



Creating Safe and Inclusive Faith and Community Spaces for LGBTQ+ People Affected by Gambling Harm

A Guide for Faith Leaders,
Congregations and
Community Organisations



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A Guide for Faith Leaders, Congregations and Community Organisations

Faith communities, places of worship, and community organisations can play an important role in people's lives.

For many people, they offer:

- Belonging.
- Support.
- Friendship.
- Hope.
- Guidance.
- Community connection.
- Opportunities for healing and recovery.

However, we know from lived experience that many LGBTQ+ people affected by gambling harm can feel excluded from these spaces.

Some have experienced rejection because of their sexuality or gender identity.

Others fear judgement because of gambling-related harm, debt, addiction, or mental health difficulties.

For some people, these experiences overlap, creating multiple barriers to accessing support and belonging.

At Recover with Pride, we believe faith and community organisations can play a vital role in reducing stigma, promoting inclusion, and supporting recovery.

Understanding the Unique Experiences of LGBTQ+ People

LGBTQ+ people are not a homogenous group.

Every person's experience is different.

However, many LGBTQ+ people report experiences such as:

- Discrimination.
- Rejection.
- Isolation.
- Minority stress.
- Family conflict.
- Poor mental wellbeing.
- Fear of judgement.

When gambling harm is added to these experiences, the impact can be significant.

For some individuals, gambling may have developed alongside feelings of loneliness, shame, exclusion, or difficulties coping with life's challenges.

Creating spaces where people feel welcomed and accepted can make a meaningful difference.

Understand That Gambling Harm Is Not a Moral Failing

People affected by gambling harm often experience significant shame.

Many fear being judged or blamed.

Faith and community leaders can help by recognising that gambling harm is:

- A health and wellbeing issue.
- Often complex and multifaceted.
- Frequently linked with emotional distress.
- Something that can affect people from all backgrounds.

Avoid language that labels people as weak, irresponsible, or lacking character.

Instead, focus on compassion, understanding, and hope.

People are more likely to seek help when they feel safe from judgement.

Create an Environment Where LGBTQ+ People Feel Welcome

Many LGBTQ+ people affected by gambling harm tell us they worry about whether they will be accepted before they even walk through the door.

Consider asking:

- Would an LGBTQ+ person feel welcome here?
- Do our words and actions communicate acceptance?
- Do people see themselves reflected in our community?
- Have we challenged discrimination when it occurs?

Inclusion is not simply about policies.

It is about creating a culture where people feel respected, valued, and able to be themselves.

Recognise Chosen Families

Many LGBTQ+ people rely on chosen family networks.

These may include:

- Friends.
- Former partners.
- Community members.
- Housemates.
- Supportive peers.

When discussing affected others, avoid assuming support only comes from biological relatives.

Recognise and value the important role chosen family can play in recovery and wellbeing.

Listen Before You Advise

When someone shares experiences of gambling harm, your first role is often to listen.

Try to:

- Listen without judgement.
- Avoid making assumptions.
- Acknowledge the courage it takes to speak openly.
- Allow people to tell their own story.
- Respect confidentiality.

Simple responses such as:

"Thank you for sharing that with me."

"That sounds incredibly difficult."

"How can we support you?"

Can be more powerful than trying to immediately solve the problem.

Avoid Making People Choose

Some LGBTQ+ people describe feeling as though they must choose between:

- Their faith and their identity.
- Their community and their authenticity.
- Acceptance and belonging.

No one should feel forced to choose between who they are and where they belong.

Faith and community organisations should strive to create environments where people can be both LGBTQ+ and fully included members of their community.

Challenge Stigma Around Gambling Harm

Many people still misunderstand gambling harm.

Faith and community settings can help by:

- Raising awareness.
- Hosting conversations about gambling harms.
- Challenging myths and stereotypes.
- Promoting understanding.
- Sharing information about available support.

Education helps create safer spaces where people feel able to ask for help earlier.



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Recognise the Impact on Affected Others

Support should not focus solely on the person gambling.

Partners, parents, siblings, friends, and chosen family members may also be experiencing significant harm.

Affected others may be carrying:

- Anxiety.
- Financial stress.
- Isolation.
- Loss of trust.
- Emotional exhaustion.

