change and self-efficacy
- To mobilize therapeutic, family, and social networks
- To develop new behavior and strategies to deal with boredom and free time
- To buttress treatment's compliance and define new therapeutic indications for future treatment
- To prevent relapses

But also..

To experience pleasure and learn **different ways to enjoy themselves (a football match, an excursion or just being with other people..)**

**The second day we go hiking.. And when we arrive at the top of the mountain they always say :
“Gorgeous!!”.**

**..it is something like a
*psychological insight.***

**They realize the time
wasted in gambling
and they will remember
this day more than
others.**



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...always together

Autobiography
group

Social network
group

Reinforce
of motivation
group

Educational group
about consequences
of gambling

health

financial

job

relationship

Football match

Cooking

Excursion

Yoga

1° edition



now

The role of alcohol

It was admitted because we wanted to observe use of alcohol

It isn't admitted

The role of cigarettes

They can smoke only during break and the number of cigarettes it isn't limited

(they smoke more than usually)

The role of phone mobile

They put it in a common box to use sometimes

They can't use during the first 3 days and for rest of time only on evening to contact family if they want

...at the end..for gamblers

On Saturday

They realize **2 videos**

- benefits and risks of gambling
- how to ask for help and to prevent relapse

On Sunday

The **money-box of positive message** to use only in case of risk to relapse

...at the end... for Sidecar's team

Our goal for the future is to organize an evaluation system to estimate the effectiveness of Sidecar about:

- **Retention rates in basic treatment (“the motorcycle”...)**
- **Length and strength of abstinence**
- **Rates of admission at clinical indication identified during Sidecar**

...so, that a game will be only a game!

Goodbye!!



lyspa@libero.it