PROBLEM GAMBLING AND AN AGING POPULATION

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Objectives

After this presentation participants will be able to:

- · Identify signs of problem gambling in seniors.
- Explain the reasons problem gambling can be especially dangerous for an aging population.
- List resources available to help prevent and treat problem gambling in seniors.

Compass Mark

- Addiction prevention agency in Lebanon, Lancaster, and Chester Counties
- Our mission is to prevent addiction through education, skill-building, and community mobilization.

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Is it Gambling?

Casino Games- slot machines, poker, dice games, etc.

Lottery- Daily numbers, scratch-off tickets, etc.

Bingo

Fantasy Sports

Definition of Gambling

- To risk money, or something of value, on an unknown outcome.
- 2 questions:
 - · Do you have to pay money, or risk something, to play?
 - Are you guaranteed to get something in return?

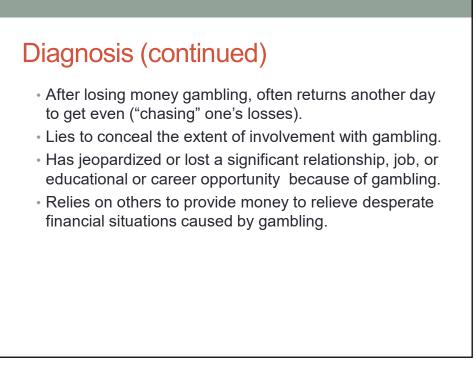
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- Must exhibit four (or more) of the following behaviors in a 12month period:
 - Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement.
 - Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling.
 - Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling.
 - Is often preoccupied with gambling (e.g., having persistent thoughts of reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble).
 - Often gambles when feeling distressed (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed).





Gambling Facts

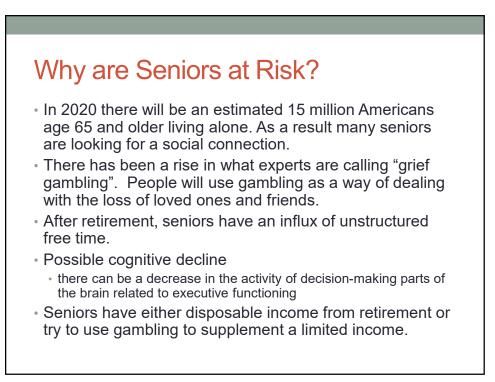
- Gambling is a \$40 billion a year industry.
- The great majority of the population gamble responsibly.
- 4-6 million adults are considered problem gamblers.
- 2 million adults meet the criteria for disordered gambling.
 Not all officially diagnosed
- March is National Problem Gambling Awareness Month, sponsored by the National Council on Problem Gambling.
- Gambling is one of the only socially acceptable forms of addiction.
- Most of the research on problem gambling is coming out of Europe, Canada, and Australia.





Gambling and Seniors

- Some studies show that 3-4 million seniors could have a gambling problem.
- The top 3 ways that seniors in Pennsylvania gamble are slots, bingo, and the PA Lottery.
 - Many senior centers/Area Agency on Aging are subsidized by PA Lottery
- Casinos offer many things that could be attractive to seniors.
- There has been a large increase in gambling over electronic devices.
 - Online
 - Hand-held devices



Grief Gambling

- Using gambling to cope with losses.
 - Loss of loved ones
 - Loss of autonomy/freedom/routine

Escapism

- Those interviewed say that its easy to forget pain, loss.
- Casino staff become an ad hoc social network.
 - It is important to remember that casinos are designed to make people stay longer.





