

ANNUAL REPORT



A Journey of Hope, Healing and Renewal



PROBLEM GAMBLING
— SERVICES —
A Network of Comprehensive Resources

2021

A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER



Fiscal Year 2021 was a difficult and challenging year not only for the people of Rhode Island but also the people of the world. The pandemic hit harder than any of us could have imagined. Rhode Island, known for our beautiful beaches and plentiful restaurants was, in effect closed, bringing businesses to a halt. Many people lost their jobs and loved ones during this time. Hope, healing, and renewal seemed distant, if not impossible.

The work of helping problem gamblers, however, continued. As the Program Manager, I am proud of the work our team of Providers were able to accomplish. Without hesitation, the already difficult work of helping someone whose life has been torn apart by the grip of this disorder, gambling, had to be done virtually. Fast track learning of how to use ZOOM and Facetime, mediums which in the past would be frowned upon by our industry, was set into motion.

The Problem Gambling Services Program did not miss a beat. Every client received services, individual, peer, group, and family all virtually. Some clients opted for just a call; others wanted to see their providers face. In all, we provided two thousand, five hundred seventy-seven (2,577) services to two hundred fifty three (253) people.

My purpose in creating this annual report is to provide its readers with an insight into accomplishments the Fiscal Year 2021 (July 2020 thru June 2021).

Nancy A. Murray
Program Manager

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PROBLEM GAMBLING SERVICES

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2012 Legislation passed requiring the Rhode Island Lottery to establish Problem Gambling Programs, with all funding (no less than one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) per year) to be provided by Twin River and Tiverton (then Newport Grand). Subsequent Legislation increased that minimum amount to one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars (\$125,000) per year. This Statutory requirement (R.I.G.L. 42-61.2-14) provides us with unlimited funding for our Problem Gambling Programs. The minimum amount was increased to two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) in 2021.

Problem Gambling Service (PGS) has 24/7 Peer Support available for Helpline “warm transfers” for people in crisis and for those seeking treatment information. We have centralized the Intake/Assessment process which enables a caller to meet with a provider within twenty-four (24) hours or less from the initial call for help.

There are two (2) resource centers - one is at the Substance Use and Leadership Council in Warwick and the other is at Holy Trinity Church in Tiverton.

Training for counselors and faculty at local colleges and universities was developed. The fall semester of 2020 was set aside as the time to begin providing training to college and university Resident Assistants to help identify students with gambling problems. This was placed on hold because of COVID.



Training has been provided to the Opioid Treatment Providers and Mental Health Agencies throughout the state on how to screen and identify problem gamblers in their treatment settings, who may have gambling disorder as a co-occurring disorder.

We work as partners with Twin River and Tiverton Casinos on all aspects of problem gambling, including Self-Exclusion Programs, how to assist a person in need, and being proactive in providing information on availability of services for problem gamblers.

Data is collected on those accessing services in Rhode Island and used to identify groups for targeted prevention. A survey of gambling co-occurring with opioid users was completed; and those results have been shared throughout the Northeast and was presented at the 2019 Maine conference. Currently, a pilot project is being completed by one of the Opioid agencies. The study is for a year, looking at patients when they first enter opioid treatment and then at intervals of time across the first year of treatment. The purpose of this study is to validate the findings in the original study which demonstrated forty-five percent (45%) of illicit drug free opioid clients had developed a gambling problem. We have met with the Presiding Justice of the Superior Court with regards to working with the courts to identify crimes associated with gambling disorder and refer defendants for screening and the possibility of mandating treatment. A presentation will be made to the Judges in October 2021.

There are currently twenty-three (23) treatment providers in our network. In FY 2021 two thousand, five hundred seventy-seven (2,577) services were provided to two hundred fifty-three (253) people.

