

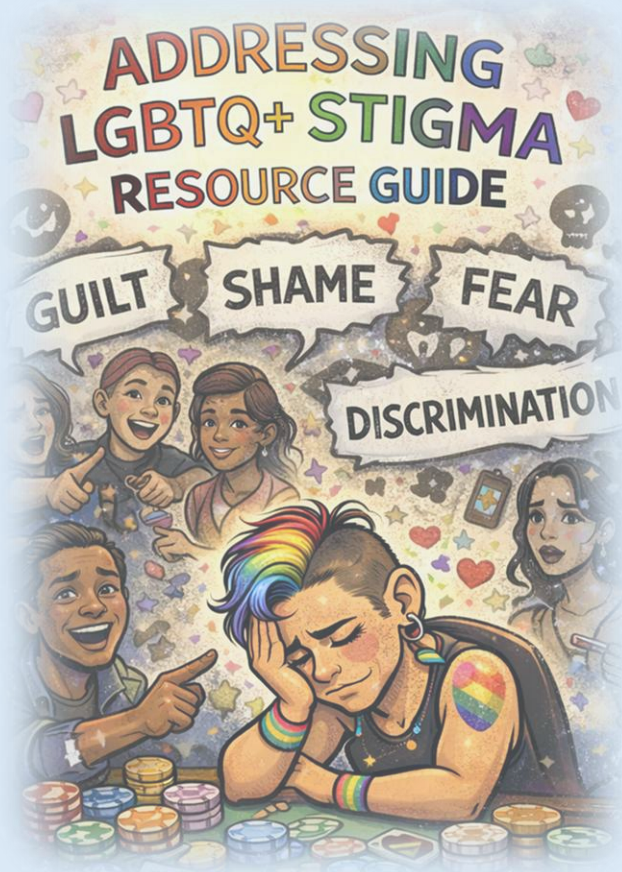


Stigma & Language Guide





Introduction



The book includes:

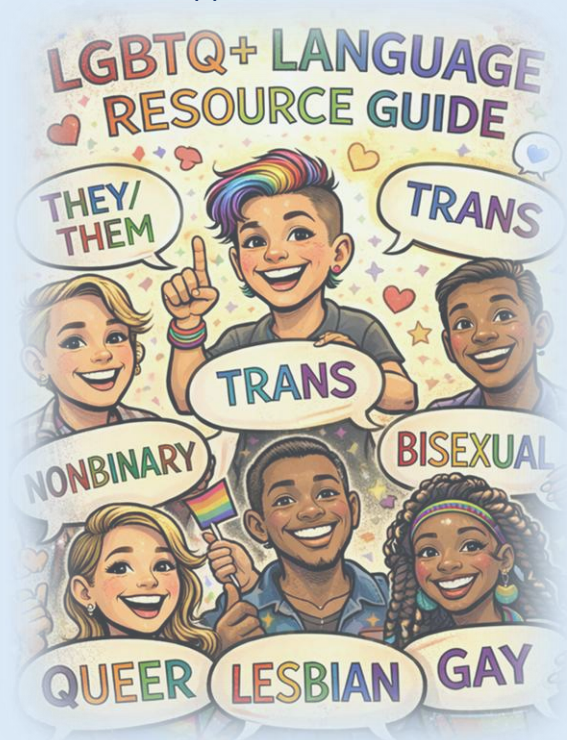
- Core principles for stigma-free communication
- LGBTQ+ identities and respectful language
- Pronoun guidance and repair models
- Understanding minority stress and its link to gambling harms
- Practical language swaps
- Why affirming language matters in gambling-harm support

Introduction

This resource book transforms the Stigma & Language Guide into a structured, accessible, and LGBTQ+ affirming companion for anyone working with or supporting people affected by gambling harms. It is designed for frontline staff, volunteers, community partners, and organisations seeking to communicate safely, reduce stigma, and build trust with LGBTQ+ individuals.

The content is grounded in:

- Trauma-informed practice
- Public health framing
- Cultural competence
- Lived experience leadership
- Identity-affirming language and approaches





Purpose & Core-Principles

This guide supports staff, volunteers, and partners to communicate in ways that:

- Reduce stigma
- Affirm LGBTQ+ identities
- Avoid shame-based or blaming language
- Recognise the impact of minority stress and discrimination
- Support safe disclosure of gambling harms
- Build trust and psychological safety





Core Principles

Person-First, Not Problem-First

Use language that centres the person, not the behaviour.

