Recover with Pride

LGBTQ+ GAMBLING HARM SUPPORT

Health & Fitness and Gambling Recovery

switchboard

REFRAME COACHING

University of Brighton

Health & Fitness and Gambling Recovery

What Is Health & Fitness?

Health and fitness refers to the activities, habits, and lifestyle choices that support your physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. This can include exercise, movement, nutrition, sleep, hydration, self-care, and looking after your overall health.

When someone is experiencing gambling-related harm, health and wellbeing can often suffer. Gambling may affect sleep, increase stress and anxiety, reduce motivation, lead to poor eating habits, impact physical activity levels, and leave people feeling physically and emotionally exhausted.

For LGBTQ+ people, wellbeing can also be affected by discrimination, minority stress, social isolation, body image concerns, identity-related challenges, and barriers to accessing inclusive health services.

Health and fitness can play an important role in recovery by helping you reconnect with your body, improve your wellbeing, and develop positive routines that support a healthier lifestyle.

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How to Use This Tool

Health and fitness is not about achieving a perfect body or becoming an athlete. It is about making realistic changes that help you feel physically and emotionally stronger.

You may find it helpful to:

- Take regular walks or engage in physical activity you enjoy.
- Establish healthy sleep routines.
- Improve eating habits gradually.
- Stay hydrated throughout the day.
- Reduce sedentary behaviour.
- Set realistic wellbeing goals.
- Incorporate movement into your daily routine.
- Monitor how exercise affects your mood and gambling urges.

The most successful changes are often small, achievable, and sustainable.

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How This Can Aid Recovery From Gambling Harm

Physical wellbeing and emotional wellbeing are closely connected.

Many people experiencing gambling harm describe feeling stressed, anxious, exhausted, low in mood, or overwhelmed. These emotions can often increase the temptation to gamble as a way of escaping or coping.

Improving your health and fitness can help you:

- Reduce stress and anxiety.
- Improve mood and emotional wellbeing.
- Increase energy levels.
- Improve sleep quality.
- Build confidence and self-esteem.
- Reduce boredom and unstructured time.
- Create healthy coping mechanisms.
- Strengthen resilience during recovery.

Physical activity can also provide a positive outlet for difficult emotions and create healthy alternatives to gambling behaviours.

Recovery is often easier when both your mind and body are being supported.

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LGBTQ+ Considerations

Many LGBTQ+ people face unique challenges that can impact their relationship with health and fitness.

These may include:

- Experiences of discrimination or stigma.
- Anxiety around accessing gyms, sports clubs, or public facilities.
- Body image concerns.
- Gender dysphoria.
- Social isolation or lack of confidence.
- Negative experiences within healthcare settings.
- Minority stress and its impact on physical and mental wellbeing.

For some people, fitness spaces may not always feel welcoming or inclusive. Finding activities and environments where you feel safe, comfortable, and affirmed is an important part of building healthy habits.

Health and fitness should support wellbeing, self-acceptance, and confidence, not create additional pressure or self-criticism.

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Practical Recovery Activities

To support your recovery and wellbeing, consider:

- Taking a 20-30 minute walk each day.
- Setting a regular bedtime and wake-up time.
- Participating in LGBTQ+ inclusive sports or fitness groups.
- Tracking your mood alongside physical activity.
- Trying activities such as swimming, cycling, yoga, or strength training.
- Preparing healthy meals in advance.
- Spending time outdoors and connecting with nature.
- Celebrating small wellbeing achievements and milestones.

Remember that progress is measured by consistency, not perfection.

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How We Can Help

Our Recover With Pride Recovery Coaches understand that physical wellbeing can be a powerful part of recovery from gambling harm.

We can support you to:

- Explore the relationship between wellbeing and gambling recovery.
- Identify healthy activities that you enjoy.
- Develop realistic health and fitness goals.
- Build positive routines and habits.
- Improve confidence and motivation.
- Manage stress and emotional triggers in healthier ways.
- Develop strategies to support both physical and mental wellbeing.
- Create a personalised recovery plan that includes wellbeing activities.

Our coaches can work alongside you to help integrate health and fitness into your recovery journey, understand the benefits it can bring, and develop sustainable habits that support long-term wellbeing.

Recovery is about more than stopping gambling. It is about creating a life that feels healthier, more balanced, and more fulfilling. Through improved health and fitness, you can strengthen your resilience, boost your confidence, and build positive habits that support lasting recovery and overall wellbeing.

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

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