Program expenditures reimbursed by Twin River and Tiverton Casinos are as follows:

Fiscal Year 2013	\$ 3,667.75
Fiscal Year 2014	\$ 96,268.74
Fiscal Year 2015	\$ 126,791.92
Fiscal Year 2016	\$ 141,234.50
Fiscal Year 2017	\$ 147,503.90
Fiscal Year 2018	\$ 265,658.88
Fiscal Year 2019	\$ 378,776.26
Fiscal Year 2020	\$ 489,437.64
Fiscal Year 2021	\$ 347,371.60 *

TOTAL

\$1,996,711.19

***Through April 2021**



JOURNEY OF HOPE, HEALING AND RENEWAL

A FIRST RESPONDERS STORY

My name is Derek and I am writing this in regards to services I have received from RI Problem Gambling Services and in particular from my peer counselor, Shirley Hoak. I am a Police Officer, father of two and have been married now for 13 years. I began gambling as a sports better. Over a span of 12 plus years (beginning in 2004) I began to run into problems with my gambling and started racking debt utilizing credit cards to acquire money to place not only for online sports bets but to play online casino games. It started affecting my relationships, my career and how I felt about myself.

Because of the debt I was accumulating, my gambling came to light in January of 2018. As a result, I had reached out to EAP where I was set up with a therapist who was been trained in helping people with gambling problems. After one year we had parted ways. I thought I had my gambling under control since I had not placed any form of bets throughout that year of time. In August of 2019 I had relapsed and during that same month I had discovered RI PGS and was set up with Shirley. She is a certified gambling counselor and has her own lived experience with gambling. Since that time, I have been free of gambling and have been receiving services from Shirley, both individually and in group. The services Shirley has been providing are continually helping me not only with my life issues but have been showing me that I do not have to use gambling as an outlet. I've learned I can handle the ups and downs of life without using gambling to help me cope. Gambling cost me a great deal of money. It almost cost me the things that are most important to me - my wife and kids. One thing I can say for certain is that my life is so much better and more manageable now than it's ever been. I'm thankful RI PGS was there when I needed help and really grateful I met Shirley. My future now looks a lot brighter than it did 2 years ago.





AMBASSADORS OF HOPE

As Rhode Island and the rest of the world was trying to manage during the pandemic, Problem Gambling Services Peers continued to provide services to people affected by problem gambling.

Rhode Island is fortunate to have the Cadre of Peers that it does. These ambassadors of hope meet with the problem gambler where they are ...literally. Coffee shops, GA, dinners, etc.

Rhode Island Problem Gambling Services (PGS) has fully integrated Peer Services into its treatment program options. RI has been a leader in recognizing the value of peers with lived experience in working with individuals. A 2017 report by SAMHSA reviewed the “Value of Peers” and posed the question “Is Peer Recovery Coaching Effective?” The current body of research on the topic shows people receiving peer recovery support often report the following:

- Improved relationship with treatment providers and retention
- Increased overall satisfaction with overall treatment experience
- Increased self-esteem and self-confidence
- Increased self-control and ability to bring about change in their lives
- Improved access to social supports
- Decreased criminal justice involvement and emergency utilization services

Peer Services also:

Reduced relapse rates for their families who struggle with Problem and/or Disordered Gambling. Four (4) Peers work with PGS. They bring over seventeen (17) years of work experience and many more years of personal recovery experience to their work with clients.