- Use: “Person experiencing gambling harms”, “Person affected by someone else’s gambling”
- Avoid: “Addict”, “Problem gambler”, “Compulsive gambler”

Public Health Framing

Gambling harms are shaped by:

- Product design
- Targeted marketing
- Accessibility
- Social inequalities
- Minority stress

They are not caused by personal weakness or lack of willpower.



Trauma-Informed Approach

- Prioritise safety, transparency, and choice
- Avoid shame-based language
- Repair quickly and simply when mistakes happen

LGBTQ+ Affirming Practice

- Use correct name, pronouns, and identity terms
- Avoid assumptions about gender, sexuality, partners, or family structures
- Recognise chosen family as legitimate and important



Understanding Minority Stress, Unique Stress & Gambling Harms

LGBTQ+ people experience higher rates of gambling harms not just because of their identity, but because of stressors linked to discrimination and inequality.

Minority Stress is a chronic stress caused by:

- Homophobia
- Biphobia
- Transphobia
- Internalised Stigma
- Fear of Harassment
- Rejection by Family
- Rejection by Faith

Minority Stress Impacts on Gambling

- Coping Through Escapism
- Using Gambling to Numb or Distract
- Seeking Belonging on Gambling Spaces
- Internalised Stigma
- Impulsive or Risk based Behaviours





Unique Stress of LGBTQ+ People

LGBTQ+ people often face unique stressors rooted in discrimination, identity-based shame, social isolation, and navigating services that may feel unsafe or invalidating, all of which can heighten vulnerability to gambling harms.

Unique Stressors LGBTQ+ People Face

- Targeted marketing (e.g., Pride sponsorships)
- Social Isolation
- Lack of Culturally Competent Support
- Housing Instability, Linked to Rejection
- Financial Precarity due to Discrimination
- Navigating Unsafe or Invalidating Services

Minority Stress Impacts on Gambling

- Coping through Escapism
- Coping with Loneliness
- Managing Emotional Pain
- Seeking Financial Stability, for transition surgery as example
- Feeling in Control





Intersectional Stress

What is Intersectionality in LGBTQ+ people

Intersectionality is a framework that helps us understand how different aspects of a person's identity, such as race, class, disability, age, faith, and immigration status, interact to shape their experiences of discrimination and privilege. For LGBTQ+ people, these overlapping identities can compound the effects of homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia, influencing everything from safety and visibility to mental health, access to services, and community belonging. An intersectional lens recognises that LGBTQ+ people are not a single group with a single story; their needs, barriers, and strengths are shaped by the unique combination of identities they hold, and meaningful inclusion requires acknowledging and addressing these layered realities.

LGBTQ+ People who have intersectionality's May experience compounded stress, increasing vulnerability to gambling harms.

Such as

- Living in Poverty
- Neurodiversity
- Migrants
- People of Colour
- Disabled





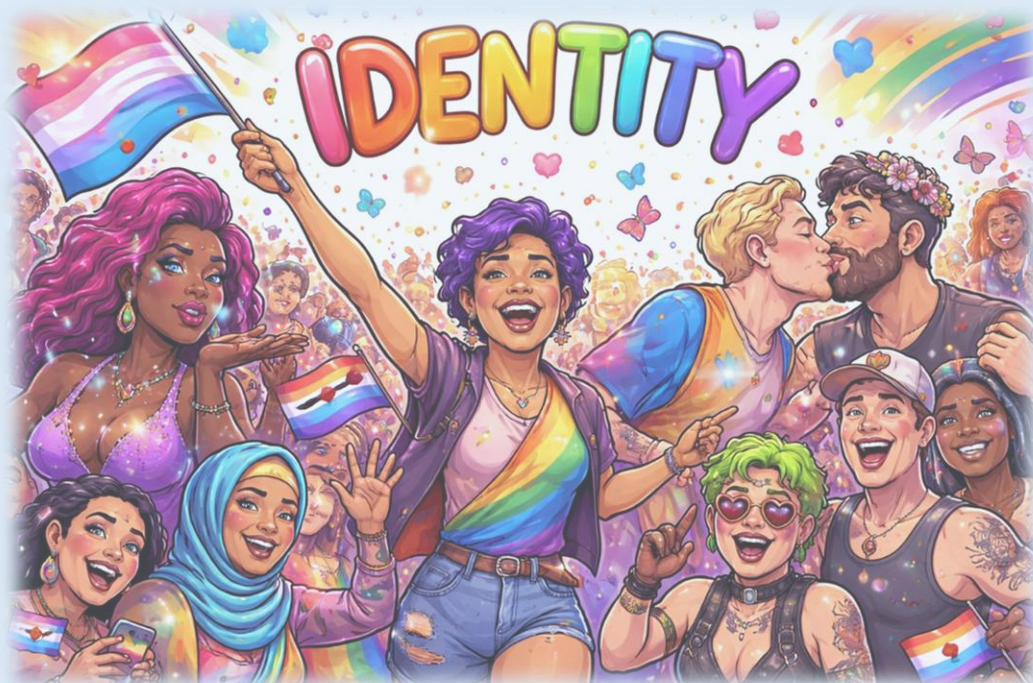
LGBTQ+ Identities – Clear, Respectful Explanations

