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WEB LETTER

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FLORIDA COUNCIL ON
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Shine the Light on Problem Gambling During National Women's Health Week

National Women's Health Week, which begins on Mother's Day and this year runs May 12-18, 2024, was officially established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 1999 to promote a better understanding of women's health issues among women of all ages.¹ This is a great time to shine the light on how problem gambling impacts women, both as gamblers and as loved ones.

How are you today? Even asking this simple question can make a difference with health issues that may not be easily observable on the outside, such as problem gambling. By opening up a conversation that is a little deeper, it can become very healing for either person. Sometimes, we just need to speak our thoughts aloud and be heard. This is especially true if you have found yourself gambling more and more as an escape from negative emotions, work, children and family stress, and even financial stress. **For some, gambling can progress from an escape from life stressors into an addiction.**

While the issue of problem gambling is unfortunately still shrouded in shame as a whole, women who are impacted face an even higher level of shame. But regardless of how society perceives gambling and the people who participate, gambling disorder does not discriminate. As gambling becomes more and more accessible, it can become a secret escape, which can bring women down a very slippery slope into possible disordered gambling. There is nothing wrong in asking for help, which is always reachable and available for free in Florida!

If you feel as if you or a loved one may be headed down this path, call or text the 24/7, Confidential, and Multilingual [888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine](https://www.gamblinghelp.org) for Florida to get immediate assistance and connection to free resources.

There are a few ways to take care of yourself without feeling like you are taking time away from others in your life. They are **relaxation, leisure, and life balance**. We all get into ruts and forget to stop and relax from everyday stressors. Taking a minute during your day and just closing your eyes and breathing even for a minute will help calm you for the rest of the day. As you practice this and get more comfortable with it, add a minute every day. Simple stretching in the office or at home for a few minutes will also move any tension out of your body, so it can relax more through whatever your day gives you. If you can take a break for a little longer, get outside and take a short walk, even if it is only a block. There is calmness in the sights, sounds, and beauty of the natural world that we often forget due to the conveniences of technology.



Shine the Light on Problem Gambling During National Women's Health Week (Continued)

Leisure is free time or fun time, whatever that might be for you. It is always better if you can enjoy this with others. Sometimes, it can be difficult to escape the thoughts that pop up when we are alone. Leisure can be anything that you enjoy, which relaxes you, and which gives you a social outlet. **Gambling is far from the only form of leisure, and if it is causing problems or is no longer fun, then it is time to reach out to the [888-ADMIT-IT Helpline](https://www.888-admit-it.com).** If problem gambling has taken over your life, think back to the other things you enjoyed before. What are the barriers that stop you from enjoying these things?

I balance my life completely by nourishing my soul, as well as my mind and body.

Lastly, **balance** in life can be difficult and at times overwhelming. Because of this, many women reach out in unhealthy ways to relieve the pressure. Behaviors like overeating, drinking too much,

shopping/spending compulsively, or problem gambling are just some of the ways. Here are the areas to think about that we have to balance daily. Are any of these out of balance for you? If so, what can you do to shift the balance?

1. Home
2. Work
3. Family
4. Spiritually
5. Physically
6. Socially
7. Leisure
8. Emotionally
9. Education/Career

These are areas to take into consideration for yourself and others, especially while giving a helping hand for a friend or family member. We all need a little help to navigate this tumultuous and ever-changing world we live in. Ask for help and ask if your loved ones need anything. **If problem gambling is a factor, there's one number to remember in Florida: call or text 888-ADMIT-IT.**



References

1. "National Women's Health Week." *Holiday Calendar - National Women's Health Week*, www.holidaycalendar.io/holiday/national-womens-health-week. Accessed 15 Apr. 2024.