Ask not only:

"How are they doing?"

But also:

"How are you coping?"

Respond Compassionately to Disclosure

If someone discloses gambling harm, affected other experiences, or struggles linked to their LGBTQ+ identity:

Do:

- Listen.
- Thank them for sharing.
- Acknowledge their experiences.
- Offer support where appropriate.
- Signpost specialist services.

Avoid:

- Judgement.
- Blame.
- Minimising experiences.
- Offering simplistic solutions.
- Questioning somebody's identity.

Compassion and curiosity are often more helpful than certainty.

Build Partnerships with Specialist Services

Faith and community organisations do not need to become gambling experts. However, they can play a valuable role by understanding where support is available.

Consider building relationships with:

- Gambling harm support services.
- LGBTQ+ organisations.
- Mental health services.
- Domestic abuse organisations.
- Community wellbeing services.

Knowing where to signpost can help people access the support they need.

Recovery Begins With Belonging

One of the most common themes we hear from LGBTQ+ people affected by gambling harm is a desire for belonging.

Recovery is not just about reducing harm.

It is also about:

- Connection.
- Community.
- Acceptance.
- Hope.
- Purpose.

Faith and community spaces can provide these things when people feel genuinely welcomed and valued.

Practical Actions for Faith and Community Leaders

Consider:

- Reviewing how inclusive your services and activities feel.
- Providing gambling harm awareness training.
- Challenging homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.
- Using inclusive language.
- Recognising chosen family members.
- Providing safe opportunities for people to talk.
- Displaying information about gambling harm support.
- Building links with LGBTQ+ and gambling harm organisations.

Small changes can have a significant impact.

How Recover with Pride Can Help

At Recover with Pride, we work with organisations, communities and professionals to increase awareness of gambling harms within LGBTQ+ communities.

We can support faith and community organisations to:

- Better understand gambling harm.
- Recognise the impact on affected others.
- Develop inclusive approaches.
- Increase confidence in having conversations.
- Create safer and more affirming environments.



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Key Takeaway

Faith and community spaces have the power to reduce stigma, increase belonging, and support recovery.

For LGBTQ+ people affected by gambling harm, a welcoming community can be life-changing.

No one should have to choose between their faith, their community, their identity, or their recovery. By creating inclusive and compassionate spaces, faith and community organisations can help people feel seen, supported, and able to recover with pride.

Key Message

The question is not whether LGBTQ+ people affected by gambling harm belong in our faith and community spaces. The question is how we ensure they know they are welcomed, valued, and supported when they arrive.

Refer for support here:

www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/



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Support for Affected Others



Aila

Aila is a website for women in Scotland experiencing or affected by gambling harm, developed by women with lived and living experience. If you are being harmed by someone else's gambling, Aila brings together emotional support, financial and debt advice, and practical guidance on navigating conversations and setting boundaries, helping you find the right service at the right time. Our monthly Living Room offers a welcoming in-person and online space for women affected by their own or someone else's gambling, and the Lived and Living Library shares stories from women across Scotland. You are not alone.

Links

Website

aila-scotland.co.uk/explore-available-support/support-for-affected-others/

aila-scotland.co.uk/explore-available-support/are-you-supporting-someone-else/

aila-scotland.co.uk

Contact

hello@aila-scotland.co.uk



Ara

Ara provides free support for people across the South West affected by someone else's gambling, including partners, family members, friends and colleagues. Support includes one-to-one counselling delivered face-to-face, by telephone or online by professionally accredited, CBT-qualified counsellors. Sessions focus on emotional wellbeing, coping strategies, recovery and rebuilding confidence.

Ara also offers specialist relationship counselling support, where gambling has impacted trust, communication, finances or family life, helping people to rebuild relationships and move forward together. In addition, our easy access workshops provide practical advice, digital safety support, understanding gambling-related harms, and action planning for those seeking support at the earliest opportunity.

Links

Website

www.recovery4all.co.uk/

Refer for support here:

www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/



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Support for Affected Others



Betknowmore UK

Behind every person experiencing gambling harm, an estimated 6-10 other people may be affected.

