



## **March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month**

### ***Are Your Children Gaming? Then They May Be Gambling, Too!***

(MARCH 1, 2019) Videogaming has been expanding its reach into an area that has traditionally been off limits for children – gambling. In recent years, researchers have been looking into how gaming has been weaving gambling into the virtual stories. Unfortunately, while the situations are virtual, the money spent to participate is often real, and state and national surveys suggest that the youngest adults are at highest risk for developing gambling problems.

March 2019 is recognized as National Problem Gambling Awareness Month, and the Association of Problem Gambling Service Administrators (APGSA) supports this observance to encourage awareness and action to prevent problem gambling and promote help for those individuals and families affected by gambling disorder.

APGSA President Terri Sue Canale-Dalman commented, "As the Problem Gambling Service Administrators across the U.S., we encourage everyone to participate in the theme, 'Awareness + Action,' to ensure that friends, family and healthcare access points develop a growing awareness of responsible gambling and resources available for gambling addiction."

What video games are unlocking the keys to gambling behaviors? These include Overwatch, Red Dead Redemption, FIFA Ultimate Team, Casino Kid, and any games with "loot boxes." Loot boxes are like the "mystery bags" that children used to buy on the chance of finding something of value within. However, in video games players may compete to buy loot boxes with real dollars, and the contents can be worth pennies or thousands of dollars in real or virtual prizes. Researchers have found that the more money a player wagers on loot boxes, the more at-risk for problem gambling he or she will be.

The APGSA and the National Council on Problem Gambling want to make sure that if people gamble, they should gamble responsibly. Consider these questions:

- Have you ever bet more than you could afford to lose?
- When you gambled, did you go back another day to try to win back the money you lost?
- Have you ever borrowed money or sold anything to get money to gamble or pay bills?
- Have you felt that you might have a problem with gambling or felt guilty about gambling?

To keep gambling in a "safe zone," consider:

- Setting a limit on how much money and time will be spent gambling.
- Never borrowing to gamble or using credit.
- Paying bills first and spending only what you can afford to lose.
- Gambling will not solve money concerns in the long term.
- Gambling for fun, not to avoid being depressed or upset.

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Anyone who gambles can develop a problem. Groups at higher levels of risk include young adults, older adults, adolescents, veterans, and racial and ethnic minorities. Individuals new to taking medications for Restless Leg Syndrome or Parkinson's might also develop a gambling problem. March 12, 2019 is the Sixth Annual Gambling Disorder Screening Day – a day when healthcare organizations are urged to screen their patients or clients for problem gambling and Gambling Disorder. Read more on this [website](#).

If you or someone you know struggles with gambling, call the 24-hour, free and confidential National Helpline: **1-800-522-4700**, chat at [www.ncpgambling.org/chat](http://www.ncpgambling.org/chat) or text **4hope** to **Crisis Text Line at 741741**.

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#### About the APGSA

The Association of Problem Gambling Service Administrators (APGSA) is a national membership organization of state administrators of public funds for problem gambling services. The organization was formed in 2000 to support the development of services that will reduce the impact of problem gambling in the United States. To learn more about APGSA and problem gambling services across the nation, visit [www.apgsa.org](http://www.apgsa.org).

#### Contact

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# Sixth Annual Gambling Disorder Screening Day

## Tuesday, March 12, 2019

The Sixth Annual Gambling Disorder Screening Day is on Tuesday, March 12, 2019 and coincides with National Problem Gambling Awareness Month. The Association of Problem Gambling Service Administrators (APGSA) is pleased to be a participating organization in this effort with the Division on Addiction at Cambridge Health Alliance, Harvard Medical School, along with hundreds of organizations from around the country that host Screening Day events.

Participating organizations administer a brief gambling screen to their patients/clients on March 12th (the 2nd Tuesday of March). Hosting a Gambling Disorder Screening Day event has never been easier. The [Screening Day Toolkit](#) includes many free online tools and resources, including a printable and customizable [Screening Day Flyer](#), a copy of the [BBGS \(Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen\) e-Screener](#) and a one-page article, [What Is Gambling Disorder?](#)

Organizations that take part will be listed on the Cambridge Health Alliance website. After Screening Day ends, data is compiled on (1) how many people were screened, (2) how many completed a screen, and (3) how many positive screens were found. An optional [Host Data Reporting Form](#) is located in the toolkit to simplify reporting this information.

Gambling Disorder Screening Day can also be promoted through web posts, emails to contact lists, and social media support (#gamblingscreen) and link to the [CHARGE](#) page on the Cambridge Health Alliance Division on Addiction [website](#).

This past five years of this screening effort have been a success due to grassroots efforts and the participation of multiple agencies. Any entity interested in being a participating organization or a supporter, should contact Vanessa Graham at [vgraham@challiance.org](mailto:vgraham@challiance.org) or (617) 575-5619.