

SAFE Shares Info With Seniors On Problem Gambling

SUBMITTED BY SAFE, INC.

SAFE visited the Glen Cove Senior Center last month to share important information on the perils of gambling – when it is a problem, where help is available and the signs to recognize if it may become a problem. Social worker Aimee Abraham presented a workshop that included a PowerPoint presentation, a video, as well as a question and answer period toward the end of the program.

There are five different types of gambling, she said. They include the social gambler that engages in the activity for leisure, the problem gambler who's involvement is more excessive, a pathological gambler who has an uncontrollable response to gambling, the organized crime gambler that launders illegal funds through illegal resources and the professional gambler who does it for a living in a controlled fashion and can deal with their losses.

"Four to six million people are problem gamblers," said Abraham, who went on to discuss the different media outlets that encourage gambling. "The Internet provides avenues to gamble and the advertising on television and the radio encourages



SAFE's social worker Aimee Abraham visited the Glen Cove Senior Center to present a program on gambling. (Photos by SAFE, Inc.)

it. And you don't need to work hard to find ways to gamble. You can even do it on your phone."

Aging adults engage in Bingo at senior centers which can be enjoyable, but for someone with a gambling problem it can have dire consequences. Many seniors are limited financially so they may see playing Bingo or scratch-off lottery cards as a way to add to their income.

And since retired seniors have more time on their hands, gambling can become an escape.

"Seniors with a gambling problem will find that their mood is affected by their gain or loss when gambling," Abraham said. "A problem gambler is willing to go without food and medication so they can gamble. They might even cash in their insurance policy."

A senior with a gambling problem suffers the same consequences as their younger counterparts. Their family won't even trust them anymore. Abraham said that 20 percent of seniors with a gambling problem have filed for bankruptcy and 20

percent attempt or commit suicide. She shared the following warning signs:

- They continue to gamble despite its threatening consequences.
- They become preoccupied with gambling.
- Their time spent gambling interrupts previous engaged activities.

SAFE, Inc. encourages anyone with a potential or actual gambling problem to seek help.

For further information on SAFE, Inc. and their initiatives contact Social Worker Aimee Abraham at 516-676-2008. SAFE Inc. is a not-for-profit tax-exempt substance abuse education and prevention agency located in Glen Cove. Visit www.safeglencove.org and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GlenCovePrideCoalition.

Need Help?

To get further information or help with a gambling problem:

Gamblers Anonymous

213-386-8789

www.gambleranonymous.org

NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services

877-8-HOPENY

NY Council on Problem Gambling

518-867-4084