

Video Transcript: Cognitive-behavioural Therapy Clinical Simulation

Therapist: So, Liz, I want to come back to something that you said earlier, when you were talking about feeling triggered and then going gambling.

On-screen text: Therapist's Thoughts: I wonder how far back she first felt triggered? When did she then make the decision to gamble?

Liz: Um, okay.

Therapist: So can you tell me a little bit more about what was going on when you first noticed that you were feeling triggered?

Liz: Well, I was leaving a friend's house, um, and I was thinking about, you know, which way to go home, because of traffic, you know, and I decided to take the highway.

On-screen text: Therapist's Thoughts: I wonder if there is more to the highway than it just being the fastest way home?

Therapist: So, you chose to take the highway because it was the fastest route home?

Liz: Well, yeah, sort of. No, I mean, I think I knew the highway went right past the casino.

Therapist: So you realized that the highway would go right by the casino and you wanted to see how that would feel?

Liz: Um, I think I knew the highway went past the casino I just wanted to go gambling because nobody was going to be home for a few hours and I wanted to see if I could win back some of my money to cover some debt.

On-screen text: Therapist's Thoughts: Those are quite a few triggers--I wonder if she realizes it was a perfect storm?

Therapist: So it sounds like you were looking to test out personal control because you haven't gambled in a while and you have a pretty big debt load.

Liz: Yeah. I thought, maybe, I could just go for an hour or so and be okay.

Therapist: Okay. And that didn't quite go as you thought?

Liz: No. I ended up staying for, like, eight hours, and losing all my money, that I had saved in my bank account from not gambling for a month. So I'm deeper in debt, my partner knows that I relapsed, because I stayed out for so long. I'm so stupid.

On-screen text: Therapist's Thoughts: How can I turn this into a learning opportunity for her and get her to move through some of her guilt?

Therapist: Okay. Let's take this moment and look back some of the other situations that you've found yourself in, and some of the previous work that we've done together. Here are some of the situations that you've struggled with in the past that we've both identified. First we've got money, having it and then being in debt. And then we have time alone, and feeling like you've got things under control. And then we have feeling scrutinized by your partner. And we have being bored. Now, in this particular situation, you've identified that you were feeling pretty good about your ability to only gamble for a bit as well as the fact that you had money and time alone. Now, let's work through each one of those two thoughts on their own, and then we'll combine them, and we'll see how you gave yourself permission to gamble with those.

On-screen text: Therapist's Thoughts: Examining each individual thought may help her understand how these thoughts influenced her behaviour.

Liz: Well, I was thinking that I hadn't gambled in a month and it'd been pretty easy to stay away for that long so I thought maybe I don't have a problem. So I wanted to gamble like a regular person, you know, just go in for a bit and then leave.

On-screen text: Therapist's Thoughts: She really wanted to test her personal control and to check and see if she really does have a gambling problem.

Therapist: So, so you were wanting to test out personal control as well as test whether or not you really have a gambling problem?

Liz: Yeah. And it didn't go so well. I ended up staying way longer and spending way more money than I'd planned to. I feel so bad. My partner's pissed. And now I'm deeper debt, and I made the situation worse again. I, I can't figure out why I keep doing this to myself.

On-screen text: Therapist's Thoughts: We need to break this thought process down to better understand it.

Therapist: It sounds like you noticed that, after a month, you were doing really well, in respect to your gambling goals. So you decided to test your own limits, and went gambling. Have I got that right?

Liz: Yeah. And that seems to be something that I do in my other areas in my life, like school, work, and other stuff.

Therapist: Let's come back to this one thought: "I have my gambling under control". Now let's work through that thought, right, and we'll use the Changing Your Thinking worksheet, and we'll use it the way that we've worked through some of the other thoughts that we've worked through in the past. Okay, so what we're going to do is

we're going to look at that irrational thought, okay, the irrational thought, and then we'll look at a couple of specifics of that thought, and then we'll explore a rational thought that we can use to replace it.

Liz: Okay.

Therapist: So, if the irrational thought is, "My gambling is under control," what might be two specific ways that that thought is irrational?

Liz: Uh, well, clearly my gambling's not under control. Uh, when I go to a casino and start gambling, I can't stop until I run out of money.

Therapist: So your recent example of going to the casino and losing track of your spending and then spending until you run right out of money: those two things give evidence as to why that thought is irrational.

Liz: Yeah, and I think when I tell myself that I think it's a sign that I'm not thinking properly, and that I probably already made the decision to start gambling.

Therapist: So if you were to counter, then, that irrational thought, that irrational statement with a rational one, what might that one sound like?

Liz: Well, maybe a more rational thought would be, "My gambling habits are still fragile", or, uh, "It's easy for me to lose control once I start gambling".