

Quarterly News & Updates

Spring | 2025

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

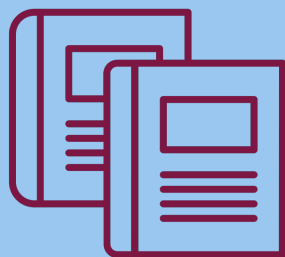
Announcement

Division on Addiction 2024 Annual Report



The Division on Addiction is proud to release our 2024 Annual Report! This report showcases our 2024 efforts to alleviate addiction-related social, medical, and economic burdens through research, education, training, and outreach, with a focus on how we incorporated lived experience into our work. [Click here](#) to read the report and to access reports from previous years.

Outreach Corner



With funding from the [National Council on Problem Gambling](#), we partnered with the [Everett Haitian Community Center \(EHCC\)](#) to develop, translate, and disseminate a culturally-tailored problem gambling prevention booklet to Haitian community members across

Upcoming Events



Drs. Heather Gray and Sarah Nelson will be presenting at the 2025 Responsible Gambling Conference sponsored by the [Responsible Gaming Association of New Mexico](#). Dr. Gray will be presenting about “Self-harm in Problem Gambling: The Role of Interpersonal Factors and Implications for Treatment,” while Dr. Nelson will be a part of a panel discussing “Building Cultures of Recovery in Tribal Communities.” [Click here](#) to register and learn more.

Stay tuned! The [Massachusetts Technical Assistance Center for Problem Gambling Treatment](#) (M-TAC) will be updating their [live training calendar](#) to include additional trainings on Gambling Disorder screening, assessment, treatment, and more! In the meantime, consider enrolling in some of M-TAC’s [online, enduring courses](#).

Massachusetts. This booklet aims to destigmatize problem gambling and provide education on the risk factors for Gambling Disorder, signs and symptoms, and available resources/treatment options.

[Click here](#) to download a Haitian Creole translated version of this resource.

[Click here](#) to download an English translated version of this resource.

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?



Rates of tobacco use in the U.S. are disproportionately high among members of sexual and gender minority groups. Tobacco harm reduction approaches offer flexible options for individuals who want to moderate their tobacco use rather than completely abstain from it. But how do sexual and gender minority youth perceive and engage in these harm reduction strategies? One study interviewed 100 sexual and gender minority youth (aged 18-25) who were current/former cigarette smokers. Four key themes emerged from these interviews. The first was related to *individual strategies used to reduce tobacco-related harms*, such as replacing cigarettes with vapes. The second referenced *tobacco use as a part of a broader range of societal harms* in which social factors, such as discrimination, play an underlying role in participants' tobacco use. The third theme highlighted *pragmatism and non-judgmental framing* of the harm reduction strategies, such as emphasizing moderation versus abstinence. And finally, the fourth theme described the strategies as being *person-centered* by catering to people's unique recovery needs. These findings highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to minimizing the harms associated with tobacco use. Read more about this study at [The BASIS](#).

Research Spotlight

Open science practices, such as research pre-registration and open data access, improve the quality and replicability of research. However, the use of open science practices in gambling research is limited and needs improvement. [Dr. Debi LaPlante and colleagues](#) published a brief report about how the use of open science principles and practices in

Research Spotlight



gambling research has changed during the past 5 years. They surveyed 65 gambling studies research stakeholders and compared their responses to a sample of stakeholders from a similar survey conducted in 2019.

They found that the majority of participants reported engaging in open science practices, but minorities reported doing so for any particular practice. This suggests that gambling research stakeholders are open to incorporating these practices into their work, but they are selective about which practices they choose. Stakeholders identified several benefits to open science practices, including research

transparency, improved research access, and increased scientific productivity through data sharing. Comparisons with the sample of stakeholders from 2019 indicated some increases in open science practices and areas in need of improvement. This indicates a growing interest in the use of open science principles, but this shift is not yet widespread. Notably, participants in the current study and the 2019 study were concerned about adopting open science practices for fear of losing control of their intellectual property and not receiving credit for their work. Dr. LaPlante and colleagues suggest ways to improve the likelihood of open science practices being used in gambling research. If you'd like a full copy of this article, contact us at info@divisiononaddiction.org.

Dr. LaPlante says: "It's interesting to see how open science practices are and are not changing for gambling research. I think this area will continue to grow and evolve, and I hope that it will make a solid contribution to the integrity of research that is published."

Meet the Team

Heather Gray, PhD

Director of Academic Affairs

*Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry,
Harvard Medical School*

Dr. Heather Gray is Director of Academic Affairs at the Division on Addiction and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. She earned her PhD in social psychology from Harvard University and completed postdoctoral training at Boston University. One of her priorities is sharing research findings with community members and the healthcare professionals who serve them, such as through her involvement with the

[Massachusetts Technical Assistance Center for Problem Gambling Treatment](#)

Some of her recent research concerns [suicidality in problem gambling](#), [gamblers' views of harm reduction programs](#), and the concept of [responsible drinking](#). She is



also a Project Lead for the capacity building component of a Native American Research Centers for Health (NARCH) program evaluating the implementation of a [culturally-grounded mental health curriculum](#) in seven Tribal nations. She and her husband are raising three kids and an impractical number of pets in her New Hampshire hometown.

Faculty & Staff Updates

Congratulations!



Nakita E. Sconsoni, MSW

has been promoted to

**Community Health Educator:
Continuing Education
Specialist**

Division on Addiction at
Cambridge Health Alliance



Join us in congratulating [Ms. Nakita Sconsoni](#) on her promotion to Community Health Educator: Continuing Education Specialist. Ms. Sconsoni joined the Division in 2022 after earning her Masters in Social Work from the University of New Hampshire. Click [here](#) to learn more about Division on Addiction staff members.



Our Latest Publications

McCulloch, S. P., Louderback, E. R., & LaPlante, D. A. (2024). Examining factors that hinder the efficacy of responsible gambling messages: Modeling predictors and effects of responsible gambling message fatigue. *International Gambling Studies*, 25(1), 46–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14459795.2024.2409430>

Tom, M. A., Edson, T. C., (2024). Testing a system for discerning blackjack-playing tendencies from card-by-card hand histories: An initial simulation using bots. *The Journal of Gambling Business and Economics*, 17(1), 117-134. <https://www.ubplj.org/index.php/jgbe/article/view/2225>

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