May 2019

Older Americans Month: Connect, Create, Contribute

Connect

Each May, we join the Administration for Community Living in recognition of Older Americans Month. This year, the ACL’s theme is “Connect, Create, Contribute,” encouraging seniors to Connect with social supports like family, friends, and services; Create by staying active and taking up new hobbies; and Contribute their wisdom and life experiences to improve the community at large.¹

We support Older Americans Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about problem gambling and the confidential services available to senior citizens and loved ones through Florida’s Problem Gambling HelpLine, 888-ADMIT-IT (888-236-4848).

The first thing we must do is Connect older Americans and their loved ones with the services and supports available for those suffering from a gambling problem through the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine. Let’s join together to raise awareness of this invaluable service, available 24/7 every day of the year. Whether for themselves, a friend, or a family member, seniors can count on the HelpLine.

Create

You may be surprised to learn that older Americans are not immune from the grips of Gambling Disorder. Approximately 20% of all individuals who call 888-ADMIT-IT are aged 55 or older, and a staggering 650,000 of Florida’s older adults report having a problem due to gambling.

Gambling Disorder is also known as the Hidden Addiction, because it is not characterized by the recognizable physical signs present with other conditions. On top of that, those who are suffering are often hesitant or afraid to reach out for help due to the prevailing stigma.

Problem gambling is treatable. We must endeavor to Create an environment free of stigma and full of support networks. Together, we can strengthen our communities to empower those suffering from this addiction to seek help and ultimately receive the treatment that puts them on the path to recovery.

Contribute

In Connecting and Creating, we all have roles to play. A community that embraces individuals and ultimately helps them overcome personal struggles is a powerful force, but strong social fiber is not created overnight and starts with the individual.

So, what can you do to Contribute? Communication is paramount to any community and makes a good first goal. If someone is struggling personally, will s/he find open ears and arms? Make a habit of showing others that you care about what’s going on in their lives, and let them know that you’ll be there should they need anything.

Next, raise awareness of the resources available. Put them in your community newsletter or post them in the clubhouse. You can start with this one: If you or someone you know is suffering from a gambling problem, help and resources are available 24/7 by calling Florida’s Problem Gambling HelpLine at 888-ADMIT-IT (888-236-4848).
References: