Recover with Pride

LGBTQ+ GAMBLING HARM SUPPORT

Identity Concealment and Gambling Recovery

switchboard

REFRAME COACHING

University of Brighton

Identity Concealment and Gambling Recovery

What Is Identity Concealment?

Identity concealment refers to hiding, suppressing, or feeling unable to openly express your sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or intersex status. Some LGBTQ+ people may choose to conceal aspects of their identity to stay safe, avoid discrimination, protect relationships, or navigate environments that do not feel accepting.

While concealment can sometimes be a necessary coping strategy, it can also create emotional strain over time. Constantly monitoring what you say, how you behave, or which parts of yourself you share with others can be exhausting and may lead to stress, anxiety, loneliness, or low self-esteem.

For some people, gambling can become a way of escaping these difficult emotions or providing temporary relief from the pressures of hiding who they are. Understanding the impact of identity concealment can therefore be an important part of recovery from gambling-related harm.

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How to Use This Tool

This tool is designed to help you explore how identity concealment may be affecting your wellbeing and recovery journey.

You may find it helpful to:

- Reflect on situations where you feel unable to be yourself.
- Consider how hiding aspects of your identity impacts your mood and wellbeing.
- Identify environments where you feel safe, accepted, and affirmed.
- Explore what authenticity means to you personally.
- Recognise the difference between choosing privacy and feeling forced to hide.
- Notice whether experiences of concealment contribute to gambling urges or emotional distress.
- Build connections with affirming people, communities, or services.

Remember, there is no right way to express your identity. Recovery is not about pressuring yourself to come out or disclose information before you are ready. It is about understanding your experiences and making choices that support your wellbeing.

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How This Can Aid Recovery From Gambling Harm

When someone is carrying the stress of hiding part of themselves, gambling can sometimes become a way of coping with difficult emotions such as:

- Anxiety about being discovered.
- Fear of rejection or discrimination.
- Loneliness and isolation.
- Shame or self-doubt.
- Stress from navigating different identities in different environments.

By exploring the impact of identity concealment, you can begin to:

- Better understand emotional triggers linked to gambling.
- Develop healthier coping strategies.
- Reduce feelings of shame and self-criticism.
- Increase self-acceptance and confidence.
- Strengthen emotional wellbeing.
- Build more authentic and supportive relationships.
- Create a stronger foundation for sustainable recovery.

Recovery is often easier when you no longer feel you need to carry everything on your own.

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LGBTQ+ Considerations

Identity concealment affects LGBTQ+ people in different ways and at different stages of life.

You may be:

- Not yet ready to come out.
- Out in some areas of life but not others.
- Managing concerns about family, work, faith, culture, or community acceptance.
- Exploring your sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Navigating disclosure as a trans, non-binary, or intersex person.
- Carrying the impact of previous experiences of rejection, discrimination, or prejudice.

These are often complex and deeply personal experiences. There is no expectation within recovery that you should come out or disclose your identity if doing so does not feel safe.

Instead, this resource encourages self-understanding, self-compassion, and recognising how concealment may influence your wellbeing and gambling behaviours.

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Practical Recovery Activities

To support your recovery, consider:

- Keeping a journal about situations where you feel most authentic.
- Recording emotional triggers linked to identity-related stress.
- Identifying people who make you feel accepted and valued.
- Exploring LGBTQ+ community groups or social opportunities.
- Practising self-compassion and positive self-reflection.
- Challenging negative beliefs about your identity.
- Creating a personal wellbeing plan for times when you feel isolated or overwhelmed.
- Celebrating moments where you have been able to express yourself authentically.

Small steps towards self-acceptance can have a significant impact on wellbeing and recovery.

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How We Can Help

Our Recover With Pride Recovery Coaches understand that gambling harm does not happen in isolation. For many LGBTQ+ people, experiences such as identity concealment, fear of rejection, discrimination, and minority stress can all influence gambling behaviours.

We can support you to:

- Explore the relationship between identity concealment and gambling harm.
- Better understand your emotional triggers.
- Develop healthier coping mechanisms.
- Build confidence and self-acceptance.
- Strengthen resilience and emotional wellbeing.
- Connect with affirming sources of support and community.
- Create positive habits that support recovery.
- Develop a recovery plan that reflects your unique experiences and identity.

Our coaching is person-centred, trauma-informed, and LGBTQ+ affirming. We believe recovery is not just about reducing gambling. It is about helping you build a life where you can feel safe, valued, connected, and able to be yourself.

No matter where you are in your journey with your identity, our Recovery Coaches can work with you to better understand the benefits of this tool, integrate it into your recovery routine, and develop practical strategies that support both your wellbeing and long-term recovery from gambling harm.

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

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