Tuesday, March 10, 2015 is Gambling Disorder Screening Day: Are you going to do a brief screen?

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Last year, through a grassroots email and social media campaign, the Division on Addiction, Cambridge Health Alliance, a Harvard Medical School teaching hospital (Division) promoted the development of the first Gambling Disorder Screening Day. To support the screening day, the Division freely made available screening toolkit materials that (1) explained Gambling Disorder; (2) described why screening is important; (3) provided a brief screen, the Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBGS); and (4) listed a wide variety of gambling resource and referral information.

The screening day was successful in raising awareness about Gambling Disorder, and promoting screening and other activities across the nation. Many organizations provided meaningful promotional support for Gambling Disorder Screening Day, and the Division was able to recruit many organizations to screen for Gambling Disorder. Partners who had not previously screened for Gambling Disorder identified as much as 10.5% of patients as being at-risk for Gambling Disorder and requiring further assessment. Supporting organizations promoted Gambling Disorder Screening Day in a variety of ways, including emailing their distribution lists, press releases, newsletter announcements, editorials, the distribution of screening resources, public calendar posts, social media announcements, webpage postings, and invitations to promote the day at public forums.

Brief screening for behavioral health problems can help providers identify concomitant behavioral health conditions (Humeniuk, Dennington, & Ali, 2008; Madras et al., 2009). Notably, the National Center for Responsible Gaming recently announced that SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) is the funding priority for the 2015 grants program.

In keeping with this evidence-based movement, the Division on Addiction is promoting Gambling Disorder Screening Day on March 10, 2015. We chose this date because March is National Problem Gambling Awareness Month. Brief

screening for Gambling Disorder is an essential part of increasing awareness and helping people who have gambling problems.

The Gambling Disorder screening toolkit is available here. Please spread the word and distribute the screening toolkit materials. If you are interested in using a dynamic screening tool with your own clients, you can find the Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen (BBGS; Gebauer et al., 2010) in 22 languages here. People who are interested in learning more about the psychometrics of the BBGS can review that information from a previous edition of The WAGER. If you have questions, and would like to conduct your own screening, please feel free to contact us at info@divisiononaddiction.org.

–Debi LaPlante

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References

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