



Problem Gambling Awareness Month – Make the Most of It!

Annual observances can be easy to tap into for local promotion of an agency's services or to raise awareness related to a specific issue. The month of March has historically been a time for focus on safe gambling, awareness of problem gambling, and what community or state resources are available to help individuals or families affected by the consequences of problem gambling.

First, determine what your message is for Problem Gambling Awareness Month. What do you want the community to know? Then develop 3-4 simple talking points that illustrate your message so that anyone can understand it. Make sure the talking points are in everything you do leading up to and during Problem Gambling Awareness Month.

For example, you decide the message is:

"Gambling can be fun, but problem gambling can destroy lives."

TALKING POINTS

- Know what safe gambling looks like.
- Know the signs of problem gambling.
- Take action to help yourself or a loved one affected by problem gambling.

Below is a list of simple suggestions that can be implemented by an ADAMH board or service provider agency to raise awareness in the community related to gambling concerns and what resources can be accessed for help when needed.

MEDIA OUTREACH

1. Request Public Service Programming

Both radio and television stations make a commitment to airing public service information for the good of the community. You may be able to request an appearance on a public affairs show that will air during March. This will give you a no-cost opportunity to get your message out to the public.

2. Submit an Op/Ed to Your Local Newspaper

Write your own editorial about gambling awareness or customize the version included in the link below on the OhioMHAS website. The editorial may run in the print version of the newspaper or just online or both. Be sure to include your contact information for readers to connect with you or your organization.

3. Submit a Press Release to Your Local Newspaper

Write your own press release about gambling awareness or customize the version included in the link below on the OhioMHAS website. The press release can include a quote from the CEO/Executive Director of your agency or a quote from someone who has been helped by your agency – or from the family member of someone who received help. Be sure to include your contact information for readers to connect with you or your organization.

4. Submit an Article to the Newsletters of All Your Stakeholder Partners

Use your op/ed or press release to create a newsletter article for submission to organizational newsletters that are printed, distributed via e-news and emailed. Get it out to the organizations at least one month in advance of publication.

Consider sending a brief version to:

- churches
- schools/PTA/PTO/athletic groups
- senior centers
- medical centers/clinics/doctors' offices/dentists
- veterans' centers
- other...

5. Prepare and Schedule Tweets and Facebook Posts

Use your message and talking points to promote the issue and direct people to your resources (or state resources): the Problem Gambling Helpline @ 1-800-589-9966, a dedicated website (org.ohio.gov), or your agency's website.

6. Purchase a Newspaper Ad or Radio PSA Spots

Use the *Until* campaign or a locally developed campaign to buy print space or radio time to get the message out. Make it clear that this is a public service campaign, and ask if they can give you two spots for every one paid for. Sometimes stations are willing to give more – 3 for every 1 purchased.

7. Purchase a Billboard (out-of-home) Advertisement

Use a modified *Until* campaign or a locally developed campaign to buy billboard space to get the message out. Make it clear that this is a public service campaign, and ask if they can give you two boards for every one paid for. Sometimes companies are willing to give more – 3 for every 1 purchased.

8. Plan a Community Event to Bring Neighbors into Your Location

Take every opportunity to invite neighbors, local officials, state leaders, your funders, your stakeholders into your space to build awareness and buy-in of your mission.

Consider the following:

- open houses
- ribbon-cuttings
- groundbreaking
- health fairs
- SWAP days
- beauty days
- KIDS days