

**For Immediate Release  
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### **SAFE Works to Prevent Problem Gambling in Seniors**

SAFE visited the Glen Cove Senior Center on May 30th 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. SAFE Mental Health Counselor and Coalition Liaison, Ashley Ferrufino, presented a workshop that included a PowerPoint presentation followed by question and answer period toward the end of the program.

There are five different types of gambling, said Ferrufino. 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 Ferrufino, 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 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," Ferrufino 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 as 20 percent of seniors with a gambling problem have filed for bankruptcy and 20 percent attempt or commit suicide. Per Dr. Sharon Harris, Executive Director of SAFE, "cognitive impairment may prevent the recognition of a gambling problem, therefore seniors may not comprehend their addiction and may be reluctant to seek and/or accept help".

Signs of seniors having a gambling problem include:

- Loss of interest and participation in normal activities with family and friends
- Blocks of time unaccounted for and secrecy regarding that time when queried
- Missing possessions or assets
- Changes in attitude and personality; Depression

- Neglect of personal needs (food, utilities, medical)

SAFE is a not for profit alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention and education agency located in Glen Cove City Hall. For further information on SAFE visit our website at [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org) and follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GlenCovePrideCoalition](https://www.facebook.com/GlenCovePrideCoalition).

**To get further information or help with a gambling problem**

**Gamblers Anonymous**

**(213) 386-8789**

**[www.gambleranonymous.org](http://www.gambleranonymous.org)**

**NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services**

**(877) 8-HOPENY**

**NY Council on Problem Gambling**

**(518) 867-4084**

**The National Council on Problem Gambling**

**24 hour Helpline**

**1-(800) 522-4700**