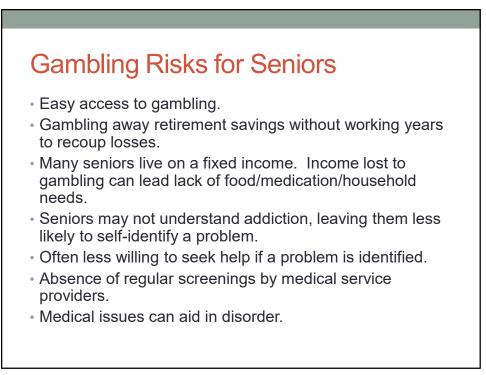
Casinos-The New Senior Centers

- Casinos offer many attractive services for older adults!
 - Use of scooters/wheelchairs
 - · Some will provide oxygen or places to dispose of diabetic needles
- Casinos create an atmosphere of connection!
 - Send birthday/holiday cards
 - If absent too long, casinos will send a card saying that they miss you
- Casinos are easily accessible!
 - Casinos will send shuttles to senior living centers or the centers will run bus trips to casinos, bingo, etc.
 - Casinos will often add incentives like free chips or free/discounted food



Is That Social Game Really Free?

- Most "free" games come with in-app purchases.
 - Clicks don't always seem like real money!
- Ads during social games can be for pay-to-play games.
- Online casinos and sports betting sites will match an initial deposit up to a certain amount.
 - Some offer "bet protection" where you can get money back if the first wager does not win!
- Free trial periods are offered by online betting sites.
 - The algorithm of the game changes after the free trial making it harder to win.
- Not all online wagering sites are required to disclose the odds.



Warning Signs of Problem Gambling

- · An unhealthy preoccupation with betting or wagering.
- Only talking about wins/not discussing losses.
- Rapid decline in physical health/mental health.
- Paying bills late or putting off refilling medication.
- · Having sudden and immediate need of money.
- Neglecting friends, family members, or personal needs.
- Lying about gambling or trying to hide gambling behavior.
- · Gambling alone and more frequent gambling.
- Gambling to calm nerves or reduce stress, instead of solely for enjoyment.



Why Should Caregivers Learn About Problem Gambling in Seniors? If problem gambling does develop in an older adult, they have less time and opportunity to recover their losses. If older adults spend a large amount of time alone the signs of problematic behavior can be easier to hide or go unnoticed. If seniors are educated about problem gambling, they are more likely to recognize behaviors in themselves or others. Talking about problem gambling can help with the stigma that can prevent people from obtaining help.

Keeping Gambling Recreational

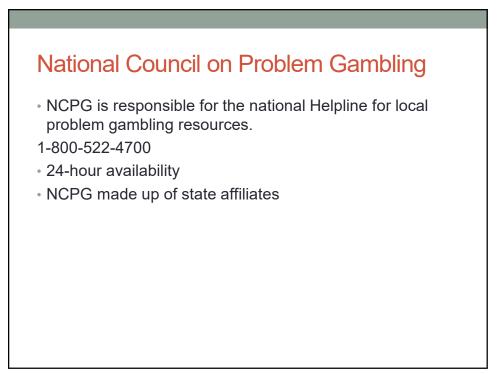
- Set a money limit that one can afford to lose and stick with it!
- Do not gamble on credit and take only cash.
- Avoid chasing lost money.
- Set a time limit and use the buddy system.
- Losing is part of the game and is the price of entertainment.
- Don't substitute gambling for other activities or gamble to deal with problems.
- Take a break!





Self-Exclusion

- Someone can request to be excluded from gambling activities in the following areas in Pennsylvania:
 - Casinos
 - Fantasy Contests
 - iGaming
 - Video Gaming Terminals (VGT's)
- Exclusion Period can be 1 or 5 years or lifetime.
- · Violation of self exclusion can be grounds for arrest.
- Applications for self exclusion must be submitted in person at the office of the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board.
- Self exclusion can also be made at individual casinos.



Council on Compulsive Gambling of Pennsylvania

- · CCGP is the state affiliate of the national council.
- · Local helpline- 1-800-Gambler
- Website also houses a meeting locator for Gamblers Anonymous
- Host regular trainings

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Questions?

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Contact Information

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