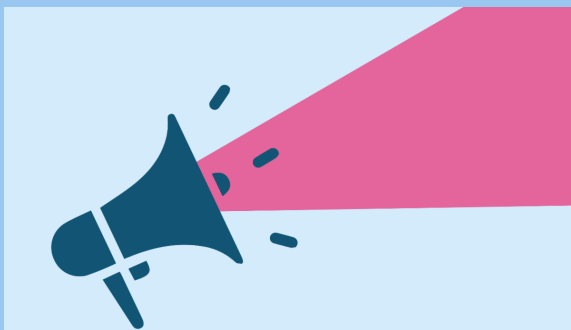


Quarterly News & Updates

Spring | 2024

Welcome to the Division on Addiction's Spring Quarterly Newsletter!

New Grant Funding!



The Division on Addiction is proud to announce three new grant awards!

Ms. Nakita Sconsoni received funding from the [Cambridge Community Foundation](#) to partially fund 52 issues of [The Brief Addiction Science Information Source \(BASIS\)](#). We will also encourage [Cambridge Health Alliance \(CHA\)](#) providers and patients to subscribe to The BASIS' weekly email service and offer strategies for integrating The BASIS' [addiction-related resources](#) into CHA providers' practices. We will translate select resources into languages spoken by CHA patients.

Ms. Caitlyn Matykiewicz received funding from the [National Council on Problem Gambling](#) to partner with the [Everett Haitian Community Center](#) to provide Everett Haitian community members with linguistically and culturally appropriate problem gambling prevention materials to (1) Reduce stigma about problem gambling in the Everett Haitian community, (2) Improve knowledge about problem gambling in the Everett Haitian community, and (3) Increase information-seeking and community support for problem gambling in the Everett Haitian community.

Upcoming Events

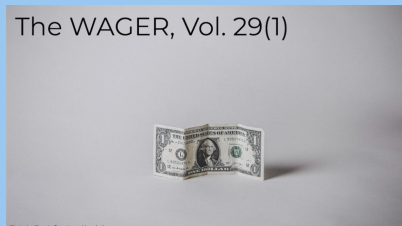


[The MA Technical Assistance Center for Problem Gambling Treatment \(M-TAC\)](#) is hosting a training titled, "Cultivating Cultural Humility in Practice: A critical self-reflection journey" on June 21 from 11:00am-1:00pm. Click [here](#) to register and learn more.

We are proud to partner with Health Resources in Action to produce M-TAC trainings and resources, which are funded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Office of Problem Gambling Services.

Did You Know?

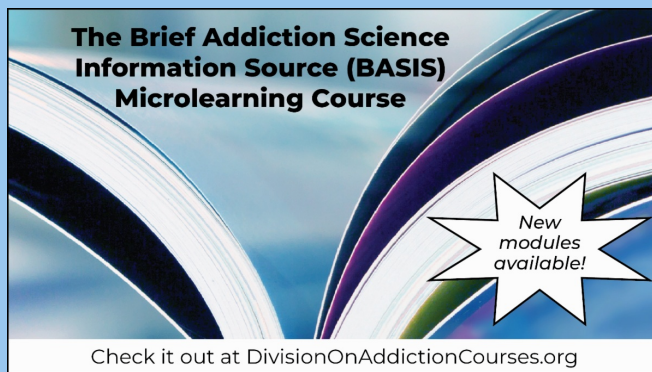
The WAGER, Vol. 29(1)



Financial consequences associated with gambling are common and can impact both

Dr. Sarah Nelson received funding from the [Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility](#) to continue to improve and streamline the [Computerized Assessment & Referral System \(CARS\)](#) with programmer, Scarvel Harris. The funding will support the development of a single-module version of CARS, CARS-Revised (CARS-R), that will replace prior versions. This funding will also support ongoing tasks related to user support and maintaining CARS, in addition to creating a Quick Guide to inform users on the transition to this streamlined version of CARS.

Outreach Corner



We are proud to announce that **four new modules** have been added to The BASIS Microlearning Course! These new modules cover addiction research findings from 2022-2023. Check out [our course website](#) for more information!

We are grateful to DraftKings, Inc. for providing financial support for assembling content from The BASIS into this CE program.

the person gambling and their loved ones. A recent study explored how people who have been negatively impacted by their own or someone else's gambling addressed the financial risks and harms associated with gambling. The findings indicated that most gamblers and affected others often overlooked the consequences of gambling until the financial burden prevented them from meeting their essential needs. For some, this resulted in unstable housing and heavy debt. Despite these repercussions, participants still attempted to conceal their financial instability for fear that they would be judged or stigmatized. Sharing first-person stories about Gambling Disorder might be one way to reduce the persistent stigma associated with this condition. Read more about this study at [The BASIS](#), and browse our first-person stories [here](#).

