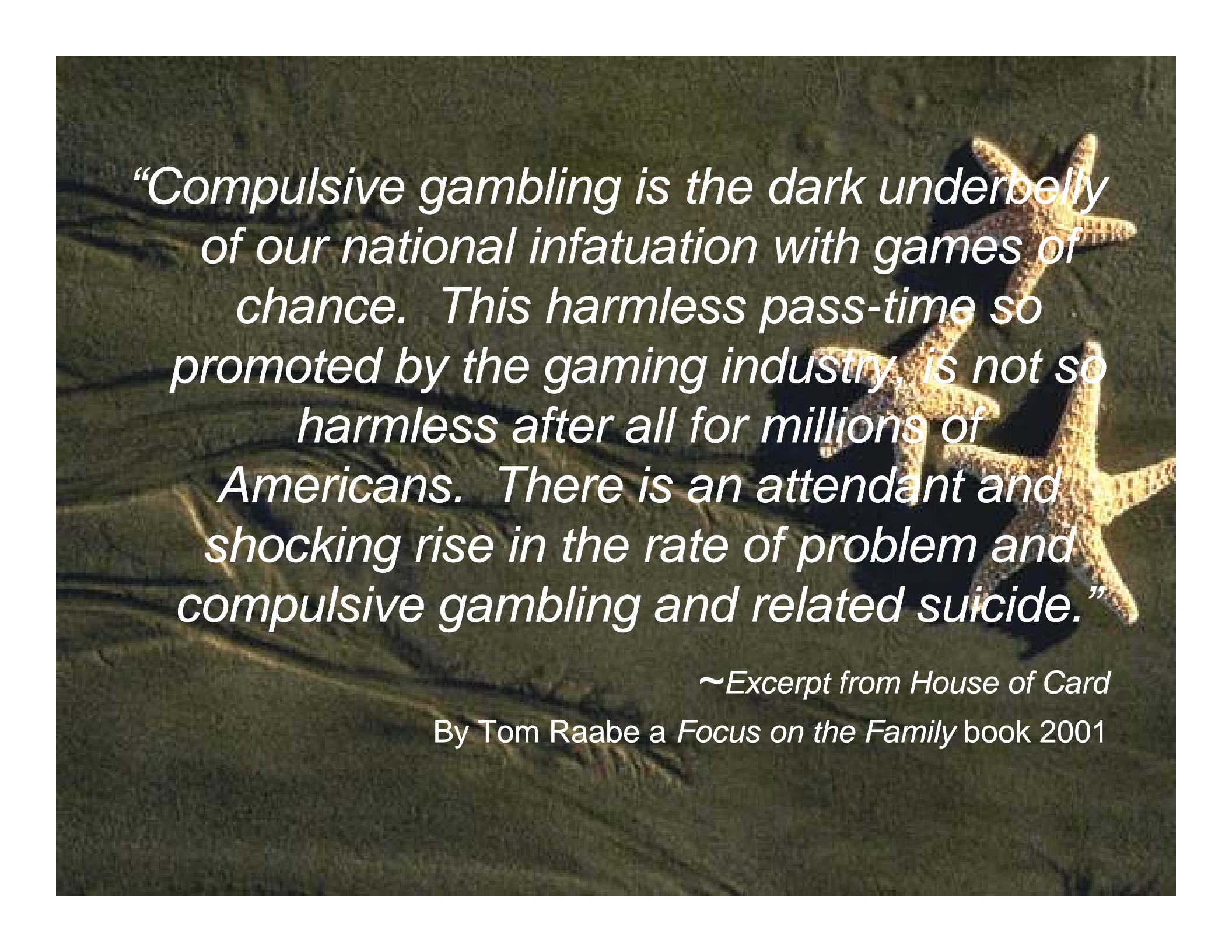
A photograph of three starfish on a sandy beach. The starfish are light-colored with dark spots. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly sand, with long, dark shadows cast across it, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Life Wagers: Problem Gambling and Suicide

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“Compulsive gambling is the dark underbelly of our national infatuation with games of chance. This harmless pass-time so promoted by the gaming industry, is not so harmless after all for millions of Americans. There is an attendant and shocking rise in the rate of problem and compulsive gambling and related suicide.”

