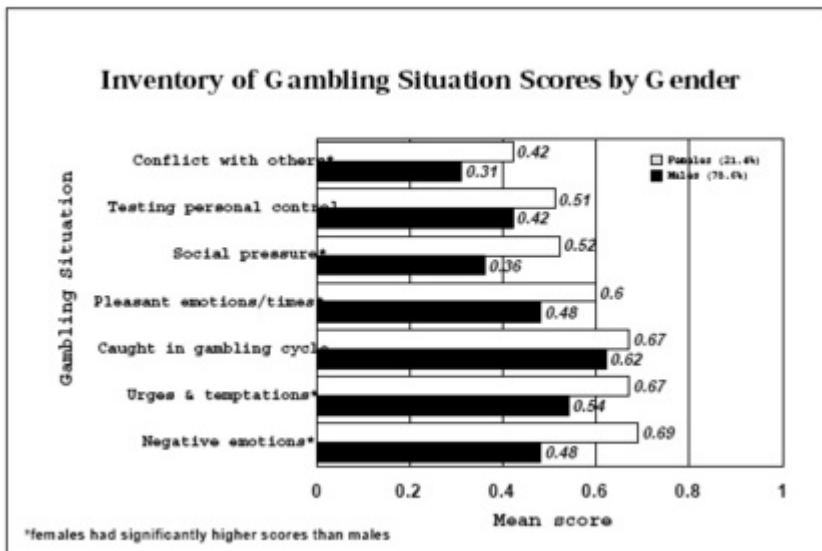


# **The WAGER, Vol. 2(30) - Gender differences in gambling relapse**

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Individuals recovering from disordered gambling relapse to their previous gambling-related activities for a variety of reasons. To examine these reasons, Littman-Sharp of the Donwood Problem Gambling Program and Stirpe of the Addiction Research Foundation created an Inventory of Gambling Situations (IGS)\*. The IGS identifies specific situations that can trigger relapse for gamblers who are struggling to recover. Modeled on the Inventory of Drinking Situations\*\*, the IGS lists 100 situations that are potential triggers for relapse to gambling. Clients rate whether they never, rarely, frequently, or almost always gambled heavily in each situation in the past year. Once these triggers are identified, counselors can work with clients to develop effective coping strategies and positive substitutes to address the relapse risks. The IGS organizes relapse triggers into 7 subscale categories: 1) pleasant emotions and pleasant times with others; 2) negative emotions; 3) conflict with others; 4) urges and temptations; 5) testing personal control; 6) social pressure; 7) caught in gambling cycle. While clinicians can create an IGS profile for each individual for treatment purposes, group IGS profiles are also informative. For example, of the 126 subjects who have completed the IGS to date, females scored higher than males in all 7 IGS subscales. In five of the 7 categories, these differences were significant (see figure below). The primary triggers for females were negative emotions, urges and temptations, and being caught in gambling cycle; for males the primary trigger was being caught in the gambling cycle. Several explanations exist for females having overall higher scores than males. One is that females may more readily recognize situations in which they are triggered to gamble.



**Sources:**

\*Littman-Sharp, N. & Stirpe, T. (1997, June). The Inventory of Gambling Situations: An interim report on a risk assessment instrument. Paper presented at the 2nd Bi-Annual Ontario Conference on Problem and Compulsive Gambling, Toronto, Ontario.

\*\*Annis, H. (1982). Inventory of Drinking Situations. Toronto, Ontario: Addiction Research Foundation. To participate in the ongoing IGS study, contact Nina Littman-Sharp at (416)-481-2755 or [nlittman@donwood.org](mailto:nlittman@donwood.org).

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