
PERFORMANCE NOTES FOR CHORUSES A AND B

“FROM EPICTETUS TO ELLIS”

Practicum in Coaching Relapse Prevention Skills for Patients
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Good morning! I'm Kent Dean, a counselor for the Louisiana Association on Compulsive Gambling's Intensive Outpatient Program in Shreveport.

This morning you're invited to interact in a simulation of a didactic presentation to patients along three concurrent tracks in eleven "Modules:"

- A. **Inner experiences** of a pathological gambler beset with active craving;
- B. **Outer experiences** of a patient learning about craving and relapse prevention;
- C. **Objective oversight** as a therapist acting as trainer/coach, equipping your patient for maneuver through craving episodes with an escape exercise, a "Bail-Out" Exercise, if you will.

Fret not: you'll need do little motion. Rest assured that these exercises have been well-received in practice with adults. We'll examine both content of relapse prevention and pedagogy of imparting knowledge to patients.

Learning Objectives:

- A. We'll review practical implications of Dr. Albert Ellis' Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT).
- B. We'll describe the ambivalence and helplessness that seize patients, making them "mentally defenseless against the first bet," (to paraphrase AA's "Big Book"), emulating contradictory messages from mid- and outer brain.
- C. We'll practice coaching a "Bail-Out" Exercise to mute craving.

Learning Methods:

Learning Method A. Playing the patients you'll coach, you'll **see** and hear a didactic in "spiraling" format, a kind of "merry-go-round" in which KEY CONCEPTS and KEY WORDS are presented and reviewed along with progressively-added key concepts and key words, themselves varied in review. We'll often emphasize pictographs and soundscapes for teaching people with cognitive impairment. It's been observed that people with addictive disorders are often impaired in ways reminiscent of Attention-Deficit Disorder (assuming the individual doesn't, in fact, **have** ADD). "Visual learners" apparently absorb picture and sound better than words.

Performance Notes for Choruses A and B

2.

Note that spiraling can seem somewhat confusing on the "first pass." This is normal. As you "go with the flow," the ultimate effect should be coherence and solid retention.

Learning Method B. You'll be invited to participate in performing three types of recitation:

- a. **Aleatory chant** (*fr. Latin alea, die, singular of dice*), in which you, the "patients," recite the sentences randomly and without synchronizing with one another (a variation of the "cocktail party effect"). This mimics the "fuzzy thinking" of patients in the thrall of a craving episode; when normally "off-line" impulses jump "online," antagonize reason and good judgment and render them "mentally defenseless against the first bet." To signal aleatory chanting, your volunteer Group Leaders, "The Instigator" for Chorus A and "The Peacemaker" for Chorus B, will sway their right hand across the area of the appropriate group, and you can start reciting at any time. For your "STOP" signal, I'll extend *my* right hand with my fingers outstretched as if signaling someone to halt.
- b. **Unison chant**, reminiscent of clear imperatives from the recovering outer brain in which you, the "chorus/patient," say the same sentences together in uniform rhythm (recalling the choral background in Meredith Willson's The Music Man: "Trouble"). I personally will signal unison chanting by making synchronized, repetitive downbeats. Your "STOP" signal is the same as for aleatory chanting. I'll always indicate the loudness of the chants by moving my left hand up or down.
- c. **Individual recitation**, expressing a growing crisis of awareness.

You'll be a sort of "Greek chorus," expressing the contradictory biological "dialog" ("argument?" "war?") between "Wanting" (performed by those of you on the left side of the room, "Chorus A," led by The Instigator) and "Thinking" (those on the right, "Chorus B," led by The Peacemaker). This "dialog" evokes the increasingly-involuntary, disordered, contradictory impulses of pathological gamblers. Later on, in Module VIII, a Volunteer has agreed to read a "Soliloquy" giving voice to this "dialog." You'll note the chairs set at 45°: You see, The Instigator and The Peacemaker and their associated Choruses are in opposition, contesting and taunting one another, vying for dominance. Sometimes, both Choruses will interact simultaneously, forming Chorus C, a 360° Polychorus. Each chant episode will last only long enough to "make the point." You'll always be able to see what each Chorus is doing by what's up onscreen.

Learning Method C. You (the patients) will be coached in a practicum of a thought-stopping/guided-movement session (staying close to your chair) to practice a simple "Bail-Out" Exercise useable by patients when they dissociate and can't think rationally. At these times patients are better served by doing, not thinking, as combat trainees practice maneuvers until they're automatic so their survival doesn't depend on conscious behavioral organization.

I'd like to extend a special note of thanks to our Executive Assistant at LACG, Ms. Karen Stone, who skillfully and meticulously rendered this presentation in Microsoft® PowerPoint®

We'll have discussion at the end, so please hold questions or comments until then.

"THE INSTIGATOR" AND CHORUS A
(Aleatory Chant; Left Side)

Go ahead and gamble!

It'll be ok!

You'll make money!

It'll be fun!

My friends are there at the casino!

I'll just bet twenty dollars; no more!

I'm a really good poker player!

No one will find out!

One more time and then I'll stop for tonight!

You know you want to!!

I'm gonna go win my money back!

GA is for other people, who don't have any willpower!

Those counselors don't know anything!

Just one more time ...

I'm gonna get my revenge and win a thousand dollars!

I can stop anytime I want to!