~Excerpt from House of Card

By Tom Raabe a Focus on the Family book 2001

Introductions

- Introduce yourself
- What do you know or do you not know about Gambling?



Problem and Pathological Gambling

- Overview



Impulse Control Disorders



The central feature of Impulse Control Disorder is the failure to resist an impulse, drive, or temptation that is harmful to the person or to others. Even though there is an increasing tension prior to the act, the act may or may not be premeditated. Additionally, there may or may not be an awareness for resistance to the impulse. All impulse control disorders have the following patterns in common:

Impulse Control Disorder cont.

All impulse control disorders have the following patterns in common...

Failure to resist the impulse →

Increasing sense of tension/arousal →

Gratification/release →

Regret/guilt

Definitions - Suicide

- Suicide: Act of terminating of one's own life. Willful destruction of one's self interest
- Suicidal ideation: A term for thoughts about suicide which may range from vague to meticulously detailed plans and posthumous instruction. Condition requires professional intervention to determine its extent, medical emergency requiring immediate treatment.

Definitions

- **Suicidal Gesture:** A person will make actions resembling suicidal attempts while not being fully committed might be a non lethal method of self harm that leaves obvious indications of attempts or committed at a time when they expect that they will be rescued.

Definitions

- Suicide Attempt: A person who genuinely wishes to die may survive due to lack of knowledge, unwillingness to use a method that might leave them damaged or harm someone else.
- Nearly all lethal suicides follow a suicide attempt.

Gambling Mortality

The background of the slide is a photograph of a sandy beach with several starfish scattered across it. The lighting is warm, suggesting a sunset or sunrise, with long shadows cast by the starfish.

- No death certificate has listed gambling as the underlying cause of death (CDC)
- The absence of pathological gambling as the underlying cause of death on the death certificate does not mean that no one has died of pathological gambling. Medical examiners, may, for a number of reasons be unwilling to list pathological gambling as a cause of death. (Path gambling has an ICD-9 medical code so it should be used.) Secret and hidden.
- Casino Deaths: from Citizenlink website.
5 examples

Atlantic City 398 casino related deaths 83% sudden cardiac deaths of elderly white retired men. Surrounding patrons were so preoccupied with their pursuit of profit, that they failed to summon medical assistance.

Solution: Defibrulators in the casino_

Why is it not reported?

- Hidden illness
- Coroners do not ask
- Police, credit agencies, counselors and others often do not screen for gambling problems.
- Secondary co-morbid substance abuse or other mental health disorders may be identified as the cause.
- People treat gambling as a 'bad behavior' not a disease.

Research: Prevalence (1 of 2)

- 64% of suicide attempting admissions to the Louis Stoke VA medical Centre over a 12 month period reported that their attempt was related to gambling (Kausch 2002)
- 50% of individuals seeking assistance for a gambling problem report a history of suicidal ideation. (Beaudoin and Colx 1999)

Research: Prevalence (2 of 2)

- Pathological gamblers display increased levels of depression, impulsiveness, and substance abuse, that places them at greater risk of suicide. (Newman and Thompson 2003 Bourget, et al, 2003)
- Any time a state endorses gambling of any kind, it increases gambling and gambling related risk and problems. (During the 2007-2008 Legislative session 11 gambling Bills were introduced, many expanded gambling in Florida.)

Quick Facts: Gambling and Suicide

- Residents in gaming communities experience elevated suicide levels.
 - The Illinois Council on Compulsive Gambling stated that 20 Illinois residents had killed themselves as a result of gaming addictions within a short period of the casino's arrival in the state(1998).
- 1 in 5 pathological gamblers attempt suicide a rate higher than any other addictive disorder.
- A survey of 200 GA members in Illinois found that 66% contemplated suicide, 79% had wanted to die, 45% had a plan to kill themselves, and 16% had actually attempted suicide.

