



Gambling Harm in LGBTQ+ Families and Relationships

Understanding the Unique Experiences of LGBTQ+ Affected Others



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Understanding the Unique Experiences of LGBTQ+ Affected Others

Gambling harm can affect anyone, regardless of their sexuality, gender identity, age, background, or circumstances.

However, LGBTQ+ individuals, families, relationships, and support networks can sometimes experience additional challenges that shape how gambling harm is experienced and how support is accessed.

At Recover with Pride, we know there is no single LGBTQ+ experience. Some people have supportive families and communities, whilst others may have experienced rejection, discrimination, isolation, or stigma.

These experiences can influence both gambling harm and its impact on affected others.

This guidance aims to help affected others understand some of the unique considerations that may arise within LGBTQ+ relationships, families, and support networks.

Gambling Harm Does Not Exist in Isolation

Gambling harm is rarely just about gambling.

Many people experiencing gambling harm are also navigating other life challenges, including:

- Stress and anxiety.
- Mental health difficulties.
- Loneliness and isolation.
- Relationship challenges.
- Financial pressures.
- Trauma.
- Experiences of discrimination.

For some LGBTQ+ people, these challenges may be influenced by experiences related to identity, belonging, acceptance, and safety.

Understanding this wider context can help affected others make sense of what may be happening without removing accountability for harmful behaviour.

Minority Stress and Gambling Harm

You may hear the term minority stress.

This refers to the additional stress that LGBTQ+ people may experience as a result of:

- Homophobia.
- Biphobia.
- Transphobia.
- Discrimination.
- Harassment.
- Fear of rejection.
- Pressure to hide aspects of identity.

Over time, these experiences can affect emotional wellbeing.

For some people, gambling may become one of several unhealthy ways of coping with difficult emotions or life experiences.

This does not mean that every LGBTQ+ person who gambles is experiencing minority stress, but it can sometimes form part of the wider picture.

Family Relationships Can Be Complex

For some LGBTQ+ people, relationships with family members may be strong and supportive.

For others, there may be:

- Family conflict.
- Rejection.
- Estrangement.
- Limited contact.
- Difficult conversations around identity.

These existing tensions can sometimes make gambling harm more complex to navigate.

Affected others may find themselves supporting someone who is already carrying significant emotional stress linked to family relationships.

At the same time, LGBTQ+ family members affected by gambling harm may be balancing concerns about gambling alongside existing family challenges.

Chosen Family Relationships

Many LGBTQ+ people build strong chosen family networks.

These may include:

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

These individuals often play significant roles in providing emotional and practical support.

If gambling harm affects someone within a chosen family network, the impact can be just as significant as it would be within a biological family.

Chosen Family Relationships

Chosen family members may:

- Worry about someone's wellbeing.
- Provide emotional support.
- Offer accommodation.
- Lend money.
- Help during crises.
- Support recovery efforts.

Their experiences as affected others are valid and deserving of support.

Partners and Gambling Harm

For LGBTQ+ partners, gambling harm can create challenges similar to those experienced in any relationship.

These may include:

- Loss of trust.
- Financial concerns.
- Communication difficulties.
- Relationship conflict.
- Feelings of betrayal.
- Anxiety about the future.

However, some LGBTQ+ partners may also face additional barriers.

For example, they may feel uncertain whether mainstream services will understand their relationship or recognise their experiences.

Everyone deserves support that respects and affirms their relationships.

Trans and Non-Binary People and Access to Support

Trans and non-binary individuals may encounter additional barriers when seeking support.

These can include:

- Concerns about discrimination.
- Fear of being misgendered.
- Previous negative experiences of services.
- Anxiety about explaining identity repeatedly.
- A lack of understanding from professionals.

Affected others supporting a trans or non-binary loved one may also experience frustration or concern if services fail to provide appropriate and affirming support.

Everyone deserves access to services where they feel respected, valued, and understood.

When Gambling Harm and Identity Challenges Intersect

There may be times when gambling harm exists alongside:

- Coming out experiences.
- Gender exploration or transition.
- Family rejection.
- Relationship breakdown.
- Housing instability.
- Mental health challenges.

This can create additional pressures for both the person experiencing gambling harm and the people who care about them.

It is important to remember that whilst these experiences may provide context, they do not excuse harmful behaviour.

Affected others still have a right to:

- Safety.
- Boundaries.
- Honesty.
- Support.
- Respect.

Fear of Judgement and Stigma

Some LGBTQ+ people worry about being judged not only for gambling harm but also for their identity.

Affected others may share these concerns.

You may worry about:

- Confidentiality.
- Being misunderstood.
- Having to explain your relationship.
- Facing discrimination.
- Being outed without consent.

These concerns can sometimes delay people seeking support.

You deserve support where you can bring your whole self without fear of judgement.

Small Communities and Confidentiality

In some areas, particularly rural communities, LGBTQ+ people may feel highly visible.

People sometimes worry:

- "What if somebody I know finds out?"
- "Will information remain confidential?"
- "What if I'm recognised?"

These concerns can feel particularly significant in smaller communities where social networks overlap.

Remember that seeking support for yourself does not mean sharing information publicly. Confidential support is available, and you are entitled to privacy.



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You May Not Identify as LGBTQ+ Yourself

One of the most important messages within this guidance is that not every affected other accessing Recover with Pride will identify as LGBTQ+.

You may be:

- A parent.
- A partner.
- A sibling.
- A friend.
- A chosen family member.

Supporting someone who is LGBTQ+.

Your experiences matter too.

You do not need to identify as LGBTQ+ to access support or benefit from LGBTQ+ affirming services.

There Is No "Perfect" LGBTQ+ Family

Sometimes people feel pressure to present relationships and families in a positive light. The reality is that LGBTQ+ families and relationships experience challenges just like any other family or relationship.

Gambling harm can affect:

- Couples.
- Parents and children.
- Siblings.
- Friends.
- Chosen family.
- Community networks.

Experiencing gambling harm does not mean you have failed, and it does not mean your relationship is any less valid.

Recovery Is Possible

Whether gambling harm has affected:

- A partner.
- A child.
- A parent.
- A friend.
- A chosen family member.

Recovery and healing are possible.

For affected others, recovery may involve:

- Rebuilding trust.
- Setting boundaries.
- Strengthening support networks.
- Improving wellbeing.
- Processing difficult experiences.
- Rediscovering hope.

Recovery is not only for the person who gambles.

Affected others deserve support and healing too.

How Recover with Pride Can Help

At Recover with Pride, we understand the unique experiences of LGBTQ+ people and those who support them.

We provide a safe, inclusive and non-judgemental environment where affected others can:

- Explore the impact of gambling harm.
- Better understand their experiences.
- Develop healthy boundaries.
- Access information and guidance.
- Build confidence and resilience.
- Reduce isolation.
- Focus on their own wellbeing and recovery.

Whether you identify as LGBTQ+ yourself or are supporting someone who does, you are welcome here.



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Key Takeaway

LGBTQ+ families, relationships, and chosen family networks are diverse, unique, and important.

Whilst gambling harm may be influenced by experiences such as discrimination, isolation, rejection, or minority stress, affected others still deserve support, understanding, and recognition.

Your relationship matters. Your experiences matter. And if someone else's gambling has affected your life, support is available for you too.

Key Message

There is no one way to be LGBTQ+, no one way to be a family, and no one way to experience gambling harm. Whatever your relationship to the person affected, your experiences are valid, and support is available.

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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