“Responsible drinking” is an ambiguous concept with no universal definition or practical guidance for individuals who consume alcohol. [Dr. Debi LaPlante and colleagues](#) recently identified five barriers to defining responsible drinking and provided some solutions to those barriers. The first barrier that the authors encountered was a lack of a clear and consistent definition. The alcohol industry, academics, and government agencies all use vague definitions to define responsible drinking, or no definitions at all. The second barrier stems from the fact that responsible drinking is determined by social

Research Spotlight



norms and preferences, making it difficult to create a shared definition. Third, it is difficult to create a definition that is applicable to a variety of audiences. The fourth barrier stems from the perceived political divide over responsible drinking. Responsible drinking critics argue that the term has been adopted by the alcohol industry to advance their own interests, leading some to reject the use of the term altogether. The fifth and final barrier relates to the research findings that indicate that alcohol consumption is not safe at any level. Some argue that responsible drinking might not be feasible if there is no “safe” level of drinking.

LaPlante and her colleagues proposed some solutions to these barriers. First, experts should develop a consensus on the fundamental principles of responsible drinking, keeping in mind responsible drinking’s context-dependent nature, the potential need for targeted definitions, and the imperative to update the terminology to maintain consistency with modern research. Secondly, these principles should be used to create definitions for both individuals and institutions. These definitions should be tested among representatives from their target audiences to gauge their understanding and acceptance of the new definitions. If you’d like a full copy of this article, contact us at info@divisiononaddiction.org.

Dr. Debi LaPlante says “Clarifying the meaning of responsible drinking will help with public health messaging and communication. We’re excited to be working on a new measure of responsible drinking that we’re calling The Responsible Drinking Index. We hope to be able to share this new tool in the coming year.”

Meet the Team

Kira Landauer, MPH

Community Health Educator Supervisor

Kira Landauer, MPH is a Community Health Educator Supervisor with the Division on Addiction. She joined the Division in 2020. Ms. Landauer contributes to multiple capacity-building and education projects, including the [Massachusetts Technical Assistance Center for Problem Gambling Treatment \(M-TAC\)](#), where she is the Technical Assistance Coordinator for the Boston region. She is a writer for [The Brief Addiction Science Information Source \(BASIS\)](#) and manages various outreach activities, including overseeing the Division’s [Gambling Disorder Screening Day](#). In her free time, she enjoys hiking, cooking, traveling, and learning about history.



Faculty & Staff Updates



Image (left to right): Caitlyn Matykiewicz, MPH, Nakita Sconsoni, MSW, and Kira Landauer, MPH

On May 17, our Community Health Educator team attended the inaugural Massachusetts Problem Gambling Conference, hosted by the [Massachusetts Department of Public Health Office of Problem Gambling Services](#). This year's conference theme was, "Equity in Action: Working Together to Mitigate Harms Across the Commonwealth," and our Community Health Educators presented a workshop titled, "Innovations in Gambling Screening: Identifying and Addressing Barriers with a Health Equity Lens." They also learned about other gambling-related topics from wonderful speakers and engaged with healthcare providers and organizations from across the state!

Our Latest Publications

LaPlante, D. A., & Nelson, S. E. (2023). Towards a systems-based responsible gambling approach to mitigating harmful gambling: Delineating industry's role in gambling safety. *The Journal of Gambling Business and Economics*, 16(2), 45-64. <https://www.ubplj.org/index.php/jgbe/article/view/2117>

Shaffer, P. M., Helm, A., Andre, M., Reaves, H., Bruzios, K., Harter, J., Smelson D., & Shaffer, H. J. (2023). Rapidly adapting a multicomponent treatment for persons experiencing chronic homelessness with comorbid substance use and mental health disorders during the Coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. *Medical Research Archives, European Society of Medicine*, 11(11). <https://doi.org/10.18103/mra.v11i11.4507>

Shaffer, P. M., Smelson, D., Helm, A., Gaba, A., Marcus, S., & Shaffer, H. J. (2023). Reentry service engagement among a reentry population with co-occurring mental health and opioid use disorders in Massachusetts jails. *Journal of Psychology and Psychotherapy Research*, 10, 85-96. <https://doi.org/10.12974/2313-1047.2023.10.08>

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