Suicide is an option

- Screening for gambling and suicide.
- Suicide risk is assessed along a continuum ranging from suicidal ideation alone (relatively less severe) to suicidal ideation with a plan (more severe).
- Suicidal ideation with a specific plan of action is associated with a significant risk for attempted suicide.

Screening Tools

- Screening for gambling
 - Lie-Bet
 - SOGS
 - DSMIV-TR

Screening for Suicide

- Beck (Depression inventory/SSI-SSI-W)
- Others



Suicide Assessment Outline

The background of the slide is a photograph of a sandy beach at sunset or sunrise. The sand is dark and textured, with several starfish scattered across it. The starfish are illuminated by the low sun, creating a warm, golden glow. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

- Assessing Suicidal Ideation
 - Ask directly if they have thoughts of suicide
 - Are the thoughts pervasive or intermittent with a definite relationship to a given situation?
 - Do they have a plan? How extensive?
 - Lethality of means/method
 - Is there access to the identified means

Suicide Attempt



- Immediate referral for a medical evaluation of medical stability if method of attempt warrants it
 - Means, location, collaborator, rescuer, number of attempts
 - Thoroughness of plan and its implementation
 - Not signs of impairment and physical harm
 - Level of treatment requirement

Risk Factors

- Intention and history
 - Recent/prior attempts or gestures
 - Direct or indirect communication of intent
 - Extensiveness of plan
 - Lethality of means
 - Access to means
 - Family history of suicidal behaviors



Demographics

- Age (teens, middle age, and elderly are at highest risk)
- Gender (males more often succeed at suicide attempts, because of lethality of method, but females make more attempts)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (stressors and lack of social support)
- Race (white)
- Marital status (separated, widowed, divorced)

Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc.

- The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling is a not-for-profit independent corporation concerned with the problems and effects associated with problem and compulsive gambling.
- The Council is under contract with state government and serves as Florida's advocate on gambling addiction and related issues.

Demographics: cont.

- Social Support (Lack of support system, living alone)
- Employment status (unemployed, change in status or performance)



Emotional Functioning

The background of the slide is a photograph of a sandy beach with several starfish scattered across it. The lighting is warm, suggesting a sunset or sunrise, with long shadows cast by the starfish. The overall tone is somewhat somber and reflective, which aligns with the theme of emotional functioning and grief.

- Diagnosis
- Auditory hallucination commanding death
- Recent loss or anniversary of a loss
- Fantasy to reunite with a dead loved one
- Stresses
- Poor coping ability
- Degree of Hopelessness or despair
- Poor coping ability
- Degree of hopelessness or despair

Behavioral patterns

- Isolation
- Impulsivity
- Rigid



Physical Condition

- Chronic Insomnia
- Chronic pain
- Progressive Illness
- Recent Childbirth



FCCG Programs and Services

The background of the slide is a photograph of a sandy beach. Several starfish are scattered across the sand, some in the foreground and some further back. The lighting is warm, suggesting a sunset or sunrise, with long shadows cast across the sand.

Under state contract, the FCCG provides:

- Toll-free Confidential 24-Hour HelpLine (888-ADMIT-IT)
- Prevention/education/outreach programs
- Training for medical/other health care professionals
- Representation on gambling related issues before policymakers
- Sponsor/conduct research
- Problem gambling awareness/education/training for governments/gaming operators/others
- Coordination/assistance in establishing alternative sentencing options in conjunction with judicial/law enforcement authorities
- Impaired Professionals Program
- Adolescent/senior outreach programs
- Statewide Speakers Bureau



For More Information

888-ADMIT-IT
(888-236-4848)

www.gamblinghelp.org