5-Step Method of counselling for family & whanau members affected by someone else’s gambling, alcohol or drug use

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Problem Gambling Foundation of NZ
PGF He Kiwi team
Delivering gambling counselling & public health services to NZ
Awesome Auckland
He Kiwi team

Working together to reduce gambling harm with the sleeping rough community @ Auckland City Mission

As part of Gambling Harm Awareness Week

Clockwise from bottom left: Narelle, Nita, Tony, Gerhart, Bonnie, Katie.
Absent: Amanda Gilmour, Cleone Guy, Aung Ko Maung.
Beyond an Addictions paradigm
Outline for presentation

• Description of 5-step counselling method and rationale
• Who is it for? Who developed it?
• My experiences to date with small sample of affected family members (AFMs)
  • Early findings
  • Comparison scores for AFMS affected by alcohol and drug harm in NZ
• Successes
• Challenges
• Next steps
Who developed 5-Step counselling?
- Experience of AFM or any person affected by a person’s harmful gambling, AOD issues relatively neglected within research literature
- Led to lack of comprehensive assessment tools and well formulated interventions for AFMs
- Lack of readily available information about how AFMs affected
- Currently, help services have not found effective consistent messaging to market to AFMs
Aim of 5-Step

- To develop evidence based intervention and assessment tools for AFMs
- To test assumptions from previous research
- SSCS model suggests coping *may* play moderator role in relationship between AFMs stress and symptoms (strain)
- However, findings mixed (Orford, Copello)

What it does do

**Normalises their experience, reduces isolation and stress**
What is 5 – Step counselling method?

- Structured, short term counselling approach
- For anyone affected by someone else's gambling, AOD
- Evidence based intervention: theoretical model developed by researchers:
  - *Stress – strain – coping – social support (SSCS)*
- Includes a workbook, based on SSCS model
I took up the challenge of 5-Step

- Part of NZ framework *Supporting Parents Healthy Children*
- Part of menu of interventions that supports family members that are evidence based
- **Family members need support**
  - Systemic assessment and wellbeing of whole system
  - Can be overlooked by practitioner or seen as part of the problem rather than solution
- **Practice based evidence**
  - Highly stressful experience for whanau/family
  - High rates of physiological arousal, mental & emotional strain, behavioural changes
    - Poor sleep, hard to relax, constant worry and guilt that not doing enough
  - Suicidal ideation in 12 months prior assessment (isolation, hopelessness, exhaustion)
  - Focus often on person experiencing harm, not noticing they need support, care and attention
The 5 steps

- **STEP 1:** Describe their experiences of living with a relative (colleague or friend) with a gambling problem
  - Family Member Questionnaire

- **STEP 2:** Provide useful information

- **STEP 3:** Explore options for coping
  - Assertive; engaged emotional, tolerant inactive; withdrawal

- **STEP 4:** Explore social support

- **STEP 5:** Summary and planning for additional support
  - Gambler becomes engaged in service; Couple, family or individual counselling; facilitation to another service

Copello, Templeton, Krishnan, Orford, Velleman 2000, 2010; George & Bowden-Jones 2015, Velleman et al 2011

Orford, Cousins, Smith, Bowden-Jones 2017
**Family Member Questionnaire**

**Snapshot of a range of problems**

- Completed at step 1, step 5 and 3 months follow up
  - Each person has 3 scores
- Based on *Stress-strain-coping-support* model
- Questions about each of those areas
  - Questions developed based on interviews with AFMs
- Therapeutic and assessment function
  - Raises awareness of range of issues & guides sessions
  - Normalises & acknowledges AFMs situation and leads to reduction of stress and isolation
**FMQ sample questions “Last three months..”**

### To your knowledge, have any of the following happened in the last 3 months, as a result of your relative’s/whanaunga drinking/drug use/gambling? Please tick one answer to each question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or Twice</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Have the family’s and whānau finances been affected?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does your relative’s/whanaunga drinking/drug use/gambling get in the way of your social life?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### In the last 3 months, how frequently have you experienced each of the following symptoms? Please tick one answer to each question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Worrying</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Being irritable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Had thoughts that you cannot push out of your mind</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