Sexualities

- Gay: A man attracted to men; sometimes used more broadly.
- Lesbian: A woman or nonbinary person attracted to women.
- Bisexual: Attraction to more than one gender.
- Pansexual: Attraction regardless of gender.
- Queer: A reclaimed umbrella term; follow the person's lead.
- Asexual (Ace): Little or no sexual attraction.
- Aromantic (Aro): Little or no romantic attraction.
- Demisexual/Demiromantic: Attraction develops after emotional connection.
- Questioning: Exploring or unsure, a valid identity.

Gender Identities

- Transgender (Trans): Gender differs from sex assigned at birth.
- Cisgender (Cis): Gender matches sex assigned at birth.
- Nonbinary: Gender outside male/female categories.
- Genderqueer: Challenges traditional gender categories.
- Genderfluid: Gender shifts over time.
- Agender: No gender identity.
- Intersex: Born with sex characteristics outside typical definitions.
- Two-Spirit: A sacred identity in some Indigenous cultures.





Pronouns – What They Are and Why They Matter

Pronouns reflect identity and dignity. Using them correctly builds trust and safety.

Common Pronouns

- she/her
- he/him
- they/them
- she/they, he/they
- neopronouns (ze/zir, xe/xem)

How to Ask Respectfully

- “What pronouns would you like me to use?”
- “How would you like me to refer to you?”

Avoid the phrase “preferred pronouns.”

How to Repair After Misgendering

Mistakes happen. Repairing them well prevents harm.

Five-Step Repair Model:

1. Acknowledge quickly: “Sorry – I meant they.”
2. Correct yourself: Use the correct pronoun immediately.
3. Move on: Don’t over-apologise.
4. Avoid repeating the mistake: Use their name if unsure.
5. Repair if needed: “I’m committed to getting it right.”

What NOT to do:

- Don’t explain why you made the mistake
- Don’t joke about it
- Don’t avoid the person afterwards
- Don’t say “I’m terrible with pronouns”





Gambling Harms Language – What to Avoid & What to Use

Avoid

- “Addict”, “problem gambler”, “compulsive gambler”
- “They’ve ruined their life”
- “They just need to stop”
- “It’s their responsibility”
- “They’re in denial”

Use

- “Person experiencing gambling harms”
- “Person who finds it hard to cut down or stop”
- “Person affected by someone else’s gambling”
- “Harms linked to stress, inequality, and product design”
- “Not yet ready or able to make changes”

Combined Example

Instead of: “Problem gamblers in the LGBTQ+ community often lose everything.”

Use: “Some LGBTQ+ people experience gambling harms, often linked to stress, discrimination, and targeted gambling environments. These harms can affect finances, mental health, relationships, and chosen family.”

Practical “Swap This for That” List

Avoid

Use Instead

Problem gambler	Person experiencing gambling harms
Addict	Person who currently finds it hard to stop
Clean/dirty	Currently gambling / not currently gambling
Relapse	Return to gambling after a period of change
Vulnerable people	People exposed to higher levels of risk
Preferred pronouns	Pronouns
Both genders	All genders
Opposite sex	Another gender



Why This Matters in Gambling-Harms Support

LGBTQ+ people may already be carrying:

- Shame
- Minority stress
- Trauma
- Financial precarity
- Social isolation
- Family rejection
- Discrimination in services

Stigmatising Language or Misgendering Can:

- Shut down disclosure
- Increase shame
- Reduce engagement
- Worsen harms
- Prevent PGSI completion
- Block access to support

Affirming Language:

- Builds trust
- Increases safety
- Supports recovery
- Strengthens engagement
- Improves outcomes

Conclusion

Affirming, stigma-free language is not an optional extra, it is a core component of safe, effective gambling-harm support for LGBTQ+ people. By grounding conversations in dignity, cultural competence, and trauma-informed practice, services can create environments where LGBTQ+ individuals feel seen, respected, and empowered to seek help.

On-Going Support

Brighton & Hove LGBT Switchboard are here to support any needs that you may require, please reach out to

Ben.Howard@switchboard.org.uk