That's all! I'm through this time!



“BAIL-OUT” EXERCISE

A. STOP AND FACE THE TRIGGER

B. TURN 180°, BUT DO NOT LEAVE YET

C. COUNT:

- 1. GET***
- 2. YOURSELF***
- 3. OUT***
- 4. OF***
- 5. HERE***

D. MOVE AWAY TO ANOTHER AREA

E. DEBRIEF WITH A TRUSTED PERSON AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

CHORUS C (A + B): POLYCHORUS
(Unison Chant; Left and Right)

STOP.

TURN.

COUNT.

MOVE.

DEBRIEF.

CHORUS C (A + B): POLYCHORUS
(Unison Chant; Left and Right)

GET

YOURSELF

OUT

OF

HERE

"THE PEACEMAKER" AND CHORUS B
(Aleatory Chant; Right Side)

I'll call my sponsor.

Gambling is relapse, and I'm about to relapse.

[STOP. TURN. COUNT. MOVE. DEBRIEF.]

This is not a way to make money.

I don't have to do this anymore.

[STOP. TURN. COUNT. MOVE. DEBRIEF.]

Casinos are not banks or loan companies.

[STOP. TURN. COUNT. MOVE. DEBRIEF.]

I don't belong in here.

I'll be proud when I leave without gambling.

[STOP. TURN. COUNT. MOVE. DEBRIEF.]

There is another way.

I need to leave here. Now.

[STOP. TURN. COUNT. MOVE. DEBRIEF.]

I have a treatable disease.

Get yourself out of here.

[STOP. TURN. COUNT. MOVE. DEBRIEF.]

**INSTRUCTIONS SPECIFICALLY FOR
THE TWO GROUP LEADERS:
"THE INSTIGATOR" (CHORUS A; LEFT SIDE) AND
"THE PEACEMAKER" (CHORUS B; RIGHT SIDE)**

MODULE XI: "ZONE OF INSURRECTION"

During Module XI, near the end of the presentation, "**The Instigator**" should be prepared to lead Chorus A in *interruptions* of the flow of the presentation at least once (no more than twice). "**The Peacemaker**" should be prepared to intervene (as described both on this page below and at the time of the presentation) by quietly eliciting your group, Chorus B, to chant and "talk down" Chorus A to calmness.

NOTE: The end of the random "**Zone of Insurrection**" section is indicated when the Facilitator crosses arms over the chest.

[At the beginning of Module XI, the Facilitator will add an element of chance (randomness) to the presentation by saying the following:]

"Now, at this final Stage of our journey, the Stage of Change marked potentially by Relapse, appears a possible "**Zone of Insurrection,**" where it's possible for relapse to happen at any time. "**The Instigator**" and Chorus A are now free, at random, to interrupt loudly the flow of events with their aleatory chant sentences; however, if and whenever that happens, "**The Peacemaker**" and Chorus B will begin the unison chant **STOP. TURN. COUNT. MOVE. DEBRIEF.** It's understood that the intervention of **The Peacemaker** and Chorus B will serve to soothe and pacify **The Instigator** and Chorus A, who will then themselves gradually join Chorus B in quietly chanting in unison: **STOP. TURN. COUNT. MOVE. DEBRIEF.** Once the situation has settled each time, I'll give all of you the "**STOP**" signal by extending my right hand as though signaling someone to halt, and then we'll continue with the presentation. Near the end of the presentation, when you all see me cross my arms over my chest, the **Zone of Insurrection** will end, and no further interruptions should take place. The end of Relapse **is** a kind of **death**, and--momentous and ultimately joyful as it can truly be--at the onset of stable recovery, ongoing abstinence is **not** always a constantly-welcome experience."

**“FROM EPICTETUS TO ELLIS”
MODULE VIII CADENZA: SOLILOQUY**

[The following to be read from forward-center presentation area by a Volunteer or by Facilitator, accompanied by a distant casino soundscape:]

[Talking to self:] "Sounds like a terrific idea! Let's go on in, get comfy, say Hi to all my friends there at the casino, have a few drinks from that friendly, good-looking waitress/waiter, who's always so nice to me--You know, I'm getting the impression I really turn her/him on!--sit myself down and get happy! **Right!**

"Look, so what it's only Tuesday?! Thanks to that jerk of a boss I've got, it's already been a long week! I'm bailing out of this crummy day! I damn well deserve a little relaxation! **Right!** Besides, there've been two or three times that my fickle friend, Lady Luck, forgot to remember who the hell she came in with and waltzed right out the door with somebody else, leaving me to lose a little more than I expected or cared to ... like, a ***bundle!***

"So ... now's the time I can get my revenge against this place and get it all back, **right!?** I deserve that, too! No reason the House has to have all the advantage, **right!?** I'm going in! It's my turn! *[Quiet, almost whispering, as an aside, turning to face audience:]* (Hey! You wanna know how I'm feeling all of a sudden, even just *remembering* how it feels to go in? I'm feeling **great**, like there's champagne running through my veins!) *[Jubilant, to self again:]* 'The morning is young, the world's my oyster, and the odds are all on my side!

[Casino soundscape gradually fades to silence]

[Beat]

*[Volunteer or Facilitator:] [Ambivalent, to audience, sheepishly:] " ... **Right??**"*
[Pause, keeping still for five seconds, then exit.]
