Recovery in Gamblers Anonymous

Peter Ferentzy, Wayne Skinner, Paul Antze

Abstract

This article was written to provide an overview of recovery in Gamblers Anonymous (GA). How GA’s approach reflects the distinctive needs of compulsive gamblers is a central theme. GA is a mutual aid organization modeled upon Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), though differing in some ways from that organization. One notable feature of GA is its emphasis on patience in the recovery process, reflected even in its approach to the 12 Steps, which are “worked” at a slow pace for this reason. Another feature that distinguishes GA is a seemingly more rigorous approach to avoiding potential triggers, notably gambling establishments. Whereas AA leaves it up to the individual to decide whether or not it is safe to enter establishments where alcohol is served, GA’s official stand on such questions is uncompromising: members should not enter, or even go near, gambling establishments. Reasons for these differences are discussed.

Keywords

addiction; gambling; Gamblers Anonymous; mutual aid

Full Text:

HTML

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.4309/igi.2006.17.6

A compulsive gambler who participated in Gamblers Anonymous program shared his recovery in hopes to help others affected by this addiction. Sean was an above average student in high school. He played sports, volunteered at the local soup kitchen on holidays and had a high school sweetheart that he married soon after graduating. Five years after graduating college he already had two kids and a beautiful home. He was living the American dream. Everything was going perfect in life. Then one day the local news broad cast the grand opening of a gambling establishment. The news reporter hailed it as a big boost for the local economy.