Recover with Pride

LGBTQ+ GAMBLING HARM SUPPORT

Gambling, Crime and Recovery

switchboard

REFRAME COACHING

University of Brighton

Gambling, Crime and Recovery

What Is Gambling and Crime?

Gambling-related harm can sometimes lead people to engage in behaviours they would never normally consider. As gambling problems escalate, individuals may experience increasing financial pressure, desperation, secrecy, and fear about the consequences of their gambling.

For some people, this can result in criminal behaviour such as theft, fraud, workplace dishonesty, financial abuse, misuse of company funds, or other offences committed to fund gambling or try to recover losses.

It is important to recognise that not everyone experiencing gambling harm becomes involved in crime. However, where criminal behaviour has occurred, it is often linked to the impact of addiction, financial crisis, emotional distress, and impaired decision-making rather than a person's values or character.

Recovery is not about ignoring past mistakes. It is about taking responsibility, learning from experiences, rebuilding trust, and creating a safer future.

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How to Use This Tool

This resource is designed to help you explore the relationship between gambling and any harmful behaviours that may have occurred as a result.

You may find it helpful to:

- Reflect on how gambling affected your decision-making.
- Consider the consequences of gambling-related actions.
- Identify situations that increased risk-taking behaviour.
- Explore feelings of guilt, shame, or regret.
- Focus on accountability rather than self-punishment.
- Develop strategies to prevent future harm.
- Build healthier ways of managing financial pressure and stress.
- Identify support networks that can assist your recovery.

The purpose of this tool is not to judge or label you. It is to help you better understand what happened and support positive change moving forward.

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How This Can Aid Recovery From Gambling Harm

Many people carry significant guilt and shame about things they did while experiencing gambling-related harm.

These feelings can sometimes create a cycle where:

- Gambling leads to harmful actions.
- Harmful actions create guilt and shame.
- Guilt and shame increase emotional distress.
- Emotional distress triggers further gambling.

Breaking this cycle is a crucial part of recovery.

Understanding the links between gambling and harmful behaviour can help you:

- Accept responsibility for past actions.
- Understand the circumstances that contributed to those actions.
- Learn from past experiences.
- Reduce shame and self-destructive thinking.
- Build healthier coping mechanisms.
- Re-establish trust and accountability.
- Develop strategies to prevent future harm.
- Focus on rebuilding your life and relationships.

Recovery is not about being defined by your worst moments. It is about recognising your capacity for change and growth.

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LGBTQ+ Considerations

Many LGBTQ+ people experience additional pressures that can contribute to emotional distress and gambling harm, including:

- Homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, or discrimination.
- Family rejection.
- Social isolation.
- Identity-related stress.
- Mental health challenges linked to minority stress.
- Difficult experiences accessing support.

While these experiences never excuse harmful behaviour, understanding the wider context of your life can help you recognise factors that may have contributed to gambling becoming a coping mechanism.

This understanding can support self-awareness, accountability, and the development of healthier ways of managing future challenges.

Recovery is most effective when it addresses the whole person and their experiences, not just the gambling itself.

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Practical Recovery Activities

To support recovery, consider:

- Reflecting on how gambling influenced your choices and behaviour.
- Identifying situations that increased pressure or risk.
- Writing about lessons learned from your experiences.
- Developing a relapse prevention plan.
- Creating clear financial management strategies.
- Setting goals focused on rebuilding trust and stability.
- Practising self-compassion while maintaining accountability.
- Focusing on positive actions you can take today rather than remaining stuck in the past.

Recovery is about what you do next, not only what has happened before.

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How We Can Help

Our Recover With Pride Recovery Coaches understand that conversations about gambling and crime can be difficult, sensitive, and often accompanied by feelings of guilt, shame, fear, or embarrassment.

We can support you to:

- Explore the relationship between gambling and harmful behaviours.
- Understand triggers that led to risky decision-making.
- Develop healthier coping strategies.
- Build accountability and self-awareness.
- Strengthen relapse prevention planning.
- Create positive routines and habits.
- Rebuild confidence and self-esteem.
- Develop a recovery plan focused on growth, responsibility, and long-term wellbeing.

Our coaching approach is non-judgemental, LGBTQ+ affirming, and focused on helping you move forward. We recognise that people are more than the mistakes they may have made during periods of gambling-related harm.

Our Recovery Coaches can work alongside you to integrate this tool into your recovery journey, helping you understand its benefits, develop positive habits, and learn from past experiences in a constructive way. Together, we can help you focus on accountability, healing, rebuilding trust, and creating a future that is healthier, safer, and free from gambling-related harm.

Refer for support here:
www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/

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