### With respect to your relative’s/whanaunga alcohol/drug use/gambling, in the last 3 months have you

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Once or Twice</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. Started an argument with him/her about his/her drinking/drug use/gambling?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Got moody or emotional with him/her?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Watched his/her every move or checked up on him/her or kept a close eye on him/her?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>
Scoring for FMQ – total family burden score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale / sub-scale</th>
<th>Score Before intervention</th>
<th>Score After intervention</th>
<th>Score 3 mth After intervention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL Impact (sum of Q1-6) ↓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Worrying behaviour (sum of Q1-3) ↓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Active disturbance (sum of Q4-6) ↓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Symptoms</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL Symptoms (sum of Q7-12) ↓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychological symptoms (sum of Q7-9) ↓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical symptoms (sum of Q10-12) ↓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Coping</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Engaged coping emotional (sum of Q13-15) ↓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Engaged coping assertive (sum of Q16-18) ↓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tolerant inactive coping (sum of Q19-21) ↓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Withdrawal coping (sum of Q22-24) ↑</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Support</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpful informal support (sum of Q25-27) ↑</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpful formal support (sum of Q28-30) ↑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhelpful informal support (sum of Q31-33) ↓</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL FAMILY BURDEN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum the 4 shaded boxes above ↓</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Demographic data N = 11

9 people were living with the person experiencing gambling harm
Initial data – AFMs affected by another person’s gambling in NZ context

- Total family burden scores, level of stress and strain reduced over the counselling and at follow up
Client snapshot: Stress Up, Strain down

- Although stress levels up as arguments and conflict with extended family, siding with person with gambling misuse, not feeling believed.
- Strain has gone down, coping better, feeling stronger.
- Not worrying about what others think.
Stress and strain reducing over 5 steps for clients

![Bar chart showing FMQ Stress & Strain scores at Step 1 & Step 5]
Average reduction in scores
Comparison between AFMs affected by gambling and AOD in NZ
Client feedback via email

• What have you noticed has improved since you started 5-step?

“I feel more confident about talking to the person I am supporting if I have concerns or want to check in”  
55 years, NZ European female

“I feel relaxed about the situation, before 5-step I felt worried, now I have the insights that the programme delivers and I am able to think calmly and rationally”  
Mother of adult son with gambling harm

“I have improved my mind and body”  
39 years, NZ born Vietnamese ex-husband
Feedback

• What have you noticed has improved since you started 5-step?
  “I have better defined boundaries, feel able to accept others for what they think of me without taking on board their comments and feeling hurt” 46 years, NZ European female, ex partner

If you had to pick one thing to say about 5-Step, what would it be and why?
“although tough at times to go back and explore painful relationships that I have left behind, I realise that I am stronger for doing so”

“feel less affected/impacted by the lies and much calmer in myself”
46 years, female, NZ European ex partner
Successes

More support & choice, less stress, happier families

- Client feedback positive
- Preliminary results suggest AFMs experience poor health & burden similar to those affected by AOD AFM.
- Reduction in total family burden score at step 5 and follow up
  - Coping better, accessing social support when gambler is relapsing
- 80% AFMs completed 5-step programme of counselling
- Preliminary evidence that positive changes for AFM can be assisted by providing relevant form of help in their own right which includes a focus on options for coping
- AFMs stay longer in service and liked having plan /structure
Challenges

- Referral to 5-step
- **Agency commitment** – Posters, advertising to attract AFMs; ongoing staff training
- Need **dedicated practitioners /referral network**
- Getting people in the door: Readily accessible information – *specific programme for AFMS and what its about, regardless of whether gambler gets help*
- Information available at all points of entry to service @ first contact
- Need to commit to 5 steps (five sessions); AFM may not want to attend without gambler
- 1 AFM no consent to sessions audio taped or data entry international database (no identifying information)
- 1 AFM did not continue with counselling; decided coping better after Step 1 completed
Further research

- Needed to understand with greater precision what it is that AFMs find most helpful and how that functions to help them cope and improve their health and wellbeing.

- In parallel there is need to study the way service providing organisations can better recognise existence of AFMs and their need for support and assistance.
Next steps?
How to become a 5-Step practitioner

• Organisation endorsement
• In NZ, fits in with the Supporting Parents Health Children guidelines
  • Supporting people to be well supported parents
• Complete 5-step training with Matua Raki & Abacus in NZ & accredited 5-step practitioners
• Complete competency based assessment by assessors who are members of AFINet–UK (Orford, Templeton, Velleman et al)

• [email]
  [email]
Contact Us

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Questions?