A partner losing sleep. A parent caught between worry and responsibility. A young person living with tension in their home. A friend who wants to help but doesn't know how. A colleague covering up mistakes at work.

If this is you, Betknowmore UK is right behind you.

We offer digital peer support service for anyone aged 18 and above. Our Peer Supporters have City and Guilds assured training and lived experience of gambling harms. They understand what you are going through.

Supporting you through shared lived experience

As part of the statutory levy, Betknowmore UK is funded to provide 1:1 and group support to affected others in England and Scotland.

This support aims to ensure that through peer-led engagement and intervention, people are offered the most appropriate support to address their specific needs.

Links

Website

www.betknowmoreuk.org/affected-other

Breakeven

Breakeven

Breakeven offers counselling support for partners, family members and friends affected by someone else's gambling. Gambling harm can put pressure on relationships, finances and the wider household, and support is available for you too.

You can receive support even if the person who gambles is not ready to seek help. Breakeven works with affected family members and friends to help them understand their experiences and find ways to cope with the impact.

Its family and friends resources also offer guidance on looking after yourself, understanding gambling harms and having supportive, non-judgemental conversations.

Links

Website

www.breakeven.org.uk/family-and-friends

Refer for support here:

www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/



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Support for Affected Others



Chances

As part of Cyrenians' homelessness prevention strategy – Chances offers person-centred, non-judgemental, and non-time limited support to anyone aged 16+ in Scotland who is impacted by gambling harm. For affected others - the service adopts a Community Reinforcement & Family Training approach focused on their recovery and not the person gambling and supports with:

- Promoting self-care, general wellbeing, independence, and boundary setting
- Understanding gambling behaviour and a loved one's triggers
- Improving communication with the person gambling through positive reinforcement techniques
- Guidance & tools to encourage the person gambling to reduce the harms experienced

Online and phone options are offered Scotland wide and in-person in Edinburgh, the Lothians and Falkirk. Organisational and self-referrals are welcome via email or phone on **07983 137239**. Alternatively, a referral form can be completed (available upon request).

Links

Website

[Chances: Gambling Support](#)

Contact

[07983 137239](tel:07983137239)

chances@cyrenians.scot



Gambling Recovery Therapy

Founded by Lorraine Perrons and Claire Jones, Gambling Recovery for All CIC and Gambling Recovery Therapy Limited combine family experience of gambling harm with specialist professional training.

The CIC's Rebuild & Rise: Reclaim Your Life is a fully funded, trauma-informed 12-week online programme for eligible women across the UK affected by someone else's gambling. It focuses on emotional wellbeing, financial resilience, boundaries, confidence and rebuilding a sense of choice and control. Women can seek support whether or not the person who gambles has stopped or sought help.

Gambling Recovery Therapy Limited also offers private paid one-to-one therapy for people experiencing gambling harm and those affected by someone else's gambling, with a complimentary 30-minute introductory conversation.

Links

Website

www.gamblingrecoverytherapy.com/affected-other

forms.gle/aMA4fJbgDMSpg0Tb9

www.gamblingrecoverytherapy.com/brochure

Contact

contact@gamblingrecoverytherapy.com

Refer for support here:

www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/



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Support for Affected Others



Recover Together

Recover Together provides a safe and supportive space for people affected by gambling harm, including family members, partners, friends and others impacted by someone else's gambling. Reaching out can feel difficult, and people may not always know what support they need or where to start. We're here to listen and walk alongside them, helping them find a way forward that feels right for them. Our approach is shaped by lived experience of gambling harm and recovery, and we meet people with empathy, honesty and no judgement, providing support, understanding and connection.

Links

Website

recoverttogether.org/what-we-do/affected-others/



Shiltons' Silverlining

Shiltons' Silverlining supports partners, family members, friends and loved ones affected by someone else's gambling. Its Affected Others service offers a confidential space to talk, be heard and feel understood.

The charity recognises that someone else's gambling can bring anxiety, financial pressure, relationship difficulties and isolation. It offers emotional support, guidance and information to help people cope with the impact and find a way forward.

Built on lived experience, the service recognises that affected family members and friends need support for their own mental health, wellbeing and relationships too.

Links

Website

shiltonssilverlining.org/affected-others/

Refer for support here:

www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/



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