

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Dr. Sharon Harris

516- 676-2008 safeglencove@yahoo.com

SAFE: March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month

Each year SAFE presents new information regarding the risk factors of problem gambling and provides resources for those who are seeking treatment for a gambling addiction. In coordination with representatives from the Long Island Problem Gambling Resource Center, SAFE's Executive Director, Dr. Sharon Harris presented a PowerPoint presentation to members of the Glen Cove Senior Center. Annually, Dr. Harris collaborates with Christine Rice, Executive Director of the Senior Center and Eric Shuman, the Activity Coordinator of the Senior Center to continue educating its' members on this growing concern.

Gambling Addiction or Problem Gambling is known as the "hidden addiction" because there are no visible signs. Because of the lack of visibility, often those suffering from a gambling addiction can hide it longer than someone with an alcohol or drug problem. Usually, gambling addiction is discovered when there is a loss of accessibility to money and/or negative actions occur. Gambling is defined as the act of risking something of value (money, food, clothes, electronics, etc.) on a game of chance (bingo, lottery, dice, slot machine, sports, etc.) for the desired result.

Given the increase in technology, Internet Gambling aka "Gaming" has emerged, making it easier for individuals to gamble from the comfort of their homes. The internet has out-paced traditional gambling advertising and experiences via television, billboard advertisements for local casinos or horse betting. Internet Gambling is dangerous because it gives the player a decreased perception of money as time spent gambling increases. Gaming refers to playing electronic games, whether through consoles, computers, mobile phones or another medium. These devices have led the younger generation to gamble more frequently. The NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) noted that in the past 5-10 years there has been a decrease in 7-8th graders betting money over the internet compared to the 9-12th graders. As the older youth become more aware of potential "rewards" of gaming/ gambling such as feelings of gratification, extra money, etc., they also lose sight of the potential consequences these 'harmless looking" games can have.

Mobile Sports Betting in New York State has become a concern for addiction professionals.

- New Yorkers Wagered \$16,595,732,482 and lost over \$1.4 billion on mobile sports betting apps the first 12 months (January 8th, 2022 - January 7th, 2023).
- New Yorkers are losing \$4 Million daily.
- In 2022, 3.8 million accounts were created on legal sportsbook sites/apps.
- 98% of online problem gambling sports bettors are male. Their average age is about 10 years younger than casual sports bettors.
- Problem gambling sports bettors are 3 times more likely to need to gamble with more money for the same thrill; Are over 3x more likely to have felt restless or irritable when trying to cut back; Are 5 times more likely to need others to pay their bills; Are 7 times more likely to have lied about their gambling

Dr. Harris discussed some warning signs of someone who has a problem with gambling or gaming, and how to prevent/ receive help for this growing addiction. Some warning signs that gambling might be a problem include: Thinking often about gambling; Covering up/lying about gambling behaviors; Missing time with friends and loved ones to gamble; Gambling to escape problems or negative feelings; Gambling more money than planned or can afford; Trying unsuccessfully to cut back or stop gambling.

For more information on Problem Gambling please visit: NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) Problem Gambling <https://oasas.ny.gov/problem-gambling>.

Long Island Problem Gambling Resource Center <https://nyproblemgamblinghelp.org/long-island/>

SAFE is the only alcohol and substance use prevention, intervention and education agency in Glen Cove and seeks to prevent addiction. Please visit SAFE's Problem Gambling page at www.safeglencove.org to learn more about the dangers of gambling addiction.