



# KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



# Beyond Behavior: Understanding Subjective Distress and Moral Incongruence in Problematic Pornography Use

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Problematic pornography use (PPU) presents a significant challenge for individuals, clinicians, and researchers, often characterized by feelings of compulsion, distress, and functional impairment. In this presentation, Dr. Joshua Grubbs will synthesize over a decade of his research investigating the psychological underpinnings of PPU. Moving beyond simplistic models focused solely on frequency or duration of use, Dr. Grubbs' work highlights the paramount importance of subjective experience, particularly the concepts of self-reported feelings of addiction and moral incongruence.

By reviewing empirical studies that demonstrate that self-perceptions of addiction and the associated psychological distress are often more linked to both pornography use itself and to a conflict between an individual's moral or religious values and their pornography use. This latter phenomenon, termed moral incongruence, appears central to understanding why some individuals experience profound guilt, shame, and anxiety related to their viewing habits, leading them to identify as "addicted."

Dr. Grubbs will present key findings from studies utilizing diverse methodologies, exploring the relationship between religiosity, personality, moral beliefs, and self-reported PPU. He will discuss the development and validation of measures assessing these constructs and the implications for differentiating high but non-problematic use from use that causes significant personal suffering.

This presentation will challenge attendees to adopt a more nuanced perspective on PPU, emphasizing the critical role of internal conflict and subjective distress. Dr. Grubbs will discuss the crucial implications of this research for accurate assessment, effective clinical intervention – which may need to focus on resolving moral conflicts rather than solely on cessation – and reducing stigma surrounding pornography use and related concerns. Attendees will gain a deeper, evidence-based understanding of the complexities driving problematic use and the factors central to perceived addiction.

# Development and Impact of Public Health Lower Risk Gambling Guidelines

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In 2021, a set of workable, evidence-based quantitative limits on gambling behaviour associated with low risk of harm were published. This international collaboration included analysis of epidemiological data from over 60,000 people who gamble from 8 different countries. The Lower Risk Gambling Guidelines (LRGGs) recommend that individuals spend no more than 1% of household income (before tax) per month on gambling, gamble no more than 4 days per month, and not regularly gamble on more than two different types of gambling. Evidence shows that the guidelines generally have been viewed positively and are seen as helpful by both the public and policymakers. They also align well with the steps people take

naturally to limit their gambling involvement. As a result, the LRGGs have been adopted or promoted in many jurisdictions in Canada and internationally. However, measurement of impact is rare and challenging.

This presentation will: (1) provide a brief overview of the research conducted and key deliverables emerging from the LRGG project; (2) review the various jurisdictions around the world that have adopted and used the LRGGs in their public health efforts to reduce gambling-related harm; and (3) discuss barriers to implementation, and efforts underway to evaluate their effectiveness.

# Lessons from the Korean Game Addiction Cohort Study

Hae Kook Lee 

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The cohort studies—designed to investigate the natural course of a specific illness, including its onset, persistence, remission, and exacerbation—are essential for understanding the concept of the problem and its contributing factors. In South Korea, a cohort study aimed at identifying the mechanisms and risk factors for gaming disorder was conducted between 2014 and 2019. The study followed a population-based sample of 2,300 elementary and middle school students, achieving a high follow-up rate of 91.7% over two years. At baseline, 45 participants (1.9%) met the diagnostic criteria for Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) according to the DSM-5. One year later, among the 2,206 students successfully followed up, 56 individuals (2.5%) were diagnosed with IGD. Of the original 45 IGD cases, 31 had recovered to a normal state after one year, while 14 individuals (31.1%) continued to meet the criteria for IGD. Additionally, 42 new cases of IGD (1.9%) emerged at the one-year

follow-up. The study also identified significant risk factors. Among those with comorbid psychiatric disorders, the incidence of IGD was 14.5 times higher at one year and 4.8 times higher at two years. Other baseline factors associated with the development of IGD included depression, aggression, poor communication with parents, early age of gaming initiation, and longer duration of daily game use. Regarding adverse outcomes, those with IGD exhibited significantly more physical symptoms and had higher rates of comorbid psychiatric conditions such as ADHD and depression. Based on these findings, the authors conclude that gaming disorder is a clinically stable mental and behavioral condition with identifiable risk factors. They propose that evidence-based prevention and medical intervention strategies are necessary for the appropriate management of gaming disorder.

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# New Perspectives from Theory to Intervention on Behavioral Addictions

**Marc N. Potenza** 

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The availability and usage of digital technologies have changed rapidly, generating new psychiatric concerns that may relate to specific groups differently. In this presentation, current advances in understanding specific types and patterns of internet use in the context of psychiatric concerns will be presented, considering sex/gender and other individual differences. Dr. Potenza will provide a theoretical framework for considering behavioral addictions, drawing on proposed models such as the Interaction of Person, Affect, Cognition and Execution (I-PACE) model. He will present data from multiple sources including from work of an international Lancet Psychiatry Commission on Problematic Usage of the Internet (PUI), a World Health Organization workgroup developing screening and assessment instruments

applicable across jurisdictions and large-scale studies including the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD), a longitudinal study of over 11,000 developing youth. In his presentation, Dr. Potenza will present on these international activities and how gender/sex relate to engagement in types and patterns of internet use. He will present on the rise of online sports gambling and how youth and young adults, especially males, may be impacted. He will present on individual differences relating to youth engagement in social media, including novel data on how online social activities relate to subsequent ADHD symptomatology and not vice versa, especially for girls. How to identify and treat different types of PUI will be considered, as will novel digital interventions.