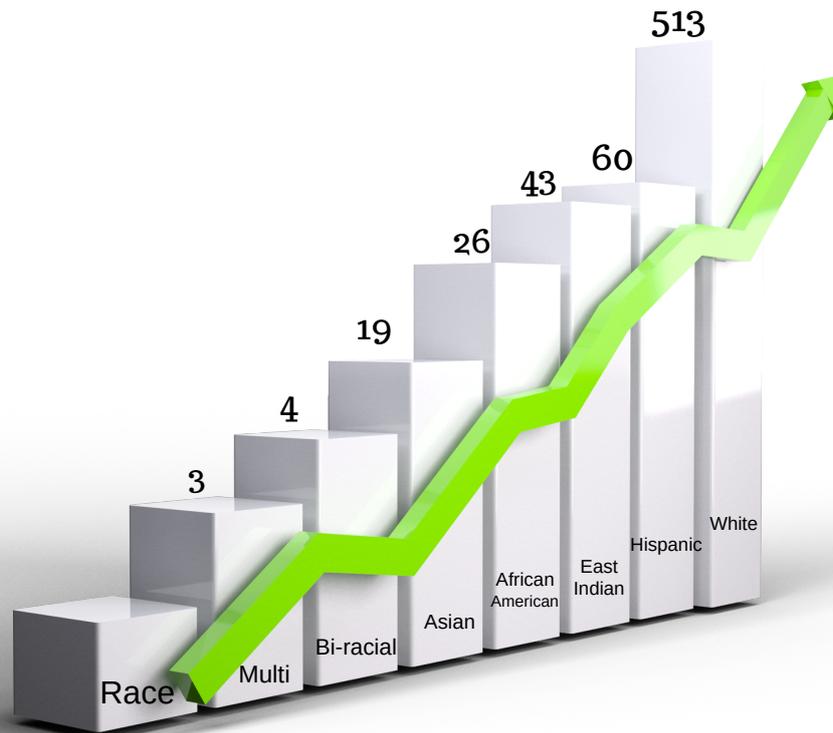
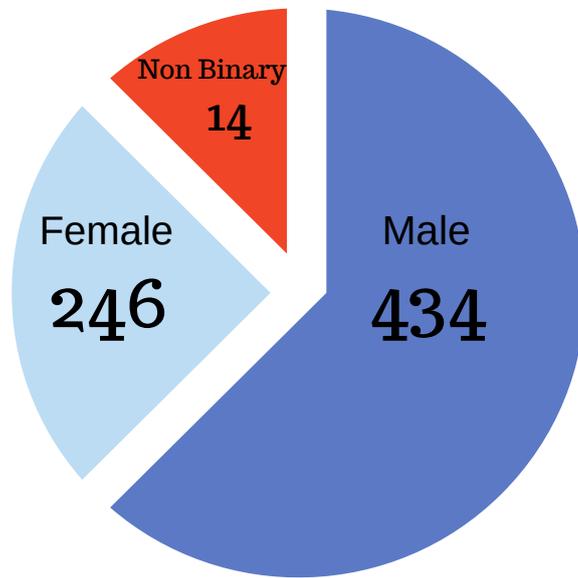
All the peers are certified gambling counselors at the National or State level. They are also trained Peer Recovery Support Specialists and/or Recovery Coaches. Peers offer person centered services. They recognize there are many pathways to recovery and support clients in choosing what works best for them.

Peer work is based in hope and embodies the concepts that treatment works, and recovery is possible. It offers a unique intersection between lived experience and evidence-based interventions and treatment. Peers represent hope fulfilled for others suffering with a gambling addiction that they too can gain an overall sense of self-actualization, citizenship, health and wellness and a better quality of life for themselves and their families.



The Numbers

Gender



WHAT CLIENTS HAVE TO SAY

96 % of PGS Clients are:

- Satisfied with the services provided
- Feel they are treated with dignity and respect
- Have a say in their treatment
- Would recommend to family and friends

Thankful.





RESPONSIBLE GAMING

PGS providers and RI Lottery staff have made the responsible gaming message an integral part of their work.

The RI Lottery has made Responsible Gaming one of its priorities. A group of lottery employees comprise a Responsible Gaming Work Group, who focus on all elements set forth by the World Lottery Association Responsible Gaming Program.

This work group includes, the Acting Deputy Director, the Human Resources Admin Assistant, The Problem Gambling Program Manager, the Director of Sales, the Director of Marketing, the IT Director, and the Validations Manager.

All of the World Lottery Association's elements are included in the RI Lottery responsible gaming program. This year, as in the past the RI Lottery participated in the gift responsibly holiday campaign, responsible gaming week and Problem Gambling Awareness Month. (PGAM)

As a business, the Rhode Island Lottery has a responsibility to maximize revenues. However, as a State Agency, the challenge lies in maximizing revenues while maintaining the trust and best interest of the citizens of the State of Rhode Island. It has always been, and will continue to be, the Rhode Island Lottery's goal to achieve both.

We encourage everyone to Play Responsibly and continue to enjoy the Lottery as it was intended when it started in 1974 - a fun, positive way to generate additional revenue for the State of Rhode Island.



OUTLOOK OF HOPE

As PGS looks to the future, we are hoping to become a more robust treatment provider by offering additional support groups, as well as an Intensive Outpatient Program.

PGS, along with its partner, the Rhode Island Council on Problem Gambling (RICPG), will continue to raise the awareness of Problem Gambling by co-hosting an annual conference, continuing to provide education and trainings throughout the state, and working with the Criminal Justice system to identify and refer problem gamblers to treatment.



OUR SPONSORS





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